Regional Training Workshop on Early Childhood Policy Review
(Bangkok, Thailand, 6-8 February 2007)

Technical Information Note

1. Context/Background

“Expanding and improving early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged” is the first of the six goals of the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All that was agreed upon in 2000. Since then, several countries in the Asia-Pacific region have taken important steps towards meeting this goal to expand and improve early childhood care and education. Many indicators for children and women have improved, this having direct impact on early childhood development. However, conditions between countries and regions continue to show vast diversity and disparities.

The survival and development of young children depends upon three main factors: (i) the quality of household care, (ii) access by families to quality services and (iii) the policies and resources to support the above. In the Dakar Framework of Action it is written that “Political will and stronger national leadership are needed for the effective and successful implementation of national plans in each of the countries concerned.” In particular, having quality national policies is the major first step for ensuring the provision of good quality early childhood programs and ensuring healthy development of young children. It is the Governments through relevant ministries that have the primary responsibility of formulating early childhood policies, to mobilize support to such programming and to ensure programmes are established that are suitable for children under school-age. It is thus clear that emphasis must be directed towards providing policy-makers with strengthened capacity to work efficiently with early childhood.

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2 Ibid, page 9, paragraph 10
The latest Global Monitoring Report 2007 focusing on this first EFA goal clearly makes a compelling case for early childhood care and education (ECCE) - as the foundation for all learning, a foundation for life. It highlights the multiple benefits that ECCE brings to an individual, to the society, and to productive development of a country. ECCE is also recognized as a requisite in achieving the other Education for All (EFA) goals, as children who have access to ECCE are more likely to enroll and retain in school, learn what is taught effectively and perform well. The GMR 2007 also reveals that evidence-based research and studies in the field of ECCE, especially in the developing countries is limited. As a result, ECCE has not been a priority for governments and there is serious policy neglect for ECCE.

The UNESCO-UNICEF joint regional policy review exercise thus aims to support the countries of Asia-Pacific region in meeting the first goal of EFA on ECCE by identifying, documenting and sharing good practices as well as constraints and challenges in early childhood policy development and implementation. To this joint call for a policy review initiative, nine countries of the Asia-Pacific region had responded to participate, namely, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Philippines and Viet Nam.

2. **Workshop objectives**

- To provide the participating countries with a detailed orientation on the conceptual framework and the draft regional guidelines for engaging in an early childhood policy review
- To strengthen the understanding of key issues in early childhood policy at the regional and international levels
- To train the national researchers on the review/research methodologies for analyzing and assessing policy;
- To review the draft national guidelines and refine and finalize the draft country work plan for the policy review

3. **Expected outputs and outcome**

At the end of the workshop, participants will have:

- Enhanced knowledge on regional and global issues in early childhood policy
- Gained a clear understanding of the conceptual background and technical skills and knowledge required when conducting a policy review.
- Refined and agreed on the regional guidelines and overall work plan
- Determined appropriate methodologies to be used in assessing policy.
- Elaborated the national guidelines on early childhood policy review, and
- Developed and agreed on a detailed regional- and country-level work plan
4. Participants

A total of approximately 30 participants will participate in the workshop, as follows:

1. 2 lead/key researchers each from the 9 participating countries (China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Vietnam)
2. International resource persons
3. UNICEF and UNESCO staff

5. Dates and venue

The workshop will be held from 6 to 8 February 2007 at Windsor Suite Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand.

Windsor Suites Hotel
Soi 20 Sukhumvit Road
Bangkok
Thailand

6. Agenda and modality of the workshop

The workshop will be for three days (6-8 February 2007) and will be a practical training focusing on the *how's* and the *what* to review, and will mainly consist of plenary training sessions and group/team work by countries. Participants will be familiarized with the research methodology and trained in the use of some prototype tools and instruments, as well as the review report structure and format. Some key issues in early childhood in the region and in the country context will be identified and discussed to be addressed in the policy review, for example,

- the extent/nature of integration of early childhood services
- the status of implementation of the early childhood law
- the roles and responsibilities of early childhood coordinating mechanisms
- the effects of different early childhood interventions on outcomes for children and families who face differential opportunities and vulnerabilities
- Early childhood financing and impact on access and quality,
- etc.

The international consultant will be the **lead resource person and facilitator** during the workshop, while resource persons will also come from UNESCO Headquarters as well as from the UNESCO and UNICEF regional offices. A rough agenda of the workshop is given below for quick reference. A more detailed programme and agenda will be distributed in due course.
**DAY 1**
- Opening and introduction to the workshop
- Introduction to the policy review exercise cooperation project
- Orientation on the Regional Guidelines for the policy review
  - Early Childhood Policy or Early Childhood Policy Framework? – What is appropriate in each case
- Discussion on key policy issues in early childhood (at country and regional levels)
  - Policy Profile – the status in the different countries
  - Identification of issues to be addressed and reviewed
- Sharing good practice/lessons learned from international experience
  - Presentation and discussions on policy reforms and strategic initiatives being implemented in other developed and developing countries for expanding access and quality of early childhood programmes.

**DAY 2**
- In-depth review of the Guidelines for the policy review
  - Agreement on the key areas and components of the policy review
  - Review of national guidelines and work plan in view of the regional guidelines
- Approaches and methodology of the review
  - Introduction to methodologies and tools of data collection for review and assessment of national policies relating to early childhood at the country level processes
- Discussion on the expected final report
  - Agreement on the format and key components of the final report
  - Validation issues of the final report

**DAY 3**
- Refinement and finalization of the country guidelines and work plan
- Discussion on overall regional work plan and follow-up to the workshop
- Closing

7. **Language**

   English will be the working language during the workshop.

8. **Preparation for the workshop**

   A one-page questionnaire on the status of early childhood policy has been circulated to the UNESCO/UNICEF country offices in late December 2006, to be completed in
consultation with the national counterparts and to be submitted to the regional offices of UNESCO and UNICEF by early January 2007.

In addition, countries (participants) are requested to do a simple ‘homework’ prior to the workshop. This “homework” basically consists of three activities*:

- Review the Regional Guidelines (draft)\(^3\) and prepare draft national guidelines
- Prepare a draft work plan for the policy review exercise
- Prepare a brief overview on lessons learned to date related to early childhood policy issues in the country

* There will be a peer-review session for countries to share the draft concept papers and work plans, as well as lessons learned to date. Therefore, participants are requested to come prepared to make a short (5-10 minutes) presentation with or without PowerPoint. This will be an opportunity to firm up the country plans.

** Please also prepare and bring along at least 20 copies of relevant documents and materials that you may wish to share/distribute at the workshop if any.

8. **Travel arrangements**

   a) **Air tickets**

   UNESCO and UNICEF will make arrangements with the local UNESCO and UNICEF offices to issue an international round-trip air ticket in economy class for participants to arrive in Bangkok, Thailand on 5 February 2007, one day before the workshop starts. Further details of ticket arrangements will be provided to participants in due course.

   b) **Airport transportation**

   Airport pickup and transportation service to the Hotel will not be provided. Please note that it should take about 40 minutes (depending on traffic) to get to the hotel and cost around 7-10 USD (280-400 Thai baht). As of 1 January 2007, the official UN exchange rate USD-THB is: 1 USD = 35.58 THB.

   c) **Passport and Visa**

   Participants must be in possession of a valid passport and travel documents to travel to and in Thailand. Participants are advised to contact the Thai Embassy or Consulate in their respective countries to obtain an entry visa to Thailand as necessary.

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9. **Accommodation**

Single rooms have been booked at the **Windsor Suites Hotel** for the workshop participants. Please note that for participants supported by UNESCO, the hotel bill will be settled directly by UNESCO. Participants supported by UNICEF or UNESCO field offices are requested to pay their room charges directly to the hotel when checking out (room rates include breakfast and tax/service charge). **Additional costs incurred in the hotel, such as mini bar usage, telephone charges, etc., will be charged to the occupants of the rooms.**

Below are the hotel name and address in Thai to show to taxi drivers if needed, as well as a map for reference:

For the taxi:

โรงแรม วินเซอร์ สุขุมวิท ซอย 20 กรุงเทพฯ 10110

![Map of the hotel location]

10. **Daily Subsistence Allowance**

UNESCO/UNICEF will provide the participants with a reduced daily subsistence allowance (DSA) of $40 per day to cover dinner/incidental costs in Bangkok during the period of the workshop. UNESCO will cover tea/coffee breaks, and lunch during the workshop period. UNESCO/UNICEF will not provide other expenses such as visa fee and local transportation between the participants’ home and the airport.
11. Climate and clothing

The weather in Bangkok in February is sunny with an average temperature around 30° C (86° F) with occasional rain. Light cotton clothing is recommended. However, air-conditioned meeting rooms can be cold thus bringing warmer clothing to the meeting room is recommended.

12. Registration form

All participants are kindly requested to complete the Registration Form at the end of this Information Note to confirm participation and to return to UNESCO Bangkok Office by 1 February 2007 at the latest to the contact details below or to Khun Amporn (r.amporn@unescobkk.org).

13. Contacts and correspondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Junko Miyahara</th>
<th>Maki Hayashikawa</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Programme Specialist for Gender and Quality Basic Education</td>
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<td>UNICEF EAPRO</td>
<td>APPEAL Unit, UNESCO Bangkok</td>
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<td>Tel: +66-2-391-0577 ext. 317</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tel: +66-2-356-9418</td>
<td>Fax: +66-2-391-0866</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fax: +66-2-280-3563</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:m.hayashikawa@unescobkk.org">m.hayashikawa@unescobkk.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:miyaharajunko@hotmail.com">miyaharajunko@hotmail.com</a> and <a href="mailto:jmiyahara@unicef.org">jmiyahara@unicef.org</a></td>
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**Registration Form**

**PLEASE KINDLY COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN TO UNESCO BANGKOK BY **1 FEBRUARY 2007** at the latest by fax or email attachment to the “Contacts” under Item 12 in the Technical Information Note. (fax: +66-2-391-0866, r.amporn@unescobkk.org OR m.hayashikawa@unescobkk.org)**

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**Contact details**

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**Food restrictions:**

**Any other enquiries:**