

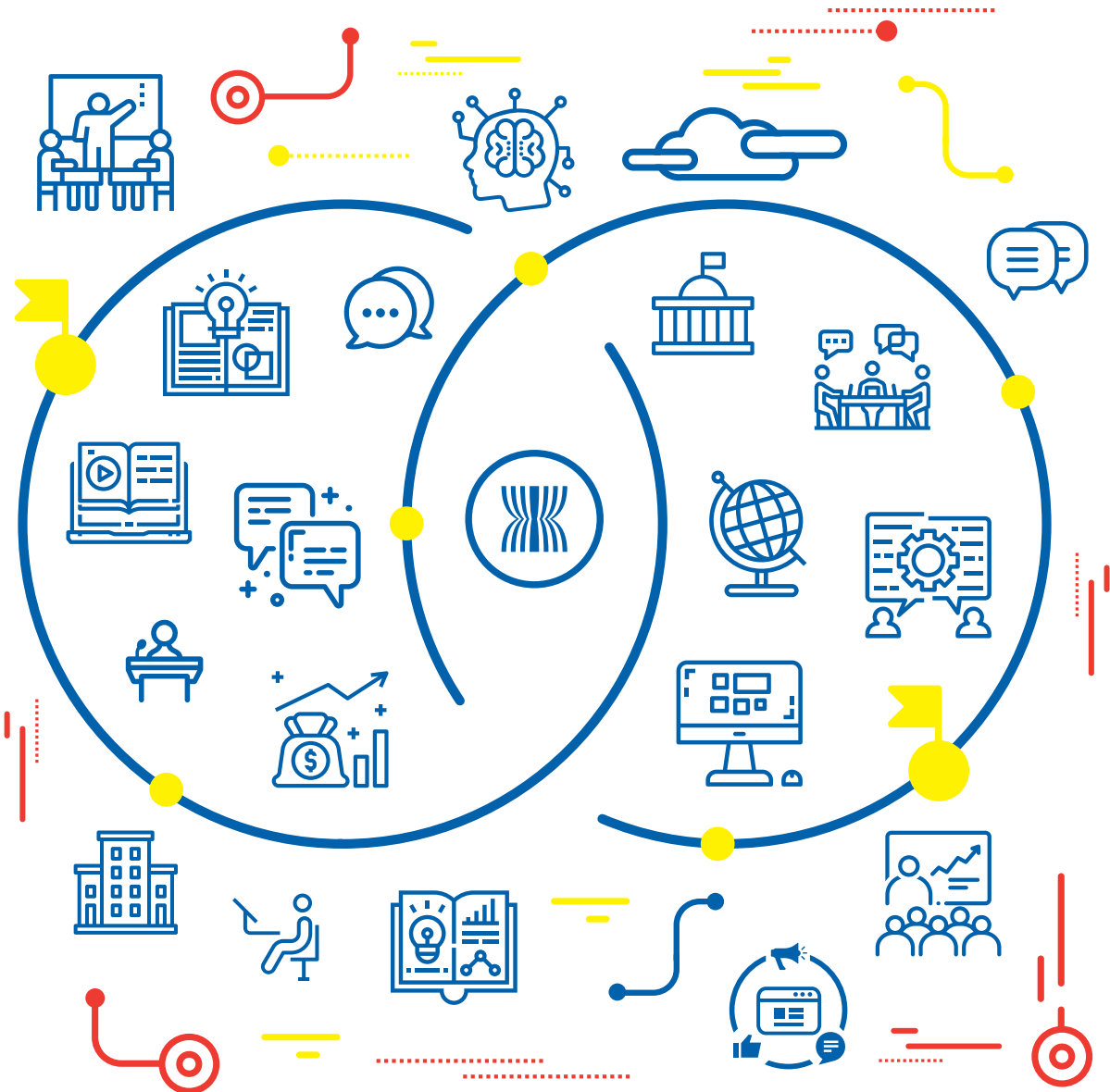


ASEAN
THAILAND 2019
ADVANCING PARTNERSHIP
FOR SUSTAINABILITY



ASEAN High-Level Meeting on Human Capital Development

9 September 2019



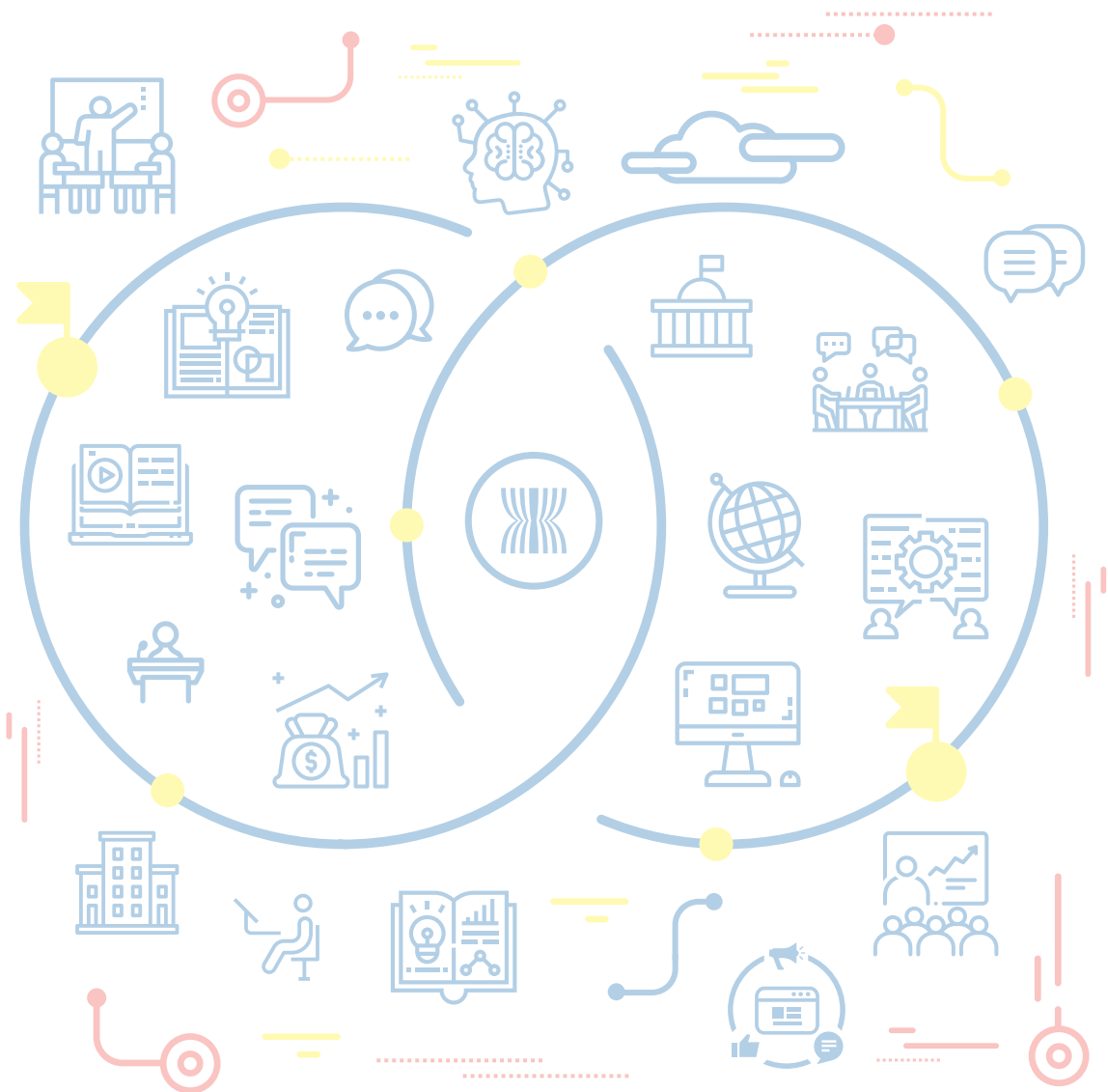


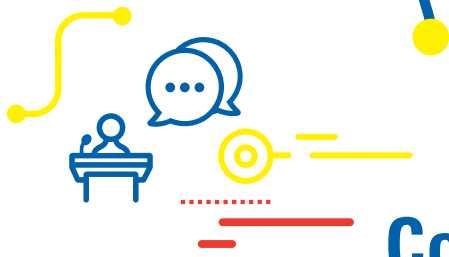
ASEAN
THAILAND 2019
ADVANCING PARTNERSHIP
FOR SUSTAINABILITY



ASEAN High-Level Meeting on Human Capital Development

9 September 2019





Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms	iii
1. Introduction	iv
2. Outcome of the meeting	1
2.1 Observations	1
2.2 Recommendations	2
2.3 Conclusion	2
3. Proceedings of the meeting	3
3.1 Opening the meeting.....	3
3.2 Keynote speech.....	4
3.3 Sharing experiences on human capital development in ASEAN.....	5
3.4 From vision to action: ASEAN Leaders Declaration on Ending All Forms of Malnutrition.....	6
3.5 Investing in young people, the key to accelerating human capital.....	7
3.6 Closing the meeting.....	9
Annex. Concept note and meeting agenda	10
Concept note	10
Agenda	12

Abbreviations and acronyms

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
AI	artificial intelligence
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
GDP	gross domestic product
HCI	Human Capital Index
NESDC	Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, Thailand
UHC	universal health coverage
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

The Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have made tremendous economic and social progress in recent decades, yet development gaps persist. Unequal access to basic services, including health care and education, contribute to widening inequalities, especially in income and wealth. Meanwhile, the digital divide has been exacerbated by rapid technological change. Production and management systems of global industries are responding to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), digital transformation and disruptive technologies. Thus, the skills of the future workforce need to be adapted to and keep pace with the digital transformation.

Investments in human capital development are key to closing the gaps and preparing for the future. Furthermore, there are very high returns on investments in nutrition, health care, quality education, life-long learning, jobs and skills for people in all three major stages of the human life cycle. When supported by wise policies and effective implementation, investments in human capital build resilience to the disruptive future while narrowing existing social and economic gaps.

Underinvestment in human capital is an important challenge in the region, but there are initiatives underway to accelerate human capital development. Policymakers and development partners in the region are taking steps to implement the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Ending All Forms of Malnutrition, in line with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals. On 9 September 2019, the ASEAN High-Level Meeting on Human Capital Development was held in Bangkok during Thailand's chairmanship of ASEAN. The meeting highlighted the importance of human capital development and provided a platform for key policymakers and practitioners from across ASEAN and global technical experts from the World Bank and other development partners to share their knowledge and experiences in human capital development.¹ Many examples from the region of successful development of human capital were shared at the meeting, along with frameworks and initiatives to increase investment.

This report includes the outcome and recommendations of the meeting and a summary of its proceedings.



Participants in the ASEAN High-Level Meeting on Human Capital Development.

¹ The concept note and agenda of the meeting are annexed to this report.

2. Outcome of the meeting



Speakers and panelists in the ASEAN High-Level Meeting on Human Capital Development.

2.1 Observations

Human capital development was seen as part of a people-centred process to build an ASEAN Community that leaves no one behind and looks to the future, in line with this year's ASEAN Chairmanship theme "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability". In light of global megatrends, human capital development is a priority area in 2019.

Global megatrends, the impact of 4IR and other human capital challenges facing the ASEAN region all represent critical challenges to the current and future prosperity of the ASEAN Community and to the realization of its Vision 2025 for economic competitiveness and dynamism, political stability and social justice.

Various challenges faced by people of all ages in the ASEAN region include the following:

Children – according to the Human Capital Index (HCI) developed by the World Bank, children born in the region today will fulfil only 59 per cent of their potential productivity. It is underpinned by lagging performance across multiple countries in key areas. For instance, 1 in 5 children who complete primary school in ASEAN Member States remain

functionally illiterate, and 1 in 5 children in the ASEAN region are stunted.

Labour workforce – countries face a complex scenario where there are uncertainties around the future of work. This reinforces the urgency of overhauling education systems towards improving learning outcomes, particularly in the 4IR context, given the implications of technology, artificial intelligence and automation on the future workforce of ASEAN.

Ageing population – some ASEAN Member States have an ageing population, which results in a shrinking workforce and economic opportunities. This includes health challenges, such as non-communicable diseases, and the rise of diabetes and obesity in several countries is an emerging pandemic.

There are opportunities to improve the development and potential of the human capital in ASEAN, and it is important to promote investment in human capital development across various stages of a person's life.

2.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations were compiled based on the discussions at the meeting. They are illustrative of the wide range of ideas that were perceived as supportive of human capital development in the region.

- Encourage enhanced regional cooperation in the area of sustainable human capital development as part of the priority areas of sustainable development cooperation and economic cooperation under the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific that was adopted at the 34th ASEAN Summit in June 2019.
- Develop an ASEAN monitoring and evaluation framework to determine action and review progress on the double burden of malnutrition, which has caused stunting and over-nutrition in the ASEAN region, building on the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Ending All Forms of Malnutrition adopted in 2017, under the coordination of the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Health Development in partnership with the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue.
- Accelerate evidence-based multisectoral actions and scale up nutrition-enhancing interventions to reduce and ultimately end all forms of malnutrition, and diet and diet-related non-communicable diseases particularly among the most vulnerable, poor and disadvantaged groups in ASEAN.
- Commit to increase public and multisectoral investments to improve nutrition and ensure healthy diets and increase the level of cooperation through the mutual pursuit of initiatives.
- Increase social investment to help bring children out of poverty and invest in targeted social protection systems to address inequalities in access to quality health care and education.
- Expand public early childhood education provision in order to have positive effects on learning outcomes and retention at higher levels of the education system, as it is among the most cost-effective ways for countries to build human capital.
- Focus on learning outcomes, skills and competencies in the education sector to ensure that schooling enables students' skills on adaptability, critical thinking, collaborative attitude and entrepreneurship.
- Invest in twenty-first century learning through multiple pathways, both in and out of formal school settings, and through the promotion of lifelong learning and access to reskilling, upskilling and digital literacy.
- Promote public-private collaborative efforts and policy interventions in health care, education and employment sectors to ensure that the outcomes for human capital development can rightly respond to market demand and can be sustainably obtained through strong partnerships.
- Create opportunities and ecosystems where people of all ages can thrive and become part of productive and agile workforce for the future, contributing to tomorrow's economy and national competitiveness.
- Support the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation, which will help catalyse and synergize regional efforts to promote sustainable human capital development, leading to enhanced sustainable development cooperation and increased cooperation to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Organize a follow-up meeting on Human Capital Development in 2020, including the development of a shared learning agenda for the ASEAN Community to identify what works to raise levels of human capital and quantify the returns on investment; and request development partners including the World Bank and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to jointly support this learning agenda.
- Promote enhanced engagement in advancing human capital development with relevant sectoral bodies in ASEAN, dialogue partners, international organizations and the international community, including the G20 countries.

2.3 Conclusion

These recommendations will help ensure that human capital will be at the heart of an inclusive ASEAN Community, and thus advance the agenda on human capital development as a key driver for sustained economic growth and development.

Their implementation will also help in the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through win-win cooperation on sustainable development.

3. Proceedings of the meeting

The ASEAN High-Level Meeting on Human Capital Development, organized by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council of Thailand, in partnership with the World Bank Group and UNICEF, took place in Bangkok on 9 September 2019. The meeting provided a forum for high-level government officials from ASEAN Member States as well as representatives

of ASEAN development partners, the private sector, civil society, embassies and United Nations agencies to share their knowledge and experiences in developing human capital. The presentations given at the meeting encouraged further investment in human capital by highlighting frameworks to support human capital development and good practices in the ASEAN Member States.

3.1 Opening the meeting

During the opening session, the World Bank video “ASEAN: Invest in People to Build Human Capital” was screened for the plenary.²

Mr. Thosaporn Sirisumphand, Secretary-General of National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC), Thailand, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants on behalf of the Government of Thailand. In the region there has been great progress but challenges remain, including malnutrition and stunting that impacts some 25 per cent of children in ASEAN Member States. Ageing societies and shrinking workforces are also impacting some countries in the region, and we must put policies in place to protect older people and people with disabilities and provide the workforce with future-ready skills. He encouraged the meeting participants to identify ways for human resources to meet challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

Mr. Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN, noted that human capital development is a challenge today. While there have been improvements in terms of life expectancy, school enrolment and per capita income over the past several decades, the region has developed only 59 per cent of its human capital, according to the Human Capital Index Report of the World Bank. The ASEAN Community can play a role in encouraging Member States to further invest in and develop their human capital. The ASEAN Technical, Vocational, Education and Training Development Council is promoting skill development across the region, but the biggest challenge facing ASEAN today is how to build human capital and skills amid rapid technological change. Changes will drastically transform economies, the nature of work and required skills. Some jobs will be lost and others will be created with the advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation. In the transition to a knowledge economy, reskilling and



Mr. Thosaporn Sirisumphand, Secretary-General of NESDC, Thailand.

upskilling are critical for workers to be productive and competitive. We need human capital for a sustainable future in ASEAN, and this implies the partnership of all actors in government and civil society for our collective future.

Mr. Laurence Chandy, Director of Global Insight and Policy Office, UNICEF, provided four arguments on the concept on human capital development. First, social and economic development are linked and data on human capital development complements the argument for child rights, defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF and the World Bank will commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the ratification of the Convention with a report on child rights in the region, which makes a renewed case for investment in children. Second, human capital investments, especially investments in children, have high rates of return.

² www.youtube.com/watch?v=WH0JdnX4VxM

In fact, one study of welfare programmes in the United States found direct investments in children's health and education had the highest returns and ultimately more than paid for themselves.³ Third, initiatives must be well designed to yield results and there are many unanswered questions about what works to build human capital. UNICEF is investing in generating new evidence on developing human capital in ASEAN Member States. Fourth, there are millions of opportunities to invest in young people, to prevent poor outcomes in education and child mortality. These four arguments will become more relevant as technologies, including AI, networking and robotics, change the world of work and global

markets. ASEAN must invest in young people, and UNICEF is committed to taking on this challenge.

A video presentation by Ms. Victoria Kwakwa, Vice President for East Asia and Pacific Region, World Bank, was provided to the meeting. She emphasized that continued progress depended on investments in all people, so that everyone would be educated with skills for the future, be protected from income shocks and have health care for long and productive lives. The region is working together to reach these goals, and development community is committed to supporting them to achieve these goals.

3.2 Keynote speech

Mr. Luis Benveniste, Regional Director for Human Development in the Latin America and Caribbean Region, World Bank, gave a presentation on the Human Capital project of the World Bank, including the Human Capital Index (HCI). The index combines indicators on child survival, health and schooling to estimate future productivity and draw attention to the consequences of shortcomings in today's investments. For example, on average, ASEAN can achieve only 59 per cent of its potential productivity, based on the current investment level. The HCI indicators on health include stunting because it is a marker of malnutrition that also indicates lower cognitive development. The index also includes indicators of schooling, including forecasted years of school attendance and the value of the learning in school, based on the quality of education. This is important because while almost all children in ASEAN attend school, about 20 per cent of children are not functionally literate. Investments in children's human capital have high returns. For young children, nutrition investments are critical. Later in childhood, school is a key investment. Programmes in Myanmar and the Philippines provided stipends and cash transfers to reduce the dropout rate, while other programmes in the region target investments to improve the quality of learning in schools. Furthermore, lifelong learning is essential to prepare for the impact of AI, automation and technology on the workforce so that workers can adapt to change. Human capacity investments can also support older people to help them to continue to be productive. For example, universal health coverage (UHC) has already



Mr. Luis Benveniste, Regional Director for Human Development in the Latin America and Caribbean Region, World Bank.

contributed to greater worker productivity and increased life expectancy in Thailand.

The World Bank supports human capital development through its analytical work, and it will launch HCI 2.0 in 2020. The ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue and the ASEAN Centre for Active Ageing and Innovation also support human capacity development.

³ https://opportunityinsights.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Welfare_paper.pdf

3.3 Sharing experiences on human capital development in ASEAN

Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Public Health, Thailand, presented on the development and impact of UHC in Thailand. Expanding the services to everyone required national commitment, a whole-of-government approach and sustained investment despite periods of economic hardship. Health is a fundamental element of human capital, and universal coverage requires adequate and equitable health delivery systems. To bolster health systems the government fostered a substantial expansion of health facilities and the health workforce. Public investment in education, empowerment of women and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) were critical to the achievement of UHC, which has improved the health and life expectancy of Thai people while reducing the risk of medical poverty. Some challenges remain, such as rising health care costs and adapting to the needs of an ageing population. The Thai experience shows that a country does not have to be wealthy to offer UHC. It takes strong political commitment, participation, ownership, accountability and careful management of limited resources to achieve sustainable UHC.

Mr. Edward Teo Wee Kwan, Director of Research and Statistics, Ministry of Health, Singapore, gave a presentation on the national investments in education, health and skills to prepare for 4IR. Investments in education included financial assistance for needy students, and a new measure to ensure that preschool and early childhood education are affordable and high quality. The Ministry of Education convenes stakeholders, including schools and economic agencies, to ensure curriculum remains relevant and focused on creativity and interdisciplinary skills. Singapore has expanded publicly funded higher institutions, which provide training to build skills throughout the lifecycle. Investments in health include nurturing a healthy nation and reducing the causes of chronic disease. Dietary choices and tobacco are the top risk factors, and so the Government is working with industries and consumers to change behaviour, restrict smoking and reduce the disease burden of diabetes. Investments in skills reflect the ageing of the workforce and the need to remain relevant amid rapid technological change. Strategies to take advantage of these changes in the coming decade include supporting workers to acquire and use deep skills, and creating industry transformation road maps that integrate productivity improvement, innovation, and internationalization.

Ms. Rohayati Abd Hamed, Deputy Director of Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, gave a presentation



Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Public Health, Thailand.

on national progress toward inclusive education. In 2011, the Ministry of Education launched a blueprint to raise the educational standard and increase public expectations of education. The blueprint focuses on access, quality and values, with the goal of achieving universal access by 2020. Every child should develop knowledge in core subjects, supported by the values of lifelong learning, reasoning, problem solving, innovation, leadership skills, bilingual/multilingual, and ethics and spirituality, and national identity. Including children with learning disabilities and other special needs in the education system begins with identification and early detection of special needs. Inclusive education is part of the continuum of services for children with special needs. Special education is a standard part of teacher training, which has created a pipeline of teachers and specialists. Investments in infrastructure and other steps to reduce barriers to education ensure schools serve all children. The Government provides financial incentives for children to remain in school, and those with special needs can remain in school for an additional two years if they choose to. Enrollment has increased in all programmes and outcomes have improved.

Ms. Adoracion Navarro, Undersecretary of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the Philippines, informed the meeting about the role of investments in human capital in capturing the demographic dividend in her

country. While the birthrate in the Philippines has declined steadily from 2000 to 2017, the population continues to grow and adolescent fertility is a major concern. According to HCI, the Philippines has reached only 55 per cent of its potential. Early pregnancy is a major health risk for adolescent girls and a leading cause of death. It also disrupts education and lowers labour force participation. To boost growth and reduce poverty, the economic blueprint of the Philippine Development Plan 2017–2022 outlines two strategies: the first is to reduce maternal and infant death and reduce fertility by meeting the demand for family planning; the second is to maximize gains from the demographic dividend through investment in human capital and job opportunities for young people. Policies are paving the way for human capital investments in health, education and labour.

Mr. Daniel Kertesz, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative to Thailand, gave a presentation on human capital investments

to achieve the health-related Sustainable Development Goals. Although there are many challenges, UHC is the most powerful concept in public health, with its promise of equity and access to services of good quality and free from economic hardship for the user of the services. The burden of non-communicable diseases is a challenge, and it is growing in the region. Although there has been progress in strengthening the size and quality of the health workforce globally, there is a projected shortfall of 18 million qualified health workers by 2030. Investments in job creation in the health sector, especially for women and youth, can foster their empowerment, close the gap in the health workforce and build the economy. Good health has strong economic returns, with each additional year of life expectancy correlated to an increase in gross domestic product per capita of 4 per cent. In the ASEAN region and in other regions, multi-country approaches have strengthened systems for UHC, supported high-level commitments and facilitated holistic work across sectors.

3.4 From vision to action: ASEAN Leaders’ Declaration on Ending All Forms of Malnutrition

Mr. Daniel Dulitzky, Regional Director for Human Development, East Asia and the Pacific Region, World Bank, moderated the panel discussion. ASEAN Member States have made progress toward ending malnutrition for many years, with the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue working at the regional level.

The panelists focused their remarks on challenges and bottlenecks in reducing stunting.

Mr. Phouthone Muongpak, Vice Minister, Ministry of Health, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, explained some of the good practices to reduce stunting in his country. Longstanding efforts include



Participants in the panel discussion on the ASEAN Declaration on Ending All Forms of Malnutrition.

salt iodization and the provision of free health treatment for poor families, including maternity and care for children up to age 5. The Government established a national nutrition forum, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister to share information and identify bottlenecks to improved nutrition. Following survey results that showed about half of Lao children were stunted, the Government joined the Scaling Up Nutrition movement with a focus on the first 1,000 days. This brought greater attention to the issue of malnutrition, and partnerships led to progress. While the overall percentage of stunted children has decreased, some groups are impacted more than others. Thus, in the coming five years, the focus will be on implementing high coverage nutrition-specific interventions for populations with a high prevalence of malnutrition, while also improving WASH services. The Government is also working toward banning the sale of breastmilk substitutes.

Mr. Kraisd Tontisirin, Expert in Stunting and Nutrition, Mahidol University, Thailand, spoke about the multisector approach to reducing malnutrition in Thailand. It began with strong political commitment followed by community-based actions to reach all people. The interventions targeted rural areas where malnutrition was worst and worked with community volunteers to provide basic yet good quality services. A great reduction in malnutrition was achieved from 1980 to 2006, but Thailand is now facing the double burden of over and under nutrition, and children are at risk of obesity and the prevalence of diabetes has increased. The approach to community-based programmes for malnutrition can also be used to support other programmes, including the care of older people. The success of the programme is based on the provision of basic services, strong leadership and commitment, good practice and mass mobilization.

Ms. Panpimol Wipulakorn, Director-General, Department of Health, Thailand, informed the meeting of the 20-year strategic plan for public health, including initiatives for health protection and promotion. Food education and public service announcements provide nutrition guidance to the public. The strategic plan takes a lifecourse approach, and the first 1,000 days are regarded as a key time and a predictor of many outcomes. The focus on the first 1,000 days aims to increase the quality of health facilities, enhance service systems and elevate stakeholder participation. The Ministry of Public Health is releasing health information through social media, but it will take time to build health literacy.

Ms. Wivina Belmonte, Deputy Regional Director, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, explained the interlinkages between nutrition and other parts of the development agenda. In addition to agriculture and education, nutrition is linked to sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Stunting, wasting and obesity are problems in the region, and a range of interventions are needed to reduce the prevalence of these challenges. The objectives of the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Ending All Forms of Malnutrition are to accelerate evidenced-based multisectoral interactions and scale up interventions. To formulate a multisectoral framework of the strategic plan, ASEAN should develop guidance for policies and interventions, service delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and promote regional cooperation. ASEAN should also commit to both public and multi sectoral investments, along with data. The first 1,000 days are key to the development of cognitive capital, and the second decade is also important. The intergenerational links are clear and so the solutions must extend beyond the youngest people. To achieve the best results, interventions must take a multidimensional approach with high-level commitment and support.

3.5 Investing in young people, the key to accelerating human capital

Mr. Thomas Davin, UNICEF Thailand Representative, moderated the panel discussion. The youth population in ASEAN is growing and school enrollment is increasing, but there are concerns about the quality of education. Meanwhile, the skills to succeed in the labour market are changing, and those with the lowest skills will be impacted first as some jobs disappear and others are created. The panelists focused their remarks on education, employment and building a future-ready workforce.

Mr. Angkearoat Sam Or, Deputy Director-General of Policy and Planning, Ministry of Education,

Youth and Sport, Cambodia, described the reforms in primary and secondary education. The initiative followed a school-based management approach and had five pillars: teachers, curriculum, inspection, assessment and higher education. Gaining access was not easy, and data were often unreliable. Those were obstacles to overcome but the programme is going forward with the support of central leaders and co-trainers to work with teachers. Co-trainers ensure that teachers have the competencies to prepare students for the future. It is important to invest in teacher training, and the Government has provided a budget to support it.



Participants in the panel discussion on investing in young people to accelerate human capital.

The purpose of training is not only to do well on tests, but to be prepared for future employment.

Mr. Suttipong Suvansook, Vice President Human Resources, Toyota Leasing Thailand, presented on connecting the private sector and the education system to build a future-ready workforce for 4IR. The aim of collaboration with university researchers and partners in the development sector is to develop curriculum with a global perspective that focuses on skills that are needed across different economic contexts. Lifelong learning is a critical dimension of adaptation to changing labour force needs, and it contributes to improving the quality of life for people. Technologies and 4IR will transform people, business and society.

Mr. Amarit Charoenphan, Executive Chairman and Co-founder of HUBBA, Thailand, shared his experience as a young entrepreneur in the technology sector, and explained some of the challenges for young entrepreneurs today. Entrepreneurship requires a wide range of skills, resilience to failure, access to capital, an ecosystem that supports entrepreneurship and access to skilled workers. Competition is fierce and global, and competitors with limitless resources can easily recruit the most skilled workers, leaving many start-ups struggling to survive and unable to grow. Thus, entrepreneurship may be out of reach for many young people. Technology ecosystems in ASEAN should create a large talent pool with opportunities for young entrepreneurs to grow in the technology space. Youth benefit from forums where they can share their experiences.

Ms. Birgit Hansl, Country Manager, World Bank Thailand, spoke about the link between human capital, intangible assets and productivity. The greatest priority for human capital investments will vary across the ASEAN region because it depends on the current status and the key challenges. Because investments are context specific, human capital investments can take many different forms, but in all cases, investments in human capital increase economic productivity and growth. They also improve the individual's earnings, which can reduce inequality within a country. A key mission of the World Bank is to foster inclusive growth and human capital development. There is clear evidence that the region's investments in human capital must increase to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Because fiscal space is limited, decisions about investments must be made with care. Overall, the best short-term investments are those that reduce inequality and the best long-term investments are in health and education.

In the question and answer period, the panelists were asked about critical factors for entrepreneurial success. They felt that mentorships and internships were valuable for young entrepreneurs, along with safety nets and government investment in young people and life-long learning. A further question focused on options for young people who are outside of the formal education system. Mr. Angkearoat Sam Or responded that the role of parents in Cambodian culture is very important, so it is vital to work with parents to ensure that children benefit from education opportunities.

3.6 Closing the meeting

Mr. Laurence Chandy, Director of Global Insight and Policy Office, UNICEF, provided a summary of the key messages of the meeting. The HCI provides an estimate of the potential productivity of today's children relative to their potential, and the data indicate an acute need to strengthen education and literacy and do more to reduce malnutrition and stunting. Progress in those areas will enable better adaptation in an uncertain future. There are many challenges, and there are many aspects to any solution. Raising the level of human capital is a long-term endeavor, but it is possible to achieve strong results even on a limited budget and these investments yield significant returns which are magnified further by the cost of failing to invest. Examples from the meeting have shown that human capital investments have made great strides in different dimensions in different countries. Looking ahead, good practices, including high-level commitment and multisector approaches should guide the design of policies and effective implementation. Evaluation of programmes must be rigorous, and data on the impact of an intervention can contribute to the knowledge base on human capital development. There is a need for more accountability, commitments and incentives, supported by ASEAN, the World Bank and UNICEF.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Mara Warwick, Country Director for Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand, World Bank, reiterated that a whole-of-government approach is needed to address challenges to human capital development. Countries do not have to be wealthy to provide UHC or to boost their investments in human capital. ASEAN is taking bold action today to achieve change, and these changes cannot wait for tomorrow.

In her closing remarks, Mrs. Pattama Teanravisitsagool, Deputy Secretary-General of NESDC, Thailand, noted the determination and commitment of ASEAN Member States to invest in human capital and uplift each individual to reach his or her potential. Development partners also shared experiences and practices to translate ideas into actions. As encouraged by UNICEF and ASEAN, it is vital to step up investments in young people to prepare a future-ready workforce. Social investments must address the problem of inequality, and the private sector can help to upskill and reskill the workforce. Collaboration and a holistic approach are key guiding principles to increase labour productivity, improve competitiveness and increase equality.



Mr. Laurence Chandy, Director of Global Insight and Policy Office, UNICEF.



Mrs. Pattama Teanravisitsagool, Deputy Secretary-General of NESDC, Thailand.

Annex. Concept note and meeting agenda

Concept note

ASEAN High-Level Meeting on Human Capital Development 9 September 2019

World Ballroom B, Centara Grand at Central World, Bangkok, Thailand

Background

The ASEAN region, comprising of 10 Member States, namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, boasted a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of roughly US\$ 2.77 trillion as of 2017, with predictions for enviable GDP growth rates of around 5.3% per year through 2019.

Despite its commendable economic performance, development gaps within and among ASEAN countries that may further undermine its efforts to create shared prosperity and social cohesion continue to widen. Inequality, together with other emerging issues with significant impacts on development such as digital transformation and disruptive technology, can be considered the greatest challenges for ASEAN as it makes its way toward achieving sustainable economic growth and boosting its competitiveness in the global arena. The Fourth Industrial Revolution will transform production and management systems of global industries, casting a significant impact on the future skills that employers seek over the coming years. Children currently in primary school will likely work in new job types that do not yet exist today. Elderly and underprivileged will face with more severe problem of digital divide and might be left behind. In order to mitigate the negative impacts and fully reap the benefits of advancing technology and innovation, ASEAN needs to address the future challenges that come with it by putting a strong emphasis on investment in human capital development. Fundamental to economic and social development, human capital is an important component for a knowledge-based economy that contributes to the enhancement in competitiveness of a country in the disruptive future while narrowing existing social and economic gaps.

In order for human capital development to be successful, effective policy cycle ranging from policymaking to implementing levels should be

in place. Human capital development requires investments in terms of nutrition, healthcare, quality education, life-long learning, jobs and skills for people in all three major stages of the human life cycle. However, it can be observed that underinvestment in human capital remains an important challenge for ASEAN, leaving it inadequately prepared for what lies ahead. Children in many ASEAN countries are struggling to learn in schools. Over a quarter of children in ASEAN are stunted, making them more vulnerable to poor cognitive development. Furthermore, many ASEAN citizens are not covered by essential health services. Unequal access to basic services, including healthcare and education, contributes to widening inequalities, especially in income and wealth. Human Capital Index (HCI) developed by the World Bank is one of the effective tools to measure the advancement of human capital development. The Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), for example, is another key index that considers human capital its major component. These two tools can be used together to measure the human capital development in integrated manners.

Building upon the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals that highlight the importance of human capital development, the ASEAN High-Level Meeting on Human Capital Development will serve as a platform for ASEAN member countries to advance our cooperation and partnership for human capital development during Thailand's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2019. The ASEAN High-Level Meeting will bring together key policymakers and practitioners from across ASEAN, as well as global technical experts from the World Bank and other development partners, to share their knowledge and experiences in human capital development and determine the next steps for ASEAN to accelerate human capital development and to translate the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Ending All Forms of Malnutrition into actions.

Objectives of the meeting

The focus of this one-day meeting will be to:

- Raise awareness on the importance of human capital development amidst changing environments with regard to inequality, competitiveness, digital transformation and disruptive technologies
- Highlight the importance of multisectoral approaches to human capital development to support ASEAN Vision 2025 and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals
- Share country experiences in key aspects of human capital development
- Share private sector's perspective on human capital preparation for the future-ready workforce
- Share the World Bank's Human Capital Project
- Discuss the next steps for ASEAN to accelerate human capital development and to translate the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Ending All Forms of Malnutrition into action

Expected outcomes

- Greater awareness and understanding of potential approaches and options for human capital development in ASEAN
- Strengthened public-private collaborative approach in preparing human capital for the future-ready workforce
- Agreeing on a set of policy recommendations on promoting human capital development in ASEAN

Target audience: High-Level government officials (ministries of planning, education, health, labour, finance, foreign affairs) from all ASEAN countries, UN Agencies, ASEAN Dialogue Partners, ASEAN Development Partners, private sector, civil society organizations, think tanks, academic institutions

Room set-up: Classroom or roundtables

Estimated number of participants: Approximately 100–120 participants

Agenda

ASEAN High-Level Meeting on Human Capital Development 9 September 2019

World Ballroom B, Centara Grand at Central World, Bangkok, Thailand

08:00–09:00 **Registration**

09:00–09:30 **A Short Video on “ASEAN Invest in Me”**

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- H.E. Prof. Dr. Thosaporn Sirisumphand, Secretary-General of National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC), Thailand

Remarks

H.E. Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary-General of ASEAN

Mr. Laurence Chandy, Director of Global Insight and Policy Office, UNICEF

Ms. Victoria Kwakwa, Vice President for East Asia and Pacific Region, World Bank (Video Address)

Group Photo

09:30–10:00 **Keynote Speech – Perspectives on Human Capital Development**

Dr. Luis Benveniste, Regional Director for Human Development in the Latin America and Caribbean Region, World Bank

10:00–10:30 **Coffee/Tea Break**

10:30–12:00 **Sharing Experiences on Human Capital Development in ASEAN**

Interlinkages between policy, investments and results in health and education

- **Thailand Experience – Achievement in Universal Health Coverage**

H.E. Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health, Thailand

- **Singapore Experience – World’s Top HCI Scores**

Mr. Edward Teo Wee Kwan, Director of Research and Statistics, Ministry of Health

- **Malaysia Experience – Inclusive Education in an Upper Middle Income Country**

Ms. Rohayati Abd Hamed, Deputy Director of Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia

- **Philippines Experience – Harnessing the Demographic Dividend**

H.E. Dr. Adoracion Navarro, Undersecretary of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the Philippines

- **Investing in Human Capital to achieve SDG Health-related Goals in ASEAN**

Dr. Daniel Kertesz – WHO Representative to Thailand

12:00–13:30 **Lunch**

13:30–14:45 **From Vision to Action: ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Ending All Forms of Malnutrition**

Country examples of progress and challenges around implementation

Moderator:

Dr. Daniel Dulitzky, Regional Director for Human Development, East Asia and the Pacific Region, World Bank

Panelists:

- H.E. Dr. Phouthone Muongpak, Vice Minister, Ministry of Health, Lao PDR
- Dr. Panpimol Wipulakorn, Director-General, Department of Health, Thailand
- Professor Emeritus Kraissid Tontisirin, Expert in Stunting and Nutrition, Mahidol University, Thailand
- Ms. Wivina Belmonte, Deputy Regional Director, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office

Q&A Session

14:45–15:00 **Coffee/Tea Break**

15:00–16:30 **Investment in Young People, the Key to Accelerating Human Capital**

Way-forward for the future-ready workforce in ASEAN

Moderator:

- Mr. Thomas Davin, UNICEF Thailand Representative

Panelists:

- Dr. Angkearoat Sam Or, Deputy Director General of Policy and Planning Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodia
- Dr. Birgit Hansl, Country Manager, World Bank Thailand
- Dr. Suttipong Suvansook, Vice President Human Resources, Toyota Leasing, Thailand
- Mr. Amarit Charoenphan, Executive Chairman and Co-founder of HUBBA, Thailand

Q&A Session

16:30–17:00 **Key takeaway:**

Mr. Laurence Chandy, Director of Global Insight and Policy Office, UNICEF

Closing Remark:

- Dr. Mara Warwick, Country Director for Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, World Bank
- Dr. Pattama Teanravisitsagool, Deputy Secretary-General of NESDC, Thailand

18:30–20:30 **Dinner Reception hosted by World Bank** (Attire: Smart Casual)

Dinner Speech by

- Dr. Mara Warwick, Country Director for Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, World Bank
 - H.E. Prof. Dr. Thosaporn Sirisumphand, Secretary-General of National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC), Thailand
-

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

