



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRD ASEAN PLUS THREE WORKING GROUP ON MOBILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND ENSURING QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

11 June 2015, Bangkok, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

1. The Third Working Group Meeting on Mobility of Higher Education and Ensuring Quality Assurance of Higher Education (3rd APT WG) was held on 11 June 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was attended by delegates from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam as well as the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (ROK). Representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat and SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (RIHED) were also in attendance. The list of delegates appears as **ANNEX 1**.

OPENING FORMALITIES

2. Ms. Chadarat Singhdechakul, Director of the Bureau of International Cooperation Strategy, Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Ministry of Education, Thailand, welcomed all the participants to the meeting. In her welcoming remarks, she introduced the Chair of the Meeting, Associate Professor Dr. Sisamone Sithirajvongsa, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports, of the Lao PDR and the Co-Chair of the Meeting, Mr. Wang Lisheng, Director General, China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Center, the People's Republic of China. She then introduced Ms. Aporn Kanvong, Deputy Secretary General for Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Thailand, and invited Ms. Aporn Kanvong to deliver her opening remarks.

3. In her opening remarks, Ms. Aporn Kanvong stated the need to nurture the youth to be equipped with necessary competencies and skills to respond to the changing demand of the world of work. She also sees that learning and sharing among ASEAN Plus Three countries about quality assurance, national qualifications framework, and educational measurement and assessment is instrumental in making our education systems compatible and comparable. She ended her remarks by highlighting the role of student mobility as a major mechanism to enable our youth to become quality global citizens. Her opening remarks appear as **ANNEX 2**.

Opening Remarks by Chair and Co-chair

4. In his opening remarks, Associate Professor Dr. Sisamone Sithirajvongsa, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR, chaired the meeting and thanked OHEC, Ministry of Education, Thailand for hosting the meeting and expressed his gratitude to all senior officials and representatives from ASEAN Plus Three countries and the ASEAN Secretariat for their participation in the meeting. He urged the participants to express their viewpoints in order to finalise the Guidelines on Student Exchange prior to the 3rd ASEAN Plus Three Education Ministers Meeting (APT EMM) in 2016.

5. Mr. Wang Lisheng, Director General, China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Center, the People's Republic of China, the Co-Chair of the Working Group expressed his appreciation to the meeting for inviting China to co-chair the meeting. He further thanked Thailand for hosting the meeting. In his remarks, he stated that supporting student mobility is an urgent task for the ASEAN Plus Three countries. He appreciated that the agenda items enable the participants to further discuss student mobility, credit transfer, and quality assurance. He also expressed his hope for the working group to have an in-depth discussion about the ASEAN Plus Three Guidelines on Student Exchange.

MEETING DISCUSSIONS

Report on the Follow up Actions after the 2nd APT WG

6. On behalf of Dr. Illah Sailah, Director of Learning and Students' Affairs, Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, Indonesia, Dr. Eko Hari Purnomo, Head of International Collaboration Office of Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia briefed the meeting on the results of the Expert Meeting for the Guidelines on Student Exchange held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 25 June 2014, the 2nd ASEAN Plus Three Education Ministers Meeting held in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 10 September 2014, and the 2nd APT WG meeting held in Bali, Indonesia on 16 October 2014. The presentation slides of Indonesia on the report of the said meetings appear as **ANNEX 3**.

7. The Meeting further discussed the summary record of the 2nd APT WG meeting with the following amendment;

- Under Article 13, the text in the third dot was amended to read “The aim of the “Guidelines” is to solve the general and common questions faced with ASEAN Plus Three student mobility.....”, and
- Under the same article on page 4, the text in the second dot was amended to read “The Guidelines will be submitted to the APT EMM for their adoption by 2016.”

8. The Meeting noted that the chairmanship of the working group shall be rotated alphabetically among ASEAN Member States, and the Co-Chair shall be rotated among Plus Three Countries.

9. The Meeting further noted a brief timeline for the working group to finalise the Guidelines on Student Exchange. By June 2015, it is expected that the members of the working group will be able to agree upon the Guidelines. The finalised Guidelines will be then tabled for adoption at the 3rd ASEAN Plus Three Education Ministers Meeting in 2016 through SOM-ED+3.

10. The Meeting further noted on the background and outcomes of the First and the Second APT Quality Assurance Expert Meetings held in Hanoi, Viet Nam on 6 March 2014 and in Bali, Indonesia on 17 October 2014 respectively, followed by a summary of the survey on QA related to student mobility and the schedule of the meetings. The 3rd APT QA Expert Meeting is scheduled to take place in September 2015 in the Philippines. The presentation slides of Japan on the APT QA Expert Meeting appear as **ANNEX 4**.

Finalisation of the Draft Guidelines on Student Exchange

11. Japan informed the meeting that comments on the said Guidelines has been received from China, ROK, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The Meeting discussed and agreed to revise the Guidelines as **ANNEX 5**.

- The title of the guidelines was revised to “ASEAN Plus Three Guidelines on Student Exchange and Mobility” in order to be more inclusive and promote openness, and to incorporate the exchange with degree awarding.
- Under Article 1 **Vision**, the text was revised to “The ASEAN Plus Three countries aspire to achieve mutual understanding, peace and development in the region through promotion of further student exchange and balanced mobility of the future generation”.
- Under Article 2 **Objective**, the text was revised to “ASEAN Plus Three Guidelines on Student Exchange and Mobility (hereafter “the Guidelines”)..... The Guidelines is a reference for relevant programmes to promote student exchange and balanced mobility of the ASEAN Plus Three countries (hereafter “programmme”). Each country is encouraged to explore possible support to promote the utilization of the Guidelines for the programmes.”
- Under Article 3 **Participation**, the words “joins” and “join” in paragraph 2 and 3 respectively be replaced with “participates in” and “participate in” respectively to fit the context of the exchange.

- Under Article 4 **Student Exchange and Mobility**, no. “1.” under 4.1 Length of Study was changed to “4.1.1.” and no. “2.” was changed to “4.1.2.” Under Article 4.1.1, the section name was revised to “Length of Study and Programme Types” and (a) was revised to “shorter than three months”, (c) to “six months to twelve months”, and (d) to “longer than twelve months”. Under Article 4.3 **Languages**, the text was revised to “The preferred medium of instruction is English but other languages are not excluded.” Under Article 4.4 **Academic Fields**, the second sentence “In accordance with the willingness of both sides, considering their own situations and the agreements, it should be decided by their own.” was exchanged with the first sentence “The fields are not limited, but classified to the following categories.” and was revised to “In accordance... both sides of institutions considering... agreements, the academic fields should by themselves”
- Under Article 5 **Credit and Credit Transfer System**, the last sentence was revised to “Home institutions are encouraged to recognize earned credits by the host institutions.”
- The text under Article 6.2 was revised to “Universities and/or programs of study for student exchange are encouraged to be officially accredited and evaluated by related accreditation bodies and evaluation agencies (omit in the host country)” to soften the language and to avoid the confusion between different meanings of “home country” versus “host country”.
- The second paragraph heading Home country under Article 7.1 **Finance**, “Allot monthly allowance to students” was revised to “Allot living allowance to students”. Under the heading Host country, the phrase “(only when inbound and outbound is balanced)” after “Exempt tuition fees” was omitted.
- Under Article 8 **Monitoring**, the third paragraph was revised to “The above-mentioned information, based on its own regulations of each country, and provided through websites such as National Information Center which is..., or other official websites operated by the governments”

12. The Chair advised the Meeting that the Guidelines need to be self-explanatory and the language of the Guidelines be revised to be consistent. The revised Guidelines was agreed in principle by the meeting. In this regard, the Chair proposed that the modified Guidelines be forwarded to members of the working group for comments within two weeks.

13. The ASEAN Secretariat informed the meeting that following the finalization exercise at the Working Group level, the Guidelines will be then submitted to the 6th SOM-ED+3 to be held in December 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand, for endorsement.

Guidelines on Transcript for Exchanged Student including Comparison Table of the Credit Transfer Systems

14. Japan presented the Proposal of Next Action Plan: Guidelines on Transcript for Exchanged Student including Comparison Table of the Credit Transfer Systems, the objective of which is to avoid non-recognition of credits earned at host institutions. The presentation slides of the proposal appear as **ANNEX 6**.

15. Japan showed a conception diagram illustrating the ASEAN Plus Three Credit Transfer System and presented a comparison table on credit transfer. In order to promote a common understanding of the different credit systems and facilitate transfer of credits, universities should refer to the comparison table of the credit transfer systems.

16. The Format of Transcript outlines what specific information should be provided to students when they receive the transcript from their host institution and bring it back to their home institution. The format includes eight items of information in accordance with Malaysian Qualification Statement (MQS) as well as Annex 1 (grade) and Annex 2 (syllabus).

17. Japan proposed the appointment of an Expert Meeting tasked to discuss the details about the guidelines on transcript. Members of the Expert Group were proposed to include Assoc. Prof. Nantana Gajasen, Ph.D., Executive Director of the ASEAN University Network; Mrs. Chantavit Sujatanond, Ph.D., Director of the SEAMEO RIHED; Dr. Illah Sailah, Director of Learning and Students' Affairs, Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, Indonesia; Prof. Kiyong Byun, Associate Professor, Department of Education, Korea University; and Assoc. Prof. Taiji Hotta, Vice-Executive of International Affairs, Hiroshima University, Japan; for instance. The Expert Meeting for ASEAN Plus Three Guidelines on Transcript for Exchange Students is scheduled to take place in March 2016 in Tokyo, Japan. In this connection, Japan requested each member countries to recommend one expert in the field of higher education from their respective countries to serve as members of the said Expert Meeting. To move forward, Japan agreed to develop a proposal on Expert Group Meeting and forward it to the ASEAN Secretariat for taping the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Fund.

18. There will be the distribution of the Questionnaire for Guidelines on Transcript. There is a need to collect more ideas, particularly from the university level, for guidelines on transcript. Attention will be given to learning outcomes.

19. Malaysia agreed with Japan's proposal regarding the Expert Meeting and suggested that the experts also have expertise on learning cultures of the ASEAN Plus Three countries as culture part must be integrated into education so that our students can learn from each other through exchange programme. Malaysia suggested including in the transcript a section on leadership skills and learning and understanding of ASEAN

cultures since Malaysia considers that soft skills are as important as academics, though it is difficult to measure soft skills.

20. Among other comments provided by the working group members were that the transcript should not include too much information; the Guidelines on Transcript should aim at transfer of credits and equivalency of the course (need to look at students' learning outcome, work load and quality of the grade); and learning from EU experience on "Diploma Supplement" will be helpful for developing the Guidelines.

Others Matters

21. The ASEAN Secretariat informed the meeting that there will be EU Share Policy Dialogue held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 24 - 26 August 2015 and the ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials Meeting on Education in Bangkok, Thailand, in December 2015, and proposed that the ASEAN Plus Three Guidelines on Student Exchange and Mobility and the Guidelines on Transcript be presented at the meetings.

Arrangements for the 4th Working Group

22. The Philippines informed the meeting on their willingness to host the 4th APT WG meeting either in September or October 2016. The date and time of the meeting are still to be determined and will be announced in due course. The Meeting also noted that Malaysia will be the Chair of the next Meeting and Japan will be the Co-Chair.

CLOSING

23. The Meeting acknowledged that the Guidelines on Student Exchange has been finalized the ASEAN Plus Three Guidelines on Student Exchange and Mobility and set the next action plan. In the future, China, as the Co-Chair, hopes that the working group will put more focus on the students themselves when discussing student mobility. It is better for the meeting to use the perspective of the students in order to further help them.

24. The Chair thanked the Co-Chair for his closing remarks. He noted that the meeting concluded with good success and high satisfaction, and he looks forward to the 4th APT WG meeting. He expressed heartfelt appreciation to the OHEC, Ministry of Education of Thailand for hosting the meeting and providing support and hospitality to the participants. He, once again, thanked all the participants from the ASEAN Plus Three countries and the ASEAN Secretariat for their support and contribution.

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