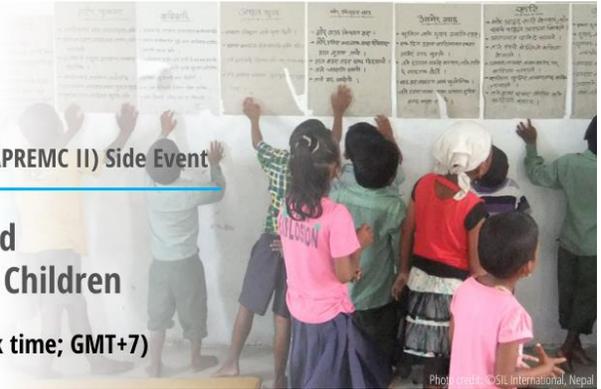**2nd Asia Pacific Regional Education Minister's Conference (APREMC II) Side Event**

**'Building Back Better: Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education
for Ethnic Minority Children'**

5 June 2022, 12:45 p.m. – 13:45 p.m. (Bangkok time; GMT+7)

Compiled Q&A

1. **What are the key points that multilingual education (MLE) can help learners who are coming from increasingly diverse language backgrounds in many countries?**

There is a great deal of evidence from many countries that children who do not speak the same language at home as they do at school lag behind their peers whose home language is the same as the language of instruction. MLE can help learners from diverse language backgrounds because MLE allows them to bring these languages to school without penalizing them for speaking these languages.

Countries and schools can adopt more inclusive policies for respecting these language diversities and still helping learners develop competencies in the languages of learning in the schools. In fact, evidence from many countries shows that including the student's language (home language, community language, mother tongue) in the formal school system increases student performance in all areas.

Cultural activities and opportunities to share and celebrate learners' languages are needed to be inclusive. If there are no teachers who speak the same language as the learners, then it is important to invite family members who can be communication bridges between the learner and the teacher. Such points can ease the integration of children into schools.

2. **Can you share more information about reading proficiency scale bands, and what these results mean for learners who do not use the testing language at home? Also are you planning to involve more countries in the SEA-PLM?**

Each of the proficiency scales were developed based on children's responses in the SEA-PLM, and proficiency descriptors and bands represent consistent and progressive abilities along each scale. The reading proficiency scale includes 5 bands. So, children in the highest bands are likely to have mastered the fundamental reading literacy skills expected by the end of primary school for that proficiency scale, which can allow teachers to know where students are in their learning. Analyses found that for 5 out of the 6 countries, children who spoke the language of instruction at home performed had higher reading scores than children who spoke a different language at

home. More detailed information can be found in the [Main Regional Report](#). As for SEA-PLM 2024, the same set of countries (6 SEA countries) are expected to participate in the 2nd round, while SEAMEO Secretariat is also in the process of engaging other countries to join.

3. **In Pakistan, there are major regional languages, i.e., Punjab has Punjabi, KPK has Pashto, Sindh has Sundhi and Balischitan has Baluchi. The national language is Urdu and therefore there is a literacy syllabus in Urdu. For Pakistan and other similar countries, how can mother tongues be introduced into the literacy course in the primary level from the experience of implementing MTB-MLE Philippines (e.g., teacher preparation)?**

Dr. Dina Ocampo has provided a suggested timeline (below) for the "slow and deliberate" program and policy development and implementation of MLE in the Philippines. The suggested timeline might be helpful to countries in plotting their own paths towards multilingual education.

Year 1 & 2 –
• Laying out the linguistic requirements for the orthography, phonology, syntax and dictionaries in the mother tongues
• Planning the curriculum for language and literacy development in the other tongues
• Writing the beginning reading program sequences for the mother tongues
• Planning for the curriculum for content areas (which include the additional languages)
• Training of trainers and MLE champions
Year 3 & 4 –
• Developing the standards for learning approaches and instructional materials
• Creating instructional materials
• Building libraries and resources
• Teacher Professional Development of Literacy and MLE Curriculum and Pedagogies
• Developing pilot areas and demonstration sites for MLE implementation
Year 5 –
• Implementation of MLE policy and programs in more areas that meet prerequisites for successful implementation