

**Greater Mekong Subregion
Fourth Meeting of the Working Group on Human Resource Development (WGHRD-4)
Vientiane, Lao PDR
5-6 September 2002**

Introduction

1. The Fourth Meeting of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Working Group on Human Resource Development (WGHRD-4) was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR from 5-6 September 2002. The Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Lao PDR hosted the meeting in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

2. The objective of the meeting was to arrive at a consensus on the proposed framework for HRD cooperation under the GMS Program (“the HRD framework”), in the context of the GMS Strategic Framework (“GMS Framework”) endorsed in the GMS Ministerial Meeting held in Myanmar in November 2001. The HRD framework was to be used as the basis for firming up the HRD cooperation program and for prioritizing projects in support of the GMS Program. The meeting therefore reviewed the Development Matrix on the HRD flagship program, which was included in the GMS-SF, entitled “ Developing Human Resources and Skills Competencies.” The HRD Matrix included a short analysis of projects, which comprise the HRD flagship program.

3. The participants included government representatives from the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), the Union of Myanmar, the Royal Thai Government, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. Also present were representatives of multilateral and bilateral organizations with strong presence in the GMS. The list of participants is attached as Appendix 1.

4. The Meeting consisted of the following sections: opening/ welcome remarks; introduction to the meeting/ expected outcomes; presentation on the GMS Program Strategic Framework and flagship programs; status of projects/ programs; presentation on draft framework for HRD cooperation; country presentations; breakout session 1 and plenary on the HRD framework; breakout session 2 and plenary on the HRD matrix pipeline; and closing session. The Agenda and Program of the Meeting is attached as Appendix 2.

I. Opening Session

5. Mr. Arjun Thapan, Director, MKSS, ADB, welcomed the participants and introduced H.E. Somphong Mongkhonvilay, Minister to the Prime Minister’s Office, Lao PDR, to deliver the opening remarks.

6. H.E. Somphong Mongkhonvilay welcomed the participants and wished everyone a pleasant stay in Lao PDR. He provided a quick overview of the vision and goal of the GMS Strategic Framework adopted in the last GMS Ministerial Meeting in Yangon in November 2001. He cited the need to re-examine HRD thrusts in the GMS, following the inclusion of the HRD flagship program, “Development of Human Resources and Skills Competencies,” in the GMS Strategic Framework. He cited the objective of the meeting to review and discuss the framework for HRD in the GMS, which aimed to identify a strategy for action to optimize HRD programs/

projects. He added that the GMS Program had become more realistic in terms of development cooperation among GMS members, which would be discussed in the forthcoming 11th GMS Ministerial Meeting in late September 2002 in Phnom Penh. He hoped that the discussions during the two-day meeting would contribute significantly to the improvement/ refinement of the GMS Strategic Plan. He then declared the 4th Meeting of the WGHRD open, and wished the meeting a great success.

Plan of the Meeting/ Expected Outcomes

7. Mr. Thapan explained that the meeting was significant in that ADB had just undergone a major reorganization, which created a full department devoted to the Mekong subregion. Since the WGHRD had not met for two years, he cited the need for a review of what had been done with a view to defining the future work plan. He suggested that the group meet more often, at the very least, once a year. He said that much remains to be done in education, health and labor. He cited the need to act quickly if we are to have an impact in meeting the millennium development goals for the social sector. He then proceeded with the plan for the meeting, noting that after the presentations on the GMS Program Strategy, the report on HRD activities and the proposed framework for HRD cooperation, it was planned that the participants would present on recent country developments in HRD. This would be followed by the first breakout session to discuss the HRD framework and the plenary presentation on the group's findings. At the end of the meeting, the group was expected to come up with a consensus on the framework for HRD cooperation and the HRD pipeline for the HRD flagship program.

Presentation on the GMS Program

8. Mr. Toru Tatara, Head, GMS Unit, ADB, gave a history of the WGHRD and stressed the achievements in the HRD area of the GMS Program, such as the projects in drug control, on HIV/ AIDS prevention, the study on ethnic minorities, and training on environmental information systems. He then gave a quick overview of the GMS Program and its achievements for the first decade, notably the promotion of mutual trust and confidence among the GMS countries, which helped expand cross-border trade and investment. He said that in addition to support for infrastructure projects, the program also developed institutional mechanisms for cooperation in eight sectors, including HRD and environment. He proceeded with a discussion of the GMS Strategic Framework endorsed at the 10th GMS Ministerial Meeting in Yangon in November 2001. He explained that the Framework was to be implemented through five strategic thrusts and ten flagship programs, two of which relate to HRD and environment. He then explained the critical role of HRD in the GMS-SF, and explained the contents of the development matrix that contains a pipeline of projects for HRD cooperation. He gave the goal and objectives of the HRD flagship program, and proceeded with an analysis of the matrix's components, and of the participatory approach adopted for the GMS strategy. Finally, he informed the meeting of the forthcoming GMS Summit of Leaders in November 2002, which will be crucial to successful implementation of the GMS Program in the next decade.

Accomplishments Since the Last WGHRD Meeting

9. Mr. Indu Bhushan, MKSS, ADB, provided the status of project/ programs under WGHRD since the November 1999 meeting in Kunming, PRC. He first provided the underlying principles adopted by the WGHRD for regional cooperation in HRD. The group had agreed to focus on issues that:

- a. have cross border implications;
 - b. provide economies of scale (like purchase of vaccines);
 - c. provide opportunities for cross-country learning and sharing of experiences (such as Cambodia's experience in AIDS care);
 - d. are "regional public good" in nature (such as development of toolkits for HIV/ AIDS).
10. He then outlined the projects completed since the last meeting, as follows:
- a. RETA: Health and Education Needs of Ethnic Minorities- Lao PDR and Cambodia reports have been published also in local languages;
 - b. RETA: Preventing HIV/ AIDS in GMS- developed toolkits providing guidelines on how to organize HIV/ AIDS programs for mobile groups;
 - c. Small Scale RETA: Drug Eradication in GMS- summarized the good practice examples of drug control;
 - d. SSRETA: Support to 6th ICAAP (International Conference on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific).
11. Mr. Bhushan then briefed on ongoing projects as follows:
- a. Community Action for Preventing HIV/ AIDS (\$8 million, funded by JFPR)
 - b. Support to Rollback Malaria (\$0.6 million)
12. Other initiatives and activities mentioned were:
- a. Meeting of the Health Ministers in Hue;
 - b. Proposal for Japan Fund for ICT for HIV/ AIDS (with UNESCO and SEAMEO)
 - c. Proposal for Cooperation in Alternative Development for Drug Control in the GMS (with UNDCP).
13. Mr. Thapan suggested that participants take down notes of issues and questions they would like to raise. The opportunity for an open forum would be given after the presentations to save time.

Presentation on Draft Framework for Cooperation in HRD

14. Dr. Ernesto Franco, HRD Consultant, first presented the steps in developing a framework, namely, assessment of external environmental forces for change, assessment of institutional capability (internal environment), taking stock of vision/ mission and goals, all of which lead to criteria for prioritization and flagship programs and projects. He said that a framework could serve a number of uses, such as acting as road map for the future, and providing rationale/ ownership, and cohesive set of principles. He proceeded to examining a framework in action, the GMS Program strategy, which embodied a vision, mission and goals, among others. For the GMS framework, the four stages in developing the framework was presented. The fourth stage was the matching of environmental forces, institutional capacity, mission and priorities to determine major policies, programs and projects. The end results were the strategic thrusts of the GMS Program and the flagship programs. He then showed the same approach needed to develop the HRD framework. The issue he raised was whether to include productivity as a leverage always. He then presented the critical questions needed towards development of an HRD policy and an HRD model. He showed a diagram summarizing the GMS Program Development Strategy, and showed a similar diagram for the HRD Strategic Framework, highlighting the gaps between what countries want to do, and what they can actually do.

II. Country Presentations

Cambodia

15. Mr. Chroeng Sokhan presented the general situation of Cambodia- its land area, population, GDP growth rate, etc. He provided key policy statements concerning HRD. He gave a quick health situation analysis, including the health work force's composition and distribution. On the current health HRD situation, he listed the institutions involved in health/ sciences training. Main problems concerning training included those related to the use of the system, coordination, standards/ accreditation, quality enhancement, and others (lack of funds and training materials, limited intake capacity of institutions). There were also problems with legislation, and professional registration, accreditation, and performance assessment.

16. For education, he showed a system totally destroyed by war but which significantly expanded in the past decade. However, public expenditures were still low and policies lack support for the sector. Major issues included the lack of budget for reform and high level of centralization. He proceeded with proposed policy areas and medium term objectives for education. Among priorities was to ensure equitable access of poor and ethnic students and girls.

17. For labor, he provided the institutional set up and situation analysis of the sector, including the workforce participation rates and employment rates. He noted the situation with respect to child labor, including their working conditions. He concluded that unemployment and underemployment were two major problems to be solved, compounded by the high population growth rate.

PRC

18. Mr. Sun Xinhua presented the country profile for China (population, urban share, life expectancy, literacy rate and per capita GNP) and administrative structure (provinces, prefectures, etc.). He cited in particular the set-up for the Ministry of Health and the three plans- two on HIV/ AIDS prevention and control, and one on national TB control. He then gave briefs on the HIV/ AIDS and TB situation in PRC and Yunnan. He gave the priority areas for health, namely, communicable disease control, expansion of surveillance system (involving experience/ information exchange), and health promotion (improving community awareness and behavior change in mobile populations).

19. Mr. Dai Xiaochu presented on labor issues and recent trends in China, such as robust inflow of investments and high growth of GNP. He cited challenges faced by the economy in the face of the Asian crisis and September 11 terror attacks. One was the problem of absorbing the new entrants to the labor market. The transition from agriculture to manufacturing required major adjustments in both the labor force and the public sector. Another issue was the displacement of workers from streamlined state enterprises. Among the required responses were to pursue high economic growth rates, to promote tertiary/ service industries, to enhance worker quality, and to improve labor market information system. Efforts were underway to improve vocational skills (through distance method).

Lao PDR

20. Mr. Bounsom Phommavithane began with general statistics for Lao PDR- population, fertility, life expectancy, infant/ maternal mortality rates, literacy rate, enrolment rates and GDP per capita. He gave the health sector's long term vision, goals and objectives of the health sector development and reform. Key objectives were to improve quality and expand coverage. He outlined the overall basic strategies comprising 21 components, including sector-wide coordination, financial management capacity, capacity building in decentralized context, promotion of gender perspective. There were 30 very high priority programs in health finance, health education, infectious disease control, primary health care, maternal/ child health, nutrition, hospital services, etc.

21. He then gave the education strategic vision and overall policy. The latter called for expanding basic education, abolishing illiteracy and improving quality, among others. Education development programs for 2001-2005 were presented, together with the targets for various levels of schooling (i.e., primary, secondary, non-formal, etc.) and needed actions under various objectives (such as increasing equitable access and improving quality/ relevance).

22. Mr. Bounsom proceeded with strategy for Lao Labor Development for 2000-2005. He gave the objectives of the strategy, which included labor skill/ regulation, properly regulating foreign labor, and expanding recruitment service, and improving labor information system.

Myanmar

23. Dr. Maung Maung Win cited the formation of manpower planning coordination committee under the Ministry of Labor. He cited the Department of Labor as focal point for subregional labor information network (SLIN) to apply common GMS skill standards. For occupational welfare the Ministry of Labor carried out measures to balance worker rights with productivity of the enterprise. He cited the various programs under the national employment service, overseas employment service and vocational training.

24. In health, the National Health Committee laid down the National Health Policy composed of 15 elements. From this the National Health Plan was formulated, and one of its projects was the Development of Human Resources for Health. A long-term visionary health development plan was drawn up to meet future health challenges. Priority was accorded to rural health development as the majority resides in rural areas. To develop human resources in health, he explained the major programs contained in the National Health Plan, Special Four-Year Plan and Rural Health Development Plan.

25. For education, the Ministry of Education was functionally the main sponsor of training and education in the areas of basic education, teacher education and higher education. The Education Department had aimed at giving basic education to all citizens and to reduce illiteracy by half. In accordance with the Four- Year Plan for Promotion of National Education the Ministry of Education was in the process of upgrading/ strengthening schools and institutions. He explained the various developments in basic education, higher education, e-education, vocational education, and literacy.

Thailand

26. Mr. Apinan Phatarathiyanon gave the HRD achievements in terms of poverty reduction, education, public health and labor, and remaining problems such as increased unemployment, inequitable regional development, and limited access to services. For health, government enforced the National Health Act and the National Health Insurance Act, reformed the public health system, and adopted universal health insurance at flat rate of 30 baht, which guaranteed equal access to nationally accepted health care.

27. He noted that the New Education Act, launched in 1999, would allow reforms to make Thailand a knowledge-based society. Other major components included an education technology system and information network, public education for the disabled, and self-education. Literacy rates and length of schooling improved, but remaining problems included increase in mental problems (due largely to the crisis), wide urban/ rural gaps and lack of standard quality education.

28. For labor development, government established the new Ministry of Social Welfare and Human Security. Private sector was seen as key to develop labor skills. Government also targeted development of skills responsive to the needs of enterprises, reducing the migration from the countryside and the creation of labor relations system to enable all sides to participate in solving labor problems. Also he reported the progress of the establishment of the Excellent Institute of Thailand under GMS which was proposed in the first phase of GMS HRD Working Group. The training can be extended to GMS Countries on the year 2003. This institute was supported by the German Government. The name of this institute has been changed to the Chiang-Saen International Institute for Skill Development (CS-IISD) located in Chiang Rai province.

29. Mr. Apinan presented the elements of the 9th National and Social Development Plan with HRD as an important strategy through people empowerment, improved social protection system, drug abuse prevention, development partnership promotion, etc. He finally enumerated the recommendations for HRD cooperation which included alignment with corridor development, regularized labor mobility and markets, and information exchanges between GMS working groups, among others.

Viet Nam

30. Mr. Nguyen Ba Can gave the overall picture for education, including mapping and enrolment levels of the education system from pre-school to secondary and on to higher education. He gave a brief of current educational programs, which included adult, ethnic minority and gender education. Issues concerned quality and efficiency, disparity by regions and equitable access. The focus of the education programs included improving quality and efficiency, ensuring equitable access, modernization, standardization, etc.

31. For the health sector, he gave general facts on life expectancy, number of health staff, physician-population ratios, etc. He gave different categories of health sector manpower. The sector's policies and targets were then presented, which included health staffing at all levels, increasing quality of staff, maintenance quality of workers, proper distribution of staff, increasing private sector role, etc.

32. For labor, he noted the trends and targets in employment and job creation. Policy wise, he noted government priorities such as employment generation, and support for vulnerable groups to integrate into the labor market, among others. Program-wise, the initiatives were to improve worker employability, to modernize the labor market information system, and to modernize public employment services, among others. Remaining issues included surplus labor, mismatch between supply and demand, poor quality, poor labor market information, etc.

III. Breakout Session 1- Plenary Presentation (HRD Framework)

Guidelines for Breakout Session 1

33. Mr. Paul Chang explained the plan for the breakout session. Dr. Sandra Tempongko (SEAMEO-Tropmed) provided the participants with the guidelines for the breakout session 1, which was to analyze the HRD framework using the following questions:

- a. What are the challenges/ issues in the environment that are impacting on their respective sectors?
- b. What areas of capacity building need to be strengthened to cope with the identified challenges?
- c. Given the GMS vision/ mission statement, what do we envision for the GMS people?

34. The groups proposed to move the plenary presentations for the next day to enable them to complete their discussions and to prepare their powerpoint presentations.

GMS Scholarship Program

35. Mr. Chang presented the proposed scholarship program that would address the needs of middle and senior level government officials across sectors. The programs would range from 3 to 12 months and would be done in various institutions around Asia. He said that he needed participants' views on whether the concept for the program was on the right track. He cited the proposed areas for the courses, namely, planning, program and project implementation, and all other aspects of development management. He conceded that there was limited time to do systematic needs analysis. He asked the participants for their views on aspects of the program such as the level and qualifications of scholars, length of training, etc. He added that there would be phasing of the program to incorporate lessons from earlier phases.

36. The comments were as follows:

- a. Thailand fully supported the idea of the scholarship program in the areas cited as consistent with the HRD program for GMS. They requested however full details of the proposal for consideration later.
- b. AHRN proposed starting new programs/ courses within the region that would respond to needs of GMS countries.
- c. Mekong Institute (MI) offered its services to develop the content of some courses as well as to undertake comprehensive training needs assessment. MI said two critical areas for the success of the program are management and selection of participants, i.e., making sure those who attend would benefit from the courses.
- d. ADB cited the different institutions and networks that could be tapped for the program (MI, GMS Academic and Research Network of AIT, Colombo Plan, SEAMEO, etc.)

- e. ADB further cited the criteria for eligibility of participants, in terms of age, academic preparation, government employment, position, potential for promotion, computer literacy, English proficiency, etc.
- f. PRC also supported the program but said the courses should not be too long. They added that courses should be more practical, and the program should focus on finding the right persons for the courses. Courses could address subregional cooperation needs.
- g. ADB said that a Steering Committee would be formed to decide on the candidates for the courses. ADB would have the final say on acceptance and would serve as executing agency for the program. Communications could take place through email or video conferencing.
- h. Myanmar asked whether the 12-month program would result to a master's degree, to which ADB replied in the affirmative.
- i. ADB stated it would continue refining the proposal and seek the countries' views on the revised proposal.

Plenary Presentation by Breakout Groups

Education

Chairman- Mr. Nguyen Ba Can (Viet Nam)

Rapporteur- Mr. Chantarat Kotkam (Thailand)

37. The group presented 12 issues and challenges for the sector, as follows:
- a. Uneven development leading to negative impact on educational access and quality of education services;
 - b. Urbanization dynamics given: migration of students/ families to cities; inadequate school physical facilities in city to cope with influx (overcrowding of classes); and draining of human resources from provincial areas to urban areas (and to other countries), among others;
 - c. Poverty of students, families, teachers, and in remote communities and ethnic groups;
 - d. Transitional economies and the challenges posed by move from agriculture to industry/ services, and from planned to market economies;
 - e. Industrialization/ modernization promoted by foreign investment, which showed skills gaps between graduates and industry requirements, and between local and international competencies;
 - f. Technological change
 - g. Poor internal efficiency/ productivity of education systems
 - h. High population growth rates;
 - i. Policy reforms impacting on education;
 - j. Language issues, within countries, language of instruction, ethnic minorities and between countries, demand for foreign language skills given mobile/ global/ regional labor force;
 - k. Cultural challenges given impact of international values (from globalization), traditional beliefs (girls' reluctance to travel) and need for flexible/ culturally sensitive approaches; and
 - l. Need for portability of educational qualifications (standards, accreditation, and mutual recognition of qualifications).
38. There were seven areas for institutional capacity building to cope with strategies, as follows:
- a. Improving educational access (particularly for ethnic minorities and women);
 - b. Upgrading of physical educational infrastructure (classrooms, learning materials, textbooks, ICT, etc.;

- c. Modernization of curriculum and learning materials to respond to challenges (particularly in science and technology);
- d. Capability building for teachers, educational administrators and education development managers, which could focus on educational management, teaching/ learning process, assessment and evaluation, etc.
- e. Expanding flexibility of educational systems including reform of teacher incentive systems, use of alternative learning/ delivery strategies, and strengthening local capacity for decentralized educational management;
- f. Strengthening of competency standards and accreditation mechanisms to facilitate portability of qualifications; and
- g. Facilitating opportunities for sharing of experiences, best practices, innovations, etc. across GMS countries.

Labor

Chairman- Mr. Dai Xiaochu (PRC)

Rapporteur- Ms. Areeya Rojuithee (Thailand)

39. Globalization was presented as the major challenge/ issue for the subregion's labor market. The aspects of globalization affecting the labor force included integration of labor markets, movement of workers, increased trade in goods and services and greater flow of information and technology. As a result of globalization, it was necessary to increase knowledge and skills base of the labor force. The group cited opportunities for greater regional integration to take advantage of globalization and create synergies at the regional level. There was need for more effective communications, such as learning new languages and cultures.

40. For capacity building, the group cited the need to build national and regional capacities to respond to globalization. Private and public sectors needed to work together to strengthen capacity of the work force and of institutions. At the national level, there was need to invest in further training and upgrading of knowledge and skills leading to the development of a learning society. The private sector was cited as the key to provide education and training. The public sector was seen as playing an important role through incentives, subsidies and overall labor policies. At the regional level, the opportunities for capacity building would be through:

- a. Strengthened sharing of information on regional labor markets;
- b. Building capacity to develop regional policy on labor accreditation and standards; and
- c. Developing transparency and consistency in labor migration policy.

41. The group presented its regional vision, which was to transfer knowledge and experience to improve skills and competence of the labor force in the subregion.

Health

Chairman- Mr. Chroeng Sokhan (Cambodia)

Rapporteur- Dr. Anusson S. Sitdhirasdr (Thailand)

42. On the external environment that impacts on health, the group noted the following factors:

- a. Diseases- HIV/ AIDS, IDU/ drug abuse, tuberculosis, malaria, dengue hemorrhagic fever, traffic accident, and fake drugs;
- b. Social situation- poverty, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;

- c. Political situation- policy making, policy in transition to market orientation, law enforcement and transparency;
- d. Globalization- cross-border movement, economic impacts, information access and donor driven programs;
- e. Biomedical advances- new vaccines/ drug development, inequity to access to new technology;
- f. Culture and beliefs- different countries and minority groups have different cultures, which affect their access to health services.

43. On the areas of capacity building that need to be strengthened, the group listed the following:

- a. Capacity building for all levels of health personnel, health institutes (medical schools and centers), and in the areas of health policy and health financing and planning;
- b. Capacity building on international health organizations and government-NGO-community partnership;
- c. Capacity building on health research and evidence base, health information exchange, and ICT development.

44. The group's vision and mission were presented as follows:

- a. Mission 1- communicable disease control among GMS countries, especially in border areas;
- b. Mission 2- improve the health status in the GMS countries;
- c. Mission 3- improve access to quality services, especially in remote areas and vulnerable groups.

Comments on Presentations

45. The following points were raised by participants:

- a. For health capacity building, government policy commitment should come first, followed by health financing to undertake capacity building of health personnel (Thailand);
- b. Public awareness on fake drugs was needed to address the problem (Cambodia);
- c. Differences in implementation of programs could affect regional cooperation; in dealing with programs and projects, duplication must be avoided, especially among those funded by external donors. On the framework, the duration should be from 3 to 5 years, since 10 years would be too long. The framework should also have its own monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to feed to the WGHRD (Thailand);
- d. It was noted that the WGHRD is shifting from an ad hoc approach at programming HRD projects, towards a comprehensive HRD framework. The latter however, is an evolving one with a life span of only 3-5 years and possibly updated annually (ADB).

Presentation/ Adoption of the HRD Framework

46. Dr. Franco noted that that the outputs of the groups exceeded parameters set for their sectors. From the three sector outputs, he presented the integrated output the "HRD Strategic Framework". First cited were the external forces for change as follows:

- a. Globalization- uneven economic development, transitional economies, migration of labor force, changing knowledge and skills needed, roles of public and private sectors, language issues, cultural challenges, policy reforms, spread of infection/ communicable diseases, trafficking, and biomedical advances;
- b. Technological change- access issues and uneven development;

c. Poverty

47. Second area cited was capacity building, which would lead to building in-house capacity. Infrastructure included physical and training institutions. Standards for accreditation and policies and systems were also needed. The third area consisted of the various opportunities for regional exchange. It was suggested to take all three areas to build the HRD program for GMS.

48. Among additional observations were:

- a. Globalization should be accorded top priority since all countries must prepare for this to survive (Thailand);
- b. Whether education for all, non-formal education and open university concept should be given more prominence (UNESCO); these elements were included in the proposed framework (Dr. Franco).

49. Mr. Chang called for adoption of the framework, to be used as basis for the review of the HRD development matrix in the next breakout session. He reminded the participants to adopt a regional perspective and think in terms of cross-border needs in proposing changes in the HRD matrix. He added that thinking on funding should not be limited to ADB; other donors could come in to support some of the projects.

IV. Breakout Session 2- Plenary Presentation (HRD Flagship Program)

Guidelines for Breakout Session 2

50. The participants were then provided with the guidelines for breakout session 2. In the context of the adopted HRD framework, each sector (education, health, and labor) was expected to review and prioritize the specific projects relevant to the sector under the GMS HRD Flagship Program. In the review process, the sector groups were asked to expand, modify, or delete some of the projects.

Education

Presenter: Ms. Pornthip Jaisan (Thailand)

51. The group described the process for review of the priority projects, which included brainstorming on key issues

52. High priority projects included:

- a. Educational Development Management
- b. Education for Ethnic Minorities
- c. ICT in Education, including Distance Education
- d. Decentralized Educational Management

53. Medium priority projects included:

- a. Curriculum modernization
- b. Development/ Strengthening of Competency Standards/ Accreditation
- c. Knowledge Generation, Sharing/ Transfer, Networking in the GMS

54. Low priority projects included:

- a. Poverty Monitoring

- b. Educational Infrastructure upgrading
- c. Gender inequalities in education
- d. Role of private sector in education

Health

Presenter: Mr. Chroeng Sokhan (Cambodia)

55. The group presented the following projects (listed in order of priority):
- a. Health and Education Needs of Ethnic Minorities in the GMS
 - b. Preventive Health Education Through ICT
 - c. Regional Communicable Diseases Surveillance System
 - d. Strengthening a Regional Network for Research in HIV/ AIDS
 - e. Cooperation in Alternative Development and Demand Reduction in Drug Abuse
 - f. Strengthening Regional Capacity for Drug Quality Control

Labor

Presenter: Mr. Dai Xiaochu (PRC)

56. The group discussed many activities to reach agreement on priorities. Discussions on key regional issues were reviewed. The proposed project "Capacity Building for Skills Exchange and Accreditation for GMS Labor Markets" was used as basis for the labor sector proposals. Priority was given to those that promote greater regional integration

57. Highest priority was the Inventory study on labor markets, labor mobility, skills needed for labor market, systems for labor mobility, gender and language issues, training institution / standards/ accreditation mechanisms.

58. Along with the study, it was necessary to establish a permanent regional mechanism (forum, working group, etc.) responsible for management of the study. This would also serve as steering committee for future activities, particularly in addressing the issue of cross-border labor migration in the subregion.

59. Next steps included:

- a. Development of standards and mutual accreditation
- b. Upgrading of selected training institutions
- c. Training of workers to meet regional demand for labor

60. The group noted importance of not duplicating the work of others. There was need to work with others in labor markets to ensure complementarity of work. Steering Committee would work closely with ASEAN.

Presentation for Validation of DMCs of the Framework and Pipeline of Projects

61. Mr. Chang noted the need to develop the details of the project proposals, and matching these with potential funding sources. He noted that some of the activities are being prepared by ADB and could get off the ground quickly. He asked the participants to give feedback on the project proposals after two weeks. For the next venue, he said consultation with the prospective host would be made shortly. He proposed the creation of task forces and their TORs, which would define their work for the next WGHRD meeting. Among the tasks mentioned was to

review the outputs of the WGHRD and provide the details in the priority proposals. The countries would be asked to nominate members of the three task forces (health, education, and labor).

62. Comments

- a. There was question on the need for the task force, and its tasks, since there was no TOR yet (Thailand);
- b. It was explained that there would be need for another look at all the projects from the three sectors to determine their timing (ADB);
- c. It was proposed that cross border migration issues be considered top priority (PRC);
- d. Given the limited resources, some of the priority projects could be funded by the ADB and the others could be proposed for funding from various donors (Thailand);
- e. Relevance to certain sectoral and regional objectives could be used as criteria to rank the projects (Myanmar).

V. Wrap Up/ Concluding Session

63. Mr. Thapan thanked the group for their contributions during the workshop. He said that the meeting has been an educational experience and noted that the extent of participation has been encouraging. Three broad things emerged from the breakouts, which cut across all sectors discussed. One was the need for GMS to prepare for globalization. He said GMS should be prepared for the challenges while noting its strengths. Globalization and increased mobility would have major impacts on health, such as the case for HIV/ AIDS. Second was the need to maximize benefits from new advances in technologies. ICT needed to be more integrated in education, as well as pursuit of biomedical advances. Finally, there was need to be more sensitive to uneven development within and across GMS countries. He said the meeting succeeded in coming up with the priorities for HRD, and noted the intense discussions on the process. He cited the health and education needs of ethnic minorities as a top priority due to its strong cross-border element. Next was the ICT project, and third was the scholarship program in development management. He stressed that ADB would help in developing the projects with guidance from the countries but that there was also the need to strengthen ownership of the program by the countries. He also suggested the group to be open to creative new ideas. He broached the idea of a mechanism for exchange of ideas, through say, a newsletter. He ended by thanking everyone for their contributions and looked forward to future meetings with stronger participation of the GMS representatives.