



**Statement by Ms. Churairat Sangboonnum  
Deputy Permanent Secretary of  
the Ministry of Education of Thailand**

**On the Result of the Asia and Pacific Regional  
Preparatory Meeting for  
the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review**

**At the 2011 ECOSOC High Level Segment  
Geneva, 4-8 July 2011**

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*Report by  
Ms Churairat Sangboonnum, Deputy Permanent Secretary,  
Ministry of Education, Thailand  
on the Asia Pacific Ministerial Meeting - Education and the Millennium Development  
Goals  
to the 2011 Economic and Social Council Annual Ministerial Review  
Monday, 4 July 2011, 11.30 - 12.00 hrs.  
Geneva, Switzerland*

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Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to represent Thailand as host country of the Asia-Pacific Regional Annual Ministerial Preparatory Meeting. I would like to report its key messages as follows.

On 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2011, a one-day, Asia Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting on "Education and the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals" took place in Jomtien - Pattaya, Thailand. It was organized in collaboration with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Thailand. The venue was selected in order to commemorate the Twentieth Anniversary of the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All. It was organized back to back with the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the High Level Group on Education for All. Ministers of Education, high officials together with representatives from the region as well as international government and non-government development organizations attended the meeting.

The overall regional outlook for reaching many of the MDGs is positive. Education has played a vital role in keeping the region on track for lifting people out of poverty and improving quality of life. The Asia Pacific region has seen a significant rise in primary school enrolments to an average 95%. In addition, gender parity has been achieved or is on track at

all levels of education. However, these achievements make considerable disparities both among and within countries in the region. How to improve retention and completion rates for both primary and secondary level students as well as increase the average number of years schooling are among the continuing challenges faced. Raising levels of attainment would enhance employability and increase the earning capacity of individuals as well as help drive the much needed innovation leading to economic growth in the region.

The meeting also considered the direct links between education and progress towards the MDG health-related targets. It is widely known that girls who are educated are more likely to seek professional pre and post natal health care services. They are also more likely to promote healthcare and nutrition for the physical and mental well-being of their children. However, in the Asia Pacific region access to and the quality of services provided varies considerably and progress toward the MDG targets with regard to improving maternal health, reducing child mortality, addressing malnourishment and providing basic sanitation have been particularly slow. The region's least developed countries lag seriously behind and in all countries there were marked differences between urban and rural areas.

On a positive note, the prevalence of TB, malaria and other diseases has reduced significantly as more people are equipped with the necessary knowledge to protect themselves and their families. The region remains challenged, however, by a high incidence of HIV and even in countries where progress had been made, infection rates among the young are now rising. This highlights an urgent need to address young people's right to comprehensive sexual and reproductive education services.

With regard to the promotion of sustainable development for better management and conservation of environmental resources, the region's loss of forest cover and level of carbon emissions require urgent attention. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) would help raise region-wide awareness. Beyond the integration of ESD in formal school curricula, it was agreed that informal education and lifelong learning have a major role to play in preparing people as responsible citizens with the necessary knowledge, values and skills to cope with today's and tomorrow's challenges.

Concrete actions and policy measures were included in the Jomtien Statement from the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the High Level Group on Education for All. Referring back to the Addis Ababa Declaration, the need for national governments to allocate at least 6% GNP or not less than 20% public expenditure minimum to education and to ensure cost effective use of resources was reiterated. Also highlighted was the fact that education financing should be strengthened through existing south-south and triangular cooperation as well as innovative partnerships between public and private sector.

While strongly supporting continued efforts to tackle disadvantage, discrimination and the right to education for all, national governments were urged to ensure that their education systems support the development of quality lifelong learning opportunities from the early years throughout adulthood. Effective resource mobilization and the development of relevant curricula were identified as crucial factors. These could be achieved through participatory approaches with civil society and other stakeholders, including youth, contributing to quality improvements.

Emphasis was also given to the need to attract and provide qualified and motivated teachers.

On final note, Thailand would like to thank UN DESA for entrusting us to host this important Regional Annual Ministerial Review Meeting. May I also express my sincere gratitude to UNESCO for its leading role and the strong support to all education activities, particularly the education for all.

May I thank you all for your attention.

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