**Minutes**

**ASEM Education Senior Officials’ Meeting (SOM2)**

**December 13-14, 2021**

**Online, hosted by Thailand**

**Bangkok, Thailand**

The ASEM Education Senior Officials’ Meeting (hereinafter referred to as SOM2) was held virtually at the Ministry of Education in Bangkok Thailand from December 13-14, 2021. The Meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Education of Thailand in cooperation with the Ministry of **Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation of Thailand.**

One hundred and twenty-eight participants from twenty-two countries from Europe (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Romania, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, Slovania, and Switzerland) and fourteen countries from Asia (Brunei Darussalam, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, People's Republic of China, Philippines, Singapore, Republic of Korea, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam), as well as representatives from the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, EU SHARE, the Asia-Europe Foundation, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research, the European University Association and ASEM Education Secretariat also attended the meeting.

The two-day Meeting under the theme **“ASEM Education 2030: Towards a more resilient, prosperous, and sustainable future”** provided opportunities for dialogues and discussions on ASEM initiatives and projects, and the ASEM Education Strategy and Action Plan 2030. It also provided a key message to shape future deliberations of the 8th ASEM Education Ministers Meeting on December 15, 2021.

The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Duriya Amatavivat, Senior Adviser, the Office of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education of Thailand, on behalf of Dr. Suphat Champathong, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education of Thailand.

**Day 1, December 13, 2021.**

1. **Opening Session**

**Professor Sirirurg Songsivilai, Permanent Secretary of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation of Thailand delivered Welcome Remarks by underlining the importance of the ASEM Education Process as a solid platform for higher education cooperation between Asia and Europe to promote the visibility, transparency, and comparability of their higher education systems, as well as produce skilled and employable graduates in both regions. He also welcomed the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 to enhance the development of the ASEM Education Process towards a stronger dialogue and collaboration of ASEM dialogue partners as well as highlighting that the strategy was formulated to set the strategic direction and to provide a framework for ASEM member countries, stakeholders, and partners.**

**Dr. Suphat Champathong**, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education of Thailand**, delivered his opening remarks. He conveyed his appreciation to the ASEM Education Secretariat and thanked Dr.** Teerakiat Jareonsettasin, Former Minister of Education of Thailand, for his presence to share his profound knowledge and contribute his ideas and insights on how ASEM Member Countries should pursue and continue the ASEM Education Process under the new Education Strategy 2030. He highlighted the importance of the Meeting as a platform to open dialogue and exchange ideas on the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 and the ASEM Education Action Plan 2030. He reaffirmed Thailand’s commitment to fully implement the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals and to build an inclusive and sustainable future for all. He called for the commitment from ASEM education partners to ensure education accessibility to all. He also emphasized that Thailand would continue to work closely with ASEM to enhance quality systems, relevant frameworks and skills recognition to enhance quality and learning outcomes and to promote people-to-people connectivity between Asia and Europe.

**Ms. Emilie Degueldre**, Coordinator of ASEM Education Secretariat (AES), Ministry of Education, the Federation Wallonia-Brussels delivered her Remarks by expressing her appreciation to Thailand for hosting the ASEM Education Senior Officials in Bangkok, Thailand. The Meeting was held to foster closer collaboration among ASEM partners in the framework of the ASEM Education Process. She also emphasized the theme of the Meeting **“ASEM Education 2030: Towards a more resilient, prosperous and sustainable future”**, As Emilie said, this process has facilitated the further sharing and discussion of existing and new initiatives and projects, as well as the endorsement of the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 and its Action Plan for the next decade. She also mentioned that the Meeting marked the end of the long drafting process as well as the mandate of the Belgian ASEM Education Secretariat.

1. **Keynote Session**

Ms. Duriya Amatavivat chaired the Meeting on behalf of Dr. Suphat Champathong, Permanent Secretary of Education, Thailand, who was engaged by an unforeseen urgent commitment. She then invited Dr. Teerakiat Jaroensettasin, Former Minister of Education of Thailand, to present his Keynote Address.

**Dr. Teeratkiat Jaroensettasin** started his keynote mentioning that lifelong learning never stopped and mentioned that at his age he was still continuing his education by enrolling in a master’s degree programme in the UK. He then presented a slide of John Tukey who provided many insights about education. As Tukey mentioned “*An Approximate answer to the right question is worth a great deal more than a precise answer to the wrong question*”. Dr. Teeratkiat also emphasized that this concept could be applied to education management. Educators should ask themselves questions and focus on answering the right questions with confidence to the many situations and issues we got involved with. We should be mindful of the foundation of education and question the purpose of education. He also referred to the philosopher Michael Oakeshott, whose work had led to the shaping of the future of education. In Oakeshott’s thoughts, education must realize a harmonious existence with human nature and help to shape a man’s character. He said we had to find out what humans needed to live and stated that education that responded to such a complete human being was lifelong learning. We needed to focus on the development of learners' IQ. We needed knowledge to develop the character of learners.

The former Minister went on to say that during his time as Minister of Education, the focus was on education investment. He referred to James Heckman’s work entitled “Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children”. According to this, the life cycle skill formation was a dynamic process in which early inputs strongly affected the productivity of later input. He also emphasized that investment in early childhood education would yield a high return in comparison with other levels. One of his major points was there were many educational policies in Thailand, including educational strategies, programmes for preparing people for work and pre-primary education. There were programmes that bridged educational gaps and provided opportunities for disadvantaged people, including providing quality education for future citizens. However, up until now, he said that early childhood education still needed more focus.

The former education minister also addressed the impact on education from COVID-19. Researchers had found that the effects of COVID- 19 had had such a huge impact on the psychology of students while engaging in virtual learning. However, virtual learning had provided a great opportunity to combine traditional learning with digital learning and moved education to further adapt to the future. In addition to this, he mentioned we should come up with a new approach to education that was more relevant to the current situation. Learners needed to think about the impact of natural disasters such as global changes, floods as well as terrorism. These things required scientific knowledge. He later identified challenges to education which included pandemics, climate change, terrorism, and leadership. He said that we were facing a leadership crisis. In relation to this, he reiterated that when it came to education reform, there were many reform directives but no directions. He gave an example of frequent changes to education ministers, resulting in unclear and undirected policy making. Mr. Teerakiat also quoted Thomas A. Edison, who believed that motion pictures would revolutionize our education system, and this would replace the use of textbooks. However, he said that this prediction did not come to true. Even though learners could still partially learn from TV and internet, as the prediction was wrong, we must have a pathway or system to follow to global changes. He quoted Richard Feynman’s words who cited that if theories did not rely on experiment, they were wrong. He raised the example of the Teacher Coupon Project. This project illustrated the teacher development programme, which focused on decentralizing educational administration by not using a top-down model. At the end, he stressed the concept of the ASEM educational strategy and said it must not be abstract, but must produce concrete actions.

**3. Presentation of the Stocktaking Report by ASEM Education Secretariat**

**Ms. Emilie Degueldre** presented a stocktaking report to the Meeting. She mentioned that this ASEM Education Stocktaking Report would review the progress of projects announced in the Chair’s Conclusions of the ASEMME7 meetings held in May 2019.

The report was divided into five chapters. The first chapter was dedicated to the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 and accompanying Action Plan. The second chapter covered ongoing ASEM Education activities and projects, while the third presented new and future initiatives. The fourth chapter was composed of analytical articles from some members of the ASEM Education community, who agreed to share their views and expertise to reflect upon the challenges faced over the past two years. The final chapter formulated conclusions and possible recommendations for the further development of the ASEM Education Process.

She informed the meeting about new and future ASEM Education Initiatives, which included Projects on the Collaborative Online International Learning Pilot led by the Asia-Europe Institute University Malaya and the University of Applied Sciences of Aschaffenburg in Germany, the ARISE Project managed by the Erasmus Student Network, the European Foundation Skills Lab and Network for Excellence, the Global Lifelong Learning Summit organized by the Institute for Adult Learning in Singapore, and the International Association of Universities’ global survey on internationalization of higher education. The Report also included the works of the two new Research Networks of the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub 5 and 6, the SEA-EU Mobility Programme for Sustainable Development coordinated by SEAMEO RIHED, EU SHARE, and the BILT Project, and the Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET project managed by UNEVOC.

**Ms. Mariëlle Van Heumen** introduced the ideas and concepts of academics, scientists, professors in the Report, including key messages by Dr. M. Miandy Munusamyon “ASEM Education and Moving Forward in a Volatile World”, Mr. Frederik De Decker on “Constructing a Strong Recognition Culture for ASIA-EUROPE Educational Cooperation”, Dr. Anamika Chawhan on “Digitalization and Higher Education: Impact of Digital Transformation on the ASEM Education Process”, Prof. (Hon), Dr. H.C.Mult. Arne Carlsen on “ASEM Lifelong Learning Research: Developing an Inclusive Lifelong Learning Culture for All in post-COVID times”, Prof. Dr. Alexandra Angress on “ASEM Education Mobility in Challenging Times” and Dr. Que Anh Dangon “Thinking Higher and Beyond: Alternative Futures of ASEM Education”.

She also mentioned the Conclusions and Outlook of the Stocktaking Report included the Chair’s Conclusions of ASEMME7 and set the political and practical agenda for the ASEM Education Process until ASEMME8. This agenda included **‘sustainable development’** and **‘digitalization’** introduced as transversal themes within the four priority areas of the AEP, as well as the Development of a Strategy Paper on the ASEM Education Process Vision 2030. The Report also mentioned the impact of COVID-19, as it put many initiatives on hold or forced those initiatives to adapt to a virtual format. In this regard, cooperation had been reestablished and redefined and partnerships among countries and stakeholders had been moved to the next period, while building on lessons learned and positive past experiences. In the upcoming years, there was scope to work on the following areas of the ASEM Education Process, which included a Policy dialogue, Synergies with multilateral organizations and processes, and Communication and visibility and Management of the ASEM Education Process.

At the end, she mentioned that the Stocktaking Report clearly demonstrated many positive aspects of the ASEM Education Process and the strong commitment of various ASEM partners and stakeholders. She also mentioned that it would be used to develop Asia-Europe dialogue and collaboration. Finally, she encouraged ASEM members and stakeholders to express their interest to coordinate or participate in existing initiatives or to express their interest to take over the role of ASEM Education Secretariat for the upcoming four-year period, after the term of Belgium at the end of 2021.

**4. Presentations of On-going ASEM Education Projects and Initiatives**

Representatives from ASEM Partners presented their On-going ASEM Education Projects and Initiatives updated the Meeting on their on-going ASEM projects and initiatives

* 1. **ASEF: Promoting Inclusion & Equity across ASEM Education** presented by Mr. Leonie NAGARAJAN, Director Education Department, ASEF. He mentioned that inclusion and equity was a part of the Asia-Europe Foundation’s Mission to promote education for sustainable development in its projects. This ideal also provided inclusive platforms and would develop suitable project formats and methodologies that allowed for the active participation & engagement of all stakeholders in the ASEM process. Further to that, he said the mission would facilitate the voices of civil society and helped to voice citizens to express their concerns and channel them to policy makers and government officials in the ASEM Process. The projects also focused on the young leadership programme, higher education programmes and teaching & learning programes. He went on to say that another area of ASEF’s work was the ASEM Youth Report on Inclusive Youth Leadership. The Report presented the opportunities & barriers of youth leadership across Asia & Europe, capturing the voices of 13,600 young people from all 51 ASEM countries. Further to this, recommendations for policy makers as well as those in power who could facilitate and promote inclusive youth leadership were highlighted. Next, he talked about the production of the ARC8 Outlook Report 2030. As he said, the Report highlights emerging issues that could grow into major challenges and/or opportunities in the coming 10 years, as related to inclusion in higher education. The Report was divided into 4 chapters, 1) inclusive learning and teaching in a digital world, 2) inclusive and flexible lifelong learning pathways, 3) inclusive international mobility of people and knowledge and 4) equitable access and success in higher education. Moreover, they also developed a report on ASEM National Equity Policies in Higher Education 2021. The report examined the approaches by governments from countries within the Asia-Europe Meeting constituency to support equitable access/success in higher education for students from all social backgrounds and circumstances. They also produced 47 individual country reports completed in collaboration with Ministries of Education and the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON). He mentioned the forthcoming Reports would include a Report on **“Teachers’ Perceptions & Understanding on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)”,** **a Pedagogical Handbook on “Well-being of Teachers & Students”**, and a Report on **“Gender Equality in ASEM Classrooms”**. Their on-going activities would include ARC8 Spin-off Activities, ASEF Capacity Building Workshops on Equitable Access and Success in Higher Education and advancing inclusion in international higher education in ASEAN (in collaboration with EU-SHARE). They would also conduct a 5-week long online learning & training session for managers, academics, and researchers to help participants develop tailored action plans to address their challenges. ASEF’s e-Learning Platform would also provide specific courses to interested learners on ASEM, which were linked to ASEF’s ongoing projects. Finally, to proceed ASEF’s on-going activities, he requested for collaboration and engagement from ASEM Education stakeholders such as taking the time to consider policy recommendations by ARC8 experts when reviewing current/future policies on inclusion, as well as to follow up on missing reports and complete the study of ASEM National Equity Policies in Higher Education Study. This would foster recommendations for youth and support the development of relevant online courses.

**4.2 ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub: Updates on Research Network 1 and 2** presented by Prof. Karanam Pushpanadham, Research Network 1 ‘E-Learning’ and Associate Prof Dr Elina Maslo, Research Network 2 ‘Workplace Learning’

**Prof. Karanam Pushpanadham** presented the work of Research Network 1: **“E-Learning”** (Digital Learning Management Systems, Techno-pedagogical Skills and Knowledge Network Communities in Lifelong Learning).

The ASEM E-Learning Network for Lifelong Learning, aimed to set up an online research network that allows ASEM Lifelong Learning partner universities to continuously exchange ICT skills and e-learning related academic and practical experiences. With this aim, E-Learning was promoting international collaborative projects for information sharing, research, and human resource development on ICT skills and e-learning. There were 21 researchers in the network, including 10 males and 20 females. They focused on Capacity building and innovation. He mentioned the importance of digital capacity building in Asia-Europe. Regarding Programmes, he asked the question of how we could equip the journey to lifelong learning. Teachers at all levels needed to contribute to the transformation of Europe and Asia. We had traditional networks, scholars from Europe and Asia and international perspectives to strengthen capacities as a whole within the network. Different universities and knowledge from different countries had minimum professional standards. Therefore, he mentioned it was important to have a quality standard framework. There was a Philosophy to distance learning, which changed learning spaces and transformed them to mostly digital. It was also important to make the use of technology more enjoyable, empowering social engagement and enjoyment of the learning process.

**Associate Prof Dr Elina Maslo** presented the work of Research Network 2 **“Workplace Learning”***.* This research network directed itself to establishing working places as lifelong learning spaces across Asia and Europe. They offered very different kinds of learning opportunities such as providing structured work-related education and training for employees, where learning was integrated into the flow of the work process. The network was made up of a shared body of knowledge by exchanging information, workshop discussions and joint studies. This research network included researchers from 19 countries: Australia, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, India, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Netherlands, United Kingdoms, South Korea and Australia. The cooperation within the network included exchanging ideas, conducting collaborative transnational research, using existing resources, preparing joint publication, using the research blog to coordinate research and keep the members up to date. The outcome of their works included the development of *“Resilient skilled ecosystems in Asian and European countries during pandemic times”***.** The aim of the study was to identify good practices and strategies that helped to strengthen vocational education and training systems in the crisis and gave some suggestions concerning the resilience of vocational education and training systems.

They also produced the Journal of Workplace Learning *“Dimensions of Expansion for Configuring Learning Spaces in Global Works”.* It aimed to propose an analytical framework to understand and support the productive professional learning of those engaged in global work. According to the Report’s Findings, six dimensions of expansion were identified as challenging and potentially empowering professionals to configure learning spaces in global works, which included social-spatial, material instrumental, moral-ethical, political-economic, personal- professional and temporal development. The conceptual framework for the dimensions of expansion of learning spaces provides broad stakes for the curricula that democratized the learning and development of professionals in global work, who were currently underserved given the national orientation of vocational education and training and professional development ecosystems. Based on this project, Research Network 2 was planning to establish a conversation with people interested in the professional development of global workers. A Special issue of the Hungarian Educational Research Journal *“Workplace Learning”* also produced in the UK, Denmark, Hungary and Singapore, presented professional development and engagement session in teacher education, developed work-based higher education systems, provided informal learning in knowledge-intensive sectors, increased remote working, and encouraged employee-driven innovation and internship learning. Based on this special issue, they were planning to establish small research projects based on the themes of the issue which would include, professional development for teachers, developments in work-based higher education, informal learning in knowledge-intensive sector, increased remote working, and employee-driven innovation and internship learning. Moreover, Research Network 2 would continue with the Resilience of Skill Ecosystems (2020-2022) and would continue the work that was described in the publication.

**4.3 Expert Group Digitalization Working Paper presented** by Ms. Nina Knops, Senior Desk Officer, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). She presented the initiative of the Expert Group Digitalization in drafting a working paper, which included the recommendations on digital transformation in (higher) education. Digitalization was introduced as a transversal priority at ASEMME7 in 2019. The objectives of the working paper were to look at the challenges and opportunities of digitally enhanced education and provided key messages to ASEM policymakers. The working paper was divided into four chapters which included 1) the digital infrastructure 2) international exchange and mobility 3) futures of lifelong learning and 4) quality assurance and recognition. The members of the ASEM Expert Group Digitalization considered that digital transformation in education is inclusive, human-centred, sustainable and transparent. Digitally enhanced education should be accessible, flexible and tailored to the individual needs of a learner stimulating learning throughout life. It should be of high quality as well as serve as aninstrument to improve the quality of life of all learners. In addition to this, digitally enhanced learning within the ASEM Education Process should offer collaboration and virtual exchange, creating opportunitiesfor learners everywhere to collectively work on global challenges. The first chapter emphasized the importance of investing in equal access to the internet and technological devices and digital skills. It was also needed to promote interoperability of digital platforms and systems, as well as to foster joint research on technology frameworks for education. The second chapter, International Exchange and Mobility, identified that facilitating a better exchange of data among institutions and digitizing data mobility, and promoting collaborative online international learning (COIL) virtual exchange was needed. The third chapter focused on the future of lifelong learning. It underlined the promotion of digital competences of teachers and learners, investing in teacher training to use digital tools for pedagogy, coordinating education policies with digital connectivity and social policies in order to facilitate inclusive lifelong learning and facilitating the availability of high-quality open educational resources. The last chapter provided information on quality assurance and recognition. It highlighted integrated online learning offered by educational providers in existing quality assurance approaches, facilitating learners to move between different types of providers (between higher education and TVET) and promoting the exchange of the use of NQFs, RQFs, the World Reference Levels, UNESCO’s Global Convention on Recognition etc. in order to make transparent and recognizable micro-credentials.

**4.4** **Global Inventory of National Qualifications Frameworks – 2021-22: preliminary findings of a cross-country analysis** presented by Ms. Katerina Ananiadou, Programme Specialist, UNESCO. She mentioned that it was the 5th edition of the global inventory of the National Qualification Framework. This was the result of collaborative work between the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the European Training Foundation (ETF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and the Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). It included 87 reports on the latest developments, the inventory to inform decisions by ministries, authorities and other actors, as well as to share knowledge with world networks and experts and officials implementing national qualification frameworks. The main objectives of NQF were to improve transparency, comparability and recognition. The NQF also supported lifelong learning, access and permeability and progression as well as enabling recognition and validation of no-formal and informal learning.  Its findings included a cross-cutting analysis of 87 reports, which covered countries from Europe and North America 58.6 percent, Asia and the Pacific 14.9 percent, Arab States 9.2 percent, Africa 9.2 percent and Latin America and the Caribbean 8 percent. The implementation of NQF was mostly dominated by European and reflects European data which was almost 70 percent. Types of qualifications in inventory included all levels and all types of education, vocational education and higher education and/or occupational qualifications.

Ministries were mostly involved in NQF, while others were inter-stakeholders and council/ committees. Some of the challenges were how to reach the relevant stakeholders so they could develop a website to facilitate communication. The next step would include collecting data from more countries, producing a cross-country analytical report, preparing future studies and examining a range of issues related to development and trends in qualification globally, including a regional qualification framework.

**5. Presentation of the ASEM Education Strategy 2030** presented by Ms. Emilie Degueldre. She presented the feature of the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 by mentioning that the Strategy has marked an important milestone in the history of the ASEM Education Process as it was the first long term common vision partners and stakeholders agreed upon. The Strategy came from the decision of the Ministers made in ASEMME 7 that a framework for collaboration should be established to encourage international exchanges, share good practices, and help partners cope with similar issues and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders agreed to join forces to reaffirm the ASEM Education Process as an advanced transregional dialogue and cooperation platform. They aimed to develop the AEP as a platform to promote inclusive and equitable quality education and training through equal and mutually beneficial Asia-Europe partnerships, leveraged by people-to-people connectivity. In order to realize this vision and mission statement, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders identified four strategic objectives, six instruments and working methods and developed an Action Plan in order to ensure effective implementation and tangible results. Starting from common challenges (such as digitalization, climate change, migration, aging societies) and building on shared experiences, where they identified the four following strategic objectives in order to realize their vision for the next decade:

1. Enhancing Connectivity between Asia and Europe by Boosting Mobility and Exchanges.
2. Promoting Lifelong Learning including TVET.
3. Fostering the Development of Skills and Competences.
4. Creating more Transparency and Mutual Understanding on Recognition, Validation and Quality Assurance.

With the help of supporting institutions, such as the ASEM Education Secretariat, the Asia-Europe Foundation, the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub and the ASEM-DUO Secretariat, they would use the following six instruments and workings method to reach their objectives:

* People-to-people Connectivity
* Policy Dialogue
* Exchange of Knowledge, Expertise and Good Practices
* Collaborative Research on Education
* Synergies with Multilateral Organisations and Processes
* Visibility and Communication

The Strategy would be a steppingstone towards a closer international collaboration between Asia and Europe.

**The End of Day 1**

**Day 2, December 14, 2021.**

The Meeting started by the Chair’s summary of Day 1. Ms. Duriya Amatavivat referred to a few concepts from Dr. Teeratkiat Jaroensettasin’s remarks from the first day and linked them to best practices in education. The chair further highlighted the importance of investing in early childhood education, as it yields the highest return on investment. The Chair then reminded the meeting of the leadership gap as leadership is an important issue. Leadership formulates the direction, but not directives. In addition, the Chair also updated the participants about the ongoing activities by ASEM experts and stakeholders related to enhancing education, cooperation and development in both regions. The Chair also mentioned the work on the final draft of the ASEM Education Strategy document and the six instruments and working methods identified in the education strategy. Furthermore, additional methods were identified, so objectives could be reached. Then she moved on to the next agenda item by inviting Ms. Emilie Degueldre to present on the ASEM Education Action Plan 2030.

**6. Preparation and Discussion on the ASEM Education Action Plan 2030**

**Ms. Emilie Degueldre** presented the key points of the ASEM Education Action Plan 2030. This Action Plan embodied **the practical implementation of the ASEM Education Strategy 2030** as it listed actions that ASEM Education partners and stakeholders were carrying out or were planning to carry out to realize the ambitions of the ASEM Education Strategy and reach the four strategic objectives identified for the next decade. The Action Plan was divided in four partsas follows:

The first part providedan **overview of the four strategic objectives and sub-goals** identified in the ASEM Education Strategy 2030.

The second part specified **different actions** to implement and realize these four objectives. Existing ASEM Education projects, activities and initiatives were listed under each action, together with suggestions and ideas for new projects or initiatives.

The third part served as a **reminder of the existing structure and organization of the ASEM Education Process**, in which projects and initiatives would be further developed and implemented. This part included different actions that ASEM Education partners and stakeholders needed to implement and also included the existing ASEM Education projects and initiatives that were listed under each action, together with suggestions and ideas for new projects or initiatives.

The fourth part detailed how the **monitoring** of the ASEM Education Strategy and Action Plan 2030 would take place using existing documents and reporting processes and what was expected from the different actors. Emilie went on to mention that every two years, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders would continue to update each other on their future plans through the Chair’s Conclusions presented and endorsed during the ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME). The annex of the Chair’s Conclusions would serve as a work plan for the next two years and would detail concrete plans for activities under each project or initiative. It would also specify expected outputs and results and explained how partner and stakeholder activities contribute to the four strategic objectives.

She then went on to say the Stocktaking Report, which was published every two years by the ASEM Education Secretariat, would be the main instrument for monitoring the implementation of the ASEM Education Strategy and progress of activities listed in the Action Plan. Senior officials, partners and stakeholders were expected to actively contribute to this report by providing regular updates on their on-going activities to the AES.

The last section focused on the interactions of the ASEM Education Process as a multilateral forum in a wider ecosystem and detailed how ASEM Education partners and stakeholders would seek to foster collaboration with relevant multilateral processes and organizations. Again, the idea would be to avoid duplication of efforts and working in silos, to identify synergies where possible and to make the best use of existing resources. Finally, she mentioned the Action Plan was a live document: relevant projects could be added, and new stakeholders could also be involved at a later stage, should ASEM Education partners and stakeholders find it appropriate.

**7. Presentations of On-going ASEM Education Projects and Initiatives (Part 2) and Outlook on New ASEM Education Initiatives.**

**7.1 Asia-Europe Institute: Bridging Education - Challenges and Prospect** presented by Dr. Nurliana Kamaruddin, AEI.

Dr. Nurliana Kamaruddin introduced the Asia-Europe Institute as one of Southeast Asia’s leading institutions for social science post graduate research and teaching. She said, AEI was established under the provisions of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) initiative in 1996. One year later, in 1997, the Government of Malaysia established the Asia-Europe Centre (ASC). AEI was transformed into a full-fledged academic institution in the year 2000 and renamed the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI). AEI was currently striving to be a renowned institution of higher learning with academic programmes and research on interregional relations between Asia-Europe, as well as to promote collaborative research with academics as well as government and private sector institutions.AEI offers graduate programmes and activities, including Master in ASEAN Studies, Master in European Studies as well as Ph.D. Programmes. The Institution also conducted research and activities such as seminars, lectures, summer school, and the Asia-Europe Conference. The objectives of the programs included enhancing ASEAN and EU scholarships, mutually reinforcing syllabuses, as well as designing and encouraging theoretical and academic studies with real world practical knowledge. By the end of October 2021, AEI offered hybrid learning and full remote learning due to the spread of COVID-19. As a part of remote learning, students could attend the class in real time with other students. The Institute provided an online learning platform called spectrum where learning and learning assessments were conducted. However, AEI would return to conventional classes with remote learning options in the 2021/2022 Academic Year, if the COVID situation improves. As for the way forward, AEI would increase networking among higher education institutions in ASEM, established special working groups to increase mobility between Asia and Europe, encouraged partnerships with other universities to host the summer school, joint activities and mobility programmes, and also created better and more effective means of credit transfer for non-traditional mobility programmes and encouraged research on mobility in Asia and Europe.

**7.2 ETF Network for Excellence in VET and the Skills Lab Project** presented by Dr. Manuela Prina, Head of Skills Identification and Development Unit, European Training Foundation

Dr. Manuela Prina presented ETF Networks which were established in order to encourage the sharing of ideas, practices and experience between centres of excellence at both national and international levels. The Networks also included the ETF Network for Excellence and Skills Lab. The ETF Network for Excellence was currently working on eight themes, including Web-based Learning, Pedagogy and Professional Development, Entrepreneurial Vocational centres, Industry 4.0 and Digitaization and Autonomy and Institutional Development (financing, leadership, governance, going green. These themes also supported sustainable goals and social inclusion and equity.

As for Skills Lab, it was a modality for knowledge and the creation of emerging skills required in ETF partner countries, with around 60 research organizations involved. The network was also open to all researchers, research institutes and expertise networks. The Skills Lab would bring experts and researchers together from different institution, countries and specializations, in order to co-create, exchange, and disseminate labour market research to foster the culture of skills anticipation and matching.

**7.3 Inter-regional Cooperation and the Role of University Associations** by Prof. Michael Murphy, President, European University Association (EUA), Dr. Hilligje van’t Land, Secretary General, International Association of Universities (IAU) and Mr. Korn Ratagosoom, First Officer and Chief Strategy Officer, ASEAN University Network (AUN)

**Prof. Michael Murphy** emphasized that the EUA was strongly committed to the ASEM Education Process and had been involved in this dialogue since its commencement. About its work, the EUA published “*Universities Without Walls*”. It provided guidance to our 850 members on how to support society in meeting the severe challenges and some of the opportunities to improve education due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the opportunities created by the pandemic would improve things, such as climate change, the challengers posed by digitalization and artificial intelligence, as well as the growing societal polarization. In response to the challenges, universities had become more open, more transformative, and more engaged in civic society. Universities had provided blended learning on campus, in the workplace and in civic spaces. Moreover, learning would be more transnational - promoting intercultural skills and employability among students and graduates. It would build bridges between nations and regions to make it easier to collaborate and exchange ideas and best practices. Even though the pandemic had upended traditional international exchanges, it had also stimulated the rethinking of international mobility - to be more sustainable and environmentally friendly. This would enhance inter-regional recognition of qualifications by virtual mobility.

He also mentioned that to solve global challenges, we had to pool our resources with the unbound connectivity of researchers, research data and laboratories. Science would be more interdisciplinary too. Covid-19 demonstrated that all disciplines had roles to play, especially in humanities and social sciences.  In conclusion, he said the EUA was pleased to be joined by the ASEAN University Network, the China Association for Higher Education and the Association of Indian Universities - to grow active global collaboration among the world’s universities.

**Dr. Hilligje van’t Land, Secretary General, International Association of Universities (IAU)**

Dr. Hilligje van’t Land mentioned that the ASEM Education Process called for the continuation and enhancement of the higher education institutions of Asia-Europe. She conveyed her appreciation to the work of education processes and offered their continued support in the future. She mentioned that the ASEM Education Strategy and its Action Plan needed strong support from ASEM member countries and the confirmation of the next host for the ASEM Secretariat. The IAU brought together universities and other higher education institutions from all around the world. For more than 70 years, the IAU, composing of 20,000 higher education institutions, had strengthened the global dialogue and fostered the attention needed for the development of a stronger higher education system around the world. The IAU was an official partner of UNESCO on the World Higher Education Database (WHED) and also the co-organization of global conferences. Both organizations would look forward to next steps by using the ASEM Education Strategy and the Action Plan that had been carefully co-drafted by ASEM Partners and offered a true vision for future cooperation.

**Mr. Korn Ratagosoom, First Officer and Chief Strategy Officer, ASEAN University Network (AUN)**

In his statement, Mr. Korn mentioned that the AUN has recognized that the ASEM Education Process had always been a comprehensive platform for the initiations of many collaborations between the two regions. He mentioned the AUN foresaw that the cross-regional public policy partnership between the two continents would pave the way forward and would become the driving force that mobilized instrumental knowledge, useful for educational reform in many parts of the ASEN region. The continuation of this partnership would be helpful to the higher education development in ASEAN, especially since it would help accelerate such development through knowledge sharing and capacity building. He reiterated that the AUN would continue its support and contribution to the ASEM Education Process.

**8. Presentation and Discussion on the Chairs' Conclusions**

The Meeting discussed the key points of the draft Chairs’ Conclusions that were presented by Ms. Emilie Degueldre and Ms. Mariëlle van Heumen as follows:

**Ms. Emilie Degueldre**

The Minister welcomed the theme of the meeting ***“ASEM Education 2030 : Towards a more resilient, prosperous and sustainable future”***. The main aspiration of the meeting was to further share and discuss existing and new initiatives and projects, as well as to endorse the ASEM Education Strategy and Action Plan 2030.

The Ministers acknowledged that the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 and its accompanying Action Plan aimed to provide a framework for ASEM partners and stakeholders to develop, implement and monitor result-oriented initiatives and projects to be agreed upon by the ASEM Education Ministers in the Chair’s Conclusions during each ministerial meeting.

The four strategic objectives outlined in the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 would provide the basis for cooperation over the next decade: 1) enhancing connectivity between Asia and Europe by boosting inclusive and balanced mobility and exchanges; 2) promoting lifelong learning, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET); 3) fostering the development of skills and competences; and 4) creating more transparency and mutual understanding on recognition, validation and quality assurance.

The Ministers acknowledged the projects, initiatives and activities carried out between ASEMME7 and ASEMME8, under the four priority areas as follows:

 Priority A: Quality Assurance and Recognition

Priority B: Engaging Business and Industry in Education

Priority C: Balanced Mobility

Priority D: Lifelong Learning (LLL) including Technical and Vocational Education and

 Training (TVET)

The Ministers invited the Senior Officials to use the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 and its accompanying Action Plan as a framework for further development of the above-mentioned projects and initiatives, as well as for monitoring their contribution to the realization of the ASEM Education Process’ vision and of the four Strategic Objectives identified for the next decade.

In addition, the Ministers also encouraged everyone to consider the recommendations as provided in the ‘ARC8 Outlook Report 2030: Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe’ and the ‘ASEM National Equity Policy Study’ of the 8th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARC8).

The Ministers also tasked the ASEM Education Secretariatto coordinate and monitor the ASEM Education Process and its initiatives, as well as to analyze their progress and results within the framework of the ASEM Education 2030 Strategy and Action Plan. Further to this, they recommended them to establish regular contacts and collaboration with the coordinators of initiatives and the Standing Working Group, as this approach would contribute to enhanced coherence between the four strategic objectives of the ASEM Education Process.

Ms. Mariëlle van Heumen mentioned the Chair’s Conclusion, some of which still required comments and inputs from ASEM Member Countries. Some countries that had not yet included activities or initiatives were requested to include them in the Document. ASEM Partners were also open to participation in expert groups/working groups. The list and activities would be updated accordingly. In this regard, ASEM Member Countries were requested to consider the updated chairs' conclusion to be presented to the ASEMME 8 meeting by requesting that the required updated information be submitted to the ASEM Education Secretariat by 12:00 noon on December 15, 2021 (Bangkok time) in order to present the updated version to the ASEMME8 meeting for further endorsement.

**9. Closing Remarks.**

Ms. Duriya Amatavivat delivered her Closing Remarks. She highlighted the success of today’s meeting as another significant milestone for the ASEM community towards a more resilient, prosperous, and sustainable future. She appreciated the efforts of the participants for giving their feedback on the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 and the ASEM Education Action Plan 2030. She believed that the outcome of the meeting could enhance interregional cooperation in order to strengthen ASEM’s capacity and move to the next level with exciting new developments and challenges. She also thanked the ASEM Education Secretariat for their valuable support in preparing this meeting and making it possible.

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