

**APEC Ministerial Meeting
Vladivostok, September 5-6**

Joint Statement

ANNEX D

**Outcomes of the APEC International Education Conference
“Shaping Education within APEC”**

Senior education and trade officials, academics, and private sector representatives from a number of APEC economies, met in Vladivostok, Russia, on 9-10 July 2012, to discuss ways to enhance education cooperation within APEC.

Conference participants recalled the outcomes from the 5th APEC Education Ministerial Meeting (AEMM), held in Korea, where Ministers noted the critical role education plays in facilitating regional economic integration and enhancing prosperity among the APEC economies. Ministers acknowledged the need to continue developing strategies for collaborating among people, sharing resources, and building networks between institutions in APEC member economies, and noted the work of officials in exploring a number of proposals for research, information, capacity building and knowledge sharing in the field of education services.

Participants further noted the statement of the APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade (MRT) meeting in June 2012, which recognized the importance of cross-border trade in education services and deeper educational cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. Ministers encouraged officials to examine ways to better facilitate mobility of students, researchers and education providers in the region, while taking into consideration the circumstances of individual economies, and to report progress at the APEC Ministers Meeting (AMM) in September 2012.

The benefits of open and efficient education systems

Education is the pre-eminent source of economic development in the 21st century, creating more and higher quality jobs, bolstering economic growth. Education as a fundamentally important component of economic activity accounts for almost 7 per cent of GDP in APEC economies. Cooperation in the education sector fosters innovative growth as regional networks of students, researchers and education providers build scientific, technological and linguistic communities.

All APEC economies stand to gain from enhancing collaboration and trade in education. Many developing economies in the Asia-Pacific region are rapidly moving into higher value-added manufacturing and knowledge intensive industries driven by innovation. Access to a wide range of quality education services will be critical to sustainable growth on this development pathway. The APEC region also contains some of the world's largest exporters and consumers of education services. Opportunities exist for a significant expansion of trade in education services to the benefit of all economies if we can facilitate the flow of students and researchers, reduce the transaction costs involved.

Increasing cross-border student flows will also strengthen regional ties and promote economic development through knowledge and skill transfers. In particular promoting the movement of the younger generation between economies will promote cultural understanding and build regional networks. High quality cross-border education will equip students with the 21st century competencies they need for their full participation in a globalized and knowledge based society.

Work on specific policies, including those relating to quality assurance, accreditation, cross-border exchange and data collection, can have a significant impact on the education sector in APEC economies. By undertaking research, sharing best practices, working collaboratively to increase transparency and undertaking capacity building, APEC economies can greatly improve the enabling environment for trade in education services within the region.

Priorities for future work to enhance APEC education cooperation

APEC has a strong track-record of work on international education. Participants recalled prior projects implemented and reports prepared by the APEC Human Resource Development Working Group (HRDWG) including: "APEC 21st Mathematics and Science Education for All"; "Strategic Action Plan for English and Other Languages"; "Capacity Building for Policies and Monitoring of Cross-Border Education"; "Mapping Qualifications Frameworks across APEC Economies"; "Measures Affecting Cross Border Exchange and Investment in Higher Education in the APEC Region"; and "APEC and International Education".

Participants also acknowledged the development and progress made by the HRDWG and the Education Network (EDNET) in expanding and extending the education knowledge-base for the APEC region. This includes the work carried out by EDNET in building and sharing knowledge through the APEC Human Resource Development (HRD) Knowledge Bank Wiki and the APEC Learning Community Builders (ALCoB) networks in developing the 2008 education priority areas: mathematics and science education; career and technical education (CTE)/technical and vocational education and training (TVET); learning each other's languages; information and communication technology (ICT); and systemic reform. The important achievements of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, University Mobility in the Asia Pacific, and the ASEAN University Network in creating bilateral and multi-lateral partnerships and fostering student and researcher exchange was also recognized. Profound steps were made by economies in 2012 to enhance practical and sustainable educational cooperation exploring a number of proposals for research, information, and knowledge sharing in the field of education services including the proposed initiative by the Russian Federation for the development of higher education cooperation and Korea's initiative on cooperation.

More work, however, remains to be done in response to the 2012 AEMM and MRT statements. We have discussed a range of issues affecting higher education cooperation within APEC and examined ways to better facilitate the mobility of students, researchers and education providers. We have identified the following priority areas for future joint work and capacity building to enhance higher education cooperation within APEC. We have also acknowledged that while the focus of this conference was on higher education, the identified priority areas apply equally to TVET.

These priorities will be presented to the APEC Ministers and Leaders at the AMM and AELM for consideration, after which they could be taken forward by economies on a voluntary basis through the HRDWG, the Group on Services, and other relevant APEC working groups.

1. Enhancing the mobility of students

The mobility of students could be enhanced through closer cooperation on specific policies. This could include identification of best practices for APEC economy course accreditation, and quality assurance systems, as well as targeted capacity building projects. This work could also include the development of models to guide reform and transparency, and where possible, drawing on case studies. APEC economies could also explore ways to increase the transparency of student visa regulations.

2. Enhancing the mobility of researchers

The mobility of researchers could be enhanced by building on existing academic exchanges and joint research activities among education providers in APEC economies. APEC economies could also explore ways to improve the mobility of the academic and TVET workforce.

3. Enhancing the mobility of education providers

The mobility of education providers could be enhanced with the exchange of best practices for market access, capacity building, understanding of existing regulations for the establishment of foreign providers, exploration, identification and comparison of best practices in APEC on quality assurance system. The APEC Services Trade Access Requirements (STAR) Database, which by the end of 2012 will include information on requirements for the supply of higher education services through commercial presence, would be a useful tool for understanding existing regulations.

4. Increasing the interaction between higher education institutions

This could include enlarging the existing network of bilateral agreements between universities into an APEC-wide voluntary mechanism; examining policies related to the flexible design and delivery of

educational content (such as online courses) between APEC economies; and exploring the possibility of an APEC database of educational programs.

5. Increasing data collection on trade in education services

APEC economies could share best practices and utilize capacity building to enhance data collection on cross-border student and provider mobility in the APEC region, including estimates of the economic impacts and benefits of student and provider mobility. Such work could eventually facilitate the collection of cross-border education data and deeper regional economic integration through identification of patterns of supply and demand in education and new opportunities for investment and innovative learning and teaching practices in APEC economies.