

**Bangkok Declaration of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education
Ministerial Forum
26 May 2004
Bangkok, Thailand**

We, Ministers and High Officials of Ministries of Education from the 10 countries of Southeast Asia, met in a Ministerial Forum on 26 May in Bangkok, Thailand, to discuss the issue of “increasing access to, and the quality of, education through child-friendly learning environments”.

We recognize the following:

- That the ongoing SEAMEO project on “Quality and Equity in Education” highlights our concern for fulfilling the right of all children to obtain a basic education of good quality;
- That a comprehensive definition of quality and equity in education includes (a) inclusive education; (b) gender responsive education; and (c) healthy and protective learning environments;
- That many countries in our region are developing and implementing educational innovations and systematic reforms;
- That many of these innovations are based upon a framework of “child-friendly schools” and “child-friendly learning environments”;
- That ministries of education are collaborating more actively at multilateral and bilateral fora, including with development agencies as well as non-government and civil society organizations, to enhance access to and quality of education through child-friendly learning environments.

We, therefore, agree to the following:

- To reaffirm our commitment to the shared vision on quality and equity in education in SEAMEO Member Countries, as stated in the SEAMEO Declaration on Quality and Equity in Education in Southeast Asia signed by SEAMEO Education Ministers at the 37th SEAMEO Council Conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in March 2002;
- To promote within our ministries of education a comprehensive definition of educational quality which ensures effective teaching and learning, but also includes (a) inclusive education; (b) gender responsive education; and (c) healthy and protective learning environments;
- To share experiences and best practices on, and where possible, further develop ongoing innovations and reforms (such as Child-Friendly Schools and SMART Schools) which pay particular attention to enhancing access to and quality of education through child-friendly learning environments including their integration into both pre-service and in-service teacher education and support programmes;
- To promote within our ministries of education a systematic programme of capacity building in school-based management and community-based

education which promotes school-community partnerships and the empowerment of educational stakeholders;

- To collaborate more actively and build partnerships and networks within SEAMEO, as well as explore possible collaborations with other countries, with relevant ministries in our governments and with interested development assistance agencies and non-government organizations, in efforts to address quality of education from a holistic perspective;
- To annually review these efforts at the SEAMEO High Officials' Meeting and explore further activities which could be undertaken to enhance access to and quality of education through child-friendly learning environments.

Bangkok, 26 May 2004



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