Kathmandu Statement of Action

Putrajaya+2: Advancing and Monitoring SDG4.2

1. Forty-eight Ministers and heads and members of delegations from twenty-eight countries in Asia and the Pacific; representatives and officials of United Nations agencies, development partners, and civil society organizations; and members of the research community and the teaching profession gathered in Kathmandu, Nepal, for the Third Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education from 5 to 6 June 2018.

2. This third Policy Forum carried on the spirit of the Putrajaya Declaration adopted at the second Policy Forum in Putrajaya, Malaysia in July 2016, reminding participants that early childhood care and education must continue to be everyone’s business.

3. The Forum also made clear that early childhood care and education (ECCE) requires a multi-sectoral approach, especially during the first 1,000 “golden” days when the foundations of optimum health, growth and neurodevelopment across the lifespan are established, and reiterated that the education sector can serve as a critical platform to bring together other sectoral ministries to promote holistic early childhood development.

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1 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in this Statement is used in a holistic way to refer to services and programmes that support children’s survival, growth, development and learning – including health, nutrition and hygiene, and cognitive, social, emotional and physical development – from birth to entry into primary school.
4. Under the theme of “Taking SDG 4.2 from Policy to Action,” country delegates shared recent developments based on the nine-point action agenda of the Putrajaya Declaration and identified common challenges as well as specific obstacles to national and regional efforts to fulfil their commitment to improve the equity and quality of ECCE within the region.

5. The delegates recalled that the 2019 High-level Policy Forum on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda will review the global progress in five of the seventeen SDGs, one of them being SDG4. To this effect, all countries will be required to monitor and measure their progress against the thematic indicators for SDG4.2.

6. The delegates to the Policy Forum recognized that prioritization was necessary in light of limited and competing resources, and that interventions should be focused and strategized in order to accelerate and monitor the progress of SDG4.2.

7. As the Asia-Pacific region prepares for the global review of SDG4 in 2019, the delegates to the third Policy Forum agreed to take immediate actions in the five priority areas listed below. The action points presented for each priority are the collective inputs by the delegates to the Policy Forum and are based on the sub-regional discussions in order to leverage the full potential of ECCE in line with SDG 4 - Education 2030, the nine-point action agenda of the Putrajaya Declaration, the Pasifika Call to Action for Early Childhood Development and the Pacific Regional Education Framework.

**Priority Area 1: Financing**

1. Recognize that investments in young children, particularly those from marginalized groups, yield both short-term and long-term positive impacts on developmental and educational outcomes.

2. Increase financial investments in equitable and comprehensive quality ECCE through recurrent budgets, with the goal of gradually increasing public expenditure on ECCE services, using international benchmarks (at least 1 per cent of the country’s GDP and/or at least 10 per cent of public education expenditure) as a guide and providing sustainable and efficient public funding for supporting the expansion and quality of ECCE programmes.

3. Prioritize and ensure targeted financial investment for marginalized and disadvantaged children, especially children from low-income families and/or in rural and remote areas, with disabilities, and otherwise at risk.

4. Introduce and adopt innovative financing policies and mechanisms which will increase the sustainability of financing for the ECCE sector, broaden the ECCE stakeholders’ base and ensure multi-sectoral and multi-lateral coordination, including innovation in service delivery as well as in the mobilization of resources.

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2 SDG Target 4.2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.


5 The Pacific Regional Education Framework aims to offer a comprehensive approach to raising education quality in the Pacific and support Pacific engagement with Education Agenda 2030.
5. Explore opportunities through international aid mechanisms and encourage development partners to increase and harmonize assistance to support regional and national implementation of ECCE-related priorities.

6. Engage the private sector and promote public-private partnerships to generate a substantial and stable flow of funds for ECCE and to help enhance the efficiency in the delivery of ECCE provision/programmes.

7. Build an effective accountability system which articulates clear lines of responsibility and allocates resources through transparent budgeting that can be tracked and audited.

### Priority Area 2: ECCE in education sector planning

1. Incorporate ECCE into national development plans and develop and/or strengthen a multi-sectoral coordination mechanism for the development and review of legislation and policies related to early childhood, the coordination of budget allocations and the delivery of quality ECCE services that are cost-effective, innovative and scalable, with clear implementation and monitoring mechanisms.

2. Build and/or strengthen governance and accountability mechanisms for ECCE with articulated roles and responsibilities of each ministry and the lead agency, and a clear monitoring and evaluation framework supported by legislative measures.

3. Integrate the pre-primary level into the Education Sector Plan (ESP) to ensure that ECCE will be a fundamental component in national education policies and sector reform strategies for coordinating partners, for mobilizing additional domestic and external resources and for ensuring a smooth transition from pre-primary to primary school.

4. Institute measures to develop an inclusive, responsive and resilient ECCE system to meet the needs of marginalized and disadvantaged children and children at risk.

### Priority Area 3: Equity in access for all – leaving no one behind

1. Strive to provide at least one year, ideally two years, of free quality pre-primary education, supported by integrated and inclusive policies and legislation, and paying special attention to reaching the poorest and most disadvantaged children, including those in emergency situations.

2. Implement targeted interventions for marginalized and disadvantaged children, especially those from low-income families and/or in rural and disadvantaged areas, children with disabilities and other children currently excluded or at risk of being marginalized, to increase access and move towards progressive universalization of pre-primary education.

3. Mobilize and engage all ECCE stakeholders, especially parents and community, to improve the inclusion of children and increase demand for ECCE services.
Priority Area 4: Quality improvement

1. Ensure that the provision of at least one year, ideally two years, of free quality pre-primary education is delivered by well-trained educators and through developmentally appropriate curricula and learning materials.

2. Develop and devise clear policies, strategies, national standards, action plans and monitoring systems for the professionalization of ECCE personnel to enhance their qualification standards, status and working conditions and to close the training quality gap between central and sub-national levels.

3. Ensure that good quality continuing professional development (CPD) and responsive technical support are standardized and available to provide the developmentally appropriate teaching and learning opportunities that yield the greatest benefits for young children.

4. Develop culturally- and linguistically-appropriate and gender-sensitive/responsive approaches that are developmentally appropriate and curricula that will foster the holistic development of the child and the readiness of children for primary education.

5. Promote collaboration with the primary education sub-sector, especially with early grade teachers, to ensure the smooth transition of children, especially the marginalized, disadvantaged, or at risk, from ECCE to primary education.

Priority Area 5: Monitoring 4.2 indicators

1. Develop comprehensive, national monitoring and evaluation systems in order to generate sound evidence for ECCE policy formulation and the management of ECCE as well as to ensure accountability.

2. Align indicators for national monitoring frameworks with SDG 4.2 and standardize monitoring tools.

3. Build capacity in quality ECCE data collection, analysis and informed decision making by:
   a. Strengthening Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), Health Management Information Systems (HMIS) and other relevant data systems and ensuring that they include important aspects of ECCE;
   b. Strengthening multi-sectoral approaches by engaging all stakeholders to monitor SDG 4.2 indicators;
   c. Improving the quality and levels of disaggregation of data and ensuring that indicators measure progress towards reducing inequality; and
   d. Ensuring transparency of monitoring by making relevant information and data on ECCE publicly available.

4. Strengthen the role of the education, early childhood and/or social sector(s) to lead the coordination with other relevant sectoral ministries for the collection, analysis and use of data on ECCE.