

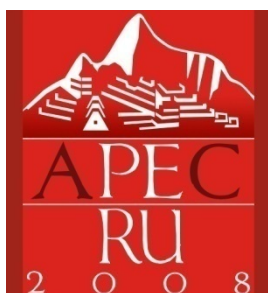


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**4th APEC Education Ministerial Meeting
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PHILIPPINE STATEMENT FOR THE 4TH APEC EDUCATION MINISTERIAL MEETING

Issued by the Philippine Delegation on the 4th AEMM

*Delivered by Hon. Mona Valisno**

Lima, Peru

11 June 2008

I. Greetings!

Honorable Ministers of Education of APEC member economies, Distinguished Colleagues in AEMM, Buenos Dias!

II. Official Statement

This delegation conveys to all member-economies of APEC Education Ministerial Meeting the Philippines' continuing commitment to achieve the APEC's collective goals, objectives and agenda of action to enable the citizens of the region to attain competencies and skills necessary for the region's economic well-being in the 21st century.

III. The Philippines' Accomplishments in Four Priority Areas, 2004-2008

Since 2004, the education department of the Philippines, working collaboratively with concerned government and non-government organizations and economic and business sectors, has initiated and implemented action agenda toward: a) *improving instruction in English across levels of education provision and the learning of other languages*; b) *stimulating learning in Mathematics and Science necessary for all workers to enable them to effectively navigate the data-driven and technological world of the 21st century*; c); *enhancing the career and technical education component in the education system*; and d) *using information and communication technologies for teaching and learning and instituting systemic reforms in improving governance in education*.

1. The teaching of English has been revitalized across levels with the implementation of massive training in **teaching the English and other languages**, including development and publication of teachers' manuals and students' textbooks and references for basic education including post-basic, technical/vocational and higher education levels.

The Department of Education (DepEd) is currently implementing an aggressive campaign to build on the quality and capability of teachers in the country through the DepEd's **Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda** (BESRA). Among the primary objectives of BESRA is to attain a universal adult functional literacy where all persons beyond school-age, regardless of their levels of schooling should acquire the essential competence to be considered functionally literate in their native tongue, in Filipino and English. The BESRA serves as the DepEd's vehicle in pursuing a national strategy in support of learning in the

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English language. This reform agenda identifies resources, capabilities, assets, strengths and advantages available for Filipino mastery of the English language.

BESRA also outlines strategies for language learning. At the early childhood (preschool) level, the child's language is the medium for learning and Filipino (the national language) and English exposure is provided through stories and such. By Grade 1, the child's language is the medium for learning in all subjects. Literacy is also taught in the child's language and Filipino and English will be learned as subjects for oral language development. In Grade 2, the child's language is still the medium for learning for all subjects. Filipino literacy is taught within the Filipino subject. English will continue to be learned as subjects for oral development. In Grade 3, the child's language is the medium of learning for Science and Math. Filipino is the language of learning in the Filipino subject and the cultural subject *MAKABAYAN* (literally translated as "patriotic"). From Grade 4 onwards, Filipino is the medium of learning for *MAKABAYAN* and Filipino language and literature. English is the medium of learning for Math, Science and English language and literature. The child's language is used as auxiliary language of learning to support learning in Filipino and English of all subject areas. In secondary schools, optional language electives may be offered for any language of interest.

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), for its part, has established the **Language Skills Institute** (LSI) to add value to the worldwide recognition of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) as skilled workers. In addition to knowledge, skills and attitude ingrained in the OFW, language and the ability to communicate with the employers, the co-workers and the communities in the destination countries is vital.

The LSI is the facility of TESDA in its headquarters in Taguig City and in thirty seven (37) other TESDA sites to provide work language training in English, Korean, Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, Niponggo and other languages of the major destination countries of OFW. The training is made available for free through the PGMA Training for Work Scholarship Program.

2. **Teaching and learning in Mathematics and Science** have been given a strong boost with the introduction and use of Science and Mathematics learner-friendly modules for basic education students; introduction and aggressive implementation of science and mathematics courses in higher education; and the development and planned implementation of science, mathematics and technology courses (subjects) as core subjects across levels of education provision, i.e., basic, post-basic, and higher education. To date, curriculum reforms across all tiers of the education system which gives focused on Science, Mathematics, and English content occupy the front seat of the nation's education re-engineering initiatives.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in cognizance to the thrusts of the AEMM has initiated **curricular reforms** in various disciplines in higher education particularly in the content of Mathematics, Science and English subjects. The upgraded curriculum is used in the in-service and pre-service trainings of teachers to ensure a standard of quality at all levels for purposes of improving international comparability and competitiveness.

CHED has been providing graduate study scholarships to college faculty in Math and Science to upgrade analytical skills and competencies of teachers. Continuous faculty development is accorded priority attention by the Commission in order to upgrade the quality of instruction and research in various institutions. Similarly, CHED extends assistance by provision of loans, grants and other forms of complementation to finance the retraining of collegiate teachers both from the public and private sectors.

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST), in support to the upgrading of science and mathematics education has developed **computer-aided instructional materials** as tools for teaching and learning science and mathematics both in the elementary and secondary levels. Computer units and **CBT teaching modules** were developed and distributed to science and technology-oriented education institutions all over the country since 2001. A benchmarking project of **Effective Practices in Science and Mathematics** of the Science Education Institute (SEI) in cooperation with the DepEd was conducted which identified top performing schools in science and mathematics and presented as models, from which other learning institutions may gain insights to better their own, and eventually, effect and promote a “learning culture” of science and mathematics among schools.

Further, capability building and leadership training for teacher educators in science and mathematics has been pursued. **Scholarship grants for graduate programs** in the areas of **Biotechnology, Basic Sciences, Materials Science and Engineering, Medical & Pharmaceutical Sciences, Information and Communications Technology, Microelectronics, Earth and Space Science, Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources, Fisheries and Marine Sciences, and Environment** are given to graduates with honors in hope to improve the country’s global competitiveness and capability to innovate. This also aims to accelerate the development of high level human resources for science and technology activities especially in the areas of research and development.

Recently, a total of P200 million worth of scholarship grants has been released to the DOST for a human resource development program which seeks to increase the number of professionals in the fields of **agriculture, forestry and natural resources (AFNR)** and attract more students to take courses related to AFNR.

The DepEd, in recognition to the fact that the fundamental component of economic development is a workforce competent in mathematics and the sciences has conducted an analysis of assessment tools for both teachers and students which revealed a lack of highly-competent teachers in these subject areas which translated to students' poor mastery of the desired competencies. To address this, DepEd is undertaking a comprehensive program for Science and Mathematics, and even other subject areas.

The formulation and adoption of the **National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS)** aims to professionalize and upgrade the skills of all public school teachers. It begins with reforming the curriculum of Teacher Education Institutions. DepEd is leading the harmonized effort among all stakeholders in the teacher education sub-sector. With this, it is expected that teacher graduates are better prepared to face the challenges of teaching in public schools.

DepEd is also conducting continuous training programs for its teachers. These intensify their knowledge of the subjects and at the same time equip them with more effective pedagogical skills for classroom instruction. The lowest performing schools are prioritized in this program, and various delivery modes are employed, depending on the specific needs of the participants.

To further improve students' interest and understanding of these subjects, supplementary teaching materials are being distributed to schools. Whenever feasible, new technologies are also being employed. Their primary learning resource, textbooks, are being screened closely for quality and being provided to all students in adequate quantities.

3. With the fast growth of the knowledge-based economy, 21st century employees need relevant competencies to respond to the demands of the workplace. While **Career and Technical Education (CTE)/ Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET)** is a new area for the APEC Education Network (EDNET), it is at the very core of the APEC mission.

The **Policy Survey for CTE/TVET** undertaken by China and the Philippines showed that there are very real transition issues as students move from the school to work environment, especially in the areas of the 21st century competencies that an employer values.

TESDA's **President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Training for Work Scholarship Project (PGMA-TWSP)** directly resolves structural unemployment by equipping Filipino out-of-school youth, the unemployed, and underemployed and even career shifters with knowledge and skills to fit existing job vacancies. The program offers

more than 25 courses under eight sectors that require critical levels of proficiency and has generated about 3,00 graduates. The PGMA-TWSP also responded to the critical training needs of repatriated Filipino workers from Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, and their dependents. To date, more than 2,000 scholarships have been awarded to returning workers for skills training and retooling, and entrepreneurship and enterprise development activities.

A major pillar in TESDA's authority role is competency assessment and certification. It is an essential quality assurance in TVET that ensures that the graduates and skilled workers possess the necessary competence to perform the tasks consistent with the required standards in the workplace. The list of certified workers is contained in the Registry of Workers Assessed and Certified which is accessible on-line.

One of the flagship programs of TESDA and CHED is the **Ladderized Education Program** (LEP) which both agencies worked on to map out competency equivalents to develop possible credit equivalency matrices in selected disciplines. Ladderized curricula have also been developed in some of the identified Tech-Voc and College Degree Programs. Jointly, CHED and TESDA are aggressively encouraging many higher education institutions to include in their curriculum, the new ladderized curriculum, which is the interfacing of technical vocational education and training with higher education. This will allow certification or recognition of units gained in TESDA registered Tech-Voc programs for equivalent credits under CHED-recognized programs – a paradigm shift from supply-driven to market-driven curriculum.

Although CTE may be more common at the post-secondary level, DepEd already provides Technical-Vocational education in two modes during high school. First, general high schools have a Technology and Livelihood Education subject during the last two years of high school. This gives students an idea of the skills in the areas of Agri-fisheries, Industry, Entrepreneurship, Home Economics and Information and Communications Technology.

For more specialized training, DepEd currently has 261 specialized Tech-Voc high schools all over the country. These offer special training on Arts and Trades, Agriculture and Fisheries. It is envisioned that students would be more equipped for post-secondary education because of exposure to these programs.

4. **4A.** The use of **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)** for teaching and learning has been expanded to include technology-based teaching and learning even to pupils in the remote barangay schools offering elementary and secondary education; there is a continuing development, among private institutions, on the use and integration of technology to facilitate learning, and to expand access

to learning in higher education; the provision for technical-vocational education has increasingly utilized technology as enabling means to facilitate learning through its well-equipped centers and private providers.

Since 1999, the DOST has started the mobilization of its **Mobile IT Classroom** (MITC) Project which allowed promotion of ICT awareness through hands-on computer activities, expose students & teachers to state-of-the-art education technology, and develop in teachers and students an appreciation of ICT as tool for teaching and learning science and mathematics. To date, the project is currently maintaining five MITC units, had served eight (8) regions in the Philippines, and benefited 306,646 students in 4,954 schools.

The CHED's commitment to improve the information and data systems for individual institutions and the higher subsector were realized with the development of the **Integrated School Administrative Systems, the State Universities and Colleges (SUC) Information System and the Basic Higher Education Information System.**

TESDA launched its electronic portal in order to broaden access to TESDA's information and training services. It aims at facilitating the delivery of information and services to various TVET stakeholders in the country. This will promote transparency and integrity of government services. TESDA Technology Institutions will be equipped with computers, internet connections and e-tesda laboratories. Learning materials will also be converted into e-learning modules.

Meanwhile, DepEd has a comprehensive ICT for Education Strategic Plan. It maps out the steps that DepEd will take in terms of integrating ICT into the curriculum, intensifying professional development programs, developing systems for effective governance, developing digital content and establishing the ICT infrastructure.

DepEd is already implementing various projects and activities towards the achievement of these goals. Entry points for ICT in the curriculum are being determined. Continuous ICT training programs on ICT skills and content development are being conducted with the help of numerous donors and partners. The Enterprise Architecture of the Department is being studied and the distribution of ICT equipment is on-going.

4B. Governance in education, particularly basic education, has been expanded to include as critical players parents and community residents, in addition to the sector representatives of the different community-based groups and business sectors, in the teaching-learning activities with these new players serving as teacher-aides, resource persons for socially-oriented courses, and performance monitors and assistants in pupils' activities done outside of the school

premises. In particular, **systemic reforms** are introduced to the system to affect the whole education sector – the trifocalized system with inclusion of the community, the industry and all stakeholders of education.

In the area of governance, oversight for the education sector is currently provided by three distinct bodies: the DepEd for basic education; TESDA for technical vocational education and training; and CHED for higher education. The Philippine government realizing the need to establish a coordinating body of the trifocalized system created the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Education (OPAE), through the issuance of Executive Order No. 632. The OPAE's primary mandate, along with the newly created **Presidential Task Force for Education** (PTFE), is essentially to assess, plan and monitor the entire education system with the end-in-view of prioritizing and harmonizing the policies as provided for under Executive Order Nos. 632 and 652. More specifically, one of the essential tasks of the PTFE/OPAE is "to review existing and proposed programs from all the three (3) education agencies of government and other government agencies with education programs for tighter inter-subsector coordination".

As for recent venture, the PTFE has adopted the **Philippine Main Education Highway** continuum as its education blueprint towards the fulfillment of its goal of producing quality and world-class graduates. The Philippine Main Education Highway incorporates the vision of the Filipino family where every son or daughter has the opportunity to obtain high quality education that will make him or her, a whole person and lead him or her to a productive, well-paying job or become a successful entrepreneur and a responsible citizen. At the end of the education highway, we should be able to turn out Filipinos who have the skills to work or become entrepreneurs, the personal abilities to manage their emotions, the social abilities to nurture relationships and the thinking abilities to solve problems and successfully cope with change in the knowledge-based economy.

In particular, the DepEd's institution of NCBTS has paved the way to effect an articulation of a singular competency-based framework for teaching and teacher development that would guide all policies, reforms, and activities related to teaching and teacher development.

The NCBTS is the proposed common framework for all teaching and teacher development programs in the Philippines formal education sector, the NCBTS is a coherent and integrated definition of the different dimensions of good teaching that leads to high levels of student learning, the contents of the NCBTS were derived from (a) educational theories and empirical research on characteristics learning environment and teaching practices that lead to effective student learning and (b) documented successful practices and programs of schools, division, regions, and educational reform projects in different parts of the country.

The implementation of the NCBTS is jointly coordinated, under a Memorandum of Agreement, among important major stakeholders: DepEd, CHED, Teacher Education Council (TEC), Civil Service Commission (CSC), Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), various related non-government organizations (NGOs) and civic organizations, private and corporate foundations and all other concerned groups.

IV. Future Initiatives and Philippine Education Reforms Agenda for APEC

As this 4th AEMM provides an opportunity to deliver on the commitment of all member economies to the 21st century competencies and skills requirements through education, we, the Philippine delegation recognize the necessity to give to present and coming generations and expanded vision of, and a renewed commitment to quality education. We, thus, reaffirm and seek stronger support and commitment from this forum to our country's reform agenda anchored on the specific thrusts of the AEMM.

The comparability and benchmarking of professional degree programs as well as professional examinations in the fields of engineering, medicine, accounting, etc., including collaborative research will be pursued under bilateral agreements with identified APEC economies, with mutual benefits to participating economies.

Science and Mathematics Initiatives

The DOST-SEI will conduct a self-funded project, **Best Practices on Human Resource Capacity Building in Science and Mathematics Education** which was endorsed by economies during the 30th HRDWG Meeting in Bohol, Philippines. The project has the ultimate objective of developing capacity for teacher education in science and mathematics through the sharing of best practices among APEC economies.

A major activity of the project is the conduct of a two-day forum where stakeholders in teacher education in science and mathematics from various economies can raise awareness, exchange ideas, transfer or gain knowledge regarding best practices in developing human resource for teacher education in science and mathematics. The two-day forum will tackle topics on the following:

1. Strategies in building the capacity of the Teaching Staff in science and mathematics for basic education
2. State policies on improving the capabilities of and provision of incentives to teachers in science and mathematics
3. Graduate level programs for teacher development in science and mathematics, and
4. Collaboration for Graduate Program in science and mathematics education.

The forum will be held in Manila, Philippines on 26-27 March 2009.

Career and Technical Education Initiatives

A **Comparability and Benchmarking of skills and TVET qualification frameworks across APEC Economies** will be pursued by the Philippine economy with TESDA as the lead organization. Learning about the prevailing standards and competency levels in the APEC region, including policies and practices in TVET will help ensure appropriate workplace preparation and enable the workers to be more competent and globally competitive.

As such, an expansion of strategic partnerships in TVET with APEC member economies will also be prioritized. There is a need to pursue the expansion and strengthen international networks and alliances among APEC economies as members of APEC must build strategic alliances with other international partners and organizations. These partnerships will provide opportunities for exchange of expertise, ideas, resources and unique practices.

ICT and Systemic Reforms Initiatives

In order to address the overlapping issues/concerns, the government agencies working for Philippine education spearheaded by the OPAE/PTFE will adopt a **Sector Wide Approach for Philippine Education (SWAPeD)**. A SWAPeD is a process of engaging all government stakeholders in order to attain national ownership, alignment of objectives, harmonization of procedures, approaches and a coherent financing arrangement for education sector. In addition, a SWAPeD process involves broad stakeholder consultations in designing a coherent and rationalized sector programme at micro and macro levels and the establishment of tighter sub-sector coordination mechanisms among and between education agencies.

Through the SWAPeD process, the Government and other education partners will develop the **Inter-agency Coordination for Education Framework (ICEFramework)**. The framework comprises investment initiatives focusing on the entire education sector. The ICEFramework fits within the broader framework of national policy as set out in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan for Education and the Philippine Main Education Highway. Our vision is guided by the understanding that quality education and training contribute significantly to economic growth and expansion of employment opportunities, as well as make it parallel to other emerging trends like the knowledge-based economy. The vision which is in tandem with the government's plan as articulated in the Medium-Term Development Plan for Education therefore provides the rationale for major reforms in the current education system in order to enable all Filipinos to have access to quality life-long education and training.

The ICEFramework is based on the rationale of the overall policy goal of achieving Education for All (EFA) and the government's commitment to the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) set by the United Nations. The broad objective is to give every Filipino the right to quality

education and training no matter the socioeconomic status by having tighter coordination amongst government agencies working for education at various levels. This will be achieved through the provision of an all-inclusive quality education that is accessible and relevant to all Filipinos.

The ICE Framework operates the interorganizational theory which clearly shows the "*coordinatedness within and between offices, departments, and organizations*" working for the education sector. Aside from coordination amongst the actors, the interorganizational theory also considers "cooperative relationships" as goal-direction and process-related joint ventures. Through coordination and cooperative relationships, various institutions work together and collectively enhance performance by sharing commitments and resources, and operating for common task goals.

The process in the ICE Framework involves the dynamic interaction between various education sub-sector agencies as well as the other strategic partners and education stakeholders, which is embedded in networks of coordination and cooperative relationships that influence the flow of resources among them and execution of projects, programs, and activities towards the attainment of the desired output. This process also engages the conception of coordinating body, together with the other existing coordinating mechanisms that are revitalized and strengthened to improve the synchronization and harmonization of education programs and policies.

V. Reiteration of Philippine Support

Our government fully recognizes that for individuals to gain economic advantage in the 21st century, he or she must be able to demonstrate competencies and skills required across spheres of work in competitive environments; with this recognition, our education ministry is aggressively pursuing a continuing quality improvement in these four areas.

In this light, the Philippines' collective efforts to attain this goal are focused on defining and implementing a cross-sector action agenda to sustain and further enhance the gains the country has realized in the past four years in the teaching of English, stimulating Science and Mathematics, using technology for teaching and learning, and making expanded governance work toward enabling our citizens compete competently in the global world.

VI. Statement of Appreciation and Thanks

Consistent with the thrusts of the AEMM, the Philippine government, through Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo granted a thirty four percent (34%) appropriations in the education sector out of the national departmental budget allocations to pave the way for a more competent and skilled workforce in the country ready to vie up close in the global market as we approach the 21st century.

Finally, we acknowledge the APEC's support given to the Philippine government with its successful endorsement of five RP – sponsored APEC funded projects through the EDNET in coordination with China and other member economies in areas of human resource capability building and information and technology for education.

As we continue to mobilize the implementation of all these education reforms agenda, we committed ourselves to such through their alignment to the country's Medium Term Development Plan and the Millennium Development Goal. We envision these projects to enhance access to and improve the quality of education and employment, bridge the gap between education and the 21st century labor requirements, ease the integration of Filipinos to the global economy, reduce poverty and promote sustainable practices that benefit all stakeholders in the community. These efforts and unqualified commitment, we believe will accord our citizenry and all member economies to advance our place and interest in the global market as we move toward the 21st century.

Thank you very much.