



ASEAN Regional Roundtable on “Promotion and Achievement of Millennium Development Goals through Education and Outreach”

Bangkok, Thailand
March 2008



Background

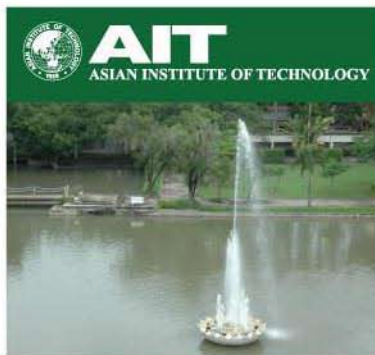
In September 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York, 189 Heads of States and governments signed the Millennium Declaration which constitutes a major commitment towards peace and human development, followed in 2001 by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), together with a MDG Road Map for their implementation by 2015. These decisions constitute the equivalent of a new universal Charter for the right to human development.

Half way through the Millennium Development Goals project, significant advances have been made in some fields in South East Asia countries: the number of people having to live on one dollar or less a day has decreased and equally child mortality rates have dropped. In other areas we have seen a status quo: the enrollment ratio in primary education in South East Asia has virtually remained unchanged and equally little progress has made in reducing the number of HIV infections. Finally, in some countries, and in some fields situations have worsened: income disparities have become bigger, forest coverage ratios have dropped, etc.

Since 2005, four Regional Roundtables were organized (Paris, Algiers, Brazil and Beijing) to address these Millennium Development Goals and the strategies to enhance greater cooperation. As a direct spin off of these Roundtables various Centers of Excellence for MDG education and training have been launched. In March 2008, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the NGO Section of United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UNDESA) and the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), will host an ASEAN Roundtable meeting on:

“Promotion and Achievement of Millennium Development Goals through Education and Outreach”.

The Asian Institute of Technology



The Asian Institute of Technology, over the last five decades has been an active partner of ASEAN and played an important role in capacity building and sustainable development of the region through human and institutional capacity building, and linkages and networks between institutions in Asia, Europe and other western Countries in development initiatives.



AIT has proven capacity and agility to mobilize and link together a wide range of international partners, all key experts in the respective fields, collaborating together in research, teaching and development activities. With such capacity, AIT is able to facilitate numbers of areas of cooperation identified by ASEAN, some of which are in line with the Millennium Development Goals. AIT has shown its commitment in promoting higher education in the field of environmental management, social welfare, rural development, and gender equality. AIT's resource and network for advanced science and technology can be utilized for information dissemination and to support the development programs to meet sectorial needs and the needs of ASEAN members, especially the training of trainers.

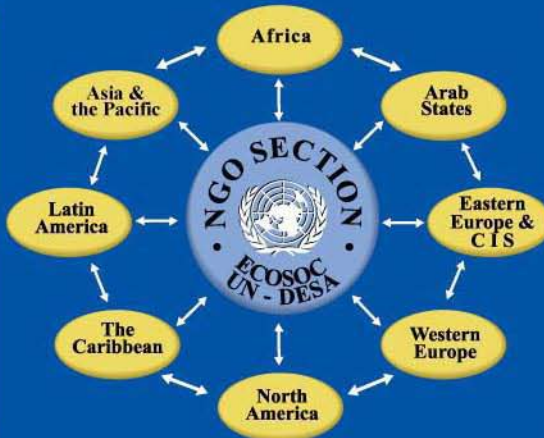


The Objectives of the ASEAN Regional Roundtable

The overall objective of this ASEAN Roundtable is to create awareness and bring together high level decision makers, experts, policy makers and representatives from civil society to deliberate on the challenges South East Asian countries face in achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals. Participants to the Roundtable will generate strategies aiming at improving and expanding capacity of institutions and professionals to cope with the MDG challenges. New educational and training tools will be proposed, offering to academic institutions and trainers new pedagogical approaches adjusted and adapted to MDG needs. Taking into account the achievements of the four previous regional Roundtables, this conference aims to help implement the Millennium Development Goals in South East Asia, in time for 2015.

The expected outcome of the Roundtable is the establishment of an **ASEAN Regional Center of Excellence** for capacity building in MDGs based in Thailand, along with commitments by ASEAN participants to launch local and/or national Centers of Excellence on MDGs. The Regional Center of Excellence on MDGs in Thailand will support and nurture partnerships amongst ASEAN government, non-governmental organizations and academic and training institutions at the national levels; and, foremost, will support national and local Centers of excellence on MDGs, based in other South East Asian Countries. The Regional Center of Excellence in Thailand will function as a coordinator for the ASEAN region, and contribute to raising awareness and capacity building on Millennium Development Goals. The Regional Center will help and support institutions of civil society and NGOs willing to become Centers of Excellence on specific MDG issues.

The Millennium Development Goals



By 2015, all 192 UN members have pledged to:

- 1** Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- 2** Achieve universal primary education
- 3** Promote gender equality and empower women
- 4** Reduce child mortality
- 5** Improve maternal health
- 6** Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- 7** Ensure environmental sustainability
- 8** Develop a global partnership for development

Agenda

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Day 1 : Monday 24 March 2008

The Day 1 of the Roundtable is assigned as a pre-meeting, at which the participants will deliberate on the needs for capacity building, training modules and ways to of collaboration in four parallel sessions, each focusing on one Millennium Development Goals (1,3,7,8)

- Eradication of extreme poverty.
- Promotion of gender quality and empowerment of women.
- Ensuring environmental sustainability in relation with the 2008 theme of the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR): **“implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development”**.
- Developing a global partnership for development.

Day 2 : Tuesday 25 March 2008

On Day 2, the official opening of the Conference will take place with keynote addresses by the Executive Secretary of UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), the ASEAN Secretary General, the President of SEAMEO (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization) and the Minister of Social Development and Human Security.

In the afternoon, there will be a social event including a sight seeing trip in Bangkok, followed by dinner. The organizing committee will hold a wrap up meeting the same afternoon.

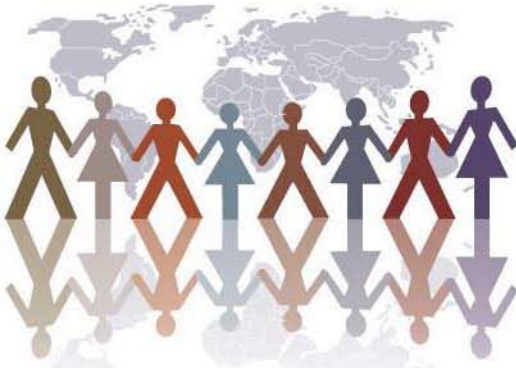
In a letter dated 19 November 2007, the Secretary-General of the United Nations expressed to Mrs. Hanifa Mezoui, Chief of the NGO section of UNDESA, his full support for the establishment of Centers of Excellence on MDG:



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I agree with you that, What would be welcomed at this juncture is more education on MDGs, and a larger mobilization of a wide spectrum of societal actors, including non-governmental organizations, women's groups, academics, teachers and trainers, policymakers, business leaders, local administrators and everyday citizens, in order to become fully aware of and involved in the MDGs implementation. In this regard I fully support efforts made by many National Economic and Social Councils and by regional networks of NGOs to launch national and regional Center of Excellence which will promote MDGs awareness and information, as well as dissemination of training tools helping to achieve a timely implementation of the MDGs.

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Ban Ki-moon
Secretary General
United Nations

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