

Mission Report
SEAMEO RECSAM Governing Board Meeting
17-19 September 2013
Penang, MALAYSIA

I Handoko

A. SEAMEO Official and Staff Member on Mission

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B. Background, Description and Objectives of the Activity

SEAMEO RECSAM is one of SEAMEO Regional Centres located in Penang, Malaysia. The Governing Board Meeting is conducted annually by the Centre to plan and discuss its programmes and activities.

C. Participants

Governing Board Members and Representatives in attendance are Mr. Hj. Zulkifli bin Hj. Md. Yusuf (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Or Siem (representing Mr. Eng Kimly of Cambodia), Mrs Varadune Amarathithada (Lao PDR), YBhg. Datuk Abd Shukor bin Ibrahim (Malaysia), Mr. Sin Kim Ho (Singapore), Dr. Rawiwan Tenissara (representing Dr. Chinnapat Bhumirat of Thailand), Dr. Luong Viet Thai (Vietnam), Prof. Dr. I. Handoko (Ex-Officio representing Assoc. Prof. Dr. Witaya Jeradechakul of SEAMEO Secretariat), Dr. Hj. Mohd. Johan bin Zakaria (Ex-Officio representing SEAMEO RECSAM).

D. Organizer/s

SEAMEO RECSAM

E. Highlight of the Activity/Summary Points

The important issues consist of (1) Mid-Term Review of SEAMEO RECSAM 9th Five-Year Plan, (2) 5th International Conference on Science and Mathematics Education (CoSMEd 2013), (3) 9th Regional Congress: Search for SEAMEO Young Scientists (SSYS) 2014, and (4) Concern on the decrease of the reserve fund.

F. Role/Participation of SEAMEO

1. To present working paper on the Follow-up Actions from SEAMEO Meetings and Updates on the Recent Developments in SEAMEO.
2. Provide comments and answers.

G. Follow-up Actions Needed

SEAMEO RECSAM should follow the recommendations by the GBM as stated on the Report of Proceedings (attached), for example on the concern of the decrease of the reserve fund it is suggested that the Centre should charge a standard rate for SEAMEO participants attending courses at SEAMEO RECSAM and a higher rate for non-member country participation.

H. Appendices/Related Conference Materials and Outputs

Report of Proceedings

44th SEAMEO RECSAM GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
SEAMEO RECSAM, PENANG
17th-19th September 2013

Report of Proceedings

Governing Board Members and Representatives in attendance are Mr. Hj. Zulkifli bin Hj. Md. Yusuf (Brunei Darussalam), Mr. Or Siem (representing Mr. Eng Kimly of Cambodia), Mrs Varadune Amarathithada (Lao PDR), YBhg. Datuk Abd Shukor bin Ibrahim (Malaysia), Mr. Sin Kim Ho (Singapore), Dr. Rawiwan Tenissara (representing Dr. Chinnapat Bhumirat of Thailand), Dr. Luong Viet Thai (Vietnam), Prof. Dr. I. Handoko (Ex-Officio representing Assoc. Prof. Dr. Witaya Jeradechakul of SEAMEO Secretariat), Dr. Hj. Mohd. Johan bin Zakaria (Ex-Officio representing SEAMEO RECSAM).

1.0 Welcome Address by the Centre Director, SEAMEO RECSAM

1.1 The Centre Director thanked the Board Members for attending the Board meeting in Penang, Malaysia. He expressed his appreciation to the Malaysian Government and the Secretariat for his appointment as the new Centre Director of SEAMEO RECSAM.

1.2 He updated the Board members on a number of developments:

1.2.1 Malaysia and the Philippines have nominated new Board members. They are YBhg. Datuk Abd Shukor bin Ibrahim, Deputy Secretary-General (Development), Ministry of Education Malaysia and Dr. Marlyn D. Dimaano, Director, Department of Education, Bureau of Elementary Education, Philippines. He welcomed both of them to the Board.

1.2.2 He placed his appreciation on record for the former Board members Dr. Yolanda S. Quijano from the Philippines and Y. Bhg. Dato Nazirruddin bin Abd. Rahman from Malaysia for their dedication and contribution.

1.2.3 He also welcomed Mr. Or Siem, Deputy Director, Department of Curriculum Development, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports representing Mr. Eng Kimly, from Cambodia and Dr. Rawiwan Tenissara, the Vice Director of Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology, representing Dr. Chinnapat Bhumirat from Thailand.

1.2.4 He expressed his pleasure in having the presence of Prof. Dr. I. Hondoko, the Deputy Director for Programme and Development, representing the SEAMEO Secretariat Director at the Meeting.

- 1.2.5 He paid tribute to Dr. Devadason Robert Peter, the former Acting Centre Director who has ended his secondment at the Centre. Dr. Devadason had served the Centre for over 10 years.
- 1.2.6 The team from the Centre including the rapporteurs and the observers were introduced to the Board.

2.0 Opening Address by the Chairman of the Governing Board

- 2.1 Mr. Hj Zulkilfi bin Hj Md Yusuf, Chairman of the Governing Board welcomed Prof Dr I. Handoko representing the Director of SEAMEO Secretariat, the Governing Board Members, and all those present at the meeting. He further thanked the Director and staff of SEAMEO RECSAM for the smooth running of the meeting. The Chairman congratulated Dr. Hj. Mohd Johan bin Zakaria on his appointment as the new Centre Director of SEAMEO RECSAM.
- 2.2 He took note of the departure of an important member, Dr. Devadason Robert Peter who will be returning to the Ministry of Education, Malaysia at the end of his tenure as a seconded officer at SEAMEO RECSAM. He thanked Dr. Devadason Robert Peter and placed on record the Governing Board's appreciation and gratitude for his contributions to the Board.
- 2.3 On the significant role played by SEAMEO RECSAM as a Regional Centre of Excellence for Science and Mathematics Education, he highlighted that the trainers and facilitators should be dynamic by constantly reviewing and upgrading their training programmes and activities so that they remain relevant, at par with international experts. He pointed out the need to benchmark SEAMEO RECSAM with other similar international bodies and the training programmes with internationally acclaimed programmes. He humbly acknowledged that these are the huge challenges lying ahead of a long journey that the Centre should address.
- 2.4 In conclusion, the Chairman thanked the Board members for their attendance and hoped that their contributions in this meeting will help make it lively and very resourceful, and urged the Centre to continue with its good work.

3.0 Remarks by the Director, SEAMEO Secretariat

- 3.1 Prof. Dr. I. Handoko, representing the Director of SEAMEO Secretariat, Associate Professor Dr. Witaya Jeradechakul, congratulated Dr. Hj. Mohd. Johan bin Zakaria on his appointment as the Centre Director of SEAMEO RECSAM and acknowledged Dr. Devadason Robert Peter for his excellent leadership in the past year as the Acting Centre Director.
- 3.2 The representative of the SEAMEO Secretariat Director announced that he looked forward to GBM as another platform besides various meetings, Council Conference, High Official Meetings, Executive Committee

Meetings and Centre Director Meetings for resolutions to be presented and discussed with the Centres' Governing Boards. He also valued the technical input from the experts.

- 3.3** The Representative acknowledged the significant role played by SEAMEO RECSAM as a catalyst for advancement in Science and Mathematics Education at both the primary and secondary levels among the SEAMEO member countries. He also proudly highlighted that the Centre has successfully established itself as an educational institution that promotes and delivers high quality training programmes and up-to-date research in relevant areas. At this point, he thanked the efforts of the past and present Centre Directors, for under their leadership, RECSAM has moved another step forward towards internationally acclaimed quality education.
- 3.4** The Representative also commended SEAMEO RECSAM for taking the lead in addressing one of the SEAMEO initiatives (SEAMEO Education Standards and Students Networking) and expressed his hope of SEAMEO attaining the vision of Golden SEAMEO through collaboration.
- 3.5** The Representative took pride in announcing that this year, the GBM has embarked on the new practice of presenting comprehensive working papers with the key points, agreements and actions having resulted from major past meetings of SEAMEO. He pointed out that the advantage of this newly adopted procedure is that only key points will be highlighted, which will require further actions from SEAMEO Centres in the form of input or advice from the Board members.
- 3.6** In conclusion, the Representative of SEAMEO Secretariat Director assured that the SEAMEO Secretariat will continuously support the Centre as it embarks on its long and continuous journey in attaining and maintaining excellence in Science and Mathematics education. He also expressed a word of thanks to the Government of Malaysia for the steadfast support rendered, through the Board members of the 11 SEAMEO member countries. He also expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the Centre Director and staff of SEAMEO RECSAM in successfully planning and hosting the 44th GBM.

4.0 Video Presentations on SEAMEO and SEAMEO RECSAM

- 4.1** A three-minute informative video on SEAMEO, which highlighted its imperative role in education in the Southeast Asia region was presented.
- 4.2** This was followed by the video presentation of *RECSAM Forges Ahead*. The seven minute video presentation highlighted the various educational programmes conducted in SEAMEO RECSAM and also showcased the continuously upgraded facilities made available to participants.

5.0 Election of Chairman of the Governing Board for FY2013/2014 - FY2014/2015

5.1 YBhg. Datuk Abd Shukor bin Ibrahim, the member from Malaysia was unanimously elected as Chairman of the Governing Board for FY 2013/2014 and 2014/2015.

6.0 Election of Vice-Chairman of the Governing Board for FY2013/2014 - FY2014/2015

6.1 Mrs. Varadune Amarathithada, the member from LAO PDR, was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairman of the Governing Board for FY 2013/2014 and 2014/2015.

7.0 Remarks by the Chairman of the Governing Board

7.1 The newly appointed Chairman expressed his appreciation to the Board members for entrusting him with the new appointment as the Chairman of the Governing Board for FY 2013/2014 and FY 2014/2015. He further expressed his gratitude to Mr. Hj. Zulkifli bin Hj. Yusuf for his guidance, and services rendered to the Board and SEAMEO RECSAM during his tenure as the former Chairman of the Board.

7.2 He also expressed his profound appreciation to Dr. Azian Tengku Syed Abdullah, the past Centre Director for her leadership that uplifted the Centre to greater heights. In addition, the Chairman also welcomed and congratulated Dr. Hj. Mohd. Johan bin Zakaria on his new appointment as the new Centre Director and expressed his hopes for the Centre to continue to grow under his capable directorship.

7.3 The Board was briefed on the proposed agenda and programmes, which included the Mid-Term Review of SEAMEO RECSAM's 9th Five-Year Plan, Proposed Budget for three fiscal years and other future programmes.

7.4 He concluded by thanking all Board members for attending the 44th Governing Board Meeting 2013 and wished for a fruitful and successful discussion.

8.0 Adoption of Agenda and Programme of the Meeting

8.1 The Agenda and Programme of the Meeting was adopted by the members of the Board. This was proposed by the member from Brunei Darussalam and seconded by the member from Vietnam.

MATTERS FOR APPROVAL

9.0 Confirmation of 44th GBM *Ad Referendum* Decisions

The SEAMEO Chairman walked the Meeting through the three Working Papers, which were presented *Ad Referendum* and noted that five out of ten Member

Countries responded and agreed on the requested decisions. The 44th SEAMEO Governing Board Meeting confirmed the decisions of the following Working Papers:

9.1 Mid-Term Review of SEAMEO RECSAM's 9th Five-Year Plan (44GBM/WP-1)

9.1.1 The following were issues raised by the members of the Board:

- a) The member from Brunei Darussalam was satisfied with the efforts of SEAMEO RECSAM in ensuring that the Centre's training programmes met the needs of current and future Science and Mathematics education. He also clarified that Brunei Darussalam has yet to participate in TIMSS and PISA because the Brunei Darussalam Government believes that based on the results of their national examinations, students' achievement is not yet at a satisfactory level. To address this, the Ministry of Education is currently at the stage of implementing *Brunei Darussalam Numeracy Initiative* to train primary and secondary Mathematics teachers to improve the teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge, incorporating Inquiry Based Science Education in the curriculum, and the production of resources by the Curriculum Development Department.
- b) With regards to TIMSS, Lao PDR informed that the two-year cycle of Assessment Student Learning Outcomes (ASLO) with the focus on Mathematics, Lao language and World Around Us (Science, Geography and History) has been conducted by Research Institutes for Education and Sciences (RIES) at primary level and would be extended to lower secondary in the near future. The Ministry of Education and Sports is now undertaking the education reform to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

9.1.2 The Board approved the Working Paper.

9.2 5th International Conference on Science & Mathematics Education (CoSMEd) 2013 (44GBM/WP-2)

9.2.1 The following were issues raised by the members of the Board:

The member from Brunei Darussalam suggested that the Centre may want to take note and include other issues:

- a) How current educational relevance can be sustained?
- b) Are teachers skilful?
- c) Are schools fully equipped?
- d) Demand of the country/industry
- e) Assessment on the effectiveness of the system.

9.2.2 The Board took note of the Working Paper.

9.3 9th Regional Congress: Search for SEAMEO Young Scientists (SSYS), 2014 (44GBM/WP-3)

9.3.1 The working paper was presented *Ad Referendum* by the Chairman to inform the 44th Governing Board Meeting on the 9th Regional Congress: Search for SEAMEO Young Scientists (SSYS), 2014 (44GBM/WP-3).

9.3.2 The following were comments from the members of the Board.

- a) The Board member from Brunei Darussalam referred to a sentence on page 1, paragraph 4 of the Working Paper, '*...comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs...*', adding that Brunei had highlighted that citizens must not be overly dependent on the government, and her people were urged to be resourceful. This concern was raised in the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue, 26th- 28th August 2013, United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand.
- b) The Board member from Brunei Darussalam also informed that the SSYS 2014 invitation letter dated 31st July 2013 was received on 31st August 2013 and was extended to all relevant departments in the MOE Brunei Darussalam on 2nd September 2013.
- c) The Board member from Lao PDR informed the meeting that there had been increased interest from private and public schools to participate in the SSYS. She informed the meeting that more time was needed for the Ministry to filter through the projects before sending the nomination to RECSAM as the invitation letter was received only on 10th September 2013.
- d) The Board member from Vietnam also requested for an extension of deadline.
- e) The Board member from Singapore suggested that an advance notice of about half a year be given to the member countries to allow ample time for selection and nomination of official delegates.
- f) The Deputy Director (Training Programme) responded that there were earlier requests for extension of deadline for submission of projects, and the Centre has tentatively extended the deadline to the end of September. She also informed the Meeting that the SSYS 2014 programme is one day longer than all the previous SSYS in response to the feedback given by the Congress delegates and teachers that more time should be given for interaction among student delegates from the various participating countries. She also informed the meeting that non-official delegates are also welcome to participate in the Congress.
- g) The Centre Director informed the meeting that the Centre will issue another letter to inform the ministry of education of the member

countries about the new deadline for submission. The information will also be updated in the SSYS website.

9.3.3 The Board took note of the Working Paper.

10.0 Matters Arising from the Resolutions of the 43rd Governing Board Meeting 2012 (44GBM/WP-4)

10.1 The Deputy Director (Training Programme) presented the report. She added that the online programme had commenced, but was rescheduled from 15th August to 15th October 2013. Although 12 participants had pre-registered, there were only seven actual participants with five from the Philippines, and one each from Thailand and Indonesia.

10.2 On the proposal to revise the current RECSAM salary scale, the meeting was informed that the Ministry of Education Malaysia is expecting a counter proposal with the revised amount of grant requested.

10.3 As proposed by the member from Lao PDR and seconded by the member from Singapore, the Board approved the Working Paper.

11.0 Audited Financial Report for FY2012/2013 (44GBM/WP-5)

11.1 The Accountant presented the audited financial report for F.Y.2012/2013 (43GBM/R2).

11.2 The following were issues raised by the members of the Board:

11.2.1 The Chairman of the Board expressed his concern on the decrease of the reserve fund and suggested that in order to increase the revenue, the Centre should charge a standard rate for SEAMEO participants attending courses at SEAMEO RECSAM and a higher rate for non-member country participation.

11.2.2 The Board member from Singapore commented that the rate of depreciation for the Centre's transportation and equipment in the statement and assets account was not indicated in the Working Paper. The accountant clarified that the depreciation of property and equipment in their statement of accounts is expressed in the notes to the financial statements.

11.3 As proposed by the member from Brunei Darussalam and seconded by the member from Vietnam, the Board approved the Working Paper.

12.0 Follow-up Actions from SEAMEO Meetings and Updates on the Recent Developments in SEAMEO (44GBM/WP-6)

12.1 Prof. Dr. I. Handako representing SEAMEO Secretariat presented the Working Paper, which encompasses organisational and policy-related matters as well as its current projects.

12.2 Board members took note and supported the key points, agreements and action resulted from major SEAMEO programmes / projects as listed in Item 65 (b).

12.2.1 The Centre Director affirmed the Centre's support in the implementation of two initiatives in the SEAMEO Strategic Plan 2011-2020 namely *Borderless School* and *One SEAMEO Basic Education*.

12.2.2 In response to the question by the Lao PDR Board member on the role played by the SEAMEO Centres in the implementation of SEAMEO College, the SEAMEO Secretariat clarified that SEAMEO Centres are encouraged to support SEAMEO College modules especially at the Country Practitioner and Youth levels.

12.3 As proposed by the member from Lao PDR and seconded by the member from Vietnam, the Board approved the Working Paper.

13.0 Highlights of the Annual Report for FY2012/2013 (44GBM/WP-7)

13.1 The SEAMEO RECSAM Centre Director presented the report.

13.2 As proposed by the member from Lao PDR and seconded by the member from Brunei Darussalam, the Board approved the Working Paper.

14.0 Strategic and Operational Plans, Programmes and Proposed Budgets for Three Fiscal Years 2014/2015, 2015/2016 & 2016/2017 and, Personnel Strength Budget for Fiscal Year Ending June 2015 (43GBM/WP-8)

14.1 The Deputy Director (Training Programme) and the Accountant presented the working paper. The Accountant rectified an error on page 14. The total amount for personnel exchanges should be RM48,000.00 instead of RM1,680,000.00 and the grand total should be RM1,728,000.00 instead of RM3,360,000.00.

14.2 The following were the comments made by the members of the Board:

14.2.1 The representative from Thailand suggested for the Centre to look into increasing online resources.

14.2.2 The member from Lao PDR shared her country's experience with decreasing student enrolment in some schools due to population shift. This has led to the introduction of multi-grade teaching. Its implication is the need to re-skill teachers in terms of appropriate teaching techniques and pedagogies. She further reported that she had received positive feedback from some teachers from Lao PDR who participated in an online course for one month with a one-week face-to-face interaction at SEAMEO SEAMOLEC.

14.2.3 The member from Singapore suggested to the Centre the need to review the budget as the development of online resources requires new expertise. He further suggested that projects involving technology could start on a small scale first to manage cost effectiveness.

14.2.4 The member from Vietnam welcomed the *One SEAMEO Basic Education* project. Early findings and results from the project would be helpful to Vietnam, which is currently preparing for education reforms to be implemented in 2015.

14.3 As proposed by the member from Singapore and seconded by the member from Lao PDR, the Board approved the Working Paper.

15.0 Appointment for External Auditor for FY 2013/2014 (43GBM/WP-9)

15.1 The Accountant presented the Working Paper. She informed the meeting that seven audit firms had been invited to submit their audit fee and out of pocket expenses proposals. The Centre had invited the firms to submit the quotation for three years, i.e. for FY 2013/2014, 2014/2015, 2015/2016. However, these quotations will still be presented to the Governing Board on a yearly basis. Out of the seven firms invited, only Deloitte Kassim Chan, Aljeffri Dean, BDO and SJ Grant Thornton responded with varying quotes of professional fees.

After discussion and deliberation, the Board decided to appoint BDO as the Centre's external auditor in view of the fact that it is one of the biggest international accounting firms and that there is not much price difference (RM650) in their quotation compared to Aljeffri Dean, which is the present company engaged by the Centre.

15.2 As proposed by the representative from Brunei Darussalam and seconded by the member from Singapore, the Board approved the appointment of BDO as the external auditor for the Centre.

CLOSING FORMALITIES

16.0 Date and Venue of the 45th Governing Board Meeting 2014

The Board decided that the 45th Governing Board Meeting be held in Malacca from 17th to 19th September 2014.

17.0 Any Other Matters

- 17.1** The SEAMEO Secretariat Deputy Director informed the Board that the SEAMEO Education Database will be launched in October, 2013. It contains the educational data, which include the number of teachers, students and schools of each of the member country. It is waiting to be endorsed by the SEAMEO Council at the next Council meeting
- 17.2** He also informed the Board that the Journal of Education published by the Secretariat, will be published online in the open source mode in September for its July issue. He invited the Board members to contribute articles to its publication.
- 17.3** The Board member from Thailand suggested that the Centre should establish a common core curriculum for Science, Mathematics and Technology in the region. Dr. Cheah Ui Hock, the Deputy Director (Research and Development) clarified that in 2009 the Centre included the regional bench of the Mathematics and Science curricula in its 9th five year plan. However, following the establishment of SEAMEO QITEP for Science and Mathematics in Indonesia, there was a negotiation among the three centres. It was agreed that the development of the curriculum standards would be taken up by the two centres in Indonesia while SEAMEO RECSAM would focus on benchmarking the regional standards for Science and Mathematics teachers. This has led to the establishment of the Southeast Asia Regional Standards for Mathematics Teachers (SEARS-MT) and the Southeast Asia Regional Standards for Science Teachers (SEARS-ST).
- 17.4** In reference to the discussion in 17.3, Prof. Dr. Handoko, the SEAMEO Secretariat Representative informed the Board that the SEAMEO Secretariat will be launching the Development of SEAMEO Module 3 online in October. This document will be accessible for all Centres.
- 17.5** On the question from the member of the Board from Vietnam on when the process of benchmarking the Teacher Standards would be completed, Dr. Cheah Ui Hock replied that the benchmarking for teacher standards for Mathematics (SEARS-MT) had already been completed through the workshop conducted recently and that the document was being finalised. He further informed the Board that the participants attending the SEARS-MT workshop had indicated that they would translate the document into their respective national languages before further disseminating and utilising SEARS-MT.
- 17.6** On the question from the member of Thailand on when the process of benchmarking Science and Technical teachers would be carried out, Dr. Cheah Ui Hock informed the Board that the Centre will be conducting a similar SEARS-ST workshop for Science teachers next year. The first

draft will be completed in January and a second workshop will be held in the middle of 2014 to deliberate on the draft. He invited the Board to send representatives for the workshop.

18.0 Adoption of Proceedings of the 44th Governing Board Meeting 2013

As proposed by the member from Thailand and seconded by the member from Brunei Darussalam, the Board adopted the report of Proceedings.

19.0 Closing Remarks by the Chairman of the Governing Board

Prof. Dr. I. Handoko on behalf of the Chairman conveyed his deepest appreciation to the Board members for their active participation and stimulating contributions during the 44th Governing Board Meeting.

He commended Dr. Hj. Mohd. Johan bin Zakaria and SEAMEO RECSAM staff for their effort and commitment in successfully conducting the 44th Governing Board Meeting. He also expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the Malaysian Government for the continued support.

There being no other matters for discussion, the meeting was then adjourned.

Report prepared by

Dr. S. Kanageswari Suppiah Shanmugam

Ms. Foo Lay Kuan

Dr. Cheah Ui Hock

Dr. Thien Lei Mee

Mr. Haji Zamani Tajudin

Ms. Puganesh Selvaraj

