
Discussion Document

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The 6th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME6)

Collaboration for the Next Decade: From Common Perspectives to Effective Fulfillment

As characterized by its nature of informality, networking and flexibility, the ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME) offers a unique platform for cooperation in education between and within Asia and Europe. Focusing on dialogue and mutual understanding based on common perspectives between the two regions, ASEM education cooperation has constantly evolved during the past 10 years. We are now facing a new decade ahead of us. Now is the best time to review the achievements of the past decade, and envision the next decade of the ASEM Education Process.

In the past decade, ASEM education cooperation has never stopped evolving. As a unique platform for inter-regional and intra-regional education cooperation, it took its first step based on the common perspectives in Asia and Europe (ASEMME1, Berlin), and then started to play a key role in sharing experience and best practices in higher education (ASEMME2, Hanoi). In order to advance and deepen the cooperation, ASEM education priority areas were shaped (ASEMME3, Copenhagen), and strategic collaboration was emphasized to strengthen the ASEM Education Process (ASEMME4, Kuala Lumpur). Recently, two-pillar system – dialogue-oriented and result-oriented systems – was introduced into the process to promote collaboration for results (ASEMME5, Riga).

In the next decade, the pace of change will only accelerate and the world will become more complex with the wave of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The convergence across the physical, digital and human worlds driven by the new wave will blur the lines between national borders, between social sectors, and between online and offline worlds. Against this backdrop, we will live in a more intertwined world, where a challenge of a single country contagiously becomes a challenge for all, and where vast gaps in technological advancement and individual adaptability among countries exacerbate global inequality, especially in education and employment. Our collective wisdom on the challenges before us, therefore, is required and emphasized more than ever before. Furthermore, since creative problem-solving abilities as well as social and emotional intelligence are viewed as high-priority skills especially in the near future, developing those skills will be critical for tomorrow. Thus, new approaches and renewed relevance should be acquired in ASEM education Process.

The 11th ASEM Summit held in Mongolia in 2016 emphasized more tangible cooperation in all dimensions between the two regions. The survey conducted prior to ASEMME6 also shows that ASEM education cooperation should now focus more on producing outcome and tangible cooperation. Tangibility and visibility in the ASEM Education Process can be achieved by effectively responding to the demands of the new era. In addition to the cooperation based on dialogue from common perspectives, we should lead our collaboration to ensure effective fulfillment of future demands in the next decade. Recognizing the objectives, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea proposes 'Seoul Declaration' to envision a renewed education cooperation in ASEM for the next decade, and will host the 6th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME6) with the theme, *Collaboration for the Next Decade: From Common Perspectives to Effective Fulfillment*.

Plenary Session I:

Collaboration for the Next Decade – Improving Youth Employability

15:20 – 17:20, 21 November 2017

ASEM Education Priority Areas:

Engaging Business and Industries in Education

Lifelong Learning including Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The World Economic Forum reports that 7.1 million jobs will disappear while 2 million jobs will be created over the period 2015-2020 (*The Future of Jobs Report*, 2016). Fundamental change in the demands of the labor market is underway, but the direction is uncertain, and the pace is too fast to catch up with. The changes and challenges in the labor market will expand the gap between graduates' job skills and the demands of the market. Making higher education more relevant to the labor market, therefore, is highly necessary to resolve the issue of rising youth unemployment. The survey conducted prior to ASEMME6 also reports that "improving skills and competencies in accordance with the changes in the labor market" will emerge as the most important task for the ASEM Education Process in the coming decade.

Since employability is sensitive to changes in economic and social environment, higher education should increase its relevance and credibility to meet the demands of industries. Thus, the growing importance of the industry-relevant higher education will demand that higher education sector play a key role in both promoting youth employability and preparing the future graduates for the coming era. According to the demands, new changes and challenges will be introduced into all dimensions of higher education, including curricula, tools for learning, approaches to teaching and learning, student evaluation, as well as faculty recruitment.

In addition to higher education, lifelong learning, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET), is a significant component for ensuring the sustainability of individuals and the socio-economic system. Re-skilling and up-skilling of individuals will be critical. Connecting individuals' skills development with productivity and social adaptability will be essential to increase individuals' employability in the next decade. In recognition of these changes and challenges, at the plenary session I, we will share our opinions and best practices on how to enhance youth employability in Asia and Europe for the future of ASEM education cooperation.

- To renew the relevance of academic-business cooperation and enhance its credibility, what strategies and policies are required in the ASEM Education Process?
- To promote individuals' sustainability, productivity, and social adaptability in the era of the 4th Industrial Revolution, what is the role of lifelong learning, including TVET, in ASEM education cooperation?

Plenary Session II:

Collaboration for the Next Decade – Promoting Mobility and People-to-People Connectivity

09:00 – 11:00, 22 November 2017

ASEM Education Priority Areas:

Quality Assurance and Recognition

Balanced Mobility

Mobility is essential in ASEM education cooperation. With geographical, historical, and cultural diversity, people-to-people contact brings about shared common perspectives and improves mutual understanding. Since only human beings are capable of conversing with others to share ideas based on knowledge and experience, the process of connecting two regions would both begin with and be completed by human interactions. Furthermore, the movement of people is one of the most tangible and visible cooperation. The survey for ASEMME6 reports that “the promotion of human resources exchange” has been one of the most significant contributions of the ASEM Education Process in the past decade and should continue to be pursued in the next decade.

Increasing international mobility in the higher education sector raises concerns for compatibility and comparability of qualifications among different higher education systems in Asia and Europe. The facilitation of cross-regional compatibility and comparability of higher education systems will eventually bring about more opportunities for students, teachers and staff to be exposed to foreign education, which will lead to more active cross-border mobility of people. However, not only the size of cross-border mobility, but also its direction is important. Balanced mobility should be valued as a means of promoting better connectivity in education between the two regions because it contributes both to the European understanding of Asia and the Asian understanding of Europe. Furthermore, from the perspective of human resource development, the strategy of facilitating the cross-border flow of people will be crucial for responding to the demands of an ever-expanding global market. The more interconnected and interdependent the world becomes, the greater the necessity of global talents and skills, which can be promoted by greater international mobility.

The recent development of technology has given rise to virtual mobility. The e-learning market worldwide was worth \$144.8 billion in 2016, and is projected to grow to \$241.5 billion by 2022 (*Global Industry Analysts*, 2016). Online education is a global phenomenon. As the way education is delivered changes, the way people interact with one another will also change, affecting the overall people-to-people exchange. At the plenary Session II, we will share our opinions and best practices on how to promote mobility to enhance people-to-people connectivity between Asia and Europe.

- With the online education market rapidly growing around the world, would the promotion of international mobility of people still be relevant in this new era? If so, how should online education tools and platforms (e.g. MOOCs) be used to promote the movement of people between the two regions?
- Given the fact that not only governments but also professional bodies, institutions, and organizations play a critical role in the global exchange of people, what strategies among those actors should be adopted to both increase the people-to-people exchange and to promote balanced mobility?