

APEC Human Resource Development Ministers Issue Joint Statement

Manila, 11 January 1996

Ministers from the 18 member economies in Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) met at the Manila Hotel in Manila, Republic of the Philippines, on 10 and 11 January 1996.

Joint Ministerial Statement: Call for Action on Human Resource Development

We, the Ministers responsible for human resource development from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and the United States of America, met in Manila on 10–11 January 1996 for the Ministerial Meeting on Human Resource Development (HRD).

Our meeting, the first among HRD Ministers and the first after the APEC Leaders' Meeting in Osaka, was convened in response to the initiative of President Fidel V. Ramos in Bogor calling for a Ministerial Meeting on Human Resource Development. We discussed a broad range of issues focusing on labour market developments under the theme: "Preparing the APEC Workforce for the 21st Century: Transition and Challenges".

This Ministerial Meeting provided the opportunity to significantly advance APEC economic and technical cooperation in HRD towards building a community of Asia-Pacific economies. We have now reached the stage where further measures can be taken to make cooperation between and among member economies real and lasting.

Because our people have transcendent significance in building the Asia-Pacific community, their capacity must be developed, expanded and diversified to sustain our region's growth and dynamism, now and in the coming century. In achieving this vision, we recognized that government, employers and workers have their respective roles to play. Because of our socio-economic and cultural diversity, there is a need to encourage greater cooperation in order to enhance economic growth and development in the region.

We recognize the disparity and diversity within the Asia-Pacific region, the special needs of some member economies in HRD and the importance of intensified cooperation in vocational education and training.

We call upon relevant international and regional organizations, in accordance with their rules and procedures, to place greater priority on investment in human resource development initiatives, such as education and skills training, through funding and technical cooperation, noting that the Jakarta

Declaration for HRD Framework for APEC affirmed the APEC Leaders' Declaration in Seattle that continued priority attention be devoted to developing human resources.

We are strongly and unequivocally committed to implement the Action Program for Human Resource Development of the Osaka Action Agenda. That action Program highlights the importance of education and training for developing a flexible and adaptable workforce, which are essential for sustaining economic growth through trade and investment liberalization and facilitation and economic and technical cooperation.

We commend the HRD Working Group for its work to date and the development of the Action Program and, consistent with the meeting's focus on labour market issues, wish to attach priority to the following initiatives within that Program:

Analysis of Labour Market Issues

We agree on the importance of labour market analysis in HRD and affirm the need to accelerate and strengthen the labour market projects currently being implemented by the HRD Working Group by:

- (a) developing a labour market information (LMI) framework for member economies;
- (b) identifying focal institutions in each member economy to distribute LMI;
- (c) exploring the development of LMI standards;
- (d) using Internet or other systems of international data sharing in the dissemination of LMI;
- (e) sharing information on models of LMI systems used by member economies through meetings of experts, exchanges of expertise, and collaboration with other international and regional organizations, according to APEC rules and practices, in the development of inventories of LMI activities;
- (f) facilitating the mobility of qualified persons through sharing of LMI on skills, wages, and working conditions, among others; and
- (g) sharing information on the use of competency based training for the development of vocational skills.

Management and Strengthening of Small and Medium Enterprises

We urge a strong emphasis on the development of SMEs focusing in particular on HRD through such measures as the APEC Center for Technology Exchange and Training for SME as a resource in information networking, training opportunities and syndicating technology transfer projects.

Facilitating Mobility of Persons and Information Exchange for HRD and Economic Growth

Consistent with the Osaka Action Agenda, we urge the acceleration and expansion of project initiative on mutual recognition of skills qualifications.

Liberalization and Facilitation of Trade in Services

We agree on the need for providing better opportunities for cross-member investment in the delivery of educational services and skills training through principles to be established and implemented in bilateral and other agreements in the mid- to long-term.

Executive Education and Development

We recognize the importance of strong and capable management to sustain economic growth, and put emphasis on activities that relate to the continuous development of leadership skills for managers.

Towards this end:

We will provide full support to the individual and joint efforts of our economies to implement these priority measures to further strengthen our cooperation in human resource development.

We call on the HRD Working Group to develop detailed implementation plans for these measures as a matter of priority.

We also urge the other APEC working groups and fora implementing human resource development projects to coordinate their efforts with the HRD Working Group.

We agree to hold a ministerial meeting to review the progress of the implementation of the APEC Action Program for HRD and welcome the offer of the Republic of Korea to host the meeting in 1997.

SOURCE: APEC Secretariat, Singapore <<http://www.apecsec.org.sg>>.