



## Global Preparatory Meeting

Summary of the 2011 ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review  
Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting  
Chonburi, Thailand  
24 March 2011

Presented by H.E. Mr. Abdulkalam Abdul Momen,  
Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN and Vice-President of ECOSOC

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a part of the annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council, a regional preparatory meeting on the theme "*Education and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals*" was held on 24 March 2011 in Chonburi, Thailand. It is a pleasure for me to inform the Council on the outcome of this meeting.

The ECOSOC High-Level Asia and Pacific Regional Meeting took place in the context of the Tenth Meeting of High-level Group on Education for All (EFA), which took place in Jomtien from 22-24 March, 2011 and was hosted by the Government of Thailand, in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

The High-Level Regional Meeting brought together regional practitioners and experts to identify integrated approaches and concrete policy measures that ECOSOC can promote in the context of the AMR, and more particularly on the role education can play in contributing to the realization of all the MDGs.

I am pleased to share with you a number of important policy messages that emerged from that meeting.

One of the key messages was that education is a crucial factor for sustained, inclusive and equitable growth and for achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals. Education

is not only a right in itself it is also an important tool to make progress on other goals such as poverty reduction, the health goals and the transitioning towards a green economy. Another message was that progress was varied and complex in the region. While much progress had been made in terms of enrolment, later entry into school and early drop out remained a major problem, particularly in East Asia and the Pacific.

Moreover, inequalities persist within countries regarding average number of years of schooling, particular between the richest and poorest, and between boys and girls, with the worst off often being poor, rural girls. The challenges to progress in the health and education related development goals include inequalities and disparities between urban and rural areas with less developed areas lagging far behind on indicators and experiencing lower quality and poorer access to and uptake of health services.

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In addition to identifying key policy messages, the meeting made a number of recommendations that I would like to highlight.

The meeting stressed the need to rethink education in light of a changing world, including demographic and technological shifts, as the new education challenges are emerging. The focus must shift from issues of access and completion to the equally fundamental issues of relevance and quality.

The health and nutritional status of children, including malnutrition, hearing and vision impairments and the consequences of HIV needs to be addressed, through the construction of adequate facilities, provision of regular hearing and vision checks, and lectures to discuss sexuality and reproductive health.

The meeting highlighted the need to follow an equity centered approach by adopting reforms that prioritize disadvantaged communities through targeted incentives, including school feeding programmes, child stipends, scholarships and conditional cash transfers.

The need to engage young people as partners and stakeholders, so they can be at the forefront of changes that benefit themselves and societies was also stressed. Partnerships between all actors, including national, local, public and private actor must be forged. Partnerships between academia, civil society government and the private sector to address the common goals of education and sustainable development must also be built.

Finally, the need to recognize the complementarity of Education for All (EFA) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), as well as coordinate efforts and share experiences was stressed.

Thank you.