Opening Speech by Mme. Vibeke Jensen, UNESCO Representative to Viet Nam and Head of UNESCO Hanoi Office

Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuong, EFA National Coordinator, Ministry of Education and Training,

Journalists and Media Representatives from South-East Asia,

Partners for EFA Global Action Week 2007 in Viet Nam,

Ladies and Gentleman, and Colleagues from the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok

It is my pleasure on behalf of UNESCO Hanoi to welcome you all to Viet Nam, and in particular to welcome you to this workshop on “Media Training on Education for All” for South East Asia. A workshop, which I hope, will have great impact throughout the sub-region and will help to strengthen and further push the achievement of the Education for All goals.

Education of good quality is a basic human right for all people. This right is mandated in several international Conventions and Declarations, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the World Declaration on Education for All and reconfirmed in the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals.

The realization of the Right to Education through the achievement of the broad global and national goals outlined in the Conventions and Declarations is the responsibility and duty of all. And it is a significant challenge for all of us.

Governments are primarily responsible for the provision of education of good quality. Parents, families and communities play a key role in ensuring children are ready to go to school and in supporting their participation and learning.

International organizations, in particular UNESCO, provide financial and technical support and monitor the progress made towards achieving the goals.

As media practitioners you also play a key role in upholding this right by maintaining and strengthening public awareness about education, for monitoring and reporting on issues related to education, and for providing an objective perspective on the realities in the education sector in your country.

UNESCO recognizes that the mass media have enormous capacity and potential for assisting with the bridging of gaps within societies and among cultures through the sharing of information and creating a public awareness on critical issues such as education.

I have noted that there are a growing number of journalists who are increasingly aware of the positive role they can play in promoting a better understanding of burning social issues. Building on the expertise gained in the area of media for peace, UNESCO will continue to assist
with the promotion of partnerships for co-productions by leading media channels, to assemble inventories of good experiences and best practices in education, and encourage reflection on vital issues through world wide networks that reach out to journalists in the countries.

Over the next three days, through dialogue with colleagues and experts, through field visits and hands-on practical activities, we aim at providing you with knowledge and skills to report on key issues in education in your countries.

We hope and expect that while you are in Viet Nam, you will gain interesting insights into educational issues, which may cut across national boundaries and relate to your own national experiences.

Let me finish by introducing my colleagues from UNESCO Bangkok Mr Ko-Chih Tung, Regional Advisor and Chief of the Assessment Information Monitoring and Statistics Unit in UNESCO Bangkok and his team, who will be the key facilitators and trainers of this workshop.

I am sure that they look forward to building on the wealth of expertise within this room and to develop together the strengths and abilities necessary to meet the challenges which lie ahead.

I would like to give a special thanks to the Viet Nam Ministry of Education and Training for support in organising this workshop and particularly the field visits planned for tomorrow. I’m confident that you will find the visits of great interest and of educational value.

Finally, I would like to thank and further encourage you the participants for putting education on the media agenda, and contribute to the upholding of the rights to education throughout the region.

I look forward to seeing you all this evening at the welcome reception, where I hope to have the chance to meet you personally.

Thank you and best wishes for a fruitful workshop.