4th Asia Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED2030)

Transforming Learning

Meeting the Skills Demand to Achieve the SDGs in the Asia-Pacific

Meeting Report

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List of Acronyms

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation		NGO	Non-governmental Organization
APMED	Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030		NQF	National Qualifications Framework
ASPBAE	Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education		PIAAC	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
CAMFEBA	Cambodia Federation of Employers and Business Association		PPP	Public-Private Partnerships
CLC	Community Learning Center		PWD	Persons With Disabilities
COEL	Centre of Excellence for Leather Skill Bangladesh Limited		QA	Quality Assurance
CSO	Civil Society Organization		QF	Qualification Framework
DCCF	Digital Citizenship Competency Framework		QMS	Quality Management System
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development		SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
EMIS	Education Management Information System		SDF	SAARC Development Funds
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development		SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
GAML	Global Alliance to Measure Assessment		SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
GCED	Global Citizenship Education		SFFA	SAARC Framework for Action
GEM	Global Education Monitoring		STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
HE	Higher Education		TCG	Technical Cooperation Group
HLPF	High Level Political Forum		TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
IAEG-SDG	Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators		TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies		UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
ILO	International Labour Organization		UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
IQE	Inclusive Quality Education		UN	United Nations
ITU	International Telecommunication Union		UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
KSAV	Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes and Values		UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
LDC	Less Developed Country		UNICEF EAPRO	United Nations Children's Fund East Asia and Pacific Regional Office

MDES	Ministry of Digital Economy	UNICEF ROSA	United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for South Asia	
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey	VNR	Voluntary National Review	
MOE	Ministry of Education			

Part 1 of the 4th APMED2030, 12-13 July 2018

Introduction

The 4th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED2030) was co-organized by UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) and the Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA), on 12-14 July 2018 at the Landmark Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand. Focusing on SDG Target 4.3 (equitable access to TVET and tertiary education) and target 4.4 (relevant skills for work) and exploring progress and challenges towards implementing and monitoring skills development and outcomes through formal, non-formal and informal education, the 4th APMED2030 provided a convening platform to enhance Member States' understanding and capacity to implement, monitor and report on SDG Targets 4.3 and 4.4.

This meeting report was developed to summarize the in-depth discussions and analyses of the regional capacity needs and priority action areas for dissemination to key stakeholders. The report comprises a summary of 15 sessions in line with the meeting agenda, capturing the salient points of the presentations, discussions and relevant questions raised during each session.

Part 1 of the 4th APMED involved a two-day meeting of technical sessions to discuss policies on and challenges faced with regard to SGD Targets 4.3 and 4.4 from the perspectives of equitable access, quality and relevance. The meeting was conducted through plenary sessions and concurrent breakout sessions for focused discussions and sharing organized around sub-themes identified under each target.

Day 1

Session 1: Opening Ceremony

The opening remarks, given by Ms. Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO, Ms. Karin Hulshof, Regional Director of UNICEF EAPRO, Ms. Watanaporn Ra-Ngubtook, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education of Thailand and Mr. Yosuke Kobayashi, Deputy Secretary General of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, all reinforced the key points that were envisioned to be discussed during the course of the meeting. One such point being that strengthening of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education is considered a priority as it will have significant impact on the economic development of countries.

Ms. Giannini emphasized that education plays a key role in building sustainable, inclusive and resilient societies and has reciprocal linkages with almost all other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The development of TVET and higher education would have significant impact on the economic, technological and social advancement of countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Ms. Giannini highlighted that the SDGs recognize the urgent need to bridge the worlds of education and employment and ensure a solid educational foundation of information and communications technology (ICT), sustainability and entrepreneurship skills as well as 'soft skills' for young people to become more resilient and adaptable to rapid change.

Ms. Hulshof highlighted that in order to support adolescents and youth have better lives through improved education and training opportunities at technical secondary and higher education levels, the 4th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED) is aiming at accelerating positive trends and policies to build better education and skills development options. To improve the efficacy of joint efforts, stakeholders should make equity the first priority, invest smartly, and continue building education systems that support the holistic development of children and youth.

Ms. Ra-Ngubtook warmly welcomed all participants representing the host country and affirmed Thailand's effort to strengthen the regional collaboration to achieve SDG4 targets. With a brief explanation on SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4, Mr. Kobayashi emphasized the importance of upgrading vocational education and development of high-quality tertiary education, which has contributed to Japan's astonishing economic growth. He also

affirmed Japan's commitment to share the knowledge accumulated thus far to contribute to the development of education and economy in the Asia-Pacific.

Session 2: Setting the Stage

This session provided a regional and global perspective on SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4, as well as set the stage for the audience to learn, share and deliberate on how to shape skills development across the Asia-Pacific region. Moderated by Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, Director of UNESCO Bangkok, Mr. Borhene Chakroun, Chief of the Section for Youth, Literacy and Skills Development in UNESCO and Mr. Ahmed Shafeeu, Minister of State for Education of the Maldives shared their knowledge as keynote speakers.

Mr. Chakroun shared a global overview on 4.3 and 4.4 and emphasized that policy development focus should be on access to and outcomes of education. This also implied a crucial policy link with SDG 8, to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all. Mr. Chakroun also highlighted that high youth unemployment is a serious issue in the region, especially for women. As growth and high employment levels cannot ensure quality of jobs, inequality is therefore a key issue and policies should make economies truly inclusive. Sustained growth and urbanization lend additional urgency to the implementation of public policies that address inequality, poverty and unemployment.

Moreover, the labour market is evolving rapidly and becoming more polarized, calling for new skills. Non-routine and interpersonal skills are becoming more relevant and are crucial additions when reforming education. In light of this, individualization of education programs and the need for flexible and personalized learning pathways is growing. Reforms should focus on how to include these new soft skills and guarantee lifelong learning for everybody. Lack of skills remains a great challenge and also a constraint on economic activity.

Based on global and regional trends in TVET, related SDG targets aim to respond to changing skills needs. Four key TVET policy measures were emphasized: 1) Enhanced anticipation and assessment of labour market changes, including measuring skills mismatches, skills forecasting, and using open and real-time data, 2) developing well-informed quality learning pathways, including qualifications and curriculum frameworks, 3) strengthening of governance, including whole government, public-private partnerships and enabling more output-based financing and 4) closer monitoring of results. Mr. Chakroun also mentioned that the UNESCO Strategy for TVET 2016-21 prioritized fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship, promoting equity and gender equality, and facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies.

Mr. Ahmed Shafeeu shared the Keynote "Transforming Learning – Meeting the skills demand to achieve sustainable development in Asia-Pacific". The technological revolution has further highlighted the need to develop and update skills. Therefore, lifelong learning perspectives are required and can be supported by offering trainings and integrating ICT into the skills development sectors. Asia Pacific countries are transforming their TVET and higher education sectors in order to address unemployment and economic growth but often meet a skills mismatch due to weak coordination between education systems and the labour market. Therefore, countries that have developed expertise should share practices and modalities at the regional level.

Session 3: Taking stock of innovative policies and practices to achieve the SDG4 skills targets in Asia- Pacific

This plenary panel discussion highlighted some of the innovative policies and practices in the region that are currently in place to address skills development. With Ms. Urmila Sarkar, Regional Education Advisor at UNICEF ROSA moderating, Ms. Panudda Boonpala, Deputy Regional Director from the International Labour Organization (ILO), Ms. Margarete Sachs-Israel, Chief Programme Coordinator from UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), Ms. Daiana Beitler, Regional Director of Philanthropies Asia from Microsoft and Mr. Sudharma Yoonaidharma, Dean of the School of Law from the University of Thai Chamber of Commerce shared their perspectives and experience in this regard.

Considering the actions taken to prepare youth for future work and provide them a wide range of career options, gains have been achieved but a more solid foundation on 4.3 and 4.4 is needed. Young people are expected to enter the workforce with a mix of foundational, transferrable TVET skills. Jobs, education and skills development must be prioritised at the national-level and in international development cooperation but the challenges of ensuring marginalized people benefit from ICT/TVET still exist.

Ms. Boonpala indicated that the key drivers of change for innovative skills development include demographic changes such as aging societies, globalization and growing economies, technological innovation and climate change. The building blocks of innovative policies to promote skills development and that implicate school-to-work transition include: 1) Access to basic education and acquisition of basic competencies, 2) bridging education to employment by involving relevant stakeholders in policy/program design to reduce skills mismatch, 3) promoting self-employment through entrepreneurial skill courses, and 4) partnering with private sectors to encourage workplace learning such as internships.

Ms. Sachs-Israel reiterated the concept of Lifelong Learning and emphasized that all people have the right to learn throughout life. To address changing skills needs, people need to continuously adapt and update their skills through re-training opportunities, the provision of which requiring inter-ministerial dialogue and multi-sectoral approaches. Lifelong learning is beyond school education, higher education (HE) and TVET, and covers non-formal and informal education. Therefore, providing pathways and recognition of skills or competencies gained is vital.

Ms. Beitler introduced Microsoft's regional outreach, which aims to empower every single person to achieve more, its philanthropic section working closely with multiple stakeholders. Targeting youth, pre-careers, incumbent workers, specifically in underserved and under-represented sectors, and career changers who are at risk of being displaced by technology, Microsoft focused on digital skills and computer science education. In support of youth employment, Microsoft also works on leveraging data from platforms to identify skills in demand in labour markets, creating awareness on skill needs and providing access to training opportunities using public-private partnership, skills matching, and monitoring and evaluating initiatives.

Mr. Yoonaidharma shared that in Thailand, the Ministry of Digital Economy (MDES) was established and governmental investment has been put into developing digital economy infrastructure so that technology can reach every village.. Considering today's rapid technology disruption and ageing society, people need to be retrained for labour market re-entry and the exclusion of the poor/rural population from digital expansion should be prevented. Digital Community Learning Centres (CLCs) are also being built to serve the community and allow self-learning for skills upgrade through open-access information.

Points were raised that lifelong learning is crucial for all age groups to support globally-relevant skills upgrade. Innovative strategies and partnerships with different stakeholders are required to ensure inclusion of the marginalized. Mismatch of skills needs to be addressed and requires state support to ensure a smooth transition from school to work. Participants from Bangladesh, Thailand, Nepal and Tajikistan shared the stages of enhancing TVET education in their countries.

To prioritize equity, inclusion and gender equality to achieve SDG 4.3 and 4.4, UIL emphasized the evolution of lifelong learning towards a more holistic skills-based perspective with a humanistic approach based on country contexts. Different status of promoting lifelong learning in countries, including Cambodia, Japan, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam, were mentioned. In their efforts to encourage under-represented groups to utilise technology, Microsoft faces challenges in promoting STEM education to girls, having role models for young women, involving people with disabilities, and increasing online access or providing offline training courses. Thailand shared two examples where they successfully reached out to youth, by providing the right environment, introducing champions and promoting inter-generational learning. ILO presented the opportunities they provided for people to learn income-earning skills, which fostered local economic growth and provided jobs in remote areas.

Session 4: Plenary: Introduction to the concurrent thematic sessions

This session provided a glance at the importance of incorporating crosscutting themes into SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4, as well as analysing the emerging issues and opportunities in TVET and higher education. Mr. Francisco Benavides, Regional Education Advisor at UNICEF EAPRO briefly introduced the importance of some of the crosscutting themes that play a role in achieving the SDG targets, namely: inclusion and equity, digital skills; school-to-work transition, qualification frameworks to promote mobility, and Education for Sustainable Development. These themes were organized into five breakout sessions and participants were free to attend the thematic session of their choice based on their interests and concerns.

Session 5: Concurrent Thematic Sessions: Strategies to operationalize Targets 4.3 and 4.4 to meet skills demand

This session comprised five concurrent sessions in which participants shared strategies to operationalize Targets 4.3 and 4.4 to meet skills demand according to the following five different themes.

Session 5.1: Learning in the Second Decade: Ensuring Inclusion & Equity

The session aimed to identify policy priorities to achieve targets 4.3 and 4.4 while reducing exclusion and improving equity of adolescents and young women in rural and remote areas, as well as those with disabilities. Facilitated by Mr. Francisco Benavides, Regional Education Advisor of UNICEF EAPRO and Ms. Urmila Sarkar, Regional Education Advisor of UNICEF ROSA, the four speakers, Ms. Nofriza Yesmita, representing Asosiasi Pendamping Perempuan Usaha Kecil - ASPPUK (Association for Women in Small Micro Business Assistance) of Indonesia, Ms. Manisha Namdeo Gangode, representing Abhivyakti Media Foundation of India, Dr. Md. Mahmud-Ul-Hoque, Additional Secretary of the Secondary and Higher Secondary Division in the Ministry of Education of Bangladesh and Dr. Kraiyos Patrawart, Assistant Managing Director of the Equitable Education Fund of Thailand, highlighted the challenges and shared initiatives addressing exclusion of these marginalized groups in secondary education and TVET in their countries.

Key issues included limited access to education and high dropout rates for young girls and women in rural communities due to various barriers. Some challenges encountered were including students and teachers with disabilities, and the implementation and adaptation of existing policies, considering ethnic languages and local cultures. Social media, if well-utilized, can increase the impact of evidence-based advocacy through story-telling, blogs and websites, to encourage social movement and enlarge network of actions.

A consensus was raised that in order to ensure inclusion and equity, sex-disaggregated data and reliable data collection tools on disadvantaged groups should be collected for informed policy-making. Participants also agreed that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sectors should engage in policy dialogue more, and that financing for inclusive education should be system-based instead of project-based. Follow up actions were suggested that the Ministry of Education (MOE) should consider multi-level collaboration with their United Nations (UN) country team, other line ministries, the private sector and other stakeholders on data collection on marginalized children. Curriculum, teaching and learning materials, assessment as well as school infrastructure should accommodate learners' different needs, and the education system should be more responsive to individual's learning needs.

Session 5.2: Deconstructing Digital Skills: Illusion vs. Reality

The session objective was to explore diverse views on digital skills acquisition and its role in education and inclusive social and economic development. It identified common factors in successful policy interventions where improved digital skills can help narrow the gap for the most marginalized, and blaze the trail towards lifelong learning and decent jobs attainment. This session was facilitated by Ms. Jonghwi Park, Programme Specialist in ICT in Education from UNESCO Bangkok.

Through polling, participants' common understanding of digital skills were computers, Internet, programming, technology, convenience and possibilities. Statistics on access to ICT from the International Telecommunication

Union (ITU) indicated the persistent gender gap among Internet users is wider in less developed countries (LDCs) compared to the developed countries.

Three cases were presented afterwards: by Ms. Siriporn Sukpool, from The Redemptorist Foundation for People with Disability, by Dr. Kamolrat Intararat, Executive Director of the Research Center of Communication and Development Knowledge Management, and by Mr. Yeshey Lhendup, Deputy Chief Program Officer of the School Planning and Coordination Division of the Bhutan Ministry of Education. Firstly, in a dialogue with a person with disabilities (PWD) who uses internet and social media tools to communicate with and search for information to assist other PWDs, Ms. Sukpool emphasized the huge convenience of ICT. With regard to national policy, Mr. Lhendup presented Bhutan's ICT in Education policy, specifically its ICT Literacy Curriculum, which covered 4 domains: 1) technology operations and concepts, 2) communication and collaboration, 3) digital citizenship, and 4) computational thinking. Lastly, a case of a regional competency framework emphasized that in view of the rapid development of ICT, digital citizens need a set of competencies that go beyond basic ICT technical skills. To address this, UNESCO Bangkok briefly presented the proposed Digital Citizenship Competency Framework (DCCF).

Following discussion of these cases, the key ways suggested to narrow the gap included the need to: 1) emphasize digital inclusion, 2) intentionally look at various types of learners including the marginalized and the elderly, and 3) start on a small scale and ensure the development of foundational ICT skills, at the formal, non-formal and informal sectors. There is a need to look into developing digital citizenship competencies, going beyond basic ICT skills towards safe, productive and responsible use of ICT. Strategies to implement the DCCF at ground-level should also be explored. After the session, participants were asked again whether digital skills narrow or widen the existing gaps and an improvement of 6% in response of "narrowing" was received.

Session 5.3: A Skilled Workforce for the Future: School-to-work transition

In this section, the presenters from diverse backgrounds shared their perspectives on challenges faced by learners and ways to help them make a smooth transition from school to the labour market. With facilitation by Mr. Julien Magnat, Skills and Employability Specialist from the ILO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, the speakers, comprising Mr. Md Shahadat Hossain, Principal of the Bogura Polytechnic Institute in Bangladesh, Ms. Sandra Damico, Vice-President of the Cambodia Federation of Employers and Business Association (CAMFEBA), Mr. Anand Singh, Regional Coordinator of Education International and Ms. Meenu Vadera, Executive Director of the Azad Foundation, shared their inputs.

The challenges commonly mentioned include: 1) quality education; 2) mechanisms of public-private partnership (PPP); 3) the focus on equity and inclusion in TVET; 4) work-based learning opportunities; and 5) investment in TVET teacher education and professional development. Quality education is key in equipping young people with both basic and globally-relevant skill sets through innovative pedagogy, curriculum, monitoring and standardized testing. Thus, governments need to expand access to TVET and tertiary education, reflecting local needs. To close the skills gaps, improving quality primary and secondary education for solid foundation skills is crucial, and approaches raised including introducing TVET earlier into school systems. Many agreed that engaging the private sector in the TVET sector would provide learners with more and better job opportunities. To strengthen and promote PPP, integrated approaches are needed to analyze labour market information and anticipate future skills needs. Increased investment is necessary to ensure teachers are well-trained and professionally qualified through the provision of pre-service training, continuous professional development and quality training strategies and resources. Governments need to develop quality standards and an accreditation system to ensure all TVET institutions meet with national quality standards.

Mr. Md Shahadat Hossain shared an example of the Centre of Excellence for Leather Skill Bangladesh Limited (COEL), which was to upscale an apprenticeship model among the selected industry members and offer employment opportunities to the poor, unskilled and unemployed. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in the Philippines shared an experience on running a TESDA-Women Centre where an advisory group interviews and advises women, especially those from marginalized communities, on their career and potential occupations.

Comments were raised that a flexible and strong educational foundation, coordination with multiple stakeholders and professionalism are necessary to make a smooth school-to-work transition. Furthermore, when discussing the importance of supporting marginalized and disadvantaged groups in rural areas to gain industry-relevant knowledge and skills, the focus should shift from issues of rural-to-urban migration and skills gaps to transformation of rural areas.

Session 5.4: Developing and Strengthening Qualifications Frameworks to Promote Mobility and Employability in Asia-Pacific

This interactive session highlighted lessons learnt on development and implementation of national qualification frameworks in Asia-Pacific. The aim was to promote effective quality assurance systems in tertiary education. Chaired by Mr. Libing Wang, Chief of Section for Educational Innovation and Skills Development of UNESCO Bangkok, three short case studies were presented by Ms. Lakhana Dockiao, Director of the Bureau of International Cooperation Strategy under the Office of the Higher Education Commission of Thailand, Ms. Chi Dao Hien, Senior expert from the Ministry of Education and Training in Viet Nam and Mr. Sang Hoon Bae, Processor and Director of the Center for Innovative Higher Education at Sungkyunkwan University in the Republic of Korea providing insights and practical examples.

Points were raised that the Asia-Pacific region has moved from a 'massification phase' to a clearer focus, and more investment is needed to boost quality in tertiary education particularly in higher education. As quality assurance is fundamental in building mutual trust in the regional qualifications, more regional awareness on the importance of quality assurance in higher education and TVET needs to be raised. Growing emphasis has been put on exploring and connecting the 'quality dots' among different ministries and stakeholders, which requires all partners to promote and maintain quality. There is also a need for greater linkages between quality assurance, qualifications frameworks and internationalization/mobility issues. Given the shift from input- to outcome-driven quality assurance, more focus should be placed on learning outcomes. This will help to engage various stakeholders and find a holistic approach to build learning pathways, improve employability and enhance lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Session 5.5: Education for Sustainable Development as a Key Enabler of SDGs

In this session, panellists and participants discussed Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) playing a cross-cutting role as a key enabler of all SDGs. It also aimed to reflect on ESD's ability to promote linkages between different SDGs, and its role in contributing to targets 4.3 and 4.4. Moderated by Mr. Alexander Leicht, Chief of the Section of Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO, Ms. Danielle Cochrane, Secretary of Education of the Cook Islands Ministry of Education, Mr. Kazuhiro Yoshida, Professor of Hiroshima University and Vice-chair of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, Ms. Ethel Agnes Pascua Valenzuela, Deputy Director of Programme and Development, of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) shared their experiences and practices on implementing ESD in relation to the SDGs.

ESD provides knowledge, skills, attitudes and values (KSAV) to promote and achieve sustainable development. The key competencies of ESD such as systems thinking and critical thinking are essential for achieving quality learning outcomes and are prerequisites of all SDGs. Although it may be difficult to harmonize the SDGs, ESD can be used to address the conflicts between SDGs, and can be contextualized to each country, to respond to issues and meet the needs of the people based around national culture and identity. Moreover, skills development in higher education can produce responsible citizens. TVET can be repositioned to relate more to the concepts of ESD so as to empower learners to be more resilient and make informed choices in their career path. ESD can be used as a tool to develop skills inside and outside the classroom to reduce the disconnect between the skills that learners have and the skills needed for employment and decent jobs.

The panel discussed concrete practices of ESD and ways to scale up action in the Asia-Pacific region including: 1) contextualizing ESD concepts and practices to suit each country's needs, 2) respecting and utilizing traditional values and indigenous knowledge, 3) going beyond conventional ministerial boundaries to involve

more stakeholders, 4) documenting and sharing good practices, and 5) mainstreaming ESD in national curriculums and in teacher training.

Comments were raised that government bodies such as Ministries of Education are well-positioned to influence policies to incorporate ESD, and meetings like APMED can be opportunities to advocate for SDG incorporation into national policy plans. Meanwhile, as teachers' autonomy can be limited by standardized tests and large-scale assessments, the impact of policy adjustment on teachers should be considered. The definition of 'quality education' was also discussed.

Session 6: Plenary: Introduction to Sub-regional Working Groups

In this plenary, Ms. Maki Hayashikawa, Chief of the Section for IQE from UNESCO Bangkok provided a brief overview on the objectives of the next session whereby participants from the Member States would be divided into sub-regional working groups to discuss common issues pertaining to the implementation of SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4 The sub-regional working groups were formed as in the table below:

Sub regions	Countries
South & West Asia	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
Central Asia	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
Southeast Asia	Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor Leste, Viet Nam
East Asia	China, Korea (Republic of), Japan, Mongolia
Pacific Islands	Cook Islands, Kiribati, Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

Session 7: Concurrent Sub-regional Working Group Discussions: Understanding issues, challenges and opportunities of SDG 4.3 and 4.4

These concurrent working groups allowed Member States of each sub-region to discuss common issues, challenges and opportunities in understanding, localizing and implementing SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4. A facilitator and resource person were assigned to each working group to moderate the discussion and address any technical question. Participants were divided into the different sub-regions, namely Central Asia, East Asia, South and West Asia, the Pacific, and Southeast Asia, to reflect on the cross-cutting themes of 1) Equity and Inclusion, 2) Digital Skills, 3) School-to-work Transitions, 4) Qualifications Frameworks and Mobility, and 5) ESD as presented in the earlier sessions of the day. They highlighted common policy and implementation challenges that were later developed into sub-regional capacity building proposals and regional action plans. Below is a synthesis of the key points raised for the different thematic areas. All sub-regions underscored the need for better inter-agency coordination on programme implementation, increased political will and funding, and strengthened data collection and standardisation.

Area 1: Equity and Inclusion

All groups highlighted the need to improve access and quality of education for marginalised groups, especially for children with disabilities and female students. Central Asian countries reported on lack of initiatives and quality teachers for students with disabilities. Pacific countries emphasised the need to ensure quality infrastructure and safe learning environments while South and West Asia shared that the lack of female teachers, particularly in remote areas, affected girls' participation in post-primary education. East Asian countries highlighted the lack of access to quality education of children of lower socio-economic backgrounds and from rural areas. Southeast Asian nations cited a lack of education for migrant children and those in conflict zones.

A common recommendation was the need to improve the collection and standardisation of data of marginalised groups to facilitate policy implementation. Central Asian countries highlighted the need to devise a policy for greater accuracy of national-level data collection and suggested building a repository of success cases of effective inclusion of disabled students. Secondly, most regions recommended the provision of more loans for disadvantaged students, as well as grants for school- and agency-level capacity building. East Asia proposed loans for the rural poor students and those with special needs. In all groups, recommendations were made for grants to boost teachers' professional development and to develop inclusive educational facilities.

Area 2: Digital Skills

All groups stressed the need to strengthen the digital infrastructure and improve the use of ICT. East Asia, in particular, proposed boosting teachers' competencies in using and teaching digital skills, especially at the tertiary-level, and minimising the digital gap between developed and less developed regions. Another point of discussion was the role of digital media policies. Pacific countries advocated for governments to play a key role in monitoring and coordinating ICT policies and ensuring their relevancy and cost-effectiveness.

Area 3: School-to-work Transitions

A repeated theme amongst the groups was the mismatch of skills between school-leavers and the labour market. Central Asian countries noted their outdated and rigid TVET curriculum, while East Asian countries cited the lack of information they received on industry needs in terms of required skills and qualifications. Southeast Asian members shared the difficulty in teaching industry-relevant soft skills and recognising them in assessment frameworks. Consequently, increased stakeholder collaboration was repeatedly proposed with Pacific countries recommending closer cooperation between government bodies, industry, civil society organisations (CSOs) and schools in devising cost-effective TVET solutions. Countries also recommended rebalancing the educational focus to achieve relevant SDGs. East Asia put greater emphasis on soft skills development and entrepreneurship education while South and West Asian members emphasised the need for greater investment in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD).

Area 4: Qualifications Framework and Mobility

Most groups raised the issue of the lack of a standardised and nuanced National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Central Asian countries reported the lack of common understanding of NQF while Southeast Asia highlighted the capacity gap in NQF implementation. Some East Asian countries, which had ratified the 2011 Tokyo Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education shared that they were currently focusing on setting minimum standards for TVET training. A second point raised was the need for the NQF to account for mobility and transferability needs. To ensure labour mobility, Pacific countries recommended recognising prior and experiential learning from different countries while Southeast Asia highlighted the need for harmonisation between national, regional and international qualifications. South and West Asia also stressed the need for greater equivalency and linkage between general education and TVET.

Area 5: ESD

A key theme raised was the implementation of ESD into the education system. In Southeast Asia, though ESD is currently integrated into the curriculum, it is seen as too broad and there is a lack of a clear definition on school-level implementation. Similarly, some East Asian countries reported a lack of harmonisation between different regions on ESD curriculum. Both Pacific and South and West Asian countries raised the importance of promoting indigenous knowledge and skills as part of ESD. It was suggested that developed countries like Japan shared their best practices in promoting ESD. Many also reported challenges with monitoring and evaluation of ESD, citing a lack of clear direction and framework to measure ESD in relation to SDG4.3 and 4.4.

Day 2

Session 8: Plenary

In this first session of Day 2, the participants were treated to a viewing of a UNESCO Bangkok produced video titled: Education and Training in a Changing World: What skills do we need?

Session 9: Plenary Panel Discussion: Building new pathways in Asia and the Pacific

This panel session aimed to identify both holistic- and individual-oriented strategies for developing new learning pathways to improve employability and enhance lifelong learning opportunities. All four panellists, namely, Ms. Nani Zulminarni, President of the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), and Executive Director of PEKKA (Women-headed Household Empowerment) from Indonesia, Ms. Teri Balser, Professor and Dean of Learning and Teaching at the Faculty of Science and Engineering in Curtin University in Australia, Ms. Vau Peseta, Assistant Chief Executive Officer from the Ministry of Education, Sports & Culture in Samoa and Mr. Polpat Songthamjitti, CMO and Co-founder of GetLinks in Thailand, placed great emphasis on linking quality TVET and tertiary education, and ensuring relevancy of skill development efforts. This discussion was moderated by Mr. Borhene Chakroun, Chief of the Section for Youth, Literacy and Skills Development in UNESCO.

One key point of discussion was the sectoral adaptations needed to suit changing individual needs. Ms. Zulminarni suggested that the 1) framework of education, 2) contents and 3) approach would have to be adapted to promote lifelong learning and globally-relevant skills development. Ms. Balser highlighted that there was a need for a skills-based curriculum with credits being given for students' skills development. Mr. Songthamjitti believed that it was critical to not only advocate the importance of TVET education to obtain multi-sectoral support for sustainability, but to also create an 'adaptive talent community' which focuses on 1) jobs, 2) community, 3) skills and 4) mobility. Participants also discussed the important of fostering digital skills which are in demand today.

However, Ms. Peseta highlighted the key challenges faced including 1) an inadequate national and/or regional TVET competency framework, 2) the lack of distinction between the values of TVET and tertiary education, which impedes the former's significance and 3) ensuring sufficient and competent teaching capacity. To combat these issues, the recommendations put forth were to 1) move towards a more outputs-based approach and an upward-type of education structure that included micro-credentials, 2) promote the benefits of learning and 3) engage in women's empowerment in education. The proposed actions for operationalising, monitoring and reporting on SDG Targets 4.3, 4.4 and 4.7 included ensuring educational pathways are embedded in the early stages of students' lives and that students are given the opportunity to engage in different ways of learning to develop their talents fully. Recommendations at the national and regional level included supporting learners' capabilities and increasing stakeholder involvement.

Special session: Lifelong Learning: Policy Implications

This session presented a conceptual overview on the transformative potential of lifelong learning and shared experiences from selected countries. Moderated by Ms. Maki Hayashikawa, Chief of the Section for IQE from UNESCO Bangkok, the speakers, Ms. Margarete Sachs-Israel, Chief Programme Coordinator at UIL, Prof. Suwithida Charungkaittikul from the Department of Lifelong Education under the Faculty of Education at Chulalongkorn University and Mr. Keith Holmes, Programme Specialist in the Division for Education Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at UNESCO, advocated for a greater breadth of understanding on the meaning and policy implications of lifelong learning at the national level.

Ms. Sachs-Israel affirmed lifelong learning as a guiding principle for education, and that requiring a sector-wide approach and flexible learning pathways. To monitor the current status of lifelong learning, Singapore has employed Delors' Four Pillars of lifelong learning and utilised data from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). Prof. Charungkaittikul highlighted that CLCs have played a key role in lifelong learning. Furthermore, the regional aging population issue raised an important new target group for lifelong learning. Mr. Holmes utilised a comparison with the health sector to showcase how it worked in holistic ways. He also raised discussion points on how to understand and implement lifelong learning in different countries, and what success factors and barriers exist. A new research project on *Lifelong Learning: Policy Implications*, jointly led by UNESCO HQ and UNESCO UIL was also presented.

Comments were raised that lifelong learning needs to be made affordable given burdensome costs of self-funded learning in some countries. This implies promoting equitable and accountable utilisation of financial

resources especially from government/public sources for lifelong learning. Suggestions were made to tap on private enterprises' interests in reskilling and upskilling exiting and future employees as alternative sources of financing. Another point raised was that learning after basic and secondary education needs to be self-directed. Public funding for lifelong learning was largely seen as justifiable, with some participants recommending the provision of more opportunities by governments. Though lifelong learning is seen as imperative, its implementation is still a challenge.

Session 10: Plenary: Strategies and methodologies for monitoring skills and technical, vocational and tertiary education

Ms. Silvia Montoya, Director of UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) dealt with the global and thematic indicators of SDG4, its coverage and recent methodological developments for monitoring targets 4.3 and 4.4 in this session. Asia-Pacific countries have very different data coverage levels related to SDG4. Multiple and diverse data sources often imply methodological issues when analyzing data. In this context, the session highlighted the importance of benchmarking exercises. The Education 2030 Framework for Action clearly expresses the need for measuring and monitoring education processes at all levels not by creating a new monitoring system but by harmonizing the existing ones. Therefore, the central message of the session was the need for countries to set benchmarking exercises at all levels: national, regional and global.

However, there are several challenges: 1) fragmented management and inconsistent data collection, 2) little data collection regarding TVET, 3) the lack of resources to update data systems, 4) the multiplicity of sources and methodologies which make comparability of data difficult and 5) a serious lack of skills in the use of technology. To combat these challenges, participants from Afghanistan suggested integrating their multi-agency data collection systems into a single report for SDG. Moreover, participants from Pakistan highlighted the need for adapting methodologies to the local context. This session ended with the call that policy and methodology development need to be enhanced and that this will allow a more evidence-based approach and data utilization in education.

Session 11: Plenary Panel Discussion: Strategies for monitoring target 4.3 and 4.4

This session aimed to discuss existing data collection systems, mechanisms and data gaps in monitoring SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4. By identifying ongoing issues and challenges in producing data to monitor the targets, this session provided suggestions and recommendations for effective and efficient monitoring of the targets.

Ms. Silvia Montoya, Director of UIS and Mr. Ashish Narayan, Programme Coordinator of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) shared their findings on 'Available sources, methodologies to monitor SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4' while Mr. Hiroyuki Hattori, Chief of Education from UNICEF Indonesia gave a presentation on 'Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and Country Example of SDG4 Monitoring (Indonesia)'. The discussion thereafter was moderated by Mr. Jordan Naidoo, Director of Education 2030 Support and Coordination from UNESCO.

Mr. Naidoo and Mr. Narayan stated that the major challenges in monitoring SDG4 included 1) harmonization of national monitoring and evaluation processes by addressing key issues related to coverage and frequency of various survey mechanisms, 2) a gap in the coordination between administrative data and household survey, 3) a lack of data coverage on disability, migrations, and other marginalized groups and 4) addressing emerging needs of data collection following rapidly changing technological development and skills needed. In order to solve these problems, participants agreed to boost capacity building in terms of 1) conceptualization and development of relevant indicators for monitoring, 2) ensuring consistency across various data sources, definitions, and methodologies, 3) staying up-to-date with technological change and 4) building a network for inclusion of missing data in different surveys and assessments.

Session 12: Plenary: Introduction to the sub-regional working group discussions

In this session, Mr. Francisco Benavides, Regional Education Advisor of UNICEF EAPRO provided a brief introduction to the next two sessions where participants would be divided into sub-regional working groups to focus on how to operationalize, monitor and report on SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4. The aim was for national representatives to discover and identify effective strategies that could be included in regional and national action plans.

Sessions 13 and 14: Concurrent sub-regional working group discussions & Reviewing regional strategies and follow-up action plans to achieve SDG 4.3 and 4.4

The objective for session 13 was for the sub-regions, namely Central Asia, East Asia, South and West Asia, the Pacific, and Southeast Asia, to concurrently discuss ways to operationalize, monitor, and report on both SDG 4.3 and 4.4 targets as well as the challenges, opportunities, and priority actions to achieve these targets. A facilitator and resource person were assigned to each working group to moderate the discussion and address any technical questions. The top three key strategies/actions proposed from each working group discussion were thereafter put up for review by the rest of the participants in session 14 which was moderated by Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, Director of UNESCO Bangkok.

Central Asia

Facilitated by Ms. Lina Benete from UNESCO Almaty and Mr. Bakhtiyor Namazov from UNESCO Tashkent, member countries, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, highlighted the need for a credit-module system at the national level to aid operationalisation of both targets. Regarding monitoring, participants agreed on the need for evidence-based policymaking, including tracking marginalized groups' access to TVET and their employment in decent jobs. Furthermore, an Education Management Information System (EMIS) including labour market indicators should be created to improve the monitoring system. For capacity building, Central Asian partnerships and networks need to be strengthened to raise awareness and share knowledge within the community to increase TVET access for marginalized groups and mainstream the 21st-century skills.

East Asia

The People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Japan and Mongolia were included in this group with Mr. Robert Parua from UNESCO Beijing and Mr. Akihiro Fushimi from UNICEF EAPRO facilitating the discussion. In operationalizing target 4.3 and 4.4, countries emphasized policy development to integrate TVET into the national education planning, a need to promote PPP across the region as well as earlier provision of career guidance and information. In terms of monitoring the targets, decentralization of labour market data collection was highlighted to facilitate decision-making at the local level. Also, participants agreed on allowing greater involvement of professional research institutions in the data collection and monitoring process. To facilitate TVET and higher education capacity building, utilisation of existing platforms and initiatives, as well as promotion of exchange programs between universities and TVET institutions within the region were recommended.

Pacific Islands

This working group involved delegates from Cook Islands, Kiribati, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu with Ms. Gail Townsend from UNESCO Apia and Ms. Kyungah Kristy Bang from UNESCO Bangkok providing technical assistance. In operationalizing both targets, Pacific countries suggested reviewing post-secondary programs, scoping different modalities for delivery and assessment, and promoting TVET tutor training. To improve the monitoring of SDG 4.3 and 4.4, members highlighted the importance of developing systems for data collection in TVET, identifying indicators for Pacific-specific learning and including wellbeing indicators. In terms of capacity needs, key recommendations included 1) national, sub-regional and regional capacity building, 2) developing networks for sharing practices on qualifications framework (QF), quality assurance (QA) and quality management system (QMS), 3) understanding and supporting inter-dependencies, and 4) increasing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) teachers and programs.

South and West Asia

With facilitation from Mr. Danny Padillo from UNESCO Kabul, Ms. Sun Lei from UNESCO Dhaka and Ms. Ameena Mohamed Didi from UNICEF ROSA, the member countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka proposed operationalising Targets 4.3 and 4.4 by: 1) developing a common result framework, 2) setting up a clear pathways of skills and ensuring recognition and accreditation at a regional level, as well as 3) strengthening data collection, analysis, and use. To monitor these targets, member countries proposed 1) conceptualisation of indicators in relation to TVET and ESD, 2) strengthening data collection, analysis, and use and 3) setting up a coordination mechanism for skills and ensuring the involvement of key stakeholder in the monitoring processes. As for capacity needs, members prioritised 1) institutional capacity building of data-focused monitoring and reporting, 2) integration of disaggregated data on marginalised groups in national data systems, and 3) organisation of sub-regional forums and action plans to monitor the targets.

Southeast Asia

With the assistance of Mr. Santosh Khatri from UNESCO Phnom Penh, Ms. Mee Yong Choi from UNESCO Jakarta and Mr. Hiroyuki Hattori from UNICEF Indonesia, the member countries of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam recommended the operationalization of the above targets by prioritising: 1) developing accessible and friendly-user data system, 2) enhancing access to TVET for marginalized groups, 3) integrating existing TVET and qualifications frameworks in the region, and 4) formalizing a mechanism for governance of target implementation. To monitor these targets, key recommendations were 1) contextualization of global indicators to national contexts, 2) strengthening the monitoring of SDG indicators, and 3) developing monitoring systems on ICT. To boost capacity building, member countries believed 1) coordinating and synergizing data from different sources, 2) strengthening collaboration with UN and other partner agencies, 3) developing cross-sectoral monitoring systems and mechanisms, 4) professionalizing TVET teachers, and 5) promoting skill development for entrepreneurship were the most essential issues.

Even though the 5 regions had different and contextualised approaches to operationalizing, monitoring and building capacity on targets 4.3 and 4.4, all countries agreed on the need to engage all stakeholders in the monitoring processes, integrate data on marginalized groups, and strengthen cooperation with existing platforms such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), SEAMEO and UNESCO.

Session 15: Closing

In this session, Ms. Wivina Belmonte, Deputy Regional Director of UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, Ms. Panudda Boonpala, Deputy Regional Director of ILO and Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, Director of UNESCO Bangkok each gave a brief closing remark about the 4th APMED and achieving SDG 4.3 and 4.4.

Ms. Belmonte promised UNICEF would turn the commitments of SDG4 into a reality by 2030, making sure no child was left behind. She mentioned two game changers, the first one being the power of community and youth engagement in policy solutions, and the second being the use of big data and other ICT and AI-based initiatives to improve education. She concluded that the key drivers critical to achieving targets 4.3 and 4.4 were 1) communities and youth themselves as indispensable drivers of change, 2) innovation, quality data and partnerships as indispensable means to delivering results, 3) cross-sectoral and inter-institutional actions as critical for effective policy responses and smart financial investments, and 4) pragmatic implementation plans as fundamental to achieving results.

Ms. Boonpala believed that meeting the skills demand to achieve the SDGs in Asia Pacific region was a timely topic. The dynamic growth and changing political situation in the region called for a new thinking in the education and training system, and in the supply side of the labour market. She argued that in order to provide quality education and access to decent jobs, it was essential to strengthen key building blocks of skills development systems namely in terms of 1) social partner participation in governance, design and implementation of skills development, 2) skills anticipation, 3) the participation of disadvantaged groups as

well as the need to expand provision, 4) business and soft skills' education in TVET studies and 5) gender equality.

Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi closed the meeting and reiterated the salient role played by the 4th APMED in allowing Asia-Pacific countries to collectively share knowledge and collaborate to achieve SDG4 targets.

Part 2 of the 4th APMED2030, 14 July 2018: 2nd Meeting of the SDG4 National Coordinators Network

As part 2 of the 4th the APMED2030, the 2nd SDG4 National Coordinators' Network meeting was convened to discuss the regional preparation for the upcoming Global Education Meeting (GEM) and global review of SDG4 in 2019. This meeting comprised a review of the 4th APMED, regional and global updates on SDG4-ED2030 coordination, and presentation and endorsement of the SDG4-Education 2030 Regional Roadmap.

Session 1: Opening

The meeting was opened with a welcome remark by Mr Shigeru Aoyagi, Director of UNESCO Bangkok. This was followed by an introduction of the meeting agenda for the day by Ms. Maki Hayashikawa, Chief of the Section for IQE from UNESCO Bangkok

Session 2: APMED IV Review

This session presented the outline of the draft Regional Recommendations for Actions on SDG4 Target 4.3 and 4.4 based on the discussions during APMED. This serves as the main outcome document of the 4th APMED, with inputs and collective commitments of government officials and members of the SDG4-Education 2030 regional coordination mechanism and drafting committee members. This session also discussed and presented the results of the pre-APMED survey with specific highlights on Target 4.3 and 4.4 being the theme of the meeting. With Mr. Francisco Benavides, Regional Education Advisor from UNICEF EAPRO, as the moderator for this session, Ms. Maki Hayashikawa, Chief of IQE from UNESCO Bangkok gave a presentation of the regional strategy/action plans for SDG 4.3 and 4.4 while Mr. Nyi Nyi Thaung from UNESCO Bangkok, presented the summary of the pre-APMED IV survey.

With regard to the Regional Recommendations for Action on SDG Target 4.3 and 4.4, Ms. Hayashikawa focused on five thematic issues with respect to the overarching concern on "skills" for youth and adults, through formal, non-formal and informal approaches, namely 1) ensuring inclusion, gender equality and equity in learning in the second decade, 2) digital skills, 3) school-to-work transition, 4) strengthening qualification frameworks to promote mobility and employability, and 5) mainstreaming ESD as a key enabler of SDGs. In order to address these concerns, the drafting committee agreed to coordinate their efforts with the following principles: 1) keep the equity agenda, 2) involve communities, youth and other partners, 3) invest in innovation and quality data, 4) improve the cross-sectoral and inter-institutional actions and 5) increase and improve their financial investments with effective equity formulas.

With regard to the pre-APMED 2018 survey based on responses from 30 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, Mr. Thaung shared the following key findings:

1) Most countries reported to have appointed a national coordinator or focal point for the 17 SDGs and SDG4;

2) the mapping and review of existing laws and programs identified several challenges, including: i) the lack of policies on SDG4, or if available, its weak or unenforced policy implementation, and ii) the mismatch between education and labour force demand;

3) the finding that implementation and monitoring is lowest for non-formal and informal education for Target 4.3, and for higher education for Target 4.4; and

4) the struggle for many countries to implement Target 4.7 specifically the indicative strategy that focuses on the development of robust assessment systems for ESD and Global Citizenship Education (GCED), and lastly 5) the fact that the majority (70%) of the country respondents are not aware of Voluntary National Review (VNR).

Based on these findings, the following suggestions were proposed:

1) developing the monitoring of policies to eliminate barriers and implement quality programs to attain SDG4;

2) provide technical and financial support to member states; and

3) strengthen effective coordination and innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships to ensure resources are effectively utilized and yield long-term impact.

Session 3: Regional Updates on SDG4-ED2030 Coordination

The session concentrated on regional updates from sub-regional organizations with representatives of sub-regional initiatives sharing their regional strategies, agenda, and activities in light of SDG4-Education 2030 coordination. The Southeast Asian update was provided by Ms. Ethel Agnes Pascua Valenzuela from the Southeast Asian Ministries of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat, the South Asian strategies by Mr M.H.M.N Bandara, Director of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the initiatives from the Pacific by Ms. Danielle Cochrane, Secretary of Education of Cook Islands. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) initiatives were elaborated on by Dr. Yan Wang, Education Network (EDNET) Coordinator of the APEC Human Resources Development Working Group (APEC HRDWG), and the Central Asian outlook by Ms. Lina Benete, Education Programme Specialist from UNESCO Almaty. This session was moderated by Ms. Urmila Sarkar, Regional Education Advisor from UNICEF ROSA.

Southeast Asia

Ms. Valenzuela cited the important role the organization played in promoting regional cooperation in education, science, and culture in Southeast Asia. She reported that the organization had set up seven education agenda points as a priority from 2015 to 2035 and based on these, the SEAMEO council created recommendations on the framework for action.

South Asia

Mr. Bandara shared SAARC's main role as a key sub-regional collaborative platform that organises technical meetings for senior education officials in South Asia. From the technical meeting held prior to APMED, the Secretariat identified the following key action points: 1) designation of a national focal point in MOEs to initiate, coordinate and oversee the implementation of SAARC Framework for Action (SFFA), 2) update of SFFA based on the feedback from the technical meeting as well as additional feedback from MOEs, 3) SAARC to share the updated document for final review by MOEs and no-objection in coordination with the Maldives, the chair of the upcoming SAARC Ministerial Meeting, by end August, 4) SAARC to initiate the process of final endorsement of the framework by Education Ministers, and lastly 5) development of project proposals to seek funds from the SAARC Development Funds (SDF) to finance joint initiatives as proposed in the SFFA.

Pacific

Ms. Cochrane highlighted that Pacific collaboration should be strengthened, and reported that regional strategies and programs created focused on South-South cooperation, defining and delivering Pacific literacies, and promoting 21st-century skills. Specifically, the regional program covered four key policy areas in education: 1) quality and relevance; 2) learning pathways; 3) student outcomes and well-being; and 4) the teaching profession.

APEC

Dr. Yan Wang stated that the APEC has a strong and cohesive education community characterized by inclusive and quality education that supports sustainable economic growth, social well-being and employability of men and women in APEC economies. To further this aim, APEC organises senior officials/economic leaders meeting each year with a different focus for each. All the meetings are aligned with the theme proposed by the host

country. Through the meetings, APEC sets three objectives: 1) Enhancing and aligning competencies to the needs of individuals, societies and industries; 2) accelerating innovation; and 3) increasing employability. Nine priority actions are also proposed based on the three objectives.

Central Asia

Ms. Benete enumerated the ongoing sub-regional initiatives in Central Asia to implement SDG4. Four countries, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan presented their progress in educational strategies and action plan by analyzing SDG4, establishing a working group and nominating national coordinators. To move forward, the representatives from Central Asia asked UNESCO to play a leading role in Central Asia.

Session 4: Global Updates on SDG4-ED2030 Coordination

This session provided an update on the outcomes of the SDG4-Education 2030 Global Steering Committee Meeting, and allowed participants to review global monitoring strategies and provide inputs to the 2018 Global Education Meeting as well as SDG4-Education 2030 strategies for the global education review. Moderated by a member of the Global Steering Committee, Mr. Kazuhiro Yoshida from Hiroshima University, the session began with a debrief on the Global Steering Committee by Mr. Jordan Naidoo, Director of the Education 2030 Support and Coordination Division from UNESCO Headquarters. Ms. Silvia Montoya from UIS thereafter provided updates from the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG), Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 - Education 2030 (TCG) and Global Alliance to Measure Assessment (GAML) progress, indicator framework development and UIS strategies to support countries for SDG4 monitoring. Mr. Naidoo thereafter sought regional inputs to the GEM, and Mr. Manos Antoninis from UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) ended the session by providing a global review of SDG4 at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) with a focus on the GEM Report Special Publication.

Mr. Jordan shared that the Global Steering Committee, which brings together 38 Member States and consists of four working groups on strategies, advocacy, financing and monitoring, and has developed different platforms on monitoring. In terms of indicator development, Ms. Silvia shared that the TCG had updated indicators for monitoring and reporting base on three different platforms such as Inter-Agency Group on Education Inequality indicators in 2018. UIS views methodological studies as necessary for the development of additional indicators, which can be achieved by constructing a framework, defining a minimum set of processes, mapping existing initiatives and tools, and defining a proficiency framework. In order to achieve capacity development, UIS opined that regional and national workshops should provide and share regular technical assistance. Through this process, UIS would offer guidance, good examples, and tools in light of SDG 4 indicators.

Participants agreed with many of the indicators but noted that operationalization of these indicators is still an ongoing issue. For example, given the comments and feedback, refugee children and displaced children were not captured within current measurement exercises because they are mostly out of school. Furthermore, considering the multiplicity of languages in some countries such as Nepal and Zambia, assessment of literacy is very challenging. In response to this feedback, presenters emphasized regional gathering to share different experiences and reach out to different stakeholders.

Session 5: Plenary Discussion on Regional Roadmap

In this session, the general findings of the Regional Baseline Study on the analysis of each SDG4 target in the Asia Pacific as well as the recommendations on the way forward were discussed. The session also presented the Regional Roadmap for the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda in Asia-Pacific which is an articulation of the region's intention and actions toward implementing and monitoring SDG4. It identifies 3 priority areas of regional cooperation and 5 implementation phrases. The regional cooperation will be led by the Regional Thematic Working Group-Education 2030+ and other key stakeholders.

Ms. Maki Hayashikawa, Chief of IQE at UNESCO Bangkok led the session with Mr. Nyi Nyi Thaung from UNESCO Bangkok offering recommendations of the regional baseline study and Mr. Francisco Benavides, Regional Education Advisor of UNESCO EAPRO giving a presentation and endorsement of the *Regional Roadmap for the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific* and support strategies for SDG4.

Mr. Thaung reported that the Regional Baseline Study aims to not only capture baseline data at the starting point of SDG4 so that monitoring of the progress can be done effectively, but to also present the education situation in the region in line with different SDG 4 targets. This study showed that universal primary education was achieved in most countries and TVET participation is limited across the region compared to overall participation in secondary education. Limited data suggests that in both developing and developed countries a significant share of the population has low ICT proficiency. As such, the study advocated a greater need to focus on addressing inequality, getting the basics right, measuring learning outcomes, and sector-wide data management and monitoring system.

In terms of the Regional Roadmap, Mr. Benavides introduced the five implementation phases: 1) foundation building, 2) clarification of targets, 3) implementation and mid-term review, 4) acceleration and reviewing success and 5) into the future. These are based on the 3 priority areas of regional cooperation namely advocacy information, capacity development, and monitoring. To fulfill those phases, there are 4 tracks: 1) Access to and quality of basic education is limited for marginalized groups, 2) access to quality post-basic education and skills development opportunities is limited 3) access to education at all levels is satisfactory but with unsatisfactory performance and 4) access to and performance of education are satisfactory but quality of education should be improved. It was proposed for the Member States to cooperate with each other and with regional key stakeholders in prioritizing their capacity building needs and resource allocation.

The session was closed with comments and the introduction of the theme for the 5th APMED2030, which will focus on targets 4.1 and 4.6 with quality learning outcomes as an overarching theme, and also covering 4.5, 4.a, 4.b and 4.c as cross-cutting themes. Participants raised two key points of feedback on the future theme: 1) lifelong learning should be a key foundation principle for education in general, and 2) combining two targets (4.5 and 4.6) has both benefits and drawbacks. Therefore, a suggestion was made for a side event addressing SDG 4.5 and 4.a.

Appendices

Appendix A: Regional Recommendations for Action on SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4

4th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED2030)
(12-14 July 2018, Bangkok, Thailand)

<u>FINAL</u>

Regional Recommendations for Action on SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4

Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship

Background

Asia and the Pacific is one of the largest and fastest-growing regions in the world in terms of economic and social development. In line with global economies, this region is experiencing changes associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Despite notable achievements in economic growth in recent decades, equity in growth continues to be elusive, resulting in increasing inequality.[1] The Asia Pacific region is also home to the largest share of the youth population in the world. Building skills for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), sustainability, entrepreneurship as well as 'foundational and transferable skills'[2] are critical to empower learners to become more resilient, adaptable to rapid change and drivers of their own future. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize the urgent need to bridge the worlds of education and employment and ensure a solid educational and skills foundation for all, including young people to make that leap to the world of work

Following the decision at the first official meeting of the SDG4 National Coordinators' Network Meeting (7 July 2017), the 4th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED2030) specifically focused **on target 4.3 (equitable access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training and tertiary education)** and **target 4.4 (relevant skills for work)** and explored progress and challenges towards implementing and monitoring skills development and outcomes through formal, non-formal and informal education and training.

This Regional Recommendations for Action on SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4 serves as the main outcome document of the 4th APMED2030, informed by the diverse perspectives of delegates in the 4th APMED2030 and represents the collective commitment of the members of the SDG4-Education 2030 Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination mechanism.

Context and rationale

As with the previous years, the 4th APMED2030 consisted of two parts, the first part being the technical meeting, focused on SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4 within the context of Asia-Pacific and under the overarching theme of ***"Transforming Learning: Meeting the skills demand to achieve the SDGs in the Asia-Pacific".*** The second part convened the 2nd National Coordinators' Network Meeting to discuss the regional preparation for the Global Education Meeting (GEM, December 2018) and the global review of SDG4 in 2019.

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[1] UN ESCAP, 2018, *Inequality in Asia and the Pacific in the era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*
[2] Add footnote on diversity of reference to skills – 21st century skills, transversal skills, soft skills, foundation and transferable skills, etc.

Three days prior to the 4th APMED, the global Technical Consultation Meeting on the future of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was held in Bangkok. This meeting provided an opportunity for Member States to discuss ways to advance ESD in the region given its crucial relevance to attaining the 17 SDGs, especially SDG4. Being a cross cutting concern, ESD was one of the thematic issues of focus in the technical discussions of the 4th APMED.

The 4th APMED meeting focused on five thematic issues with respect to the overarching concern on "skills" for youth and adults through formal, non-formal and informal approaches: (i) ensuring inclusion, gender equality and equity in learning in the second decade; (ii) digital skills; (iii) school-to-work transition; (iv) strengthening qualification frameworks to promote mobility and employability; and (v) mainstreaming ESD as a key enabler of SDGs.

Participants shared and discussed innovative policies and practices to improve and address skills development. Effective strategies for developing new learning pathways by linking secondary education reform with greater access to quality TVET and tertiary education to improve employability were also identified to enable young people to adapt to changing labour market dynamics across Asia and the Pacific. While young people can drive economies and societies to be more vibrant and productive, it was recognized that this potential could only be realized if they benefit from life-long learning from early childhood to adolescence and adulthood. Similarly, learning pathways are critical for out of school and second chance learners both to ensure gender inclusivity in the labour force and to redress issues of poverty and exclusion.

A need for rethinking of digital skills was raised to ensure the relevance of policy responses to the breadth and depth of the rapidly changing nature of the digital skills demand. While defining future-proof digital skills is important, it should not be forgotten that basic ICT skills are considered as one of the fundamental skills, together with literacy and numeracy, needed to effectively benefit from and participate in sustainable and inclusive social and economic development for all. Provision of quality and equal access to infrastructure and relevant training at all levels, including the need to continuously capacitate and support teachers, were emphasized as critical means to mainstream digital skills.

Monitoring of targets 4.3 and 4.4 was found to be most challenging for various reasons such as, but not limited to: (a) multiplicity of data sources; (b) non-availability and quality of data including lack of disaggregated data; (c) fragmented institutional settings and legal frameworks; and (d) inadequate technical and financial resources available for better monitoring. There is also a significant gap in data linking education and training outcomes with successful entry to the labour markets and/or decent work. Participants highlighted the challenge in accessing the subnational, as well as national, data for evidence-based policy making and resource distribution. While global process of methodological development is very encouraging, there is a need for strategies to translate and contextualize this process at the national level.

Participants also recognized the importance of convergence and forging partnerships beyond the education sector in achieving SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4, in particular with other ministries (for example Labour and Industry), the private sector and employers, and civil society. These partnerships can ensure that education and skills development lead to decent work and inclusive economic growth. Furthermore, countries can also benefit from inter and intra-regional collaboration, as well as south-south-north triangular cooperation as a means to increase financing in education and skills development. Participating countries also identified the need for: 1) increased financing for education; 2) systems change and coherence; and 3) strengthened public-private partnerships.

The outline of the draft outcome document presented at the 2nd meeting of the SDG4 National Coordinators' Network on 14 July 2018, and subsequently shared electronically for review and acceptance by stakeholders, includes the following set of regional recommendations that are to be carried out by all stakeholders, including the private sector, in 2018-2019.

Recommendations for action

The following recommendations are addressed to all key stakeholders of SDG4-Education 2030: governments, international/regional organizations, CSO/NGOs, academia, media, the private sector, teacher education institutions and schools, communities, youth and parents. For effective implementation, it will be necessary to prepare follow-up and monitoring mechanisms in each Member State, as well as integrated national-level plans of action, indicating not only activities, but also shared tasks and responsibilities. Many of the follow-up actions below will require the involvement of several actors.

Action area 1: Inclusion, equity and gender equality

The following recommendations are specifically addressed to the most marginalized, with particular attention to girls and women, adolescents and youth with disabilities, migrants, excluded indigenous groups, refugees, and the poor.

Recommendations	Lead stakeholders[3]
Policies, legal frameworks: 1. Review and establish appropriate legal/normative frameworks to ensure inclusion, equity and gender equality in secondary education, alternative learning pathways and skills development. 2. Improve coordination in the implementation of education and skills frameworks, and policies to ensure community networks and multi-sectoral solutions, including links to health and social protection while also reflecting the country context and values.	Government (Ministries of Education and other Ministries of related to social and human development e.g. health, finance)
Provisions of services: 3. Improve the access and quality of secondary and post-secondary education pathways, services, provision and governance (formal, non-formal, alternatives, flexible models, etc.) with special attention given to the most marginalized group. \ 4. All secondary education, including TVET, should aim at developing both foundational and transferrable skills linked to basic livelihoods training to encourage a holistic development of the individual and the communities in which they participate. 5. Greater public and private investments in expanding affordable, accessible, user-friendly, learning opportunities most marginalized groups, who have not completed schooling with recognition of prior learning and bridging courses that lead to decent work.	Government, private sectors, development partners

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[3] "Lead stakeholder(s)" means that one of the key stakeholders identified for the action area will be responsible for/expected to take the action forward with or without other stakeholder partners. This does not exclude the fact that other stakeholders have no interest or responsibility to respond and take action on the recommended point.

Recommendations	Lead stakeholders[3]
Ensure financial support (e.g. scholarships or fee waivers, etc.) 6. Targeted financial support should be made available with special attention given to the most marginalized groups and communities, to access accredited skills development programmes, including through secondary education options and TVET courses. 7. Ministries of education financing to schools, should include a strong equity-based formula, and ministries and partners, including PPPs, should support those education programs to serve the adolescents and youth most at risk of exclusion.	Government (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance), development partners, private sector
Advocacy, political commitment and partnerships: 8. Advocate with communities and parents to ensure that the most marginalized youth have access to quality secondary education and skills development with learning environments (formal, non-formal or informal), which are gender and disability inclusive, including in the most remote areas. 9. Strengthen political will and financing towards making more accessible quality education and skills development to the most vulnerable youth and women in poverty. 10. Establish and implement realistic quotas and targets to increase and maintain enrolments for job-related training for women and girls, especially in emergent and non-traditional jobs, occupations and industries.	National and local governments, NGOs youth, development partners, students, parents and communities

Action area 2: Digital Skills

Recommendations	Lead stakeholders
1. Make continuous effort to provide and maintain infrastructure to support the provision, scope and type of digital skills needed for social and economic participation, employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship for youth and adults to ensure relevance to a changing and connected world.	Government, private sectors, development partners
2. Provide inclusive quality access to ICT infrastructure and relevant digital skills training for all, with deliberate attention to avoiding digital divides and empowering the marginalized and vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities (PWDs), girls and women, migrants, elderlies and rural communities.	Government
3. Elevate teachers' capacity in mainstreaming ICT in their teaching practices through continuous professional development and support as well as digital skills curricula and assessment packages. Governments need to	Government, CSOs, private sector

Recommendations	Lead stakeholders
monitor and coordinate ICT solutions and determine the most relevant and affordable technologies and ensure cost effectiveness.	
4. Strengthen partnerships with the private sector to keep the digital skills training in formal, non-formal and informal learning settings relevant to the needs of industry and labour market.	All stakeholders
5. Enhance research capacity on digital skills for girls and women to clearly understand the reasons behind the lack of their engagement with digital technology or in ICT industries and facilitate the data-informed policy intervention to address the issue.	Research institutions

Action area 3. Promoting a smooth transition from School to Work

To address the skills mismatch between school curriculum and the labour market:

Recommendations	Lead stakeholders
1. Promote inter-ministerial coordination to ensure a continuum of foundational, transferable and vocational skills development for young people, including in secondary education reform.	Government
2. Promote improved gender sensitive labour market information, career guidance, and job placement including by using digital technologies and social media.	All stakeholders including students, youth, parents and communities
3. Review post-secondary programmes to ensure relevancy to current and future domestic and regional labour markets, job creation and entrepreneurship ensuring engagement with a full range of stakeholders/sectors.	Government, national research/technical institutions
4. Promote systemic cooperation of private sector and workers' organizations in the design (curricula) and promotion of work-based learning (apprenticeship, internship, etc.).	Government, private sector, workers organizations
5. Promote greater public-private partnership to enhance investment in education, skills development and apprenticeship.	Government, private sector
6. Undertake School to Work Transition Surveys including surveys of industry demand and youth aspirations to help shift from supply-driven to demand-driven education and training systems.	National research/technical institutions

Action area 4: TVET

To improve the relevance and quality of TVET and skills training provisions/programmes:

Recommendations	Lead stakeholders
1. Reform the teacher development, management and evaluation systems for secondary and TVET teachers in coordination with relevant sectors and upgrade their qualifications.	Government
2. Strengthen the coordination mechanisms and cooperation between TVET and other education sectors, training centers, labour and employment sectors, industry and national organizations to empower the most marginalized and integrate them in the world of work.	TVET Institutions, private sector
3. Develop appropriate policies, programmes and communication strategies to provide women, girls, youth and persons with disabilities, with equal opportunities to learn, develop and strengthen their knowledge, skills and competencies.	Government, youth, CSOs
4. Set standards for sub-regional mutual recognition of skills to facilitate recognition of skills and qualifications, and facilitate mobility of workers across borders.	Government
5. Ensure relevance of TVET provisions to the labour market by establishing TVET tripartite governance mechanisms (government, employers and workers organizations).	All stakeholders
6. Undertake labour market analysis in order to have joint public-private skills foresights, scenarios and forecasts with focus on leading economic sectors and ensure that results inform TVET policies and programmes.	National research/technical institutions

Action area 5: Higher education

Recommendations	Lead stakeholders
1. Identify a recognition authority, either governmental or non-governmental that is officially authorized by government, to make decisions on the recognition of national and foreign qualifications.[4]	Government
2. Advocate the importance of integrated qualifications frameworks based on country specific needs. National qualifications frameworks need to link TVET and higher education with the aim to promote the effective use of learning outcomes and diverse learning pathways and enhance standardisation of qualifications at various levels.	Government, CSOs
3. Promote the use of technology to ensure equal access to lifelong learning, including to deliver recognized and/or accredited higher education courses and training from the public and private sector.	Promotion: Government

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[4] With reference to the language from the Tokyo Convention is as follows: "Competent Recognition Authority means a governmental or non-governmental body officially authorised by government with making decisions on the recognition of foreign qualifications". http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=48975&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Recommendations	Lead stakeholders
	Operational: national institutions (e.g. universities)
4. Develop systems and measures to recognize prior and experiential learning in higher education, including processes for individuals to seek recognition of previous training, work experience, professional development, professional licensing and examinations, and other work-based education and training.	Government
5. Scope different modalities for delivery and assessment (including Recognition of Prior Learning, and secondary-tertiary pathways) to increase access and participation, including outreach to the most vulnerable through bridging courses.	Government
6. Ratify and implement the Tokyo Convention to promote mobility and fair recognition of qualifications.	Government

Action area 6: Monitoring of SDG4 targets 4.3 and 4.4

Recommendations	Lead stakeholders
1. Ensure/strengthen collection, synergies, analysis and full utilization of disaggregated data on marginalized populations to ensure comprehensive and inclusive monitoring of targets 4.3 and 4.4.	All stakeholders
2. Foster practices for, and build capacity in, data literacy, collection and sharing among and between ministries and relevant institutions, including national and local government and communities, to utilize multiple data sources to systematically monitor targets 4.3 and 4.4.	Government (incl. sub-national/provincial)
3. Develop regional frameworks and country standardized methodologies to ensure that the targets 4.3 and 4.4 are properly monitored across the region in coherent, comparable and technically sound manners.	Government Regional and national technical/research institutions
4. Design and implement an appropriate regional capacity programme to set up a well-coordinated national monitoring mechanism for targets 4.3 and 4.4 as part of the comprehensive national SDG-4 monitoring mechanism.	Regional Thematic Working Group (RTWG) – Education 2030+
5. Synergize full utilization of all data sources (e.g. administrative, household survey and assessment data, etc.) to provide policy relevant information to better implement and monitor the progress on targets 4.3 and 4.4.	All stakeholders

Looking ahead: Building new learning pathways for adolescents and youth for lifelong learning in the Asia-Pacific region

National policies and programs related to the achievements of these targets on TVET and tertiary education need to be holistic and within the broad framework of skills for life, work and sustainable development. This means that policies related to 4.3 and 4.4 cannot be developed without the interconnectedness of the other targets, especially 4.1 (including secondary education), 4.5 (gender equality and inclusion), 4.6 (youth and adult literacy) and 4.7 (ESD and Global Citizenship Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). It should be noted that "foundation and transferable, transversal, soft skills" essential for work and life starts with achieving SDG 4.2 (Early Childhood Development).

This set of recommendations is a collective expression of all participants at the 4th APMED2030 to work together in the coming years and use them to guide the national and sub-regional actions to meet the following milestones of the Regional Roadmap for SDG4-Education2030 to advance progress in SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4:

- Revise and update national policies and programmes to ensure a holistic education environment that encompasses secondary education, TVET, tertiary and adult education within a lifelong learning context and to ensure no one is left behind from availing to the diverse learning opportunities and pathways;
- Provide feedback to the national and regional monitoring frameworks of SDG4;
- Report back on the progress made on the actions recommended at APMED2030 in 2020;
- Use as the baseline reference for the Regional SDG4-Education 2030 Mid-Term Review (SDG4-MTR) in 2023.

Finally, in order to move the overall SDG4-Education 2030 agenda forward in the Asia-Pacific region, countries, UN Agencies, CSO/NGO partners and all other stakeholders, agreed to coordinate their efforts with the following principles strongly grounded in all levels and areas of action:

- **Keep the equity agenda** as key driver in the achievement of SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4, to reduce the marginalization of girls and woman, children with disabilities, isolated population, among others, and to enhance female participation in the formal labour force;
- **Involve communities, youth and other partners** to improve targets 4.3 and 4.4 related policies and services;
- **Invest in innovation and quality data** as indispensable means to deliver results;
- **Improve the cross-sectoral and inter-institutional actions**, as critical for effective policy responses; and
- **Increase and improve their financial investments, with effective equity formulas,** to achieving results for all.

These Regional Recommendations for Action on SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4 was formally adopted by the members of the SDG4 National Coordinators' Network by virtual sharing on 3 August 2018.

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The drafting of the regional recommendations was led by the Drafting Group consisting of the following members:

- Mr. Saifiddin Dalvatzoda, Tajikistan (Central Asia)
- Ms. Shinobu Yamaguchi, Japan (East Asia)
- Mr. Md. Mahamud Ul Hoque, Bangladesh (South Asia)
- Ms. Kanittha Hanirattisai, Thailand (Southeast Asia)
- Ms. Danielle Cochrane Cook Islands (Pacific)
- Ms. Cecilia Soriano, ASPBAE
- Ms. Elaine Butler, ASPBAE
- Mr. Julien Magnat, ILO
- Ms. Maki Hayashikawa, UNESCO Bangkok
- Mr. Nyi Nyi Thaung, UNESCO Bangkok
- Ms. Amalia Serrano, UNESCO Bangkok
- Mr. Mark Manns, UNESCO Bangkok
- Mr. Wesley Robert Teter, UNESCO Bangkok
- Ms. Jonghwi Park, UNESCO Bangkok
- Ms. Lina Benete, UNESCO Almaty
- Mr. Francisco Benavides, UNICEF EAPRO
- Ms. Urmila Sarkar, UNICEF ROSA

Appendix B: Summary of Participant Evaluation Responses to Part 1 of 4th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED)

Survey Participation Rate: 102 out of 282 participants

1. Usefulness of Sessions

Most participants found the sessions useful/very useful. Below are some sessions that were deemed particularly effective or less so.

Day 1	Day 2
In particular, participants found "Session 3: Panel - Taking Stock of Innovative Policies and Practices to Achieve the SDG4 skills targets" meaningful (97% 'useful/very useful' rating)	Sub-regional Working Groups (SWGs) on both days were useful/very useful though some SWGs on Day 2 were deemed as less effective: • G2 Central Asia (12.5%) * • G4 East Asia (10.8%) * • G5 Pacific Islands (13.9%) * *Percentage of 'not useful' ratings*

2. Usefulness of Publications and Information

Most participants found the publications and information very useful.

Pie chart: Very useful 55%, Useful 41%, Not useful 4%
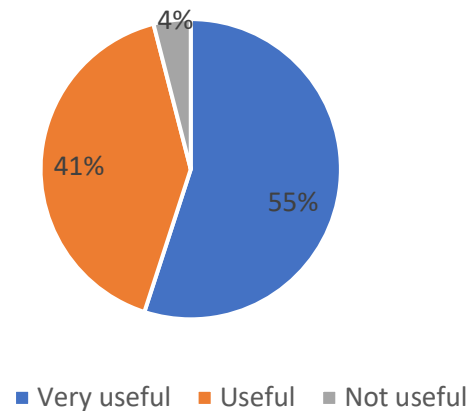
3. Satisfaction with Logistical Arrangements

Most participants were satisfied with the logistical arrangements, and in particular, with regards to the workshop venue and secretariat support:

Bar chart: Workshop Venue — Very satisfied 64%, Satisfied 36%; Secretariat Support — Very satisfied 67%, Satisfied 33%
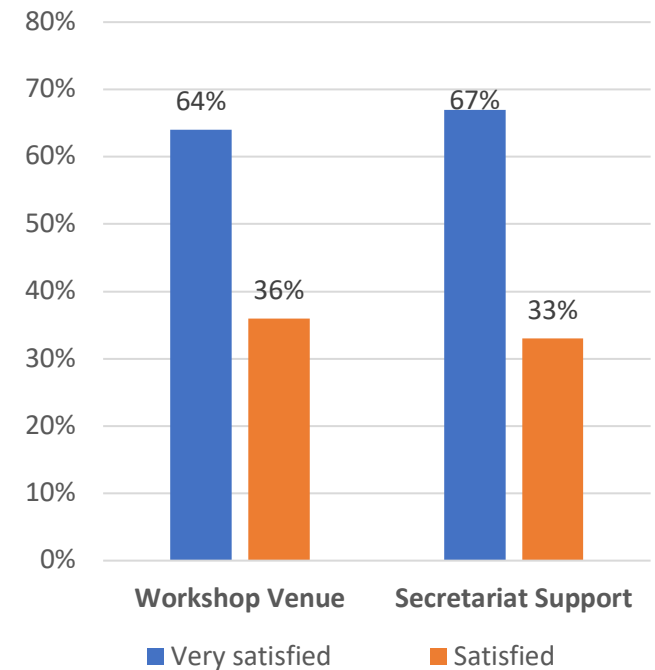
4. Areas of Improvement

Participants were overall satisfied with the secretariat's event organisation and of APMED as a platform for discussion and exchange. They cited the increasing organisational efficiency year-on-year and appreciated UNESCO's high level of commitment to this regional initiative. Nevertheless, below are some suggested areas of improvement.

Organisation and Logistics

- Meeting Agenda and Timing
- Packed meeting agenda[1]
- Lengthy daily meeting hours
- Presentation time management

- Feedback and Discussion
- Demand for more feedback opportunities (longer question and answer sessions and group discussions)
- Smaller breakout groups and simplification of groupwork

- Quality of Facilitation
- Facilitators to be better informed on their role, the discussion format and to clearly state discussion objectives upfront
- Request for technical expert support in discussions

- Hardcopy Deliverables
- To distribute soft copy documents and templates beforehand

- Organisational Communication
- More timely responses on attendance and support confirmation
- Calls for follow-up programmes and dissemination of presentation slides

- Seating Arrangement
- Ensure minimum seat reservation for each participating country in breakout groups

Miscellaneous

- Accommodation & Meals
- Make premises more accessible (i.e. disabled-friendly)
- Calls for more affordable and better quality accommodation
- Requests for South Asian and Muslim meals

- Financial and Administrative Support
- Isolated request for financial assistance for conference
- Advice and support in visa application process

- Exhibition
- More space for exhibition

Content

- Session Feedback: Positive Highlights
- Keynote address: "excellent"
- Azad Foundation Presentation: specific and informative

- Session Feedback: Areas of Improvement
- Trends in Higher Education Keynote: lack of clarity
- UIS: clearer explanation of UIS data to facilitate country-level implementation[2]
- Less overlap between presentations: Repeated focus on macro issues at expense of detailed cases and suggestions[3]
- Keynote presentation could be improved

- Content Delivery:
- Calls for (machine) translation if presentation delivery is unclear

- Thematic Focus/Information Gaps
- Restructuring of themes to focus on processes to achieve aims rather than description of current situation[4]
- Greater focus on real issues and marginalised groups in TVET regional implementation[5]
- Clearer links with other SDGs, especially 4.5 and 4.6
- More focus on gender, funding, life-long learning, different national TVET systems and need for integrated NQFs[5]
- Greater promotion of UNESCO Strategy on TVET (2016 – 2021) (deemed useful)
- Greater focus on promoting mobility and employability in the region
- 5th APMED: Call for an assessment of achievements, challenges and way forward since 1st APMED

- Greater Stakeholder Representation (from)
- Youth, civil society, private sector, TVET implementing agency, disabled people organisations, and educational practitioners and institutions

[1]*"It seems that the agenda is too ambitious and overwhelmingly informative that it is hard to digest within 2 days."*
[2] *"Display UIS data in a more understandable way. We want to go back with clear knowledge and understandings."*
[3] *"[In the] thematic session on 'A skilled workforce', most of the presenters focused on general high-level issues so many of the presentations overlapped a lot."*
[4] *"The theme and sub-themes for future APMEDs need to be more focused - no longer addressing the 'what' but to provide ways forward and address the 'how'."*
[5] *"More focus [should be placed] on the very real issues facing TVET in the region - especially for out of school/second change and most marginalized groups (including women and girls) - and how TVET could help address rising inequality with good policy work and linking to other SDGs (e.g. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11). There was only a very small focus on gender, funding, LLL, the variations of national TVET systems as well as the need for integrated NQFs that will impact heavily. The separating out of 4.3 and 4.4 from 4.5 and 4.6 was a pity."*

Appendix C: Summary of Participant Evaluation Responses to Part 2 of 4th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED)
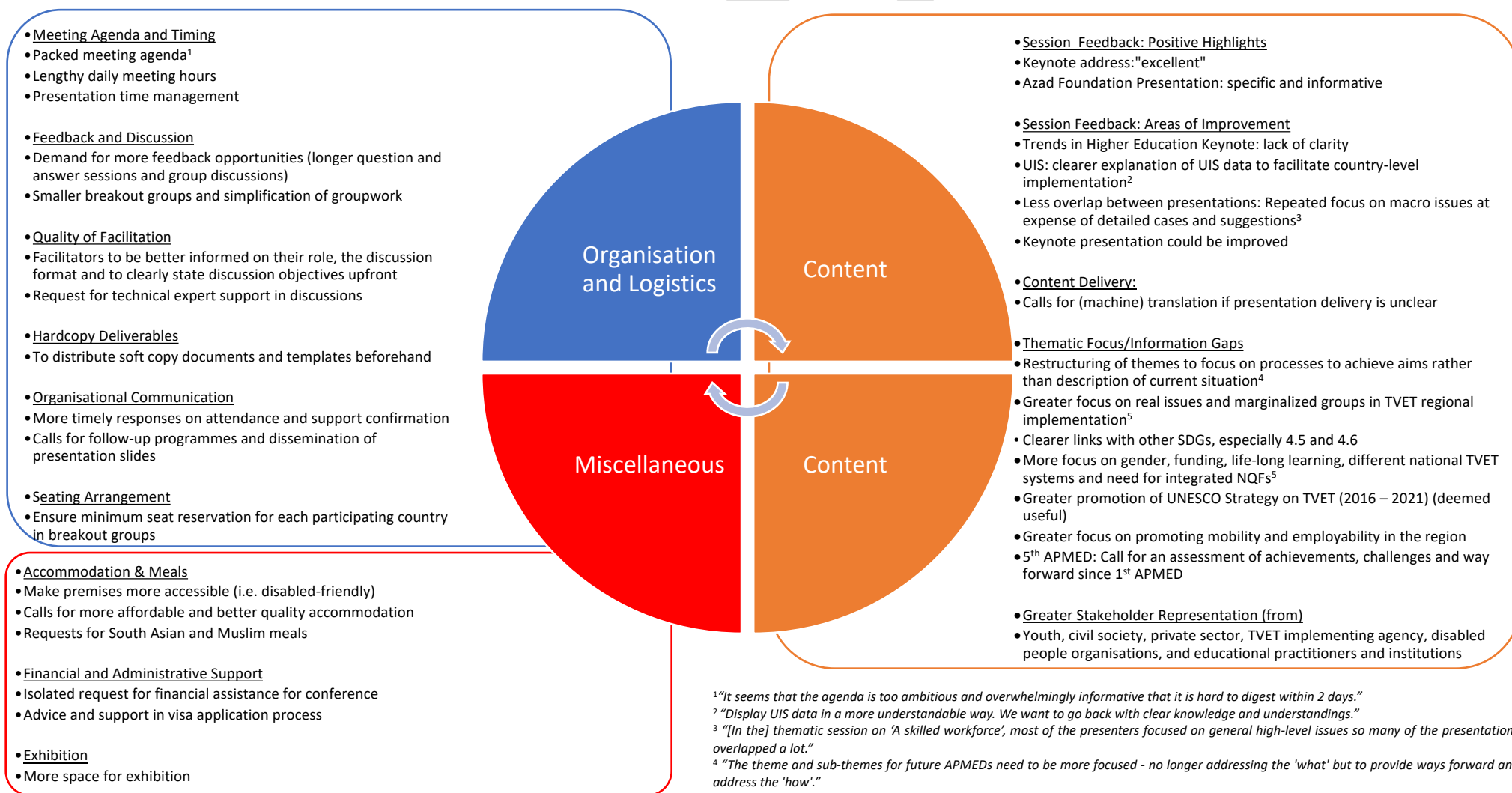
**Survey Participation Rate:** 36 out of 124 participants

1. Usefulness of Sessions

Most participants found the sessions useful/very useful.

Though the numbers are minimal, the following sessions were noted for their comparatively higher 'not useful' rating:

- "The Debrief of the Global Steering Committee"
- "Updates from the IAEG-SDG, TCG and GAML Progress, Indicator Framework Development and UIS Strategies to Support Countries for SDG4 Monitoring"
- "Preparation for Regional Inputs to the Global Education Meeting (GEM)"
- "Global Review of SDG4 at the HLPF and GEM Report Special Publication"

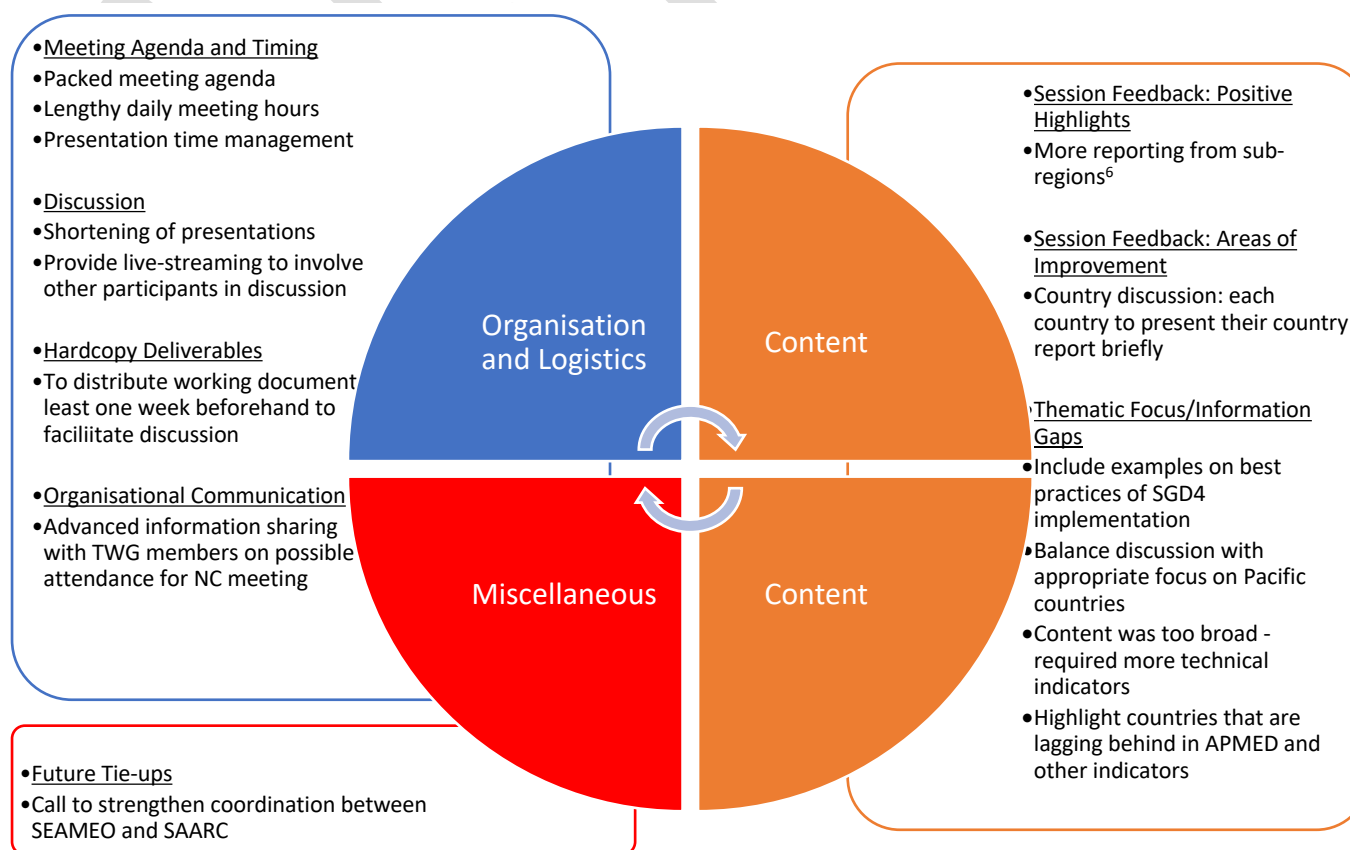*Note: Average 'not useful' rating for other sessions ranged between 0 and 1.*
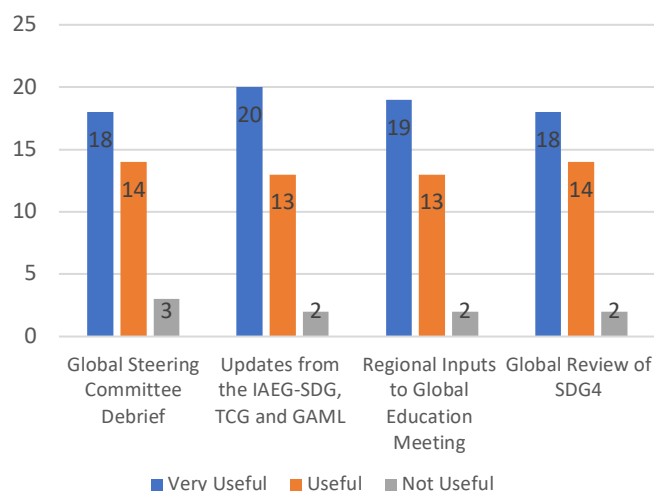
2. Usefulness of Publications and Information

3. Satisfaction with Logistical Arrangements

For areas 2 and 3, there were nearly identical responses and ratings as in the results shown in Day 1. (Refer to page 1)

4. Areas of Improvement

Participants were overall appreciative of the insights gained from and the networking opportunity provided by APMED. Below are some suggestions for further improvement.

Organisation and Logistics

- Meeting Agenda and Timing
- Packed meeting agenda
- Lengthy daily meeting hours
- Presentation time management

- Discussion
- Shortening of presentations
- Provide live-streaming to involve other participants in discussion

- Hardcopy Deliverables
- To distribute working document least one week beforehand to faciliitate discussion

- Organisational Communication
- Advanced information sharing with TWG members on possible attendance for NC meeting

Content

- Session Feedback: Positive Highlights
- More reporting from sub-regions[6]

- Session Feedback: Areas of Improvement
- Country discussion: each country to present their country report briefly

- Thematic Focus/Information Gaps
- Include examples on best practices of SGD4 implementation
- Balance discussion with appropriate focus on Pacific countries
- Content was too broad - required more technical indicators
- Highlight countries that are lagging behind in APMED and other indicators

Miscellaneous

- Future Tie-ups
- Call to strengthen coordination between SEAMEO and SAARC

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[6] *"Appreciated the reporting from sub-regions. Future NC meetings would benefit from structures like this."*