



**Asia-Pacific Regional Seminar on  
Sub-Regional Cooperation for Achieving SDG4-Education 2030  
29-31 May 2017  
Bangkok, Thailand**

**CONCEPT NOTE  
(as of 17 May 2017)**

**Background**

In September 2015, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (SDGs) was adopted at the UN General Assembly, laying the way forward for creating a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable society. The SDG 4 - **ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all** - clearly states the central importance of education. Subsequently, SDG4-Education 2030 Framework for Action was officially adopted at the 38th UNESCO General Conference in November 2015, formally launching the SDG4-Education 2030 actions. In the course of implementing the agenda, countries will be required to design targeted interventions to achieve inclusiveness and equity in education as well as measure effectiveness of education systems to improve quality and relevance of learning while ensuring efficiency and good governance.

In addition, the uniqueness of the SDG4-Education 2030, unlike the EFA 15 years ago, lies in its flexibility and adaptability at regional, sub-regional, and country levels. Countries are asked to interpret the SDG4-Education 2030 to meet their national contexts. While this is a welcome move to ensure greater national ownership and relevance of the SDG4-Education 2030, the challenge will be how to coordinate such national efforts to ensure maximum synergy and consistency at sub-regional, regional and global levels. This is particularly challenging in Asia-Pacific where there are significant economic, social and cultural diversities within the region and education issues and challenges are significantly different. Sub-regional inter-governmental bodies and cooperation platforms therefore have a unique position to bridge these regional and global commitments to national actions. Sub-regional bodies have taken initiatives – for instance in South Asia, the SAARC Framework for Action for Education 2030 was developed for official endorsement in early 2017, providing a platform for collaboration among the SAARC countries to achieve SDG4.

With support from the Government of Malaysia, UNESCO Bangkok launched a regional project on “Strengthening National Capacity for Sector-wide Planning to Achieve SDG4 in Asia-Pacific through South-South Cooperation” in 2016. The project aims to build the Member States' capacity to develop and implement sector-wide, evidence-based and results-oriented education sector plans to meet the challenges of SDG4-Education 2030 through South-South cooperation. Specifically, the project aims to enhance sub-regional coordination mechanisms through mutual learning.

In this context, a 3-day regional seminar will be organized in Bangkok, Thailand, inviting around 20 representatives of sub-regional cooperation bodies/organizations (e.g., SEAMEO, ASEAN, SAARC, and PIFS) as well as the Malaysian authorities and representatives of the SAARC countries. At the

seminar, participants will discuss their action plans for reflecting the SDG4-Education 2030 in their activities. The capacity development needs will also be discussed and identified during the seminar.

### Objectives of the Seminar

- Officials of the sub-regional organizations gain knowledge on facilitating sub-regional cooperation among Member States for achieving SDG4-Education 2030
- Senior officials of the sub-regional organizations agree on a roadmap to facilitate sub-regional cooperation and identify capacity gaps
- Country officials deepen their understanding of roles of sub-regional bodies/organization for information sharing and mutual learning from neighboring countries for achieving SDG4-Education 2030

### Expected Outputs of the Seminar

- Institutional action plans for strengthening sub-regional cooperation with a focus on capacity development and required technical support from UNESCO
- A roadmap for enhancing cooperation and collaboration among sub-regional organizations in the Asia-Pacific region

### Tentative Agenda and Programme

29 May 2017 (Monday)	
8:30-9:00	Registration (Galleria 1 & 2)
9:00-9:30	Opening Programme Welcoming remarks by UNESCO Bangkok and SEAMEO Secretariat
9:30-10:30	<b>Session 1:</b> Overview on SDG4-Education 2030
10:30-10:45	Coffee break
10:45-12:30	<b>Session 2:</b> Sub-regional Landscape of SDG4-Education 2030 Highlights of UNESCO Pre-Survey on SDG 4 Status of Sub-regional Initiatives on SDG4-Education 2030 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SEAMEO/ASEAN</li> <li>- SAARC</li> <li>- Central Asia</li> <li>- Pacific Islands</li> </ul>
12:30-1:30	Lunch
13:30-15:00	<b>Session 3:</b> Country Presentations on Progress and Challenges in realizing SDG 4-Education 2030 (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and India)
15:00-15:30	Coffee/Tea Break
15:30- 17:00	<b>Session 4:</b> Country Presentations on Progress and Challenges in realizing SDG 4-Education 2030 (Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka)
18:00- 19:00	Welcome dinner
30 May 2017 (Tuesday)	
9:00- 9:30	Recap of Day 1 activities by Dr Ethel Agnes P Valenzuela, SEAMEO
9:30-10:30	<b>Workshop Session 1:</b> Presentation of the Progress, Challenges and Opportunities
10:30-10:45	Coffee break
10:45-12:30	<b>Workshop Session 2:</b> Regional Approaches to Achieving SDG 4- Education 2030
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:30	<b>Workshop Session 3:</b> Conversations on the specific recommendations/ suggestions
15:30-15:45	Coffee/Tea Break
15:45 – 17:00	<b>Workshop Session 4:</b> Building a Consensus: Identifying top 5 recommendations for Regional Organizations' Common Action Agenda for SDG 4 and Education 2030

<b>31 May 2017 (Wednesday)</b>	
08:00 – 9:00	Field Visit (to SEAMEO Secretariat)- Leave S31 Sukhumvit Hotel to SEAMEO/UNESCO Office
9:00-10:30	Panel Discussion: Sharing Session on SEAMEO and ASEAN on their Organizations, Education Agenda/ Sustainable Development Goal Activities, Programmes and Projects
10:30-10:45	Coffee break
10:45-12:30	Synthesis and Closing Message UNESCO and SEAMEO Secretariat Directors
12:30-1:30	Lunch
	Homeward Bound

### **Participants**

Senior representatives of sub-regional cooperation platforms (e.g., SEAMEO, ASEAN, SAARC, and PIFS) and representatives of the SAARC countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) as well as selected countries. Resource persons from SEAMEO (including SEAMEO Centres) and Malaysia will also be invited.

### **Contacts**

#### **Ms. Amalia M. Serrano**

Programme Officer, Section for Inclusive Quality Education  
UNESCO Bangkok

Tel. no.: +66 2 391 0577 Ext. 374

E-mail: [am.serrano@unesco.org](mailto:am.serrano@unesco.org)

#### **Dr. Ethel Agnes P. Valenzuela**

Deputy Director for Programme and Development  
Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Secretariat  
(SEAMEO Secretariat)

Tel. no.: +66 2 391 0144

E-mail: [ethel@seameo.org](mailto:ethel@seameo.org)