



**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE
3RD ASEAN EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 15 March 2008**

1. The 3rd ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASED) was convened on 15 March 2008 following the 43rd SEAMEO Council Conference.
2. The Ministers noted the signing of the ASEAN Charter during the 13th ASEAN Summit in Singapore on 20 November 2007, and affirmed that one of the Purposes of ASEAN as enshrined in the Charter (Article 1, paragraph 10) is to “develop human resources through closer cooperation in education and life-long learning, and in science and technology, for the empowerment of the peoples of ASEAN and for the strengthening of the ASEAN Community”.
3. In this context, the Ministers considered that tremendous progress has been achieved in the development of education in ASEAN. The education sector should not be viewed solely under the socio-cultural pillar of the ASEAN Community as education permeates all three pillars of the ASEAN Community in enhancing the competitiveness of individual Member Countries as well as ASEAN as a region. The Ministers also affirmed its relevance in promoting ASEAN awareness and an ASEAN identity, and in fostering greater inter-cultural understanding among the peoples of Southeast Asia.
4. Recalling the decisions of the 2nd East Asia Summit (EAS), 15 January 2007 and the 2nd ASEAN Education Ministers' Meeting (ASED), 16 March 2007, as well as the discussions at the Informal Meeting of the ASEAN Education Ministers (31 August - 1 September 2007), the Ministers were pleased to note the progress of the study on "Harnessing educational cooperation in the EAS for regional competitiveness and community building" which would explore collaboration with participating countries in four areas pertaining to education:
 - (i) Upgrading the standard of teaching;
 - (ii) English language training;
 - (iii) ICT in education;
 - (iv) Vocational and technical training.

The Ministers agreed that future cooperation under EAS would be undertaken through the relevant SEAMEO Centres under the coordination of the SEAMEO Secretariat in close cooperation with the ASEAN Secretariat.

5. The Ministers welcomed the proposed revival of the ASEAN Student Exchange Programme as agreed during the 2nd ASEAN Education Ministers' Meeting (ASED), 16 March 2007, and were of the view that it would help to strengthen educational linkages within ASEAN and facilitate increased people-to-people interaction. The Ministers agreed that the programme will be confined to upper secondary students and the scope would include social and cultural activities while the English language be the medium of instruction.
6. The Ministers considered the proposed ASEAN Scholarship Programme and tasked the ASEAN Secretariat in close cooperation with the SEAMEO Secretariat to collaborate with the Ministries of Education to produce a guidebook on existing scholarship programmes.
7. The Ministers were pleased to note the proposal to develop a framework for the provision of source materials of a common content on ASEAN for use in primary and secondary schools as a means of promoting ASEAN awareness and raising sense of "ASEANness" in the region and tasked the Ministries of Education in Member States to develop materials for this project by 2009.
8. The Ministers reiterated the relevant role of the ASEAN University Network, and the importance of a continued strengthening of relations between ASEAN and SEAMEO through increased collaboration with the various SEAMEO Centres. The Ministers agreed that the AUN should be invited to the next ASED Meeting and present a comprehensive report of its achievements so far and orientations for the future. The Ministers also proposed that the AUN Charter be revisited to take into consideration developments in the region and this could be done in collaboration with SEAMEO-RIHED and the SEAMEO Secretariat in close cooperation with the ASEAN Secretariat.
9. On future cooperation in education the Ministers agreed that the focus should be on implementing Education For All (EFA) by 2015. In this regard, the Ministers tasked the SEAMEO and the ASEAN Secretariats to organise a workshop on the theme of "reaching the unreached" to share best practices among ASEAN Member States.
10. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to Malaysia for the warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements made in hosting the 43rd SEAMEO Council Conference, and the 3rd ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASED).
11. The Ministers welcomed Thailand's offer to host the 44th SEAMEO Council Conference and the 4th ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting (ASED) in Chiang Mai from 8 to 12 March 2009.