



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

1 December 2016, Cebu, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

1. The Fourth Working Group Meeting on Mobility of Higher Education and Ensuring Quality Assurance of Higher Education (APT WG) was held on 1 December 2016 in Cebu, Philippines. The meeting was attended by delegates from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam as well as Japan. Representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN University Network (AUN), ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework (AQRF) 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. Dr. Alex Brillantes, Commissioner, Commission on Higher Education, Philippines, welcomed all the participants to the meeting. In his opening remarks, he stated the importance of deepening discussions on student mobility in the region. He also underscored the contributions of the strengthening of mechanisms on quality assurance and credit transfer and the building of trust among partners in promoting greater mobility through platforms for dialogue such as the Working Group. Dr. Brillantes closed his remarks by encouraging the delegates to have a fruitful discussion of mutual concerns on student mobility within the context of cooperation.

3. Dr. Brillantes introduced the Chair of the Meeting, Mr. Datuk Nik Ali Bin Mat Yunus, Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia and the Co-Chair of the Meeting, Mr. Hideki Iwabuchi, Director, Office for International Planning, Higher Education Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Japan.

Opening Remarks by Chair and Co-chair

4. In his opening remarks, Mr. Datuk Nik Ali Bin Mat Yunus, the Chair of the meeting, thanked the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Philippines, for hosting the meeting and expressed his gratitude to all senior officials and representatives from the ASEAN Plus Three countries and the other ASEAN organizations for their participation in the meeting. He stated that implementing mobility program is an important task, and not

without challenges. Hence, the effort of this Working Group to work relentlessly in developing the mechanisms to facilitate students' mobility and exchanges among ASEAN Plus Three countries is commendable. This effort reflects our common interest in, and shared commitment to, promoting academic mobility, which includes mobility of students and staff, for both teaching and training, as a key element of Internationalization. He ended his remarks wishing everyone a rewarding meeting in discussing future work plans and implementation strategies that will steer ASEAN's future progressively.

5. Mr. Hideki Iwabuchi, the Co-Chair of the meeting, expressed in his opening remarks his appreciation to the delegates for their participation. He further thanked the Philippines for hosting the meeting and the ASEAN Secretariat for supporting their activities. He ended his remarks by highlighting the main agenda items of the meeting and by asking the countries to actively participate in the discussion.

Report on the Follow up Actions after the 3rd APT WG Meeting

6. On behalf of Lao PDR, the previous chair country, Ms. Lily Freida Milla, Director of the International Affairs Staff, CHED, Philippines, briefed the Meeting on the Summary Record of the 3rd Meeting of the APT WG held on 11 June 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand.

7. Japan presented the summary of the Third ASEAN Plus Three Quality Assurance Expert Meeting (APT QA Expert Meeting) held on 3 September 2015 in Manila, Philippines. The Meeting was updated on the status of the checklist for international collaborative programs between Japan and Asian countries developed and completed by the National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education (NIAD-QE), Japan. It was noted that the Fourth APT QA Expert Meeting will be held in 2017 at the convenience of the participating quality assurance agencies in the ASEAN Plus Three countries.

8. Malaysia concisely reported the results of the Expert Meeting for APT Guidelines on Transcripts for Exchange Students, including a Comparison Table of the Credit Transfer Systems presented on 7 March 2016 in Tokyo, Japan. Malaysia also introduced the highlights of the Joint Statement of the Third ASEAN Plus Three Education Ministers Meeting (APT EMM) adopted on 6 May 2016 in Selangor, Malaysia, further noting the Ministers' approval of the ASEAN Plus Three Guidelines on Student Exchange and Mobility.

MEETING DISCUSSIONS

Proposal for a follow-up activity after approval of the APT Guidelines on Student Exchange and Mobility

9. Japan gave a proposal presentation on a monitoring tool, which contains a sample format for monitoring, for the Guidelines on Student Exchange. The presentation slides of the proposal and monitoring format appear as **ANNEX 2**. The Meeting exchanged

views and opinions on what and how to monitor. The following are the main points resulting from the discussion by the Meeting:

- The purpose of the monitoring can be for both or either student mobility and/or quality assurance of higher education.
- Considering that this is a monitoring tool for the Guidelines on Student Exchanges and Mobility, it should focus on the points which the Guidelines address, i.e. student exchange and mobility. It can later be expanded to cover quality assurance and other issues.
- Data collection based on students' study fields or programs will be considered, as well as the idea of expanding the collection to cover student mobility within ASEAN and with other geographical regions.
- Several possible ways of data sampling were discussed, such as collecting from all institutions or only from a certain percentage of institutions that can sufficiently represent a country's higher education sector. In addition, awareness of the differences in higher education systems (such as the types and number of institutions within APT countries) was noted as important in presenting sampling results in order not to misinterpret the meaning of data.
- Although countries are not obliged to fill in all the sections, division of the format into two parts, compulsory and elective, may be done.
- Conducting a literature review on international statistics should be considered.
- Although it is desirable to use UNESCO's National Information Centers (NIC) for dissemination of the monitoring information, the establishment of NICs in all countries may not be easy. The monitoring information will initially be shown on the websites of relevant government agencies.
- The Meeting noted the comments and suggestions of representatives on the concept and format of the instrument. Solutions will be created to address the various constraints anticipated by the Meeting to eventually implement the instrument successfully. The Co-Chair noted that the instrument will be revised accordingly, based on the Meeting's comments and suggestions and the absentee countries' inputs. Prior to formal commencement, pilot monitoring will be conducted in 2017 and the results shall be reported to the APT SOME-ED in 2018.

Proposal of draft Guidelines on Transcript for Exchange Student including Comparison Table of the Credit Transfer Systems

10. Japan gave a presentation on the rationale and background of the draft Guidelines on Transcript for Exchange Student including Comparison Table of the Credit Transfer

Systems (Guidelines on Transcript). Japan afterwards showed the actual draft Guidelines on the Transcript and a sample of the transcript, as appears as **ANNEX 3**, which had been developed based on discussions and agreements made during the APT Expert Meeting on the Guidelines on Transcript held on 7 March 2016 in Tokyo, Japan. In discussing the document, the Meeting came up with the following agreements:

- For Section 4 “Credit Mechanism and Grading Scheme,” the Meeting noted that a national credit system can be written as most member countries have their own regulations.
- For Section 5.1 “Learning Outcomes,” clarification is needed on this section that deals with individual subjects.
- Course/subject syllabi can be a viable basis for credit conversion and facilitation of equivalency as, ideally, they outline information on the course content. Study plans may also form part of the supporting documents to the course/subject syllabi if partnering institutions require more information.
- The guidelines are for study/research programs and not for full degree programs.
- As the Guidelines on Transcripts are non-binding, the information written in the transcript can be optional as per their national status.
- The terminology used will be changed from “comparison table” to “conversion table.”

11. The Meeting agreed to solicit recommendations and comments from absentee countries for further discussion. The document will be revised accordingly by Japan and distributed to the members of the Meeting for consultation with their respective stakeholders. Pilot implementation will be conducted.

Scope of the ASEAN Plus Three Working Group

12. For Agenda Item 8, Japan delivered a presentation on the current status and the future of the APT WG. The presentation slides and supplemental document appear as **ANNEX 4**. In view of the contributions and potential of the APT WG in strengthening academic mobility in the APT region, the Meeting agreed on the continuation of the APT WG as well as the establishment of a Drafting Group for the revision of the APT WG Terms of Reference. The following issues were also highlighted in the discussion:

- Importance of deepening efforts relevant to student exchange and mobility, such as the two guidelines and the monitoring tool, which will take some time to fully implement considering the short time the APT WG has been in existence. Other issues such as quality assurance may be considered as a theme for future

activities as part of the APT WG's efforts to strengthen existing regional cooperation and widen its reach.

- Necessity to deliberate on and discuss the major common issues in the higher education community of the APT region.
- Importance of funding, leadership and governance in higher education and international vertical mobility between institutions.

13. In response to the Philippines' suggestion, the Meeting requested member countries to input their recommendations and opinions on the future of the Working Group within 10 days after the APT WG Meeting, for further discussion.

Updates, current issues and upcoming activities of participating countries

14. All participants, including observers, shared information on their major on-going and future activities related to higher education.

Arrangements for the 5th Working Group

15. The Meeting deliberated on the host country for the 2017 APT WG Meeting. Further negotiations will be undertaken with Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines for a final venue. The date and time of the next Meeting will be announced in due course. The Meeting also noted that Myanmar will be the Chair and Korea will be the Co-Chair, respectively.

CLOSING

16. The Meeting ended with the closing remarks of the Chair and the Co-Chair, who thanked the participants for their active contributions and the fruitful discussions.

17. On a final note, the participants expressed their appreciation to the Commission on Higher Education, the Philippines for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements provided. The Meeting also thanked the ASEAN Secretariat for the invaluable support and assistance rendered.