

Kuala Lumpur Declaration

Quality Education and Skills Development for Sustainable Future

Preamble

We, Ministers responsible for education and training, high-level government officials, representatives of multilateral, bilateral, employers', youth and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), of the research community and of the private sector gathered at the Asia-Pacific Conference on Education and Training in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, are grateful to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Malaysia for hosting this important Conference and for their generous hospitality.

NOTING the progress made in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the region since the Third International Congress on TVET (Shanghai, China, May 2012), in particular, in enhancing the relevance of TVET to employers' skills needs; preparing students for "green" economies and societies; utilizing electronic and/or digital technologies; advancing student-centered learning and innovation; improving qualifications; developing pathways to higher education and employment; and strengthening partnerships in TVET planning, design, delivery and assessment,

RECOGNIZING the uneven progress among countries and **CONSIDERING** the main challenges limiting further enhancements of relevance and attractiveness of TVET, including weak technical, financial and institutional capacity, and lack of broad partnerships and coordination mechanisms involving government, employers, youth and other stakeholders,

EMPHASIZING that TVET has a significant role in the post-2015 international education and development agenda towards achieving the proposed Sustainable Development Goals,

CONSCIOUS that TVET is understood as being part of both the universal right to education and the right to work,

RECALLING the outcomes of the World Education Forum (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19-22 May 2015), in particular the commitment in the Incheon Declaration to 'promoting quality lifelong learning opportunities for all', which includes equitable and increased access to TVET, with due attention to quality assurance,

BEARING IN MIND the challenges that remain to be addressed in transforming TVET systems to unleash the potential of TVET, so as to increase learners' employability and contribute to sustainable development,

RECOMMEND that governments and all other TVET stakeholders in UNESCO's Member States in the Asia-Pacific region consider implementing the following actions in response to the challenges identified during the Conference:

1. Enhance the quality of TVET and its relevance to the changing needs of the world of work

Member States should transform and expand TVET and pay increased attention to strengthening the links between its outcomes and changing labour market needs, particularly through labour market studies, private sector involvement, fostering interactions between key stakeholders in education and the world of work, and entrepreneurship development.

Member States should make efforts to enhance quality of TVET across its various types and in the multiple settings where it can take place, including through the development of quality standards and curriculum reforms. Member States should pay particular attention to teachers' professional development, including through the setting-up appropriate incentives and supporting systems.

Member States should invest in establishing foresight and feedback mechanisms such as tracer studies and employer surveys to inform TVET reforms and to anticipate skill needs that are to be reflected in TVET qualifications and programmes for different users.

2. Ensure inclusive and equitable TVET

Member States should increase and diversify learning opportunities to provide TVET for disadvantaged populations, including people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and those living in remote and rural areas so as to promote equality of opportunity. Member States should empower girls and women through gender responsive policies and skills development practices, career guidance and counselling, and information for better access to TVET programmes leading to more equitable labour market and social outcomes. TVET in the informal economy should be promoted, including through quality traditional apprenticeships in small, micro and household enterprises, community-based learning and civil society managed programmes by engaging stakeholders in rural and urban areas.

3. Expand lifelong learning opportunities through TVET

Member States should develop TVET and skills development policies that are guided by lifelong learning principles and that create learning opportunities for all, without any form of discrimination, throughout their lives for continuing professional development and to enhance their skills and competences for work and life. Member States should also promote transversal skills such as learning to learn, problem-solving and critical-thinking, entrepreneurial and citizenship skills in order to equip learners with skills for sustainable livelihoods and further learning. Member States should promote open and flexible mechanisms for professional development, and for the reskilling and upskilling of workers in the workplace.

4. Integrate greening skills for sustainable development in TVET programmes

Member States should integrate greening skills in TVET programmes for both existing and emerging occupations with a view to achieve sustainable development, including poverty reduction and inclusive economic growth. In particular, Member States should systematically include education for 'greening' economies and societies as part of TVET qualifications, standards and programmes; equip TVET systems with comprehensive institutional approaches to transform training and learning environments; and increase the professional capacities of teachers and trainers.

5. Adapt qualifications systems to facilitate learning and career pathways

Member States recognize that qualifications systems and frameworks are important for recognizing formal, non-formal and informal learning; building lifelong learning systems; and facilitating the recognition of qualifications. National qualifications frameworks underpinned by quality assurance should be developed and considered as crucial for enhancing transparency, comparability and recognition of qualifications within and across-countries. Member States should promote TVET as an attractive learning and career pathway based on effective guidance and counselling services. Member States should raise the public profile and attractiveness of TVET among youth, families and society at large.

6. Strengthen governance and increase investment in TVET

Member States should develop an appropriate framework to strengthen the governance of TVET and establish multi-stakeholder partnerships including local communities. They should increase and diversify financing for TVET through domestic resources and where appropriate with the support of development partners. Private sector stakeholders need to become true partners in the common pursuit of skills development for livelihoods, decent work and sustainable development. Member States should consider youth engagement and participation in decision making processes related to education and training policies and strategies.

7. Leverage the potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for TVET

Member States should recognize that, in addition to providing wider access to TVET, ICT has enormous potential to enable innovative pedagogy that makes teaching and learning experiences more authentic and relevant to workplace needs. Hence, appropriate policies, strategies and affordable solutions should be put in place to improve ICT facilities in TVET institutions. Member States should further explore the potential of data analytics for enhancing understanding of labour market dynamics, students' behaviour and learning, and to contribute to strengthening of TVET-labour market management and information systems.

8. Foster regional integration and labour mobility

Member States should promote exchanges of experiences, knowledge-sharing and peer learning through regional organizations, platforms and networks. As part of regional integration processes, Member States should set-up mechanisms for fair and transparent recognition of qualifications with a view to facilitate mobility for both study and professional purposes.

Action Framework for TVET development in the Asia-Pacific

To support the implementation of these recommendations, we encourage tangible and result-oriented follow-up activities which would serve the interests of all Member States. At the national level, Member States are encouraged to review and develop policies and strategies for TVET.

We encourage Member States, UNESCO, regional organizations, development partners, private sector, NGOs and other interested stakeholders to implement, in the coming years, concrete joint initiatives such as the development of common quality assurance frameworks.

We call on the UNEVOC Network in the Asia-Pacific region to offer its support and function as an active platform for peer learning, knowledge production and dissemination, experience-sharing and to cultivate promising practices for TVET transformations.

We call on Member States to actively address the challenges identified during the Conference and to regularly report on progress and remaining challenges based on appropriate targets and indicators. In this regard, Member States should appoint national focal points to facilitate this reporting process.

We encourage UNESCO to produce regular progress reports on the development of TVET in the Asia-Pacific region and to act as a clearing house for promising practices and lessons learned concerning TVET reforms and programmes.

We pledge continued commitment to TVET and skills development in the Asia-Pacific region, in particular to supporting policy dialogue, networking and partnerships through research, regional conferences, meetings and consultations. To this end, we will endorse the plan to organize the 2nd Asia-Pacific Conference on Education and Training in 2018.