7th National EFA Coordinators’ Meeting / Mid-Decade Assessment Planning Meeting  
24-29 October 2005  
Terms of Reference

I. Background
In January 2000, the Asia-Pacific Conference on the EFA 2000 Assessment was held in Bangkok, Thailand. At the Conference, country representatives adopted a regional framework for action which eventually contributed to the Dakar Framework for Action adopted by the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000. At the World Education Forum an assessment of progress was made and the collective commitment to ensure that EFA goals and targets are reached and sustained was renewed.

Following the World Education Forum, UNESCO Bangkok continued to support the regional Member States by conducting regular meetings with National EFA Coordinators, under the auspices of the Sub-Regional Forum (SRF) for East and Southeast Asia. As the preparation of National Action Plans progressed, it was agreed that draft EFA plans could be shared with other EFA National Coordinators, EFA partner agencies and experts in order to learn from others’ experiences and receive suggestions for possible improvement.

Now with EFA National Action Plans in place (or soon to be in place) in most countries, the National EFA Coordinators’ meeting has shifted its focus to provide support and assistance in EFA implementation and in the continuing process of plan revision. In recent years, meetings have taken a particular focus of interest. Themes for the 2003 and 2004 meeting were Adult Literacy/Non-Formal Education and Inclusive Education respectively.

Fourteen countries from the sub-region are regularly invited to participate in the annual meeting of the National EFA Coordinators. These include: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Korea (Republic of), Korea (DPR), Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam. In 2005, invitation will be extended to Member States from South Asia as well.

The focus of the 2005 meeting will be on Early Childhood Care and Education and planning for a Regional Mid-Decade Assessment.

Early Childhood Care and Education
The importance of targeting children prior to primary school age in order to reach Education for All was recognised in the World Declaration of Education for All agreed upon in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 which stated that "learning starts at birth". Despite different international agencies using different terminology in regards to programs targeting early childhood, focus on early childhood in EFA was reconfirmed and strengthened in the Dakar EFA Framework for Action a decade later. All participants unanimously agreed upon the importance of "expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children."
This goal requires a holistic approach: integrating health, nutrition and psycho-social stimulation; providing opportunities for exploration and active learning, and providing the social and emotional care and nurturing a child needs in order to realize its potential and play an active role in its family and its community.

Despite plausible progress in the region, the EFA Global Monitoring report 2005 gives an account of tens of millions of primary school aged children in Asia who still are out of school. There are several factors contributing to this challenging situation, and UNESCO is working on different strategies to support governments reaching Education for All by 2015. One such approach is through the introduction of early childhood programmes to serve as a bridge into primary education.

In addition to having a profound importance for young children's development, quality Early Childhood Care and Education programmes are an effective strategy in making vulnerable and disadvantaged children more likely to enroll in primary school, reducing their likelihood of having to repeat or drop out of school prior to completion. UNESCO's programmes are targeting both children and their caregivers (parents, siblings, family members, the community, etc) in order to make children ready for school and teachers and headmasters ready to make schools able accommodate the diverse needs of all children.

As the EFA Global Monitoring Report Team prepares for the 2007 report - with special focus on ECCE - this meeting of National EFA Coordinators gives opportunity to provide clear and focused commentary on the state of ECCE in the region.

EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (2006-2007)
Looking back at the major reviews of EFA in Amman, Jordan, in 1995, the regional EFA 2000 Assessment and the World Education Forum, it is clear that in order to achieve EFA, it is necessary for countries to continue to review and reassess accomplishments and remaining challenges. While the goals and targets set in Dakar are regularly monitored through the EFA Global Monitoring Report, periodic assessment is critical to resetting targets and plans for achievement. The annual EFA Global Monitoring Report has provided the world with internationally comparable statistics and general analysis, but it has limitations in its usefulness at a national level. Therefore, in looking forward to 2010 and then to 2015, it is essential to undertake a Mid-Decade Assessment of national and regional progress towards the goals of EFA. Whether for EFA, PRSP, MDG, EDPs, CCA/UNDAF or CDF, without data and analysis, informed policy discourse and decision-making are simply impossible. With timely, relevant and reliable data in hand, EFA National Coordinators and Taskforces will be better served to support intelligent and systematic assessment of the past, monitoring of the present and planning for the future.

II. Objectives
The overall purpose of the meeting is to share updates within the sub-region on EFA planning and implementation at the country level and explore future strategies and mechanisms to support the challenges faced by National EFA Coordinators and Taskforces. The specific objectives are to:

1) Provide regional input into the 2007 EFA Global Monitoring Report with focus on Early Childhood Care and Education through discussions, national presentations and dialogue;

2) Present and discuss the regional implications of the 2006 EFA Global Monitoring Report on Literacy;
3) Introduce the National and Regional Mid-Decade Assessment;
4) Seek input and endorsement on the format, modality, timeline and output of National and Regional EFA Mid-Decade Assessment Reports;
5) Develop national action plans for capacity building towards the national assessments; and
6) Update National Coordinators on the latest developments in the EFA movement.

III. Format
The National EFA Coordinators’ meeting will be held concurrently to a planning and capacity building workshop towards the preparation of a regional EFA Mid-Decade Assessment. In this regard, heads of statistical and planning divisions within the Ministries of Education across the region will be invited to attend some sessions with the EFA National Coordinators, and likewise, National Coordinators will be asked to join in planning sessions for the Mid-Decade Assessment. The medium for communication for the EFA National Coordinators’ Meeting will be English.

IV. Organisers
Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics Unit (AIMS), Regional Office for the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
Asia-Pacific Programme for Education for All Unit (APPEAL), Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education

V. Participants
The participants of the workshop will include:
- National EFA Coordinators, (one per country)
- MOE-nominated education officers, East and South East Asia (one per country)
- Head of Education Statistics Division, MOE (one per country)
- Head of Education Planning Division, MOE (one per country)
- Education staff, UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, UNESCO Bangkok
- Education Officers, UNESCO Field Offices, Asia and Pacific Region
- Regional UNESCO Institute for Statistics Officers
- Programme Specialists, UNESCO Headquarters
- Members of the Thematic Working Group on EFA, including:
  - Representatives of regional and international NGOs and donor agencies
  - Representatives from regional and country level UN agencies supporting EFA initiatives
- UNICEF Education Officers, East Asia Region
- EFA Global Monitoring Report Team

VI. Preparatory Work by Participants
- National EFA Coordinators, East and South-East Asia:
  - Prepare a brief presentation on the status of EFA and the challenges and successes in implementing Early Childhood Care and Education programmes (see guidelines for presentation)
VII. Time and Venue
24-29 October 2005

Windsor Hotel
8-10 Sukhumvit Soi 18-20
Sukhumvit Road
Klongtoey
Bangkok 10110, Thailand

VIII. Tentative Workshop Programme

Proposed topics:

- Update of National EFA Monitoring and Implementation
- 2006 and 2007 EFA Global Monitoring Reports
  - Literacy
  - Early Childhood Care and Education
- Regional and National Mid-Decade Assessment

Modalities:

- Plenary/small group presentations
- Round table
- Country-led discussions

For further information, please contact:

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