

Mission Report

11th Meeting of Working Group on Human Resource Development for the Greater Mekong Subregion

1 – 2 November 2012

Royal Park Hotel, Yangon, Myanmar

Prepared by

Abigail Cuales Lanceta, Programme Officer III

A. SEAMEO Officials and Staff Member on Mission

1. Dr Witaya Jeradechakul, Director
2. Ms Abigail Cuales Lanceta, Programme Officer III

Two SEAMEO Centre Directors participated in the meeting:

1. Dr Pratap Singhasivanon, Secretary General/Coordinator, SEAMEO TROPMED Network
2. Dr Sauwakon Ratanawijitrasin, Centre Director, SEAMEO RIHED

B. Background, Description and Objectives of the Activity

1. The cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) which consists of six countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and Peoples Republic of China, started in 1992 through the GMS Economic Cooperation Programme to promote economic and social development. Human Resource Development (HRD) is one of the nine areas of cooperation. A working group on HRD was formed in 1995, and since then conducted various discussions and initiated activities to promote HRD in the GMS. Many of the initiatives have been supported by ADB, while some are subsidized by the GMS countries particularly PRC and Thailand.
2. The 11th Meeting of the GMS working group on HRD was convened to review and endorse the draft GMS Human Resource Development Strategic Framework and Action Plan (HRD SFAP) 2013-2017. This was done by building upon the achievements under the SFAP 2009-2012 and responding to emerging HRD priorities in the GMS.

C. Participants

1. Officials and representatives from GMS countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and Peoples Republic of China – Country participants represented various sectors: education, health, labor and migration (51 participants)
2. Representatives from development partners and institutions: ILO, International Organization for Migration, UNESCO, UNDP, AUN (13)
3. ADB (15)

D. Organizer: ADB

E. Highlight of the Activity/Summary Points

1. ADB presented the draft GMS HRD Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2013-2017. ADB also highlighted the gains from the HRD Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2009-2012 and how those could be sustained in the new plan.
2. GMS countries gave presentations and statements on their insights and perspectives on the strategic thrusts of the GMS HRD Strategic Framework and Action Plans (the current plan which is from 2009 to 2012, and the new one which is from 2013 to 2017).

3. The meeting included sharing of information on recent analytical work and good practices related to HRD and knowledge management. This was provided by the participating GMS countries, development partners (including SEAMEO RIHED) and the ADB. These sharing sessions helped the GMS countries in identifying new opportunities to enhance knowledge sharing in the respective sectors: education, health, and labor and migration; thus improving the draft GMS HRD Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2013-2017.
4. Focus group discussions were conducted by sub-sectors to discuss the new Action Plan that is planned for implementation from 2013 to 2017. Specific activities and tasks were identified. Strategies were also discussed to ensure effective implementation and coordination. Specific development partners to work with the GMS countries on the three sub-sectors were also recommended. Among others, SEAMEO was recommended as a potential partner and/or implementer of specific activities under the Action Plan, particularly in higher education, TVET, and health.

F. Role/Participation of SEAMEO

1. The Director presented a statement during the closing programme to indicate the areas of possible collaboration on the implementation of the 2013-2017 Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Resource Development in GMS. Relevant SEAMEO Centres were matched with the identified activities in the action plan. Please see matrix below. The Director also introduced SEAMEO emphasizing on the strength of having a diverse network of specialist SEAMEO Centres that have contributed to human resource development of Southeast Asia including the GMS countries for more than four decades now.
2. The Centre Director of SEAMEO RIHED presented the initial findings of the ongoing policy action research for harmonizing credit transfer arrangements in GMS countries that the Centre is implementing with support from ADB.
3. SEAMEO team members were assigned in detailed planning of the 2013-2017 Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Resource Development in GMS as follows:
 - Capacity building – SEAMEO Secretariat Director
 - Higher education – SEAMEO RIHED Centre Director
 - Health – SEAMEO TROPMED Network Secretary General/Coordinator
 - Technical and vocational education and training – PO III

G. Side Meetings

Meeting with SEAMEO CHAT key officials

31 October 2012

SEAMEO CHAT, University of Yangon, Yangon, Myanmar

1. The Director and PO III visited SEAMEO CHAT on 31 October 2012 and convened a meeting with the Acting Centre Director and key officials of SEAMEO CHAT on upgrading the capability of the Centre. The meeting agenda was in response to the recommendation of the SEAMEO CHAT Governing Board for the Centre to collaborate with the SEAMEO Secretariat in developing a capacity development plan for the Centre.
2. Based on initial concept paper developed by SEAMEO CHAT, various strategies and activities were identified that could form part of the capacity development programme for SEAMEO CHAT. This includes a special mentoring programme for the Centre to be conducted by SEAMEO Secretariat and other Centres, developing funding proposal for a more comprehensive and long-term capacity development efforts for SEAMEO CHAT, and the possibility of requesting for more position items for the Centre.

Meeting with ADB officials

1-2 November 2012

1. The Director met with the Director of Southeast Asia Department of ADB to follow up on ADB's participation at the forthcoming 35th SEAMEO High Officials Meeting. ADB confirmed participation of Dr Yasushi Hirotsato, Principal Education Specialist, ADB.
2. The Director and PO III met with Dr Yasushi Hirotsato on updates from ADB side on the review of the SEAMEO College TA proposal and discussed on ways to address and respond to the comments and suggestions of ADB on the proposal.

H. Follow-up Actions Needed

1. Follow up with ADB on the finalization of the GMS HRD Action Plan for 2013-2017 to ensure inclusion of SEAMEO as a development partner (SEAMEO RIHED is already likely to be given another project under higher education sub-sector.)
2. Send information to SEAMEO VOCTECH, and link SEAMEO VOCTECH with ILO which is the development partner identified to lead TVET sub-sector.
3. Assist in coordinating with relevant SEAMEO Centres should there be concrete plans to involve them in the implementation of the projects under the new Action Plan in any of the sub-sectors
4. Write an article on the participation of SEAMEO in the meeting
5. Provide updates to SEAMEO CHAT on plans of SEAMEO Secretariat in assisting the Centre in preparing a capacity development programme for staff of the Centre.

I. Appendices/Related Conference Materials and Outputs

1. The Programme, List of Participants and Information Note are currently available in print only, and will be put on file accordingly.
2. Selected photos of the activity will be made available on the office shared folder.

SEAMEO's Areas of Interest for Collaboration

Sector	Possible Implementing or Supporting SEAMEO Units
EDUCATION	
I. Capacity development in the economic corridors	
a) Building capacity of GMS government officials in development management 1. GMS Phnom Penh Plan for Development (Phase 5) 2. Review of GMS capacity building activities	Relevant SEAMEO Centres depending on specific training needs
II. Cooperation in technical and vocational education and training	
a) Developing and implementing skills recognition frameworks b) Strengthening technical and vocational and training	SEAMEO VOCTECH (Centre for vocational and technical education and training)
III. Cooperation in higher education and research	
a) Strengthening GMS higher education	SEAMEO RIHED (Centre for higher education and development)
b) Strengthening GMS research capacity	SEAMEO SEARCA Centre for graduate study and research in agriculture)
HEALTH	
IV. Addressing regional health issues	
a) Strengthening communicable disease control in the GMS	SEAMEO TROPMED Network (Centre for tropical medicine and public health)
b) GMS food and drugs safety	SEAMEO RECFON (Centre for food and nutrition)
c) Health impact of GMS integration	SEAMEO TROPMED Network

CROSS-SECTORAL		
VI. Mitigating social costs in the economic corridors		
a) HIV/AIDS prevention		SEAMEO TROPMED Network (Centre for tropical medicine and public health)
c) Assessing the social impact of increased GMS connectivity		SEAMEO INNOTECH (Centre for educational innovation and technology)
d) Enhancing the sense of GMS community in GMS youth		SEAMEO INNOTECH (Centre for educational innovation and technology)
1. Building the Intellectual capital for offering an “ASEAN studies” course		
2. GMS Youth Forum		SEAMEO SPAFA (Centre for archaeology and fine arts)
VII. Strengthening institutions and mechanisms for GMS HRD cooperation		
a) Supporting implementation of SFAP	2013-2017	SEAMEO Secretariat