

INFORMATION UPDATE ON THE ASEM PROCESS

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I. First ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting, Berlin, 5-6 May 2008

- The First Education Ministers' Meeting is important initial step towards strengthening the dialogue and fostering cooperation among ASEM partners in the field of education and training.
- 2 major recommendations: (1) establishment of an EU-Asia working group including Senior officials and stakeholders from the education sector to identify the challenges connected with mobility; and (2) creation of a bi-regional forum involving stakeholders from the education and economic sector to strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between education and industry.
- The Meeting also agreed to continue the internationalisation of education systems, promote and encourage educational mobility of students, researchers and graduates by strengthening mobility schemes such as the ASEM DUO and ERASMUS MUNDUS. The Ministers also agreed to increase visibility of education systems and institutions by improving information and stimulating joint marketing initiatives.

II. Updates from the ASEM 7 Summit, Beijing, 24-25 October 2008

The 7th ASEM Summit took place while the world economy is facing grave difficulties with complicated fluctuations, the worst since the monetary financial crisis of 1997-98. And the current financial crisis has affected more countries and regions than the 97 one. It is expected to inflict heavy blow on the world.

The worsening global financial crisis have shoved climate change, the original theme as well as other topics aside at the ASEM 7 Summit.

Confidence and concerted efforts are what the international community needs to face the ongoing financial crisis.

Over the past 12 year, ASEM cooperation process has developed in fairly dynamic ways. At present, trade value between the two continents accounts for nearly 45% of global trade and ASEM member countries also make up more than 50 percent of the global GDP.

ASEM forum serves as an important bridge for the Asian and European business communities, parliaments and non-government organizations. ASEM is also considered to be a framework for dialogues and important inter-regional cooperation which gives fresh impetus to promoting comprehensive Asia-Europe cooperation.

Beijing Summit, apart from official opening ceremony where important speech by Chinese President, EU President Baroso, France, Finland and Brunei Sultan were heard. They also had closed sessions: (1) world economic and financial situation; (2) driving sustainable development; (3) international regional developments and (4) deepening dialogue among civilizations.

The Summit adopted 3 important documents:

The Statement on International Financial Situation where leaders expressed concern over the impact of the spreading crisis on global economy which threatens financial stability and economic development of countries in Asia and Europe – stressed enhanced ASEM cooperation to address the issue. **Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Development** on MDGs, Climate Change, social cohesion among others and finally adopted the **Chair's Statement** in which they address many issues of ASEM concerns.

Concerning education cooperation in para 38, leaders recognized that human resources development constitute a key factor for poverty reduction and economic-social development. They renew their commitment to further strengthen their cooperation in human resources development, capacity building and sustained dialogue and exchanges in pursuing higher education, vocational training and lifelong learning. They endorsed the outcomes of the First ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting in Berlin and look forward to a substantive outcome of the Second ASEM Ministers' Conference in Vietnam in 2009.

III. Vietnam Ministers for Education Meeting, Hanoi, 15-16 May 2009

- Focused on two topics:
 - (1) quality assurance, credit recognition and transfer in ASEM countries and
 - (2) sustainable human resource development for ASEM's future needs
- ASEM is taking a number of flagship projects (especially the ASEM Education Hub) in support of the Ministers' Meeting.
- The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Vietnam will be in charge of the organisational arrangements. To show its interest in promoting Asia-Europe cooperation, high level representation from the Vietnamese Government will attend and deliver the Keynote Address at the Conference.
- A document of Recommendations by the Education Ministers will be adopted.

VII. Summary/Closing

Notwithstanding the focus of the ASEM 7 Summit which is the financial crisis, I would like to further extend the proposition of President Barroso, who stressed that climate change should not be ignored. Allow me if I may:

We should not overlook the important role that the education sector specifically higher education institutions in the long term sustainable development agenda where social and economic aspects are indispensable. This we must emphasize, and this we should be convinced that learning from each others' experience will provide us a better understanding of issues and challenges that will come.

Human Resource Development will always be at the center of the policy discussions. After all, we will need new approaches and strategies that will make our development, economic, financial and environmental planners well prepared to address the uncertainties and insecurities, opportunities and advantages of a more integrated world.

