PRESS RELEASE

“Are children ready to learn? Are schools ready for children?”

Seoul, 17 September 2013 – The Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) concluded on September 12 with major policymakers from throughout the region committing to changes to benefit youth in their formative years.

The forum, “Are children ready to learn? Are schools ready for children?” held at Seoul’s Plaza hotel was attended by almost 200 high-level government representatives from 36 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including 27 education ministers and vice-ministers.

Officials from focal ministries and coordinating bodies involved in ECCE as well as ministries responsible for finance and economic planning were also in attendance.

The forum bolstered the Early Childhood Development’s (ECD) community’s commitment to children, underscoring the importance of an inter-sectoral holistic approach.

The Policy Forum on the second day showed the ability of the meeting to set change in motion. During the plenary session, representatives from several countries raised their hands to commit to action and review pertaining to the quality, access and importance of ECCE, promising to enhance children’s “readiness to learn” in their respective countries.

The forum closed on a sentiment expressed by Professor W. Steven Barnett, director of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University, on the importance of investing in “human capital”, particularly as it relates to teacher training and development.

Human capital [in ECCE] is what we are transferring to young children … Well prepared teachers are crucial: transforming the lives of children through transforming the lives of adults in the classroom,” Mr Barnett said.

About the organisers:


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Presentations are available online: http://www.unescobkk.org/education/ecce/activities/educationecceforum/presentations/

Photos from the forum are attached.