A Visit from
H.E. Dr. Edilberto C. de Jesus,
SEAMEO Council President and
Secretary of Education, Philippines
on 7 August 2003

The Commission on Higher Education
Ministry of Education, Thailand

Workshop on Long Range Planning
for Higher Education
on 16-20 June 2003
A farewell dinner for Prof. Wang Yibing was held on 2 July 2003 at the Siam City Hotel, Bangkok. The dinner was hosted by SEAMEO RIHED, ASAHL, AUN, SEAMEO Secretariat, STOU, UNESCO Bangkok, and Prof. Dr. Wichit Srisa-an. After his ten year distinguished career at UNESCO Bangkok, Prof. Wang had reached his retirement and would return to Beijing, China. (Left photo) Prof. Wang with the Plaque of Honour presented to him by Prof. Dr. Wichit Srisa-an and other hosts. (Right photo) Dr. Padoongchart Suwanawongse, SEAMEO RIHED Director presented a souvenir to Prof. Wang.

Dr. Marut Damchao-om, the 2002 SEAMEO-Jasper Research Fellowship Awardee who hailed from Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani Campus, visited SEAMEO RIHED on 20 May 2003 to present and discuss his research findings on Child Labor in Deep-Sea Fishing Boats and the Fish-Sorting Business in Fattani Province.

Dr. Erlinda C. Pefianaco, Director of SEAMEO INNOTECH visited SEAMEO RIHED on 19 June 2003 to discuss future joint projects with SEAMEO RIHED Director.

On 24 June 2003, Mr. Ian McNamara and Mr. Philip Williams from Vektor Asia-Pacific visited SEAMEO RIHED to deliver a presentation on e-learning. As an alternative to the traditional English language lessons, Vektor Asia-Pacific offers on line English language programmes.

The Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific (AUAP) held its 15th AUAP Board Meeting on 24 July 2003 at the Montien Riverside Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. The Meeting was attended by all Board Members and all AUAP Officers. Dr. Padoongchart Suwanawongse, SEAMEO RIHED Director also attended the Meeting as a Member of the AUAP Advisory Committee.
A Visit from SEAMEO Council President
on 7 August 2003

On Thursday 7th August 2003, SEAMEO RIHED was honoured by the visit of H.E. Dr. Edilberto C. De Jesus, SEAMEO Council President and Secretary of Education of the Philippines and his party. He was welcomed by Dr. Chantavit Sujatanaon on behalf of Prof. Dr. Voradej Chandarasorn, Acting Secretary-General of the Commission on Higher Education, Thailand, and Dr. Padoongchart Suwanawongse, SEAMEO RIHED Director. Following the welcoming remarks by Dr. Chantavit Sujatanaon and the briefing on SEAMEO RIHED’s activities and achievements by the SEAMEO RIHED Director, the SEAMEO Council President delivered his remarks in which he expressed his appreciation of SEAMEO RIHED’s achievements and gave his comments and advice on the future direction and scope of activities for SEAMEO RIHED.

University Autonomy: Making It Work

This International Conference was held on 29-31 July 2003 in celebration of the 13th Anniversary of the founding of Suranaree University of Technology (SUT) at SUT campus in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand. Its objectives were to explore the implications of autonomy on other issues in higher education and to share experiences of the management of autonomous universities. Keynote speakers included Prof. Dr. Wichit Srisa-an, the founder and First Rector of SUT, and resource speakers from other countries. SEAMEO RIHED served as a co-host of the Conference, and the Centre Director, Dr. Padoongchart Suwanawongse served as the moderator in one panel discussion session.

SEAMEO Centre Directors Meeting

The 2003 SEAMEO Centre Directors Meeting was held at the Montien Hotel in Pattaya, Thailand. Dr. Arief Sadiman, Director of SEAMEO Secretariat, chaired the meeting and all 15 SEAMEO Centre Directors as well as the Coordinator for SEAMEO TROPMED Network were in attendance. Representatives from the associate member countries of France and Germany, two Canadian interns, and staff members from SEAMEO Secretariat also attended the meeting. The agenda included the following: the reports on follow-up actions on agreements of the 2002 Centre Directors Meeting; and on Resolutions of the 38th SEAMEO Council Conference; progress reports on assistance from Associate Members / Donor Countries to SEAMEO during the last fiscal year; financial matters; progress reports; on-going SEAMEO plans/programmes/projects; and future initiatives. On the last day of the meeting, 29 important agreements were approved.
During the 16-20 June 2003, the Montien Hotel in Pattaya, Thailand was the site of the Workshop on Long Range Planning for Higher Education. This workshop was jointly organised by the Ministry of University Affairs, Thailand and SEAMEO RIHED. There were 22 participants who were representatives from the six Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) countries namely Cambodia, China (Yunnan Province), Lao, PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. The leaders for the workshop were Professor Grant Harman and Associate Professor Kay Harman from the University of New England in Armidale, New South Wales, Australia.

The workshop officially got underway with the opening ceremony where SEAMEO RIHED Director, Dr. Padoonghart Suwanawongse warmly welcomed all the participants. Workshop Leader, Professor Grant Harman also took the opportunity to welcome participants and outline the workshop activities. The guest of honour for the opening ceremony, Dr. Chantavit Sujatanond delivered the opening address, in which she wished the participants a successful week and encouraged participants to learn from each other.
Planning for Higher Education

During the weeklong workshop participants presented papers on their respective countries discussing the different issues and problems faced by the GMS region. Both Professor Grant Harman and Associate Professor Kay Harman lectured on various topics related to long range planning, with a special emphasis on the GMS region. Participants were invited and encouraged to participate in group discussions and the new knowledge that they acquired was put into practice during several group work sessions.

The very thought provoking and stimulating week wrapped up with the closing ceremony where participants were awarded certificates for their participation in the workshop. Dr. Chantavit Sujatanond was also present to deliver the closing address in which she congratulated the participants, workshop leaders and organisers on the success of the workshop. There was a general consensus among participants, leaders and organisers alike, that this workshop was only the beginning of continued co-operation and development in the area of long range planning for the GMS region.

A representative of participants expresses his appreciation and gives thanks to organisers and workshop leaders.

Participant from Lao PDR presenting her country paper.
Starting from July 7, 2003 with the promulgation of the Ministry of Education Regulatory Act, the Ministry of University Affairs, Thailand will no longer exist as a ministry. It will be amalgamated with the Ministry of Education and be transformed into the Commission on Higher education under the Ministry of Education, Thailand.

Article 10 of the Act has also stipulated that the central administrative bodies of the Ministry of Education are organized as follows: (1) Office of the Minister; (2) Office of the Permanent Secretary; (3) Office of the Education Council; (4) Office of the Basic Education Commission; (5) Commission on Higher Education; (6) Office of the Vocational Education Commission. Agencies no. (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6) each has a legal status as juristic person and each agency has an administrative status equivalent to Department. Chief Executive Officers of each agency will come under the direct command of the Minister of Education.

Commission on Higher Education Board

Article 16 of the Act stated that the Commission on Higher Education Board has the authority to formulate policy; higher education development and standards planning which are corresponding to the National Economic and Social Development Plan and National Education Plan; to provide resources support; to carry out follow-up, inspection and evaluation of the higher education management with respect to academic freedom and excellence of each individual degree-granting institution; and to recommend regulations, criteria, and announcement of the administration of the Office.

The Commission on Higher Education Board is also empowered to provide recommendations and consultants to the Minister of Education or the Council of Ministers. Other authorities of the Board are prescribed by law or as commanded by the Minister of Education. Furthermore the Board has been given the power to propose block grants for degree granting institutions, either public or autonomous universities.

Members of the Board come from relevant agencies such as representatives from private sectors, local administration, professional associations, and qualified members. Whereas the number of members of the latter should not be less than the number of members from the other sectors. The Commission on Higher Education (CHE) will serve as the Secretariat to the Commission on Higher Education Board having the Secretary-General as Chief Executive Officer and serve as Secretary to the Commission on Higher Education Board.

Higher Education Institutions Under Supervision of CHE

CHE will supervise and oversee altogether 123 higher education institutions. These are: 20 closed-admission public universities and institutions; 6 autonomous universities including 2 buddhist universities; 54 private higher education institutions; 41 Rajabhat Institutes; Rajamangala Institute of Technology and Its 35 campuses; and Pathumwan Institute of Technology.
Commission on Higher Education

The Commission on Higher Education has the mandate and authority to manage and to promote higher education with respect to the degree-granting institutions' academic freedom and excellence. Therefore, the Commission on Higher Education will have the following mandates:

1. Formulate policy recommendations, higher education standards, higher education development planning and carrying out international cooperation on higher education,
2. Devise criteria and guidelines for resources allocation, establish higher education institutions and community colleges and provide financial support,
3. Coordinate and promote human resource development to improve student capacity including handicapped, disadvantaged and gifted and talented students in higher education institutions and to coordinate and promote research activities that generate a new body of knowledge for the support of the national development,
4. Provide recommendation on the establishment, dissolution, amalgamation, upgrading and closing down of higher education institutions and community colleges,
5. Implement higher education monitoring, inspection, and evaluation as instructed by the Commission on Higher Education and to compile data and information on higher education,
6. Serve as the Secretariat to the Commission on Higher Education,
7. Perform other functions prescribed by law as authorities and responsibilities of the Commission on Higher Education, and to carry out assignments instructed by the Minister of Education or the Cabinet.

The organizational structure of the Commission on Higher Education is as follows:

1. Bureau of General Administration
2. Bureau of Central Education Testing
3. Bureau of Policy and Planning
4. Bureau of Community College Administration
5. Bureau of Cooperation and Promotion
6. Bureau of Standards and Evaluation
7. Bureau of International Cooperation Strategy
8. Bureau of Student Development
9. Bureau of Personnel Administration and Development

For more information please see http://www.inter.mua.go.th/
Canada: Education in Brief
By: Alyssa Mellon

Canada is a vast and diverse country of about 31 million people. As the second largest country in the world, Canada is a federation of ten provinces and three territories. Governed by a federal system of government, powers in Canada are divided between the provincial and federal levels of government. Education is the responsibility of the provincial and territorial governments and while there is no education ministry at the federal level, each province has its own ministry or department. The federal government plays an indirect role in education by providing some funding to the provinces and territories through transfer payments. Furthermore, The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, a national organisation made up of the provincial and territorial ministers of education, was formed to provide a forum for discussion and cooperation on educational issues between provinces and territories.

There are 13 different education systems in Canada, which provides for experimentation in each province and learning from the different experiences. The education system in the provinces and territories is divided into basic education, with mandatory education to 16 years of age and post secondary education including colleges, universities and technical institutions.

Post secondary education, or higher education, is also governed at the provincial or territorial level. Currently in Canada, there are more than 1.2 million Canadians who are attending post secondary institutions either full time or part time. Since education is the responsibility of the provinces and territories, post secondary institutions that have the authority to grant academic credentials, such as degrees, are recognised by a charter or legislation at the provincial or territorial level. Furthermore, most legitimate post secondary institutions are members of the Association of Universities and Colleges Canada (AUCC).

The two main post secondary institutions in Canada are community colleges, which usually offer technical programmes or university transfer programmes and universities, which mainly offer degrees. Universities in Canada are somewhat autonomous, and most are organised into faculties, schools and departments that offer bachelor’s degrees, master’s degrees and doctoral degrees.

Although admission requirements may vary across institutions in Canada, generally, applicants must be graduates from secondary school. Certain programmes or faculties may require that applicants obtain a certain GPA or may require the results of standardised aptitude tests. In every province, except in Ontario, where applicants apply to a central admissions centre, candidates may apply directly to the individual universities.

In conclusion, higher education in Canada is well established and based on many years of experience and a number of Canadian universities are recognised for their quality throughout the world. However, Canada’s higher education system continues to be influenced by new trends and demands and will therefore continue to grow and develop and adapt to future changes.