



Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
Conseil des ministres de l'Éducation (Canada)

42nd SEAMEO COUNCIL CONFERENCE
Bali, Indonesia
March 13–15, 2007

REPORT OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION

Dave Denine – Head of Delegation
Parliamentary Secretary
Department of Education
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

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1. The head of the Canadian delegation to the 42nd South Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Council Conference was Dave Denine, Parliamentary Secretary, Department of Education, Newfoundland and Labrador. The Director of International Programs, CMEC Secretariat, George Molloy, accompanied Mr. Denine.
2. A summary report of the in camera session and the plenary session, prepared by the SEAMEO Secretariat, and copies of the meeting documentation are available from the CMEC Secretariat upon request.
3. School visits were organized in the afternoon prior to the in camera meeting, allowing participants an opportunity to meet teachers, administrators, and students.
4. Three items of particular interest were dealt with at the in camera meeting held March 13, 2007:
 - a) The approval of associate member status for Spain. Spain becomes the eighth associate member, joining Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Norway.
 - b) The appointment of Dato Dr. Haji Ahamad bin Sipon (Malaysia) as the SEAMEO Secretariat Director-Designate, effective October 1, 2007. Dr. Edilberto C. de Jesus, the current director, will leave his post December 31, 2007.
 - c) The reference made to a meeting of the E-9 (China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Mexico, Egypt, and Nigeria) next year in Bali to determine if the 2015 targets for EFA will be achieved.
5. The president of the Republic of Indonesia, His Excellency Dr. Susilo Bambang Ydhoyono, gave the keynote address and opened the conference. The 42nd SEAMEO Council Conference included a ministerial policy forum on the theme “Integrating ICT for Better Quality and Values of Education” and SEAMEO Centre presentations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education; the Role of Universities in Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development; and Promoting a Southeast Asian Identity.
6. His Excellency Prof. Dr. Bambang Sudiyo, Minister of National Education of Indonesia, was elected president of the SEAMO Council, and His Excellency Dato Sri Hishammudin bin Tun Hussein, Minister of Education, Malaysia, was elected vice-president.
7. The head of the Canadian delegation brought greetings on behalf of the Government of Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. The opening statements of members and associate members drew attention to a number of common issues: education reform, integration of ICT for improving access and quality of education, need to upgrade teacher competences, and language competency in the mother tongue and other languages.
8. The head of the Canadian delegation shared two Canadian issues papers: Key Issues in Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Integrating ICT for Better Quality and Values of Education (a Canadian perspective).
9. Mr. Denine joined the ministers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand as a presenter during the policy forum on ICT. Given the importance of ICT and the concerns raised during the forum, Brunei Darussalam suggested that a survey of the state of ICT integration in education in the region be undertaken by the Secretariat. It was further agreed to keep ICT as a recurring item of future SEAMEC meetings and to convene a workshop of experts in advance of the Council conference or back-to-back with the Council conference (Malaysia will take the lead to convene the workshop).

10. At the dinner hosted by the Indonesian Minister of Education, the head of the Canadian delegation presented the 2006 SEMEAO-Jasper Research Award to Mr. Julito Contado Aligaen, a secondary school teacher and researcher from the Philippines. Mr. Aligaen's research put ecological literacy at the centre of a non-formal education process that brings children closer to the real world environment. The SEAMEO-Jasper Research Award has been presented since 1993 to recognize exemplary research on a theme reflecting social and economic development in Southeast Asia.
11. During the course of the conference, members of the Canadian delegation had the opportunity for bilateral discussions with the ministers from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand and with the representatives from Australia, New Zealand and Spain. The discussions mainly focused on the subjects touched upon in the two Canadian issues provided to participants (reference paragraph 8 above).
12. Matters of special interest to Canadian authorities and/or for follow-up:

- a) The SEAMEO Secretariat raised the issue of supplementary support for the SEAMEO-Jasper Research Award. The interest earned from the original endowment is no longer sufficient to meet the objective of the award, having the recipient come to Canada to share his research with Canadian experts.

It seems there have been discussions in the past between the SEAMEO Secretariat and the Canadian Embassy in Thailand on this matter.

- b) The Brunei minister made a note to thank Canadian authorities for arranging the visit to Canada of his deputy minister to four Canadian universities. He noted with much regret that the acting assistant director for scholarships had to cancel his planned trip to Canada because of illness.
- c) Brunei wishes to follow up with Canadian education authorities on the issues of teacher training and teacher retention.
- d) The importance of ICT and its impact on education are areas where Canadian education authorities have a great deal to share with SEAMEO members. Canada could take a leadership role in SEAMEO's interest in this field.
- e) Closer ties are being forged between SEAMEO/ASEAN and UNESCO (a consultation on potential areas for collaboration was held during the course of the meeting). The representatives from UNESCO proposed that the UNESCO Secretary General be invited to the next SEAMEO Council Conference.
- f) A suggestion was made by the Philippines that SEAMEO ministers should consider meeting twice a year. Related to this suggestion was a proposal to have SEAMEO ministers meet on the margin of the UNESCO General Conference.
- g) The Australian representative, as part of her opening statement, made reference to a meeting of ministers of education from the "broader" Asia Pacific. A first meeting was held in Brisbane on April 3-4, 2006 (see the Report of the Canadian Delegate, 29th SEAMEO HOM). She went on to state that plans are well under way for a second meeting. Canada is NOT included in this forum.

13. Participation of Canada and Canadian education authorities in the SEAMEO forum continues to be of strategic importance in ensuring a political presence in support of the institutional-level connections between Canada and the SEAMEO Regional Centres.
14. As SEAMEO assumes a leadership role for the education component of ASEAN, and with closer cooperative ties being created between SEAMEO and UNESCO, it will be even more important for a strong Canadian presence in the region, even more so given the new initiative by Australia noted in paragraph 12(g) above.
15. It is worth noting that the ASEAN leaders, at their 12th Summit (January 2007) included a focus on education issues. Within ASEAN itself, the leaders have agreed to promote greater education cooperation among the member countries to narrow development gaps within the region and enhance regional competitiveness.
16. Canada is a dialogue partner in ASEAN and an associate member of SEAMEO. The presence in SEAMEO gives Canada a privileged place in the education development sphere in the region.
17. As SEAMEO is one of only two organizations that convene Asian ministers responsible for education (the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation [APEC] is the other), this conference provides a unique opportunity for Canadian education authorities to maintain contact with the region at the ministerial and senior officials levels.