Terms of Reference for the Regional Thematic Working Group on Education for All

1. Background:
At the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000, the international community reaffirmed its vision of Education for All through the drafting and signing of The Dakar Framework.

This framework committed signatories to the attainment of six goals with focus on early childhood care and education, quality primary education, life-long learning, adult literacy and gender equity and equality. The framework also asserted that regional activities in support of national plans and strategies should be based on “existing regional and sub-regional organizations, networks and initiatives”. The regional and sub-regional EFA forums were to be linked with, and accountable to, national EFA forums. Functions of the regional and sub-regional bodies were meant to include policy co-ordination, technical co-operation, monitoring for accountability and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned. In this regard, a number of UN Agencies and organizations in East and Southeast Asia undertook activities to support and promote EFA and hence there is a need to harmonise different agency efforts at national, sub-regional and regional levels and to enhance possibilities for joint projects as well as for regular exchange of information on EFA activities.

The EFA goals were further linked to national and international development frameworks in September 2000 when 189 nations came together at the United Nations Millennium Summit and endorsed the Millennium Declaration, which incorporated two of the goals of EFA.

Following the World Education Forum, UNESCO Bangkok continued to support the regional Member States by conducting regular regional meetings of National EFA Coordinators, with direct links to the TWG on EFA, including partner agencies and experts in order to support planning and implementation of EFA by learning from others’ experiences sharing technical advice as necessary.

Now with EFA National Action Plans in place (or soon to be in place) in most countries, the National EFA Coordinators’ meeting and meetings of the TWG on EFA has shifted its focus to provide support and assistance in EFA implementation, monitoring and in the continuing process of plan revision towards the achievement of EFA.

1 In the same period of time, a Regional Co-ordination Meeting held in Bangkok in April 2000, decided to abolish the fourteen Sub-committees set up under the Regional Inter Agency Committee for Asia and the Pacific (RICAP) and to constitute Thematic Working Groups (TWG) as a regional co-ordination mechanism. These would focus on collaborative activities, as a follow up to global conferences that were results-based and time-bound.

UNESCO Bangkok requested a separate TWG on EFA in early 2001. A decision was made to include this TWG on EFA by the UN Heads of Agency Meeting (HOAM) held in May 2001. The UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education would serve as the Chair and act as a Secretariat of the TWG. UNICEF-EAPRO and ESCAP would serve as Co-Chairs.

2 Goal 2: the achievement of universal primary education by 2015 and Goal 3: the elimination of gender disparity at all levels of education.
2. **Goal:**
The goal of the TWG on EFA is to support the achievement of the goals of Education for All in UN Member States throughout the region by 2015.

3. **Functions:**
   (a) **Information sharing:**
   To promote information sharing among members and other organizations concerning their activities in the implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action

   (b) **Establishing priority areas for cooperation and potential joint programme responses:**
   1) To identify and prioritize programme actions where a regional response of the United Nations System and its partners would add value to the follow-up to the Dakar Framework for Action. 2) To promote joint programmes, projects and activities in these priority areas and, as deemed necessary, to raise funds for these joint activities, and to coordinate with other EFA mechanisms to promote joint activities, projects and programmes. In this respect the EFA Flagship Programmes can be used as a suitable framework in designing such joint activities. The Flagship Programmes are:
   
   i. United Nations Decade on Literacy
   ii. United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI)
   iii. The Initiative on Early Childhood
   iv. The Initiative on Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis
   v. The Inter-agency Initiative FRESH: Focusing Resources on Effective School Health
   vi. The Special Initiative on the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education
   vii. The Inter-agency Initiative on Teachers and Quality of Education
   viii. The Inter-agency Initiative on EFA and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Towards Inclusion
   ix. The Inter-agency Initiative on Education for People in Rural Areas

   (c) **Dissemination of innovative/good practices and lessons:**
   To identify best practices in EFA in the Asia-Pacific region and promote dissemination, sustainability, and creative replication of such innovative practices in other local and national circumstances;

   (d) **Others:**
   To assist individual countries and their national EFA Forums/Task Forces to implement, monitor, assess, allocate resources, and report on the status of actualising NAPs.

   To undertake joint activities to build on new or existing partnerships, for instance, on child labour, skills development and promoting decent and productive work for youth. The linkages with child labour can be connected to the Global Inter-Agency Task Force on EFA and Child Labour which is expected to be formalized in Beijing during the November 2005 EFA High-Level Group.

   To coordinate with the inter-agency task force on the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development at the regional level as launched in 2005.
To coordinate with other Thematic Working Groups in the UN system concerned with education, to contribute to the production of CCA/UNDAF and PRSPs, and to monitor programmes of the agencies under the UN system in implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action.

To assist in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

4. **Organization:**
   - The UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (Bangkok) will serve as Chair and secretariat of the TWG on Education for All effective from October 2005.
   - The convening committee will be formed consisting of UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO and UNESCAP.
   - The Chair rotation will be determined at subsequent meetings of the TWG.
   - The TWG will meet as often as necessary, but at least three times per year.
   - The core participants of the TWG on Education for All include: FAO, ILO, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNEP, UNIFEM and UNESCO. The TWG will open participation to representatives of other concerned UN agencies, intergovernmental bodies, NGOs, and bilateral and multilateral agencies, as appropriate.
   - The TWG will report on its activities and recommendations at the scheduled Regional Coordination Meetings.
   - Each member shall be represented in the working group by its head and/or designated focal point. Cost of participation will be met by each participating agency.

5. **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
   (a) The TWG will routinely assess its organization and functioning and adjust as necessary.
   (b) A more detailed assessment of the TWG’s relevance and effectiveness will be conducted prior to the completion of two years.
   (c) The report of findings from the routine and detailed assessments will be presented to the RCM.