



## SEAMEO News Clipping

**Headline:** Southeast Asian Ministers have agreed to step up efforts on education in each country, ahead of integration as the Asean Economic Community (AEC) in 2015.

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They resolved to support the mobility of teachers and students across the region, said Pham Vu Luan, Vietnam's Minister of Education and Training. Pham, the new president of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) Council, was speaking at the end of the 47th SEAMEO Council Conference, in Hanoi. It was held from March 19-21.

Pham said ministers would work with the 21 SEAMEO regional centres across Asean to facilitate the mobility of people in education, and that this would accelerate the process of regional unity.

During his two-year presidential term, priority would be given to preparation for 2015's economic integration, added Pham. "I will tour SEAMEO centres across the region to promote more effective working practices and make sure that the centres contribute more practically to Asean integration," he added.

Witaya Jeradechakul, director of the SEAMEO Secretariat, said it would encourage the centres to reach beyond borders and proactively facilitate the mobility of students and teachers.

Education Minister Phongthep Thepkanjana said Asean ministers were trying to reduce obstacles to cross-border mobility of people in the region.

Thai and the Philippine delegations met on the sidelines of the conference to discuss an exchange of secondary-school teachers between the two countries.

Phongthep said an initial batch of 50 teachers from each country would be selected for one-year teaching assignments. This would enable personal interaction with a foreign culture, the fruit of which teachers could then pass on to their colleagues and students at home to create more understanding between the two countries, he added.

Phongthep said details of the exchange programme should be ironed out within two months, after which the ministers from both countries would sign the agreement. "You should make sure that they [Philippine teachers] bring something home - they know how to cook tom yam soup," Armin A Luistro, of the Philippine Department of Education, told Phongthep during the meeting.

Thailand will host the next SEAMEO Council Conference, in 2015.