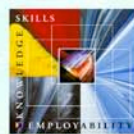




International
Labour
Organization

Developing National Skills Strategies

*Report of ILO/SKILLS-AP/Japan Regional Technical Meeting on
Developing National Skills Strategies
Chiba, Japan, 27-30 March 2007*



SKILLS-AP

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Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP)

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Forword

Many countries in Asia-Pacific have identified skills development as a key priority. They are finding it a growing challenge to respond to the skills needs of their workforce in a time of increasing globalization, new technology and changing patterns of work. A major challenge for countries is to improve their productivity and competitiveness. A key factor in translating these challenges into reality is the development of an inclusive and effective national skills strategy. Those with the skills base are forging ahead but those without it are lagging. But the picture is not all bleak. The key seems to lie in the improved alignment between what skills are produced and the productive imperatives and possibilities of their economies and societies. But this is not a simple matter to get right as shown in the difficulties faced by many developing economies as they attempt to reform their national policies and systems. For countries grappling with the aftermath of disasters and conflicts the development of effective national skills strategies have been shown to be critical for helping people find new jobs and restore livelihoods.

This Regional Workshop on Developing National Skills Strategies is an important part of ILO's assistance to countries in the region on this subject and a key element of the work of its Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP). The technical papers and report of this meeting will be distributed to ILO member States and Partner Organizations in the Regional Skills Network, through the SKILLS-AP website and in hard copy to participating countries. The aim here is to share the experience and good practices identified and discussed during this workshop with all partners in the region. The tripartite Action Plans developed by the participating countries during this meeting will provide an effective roadmap for follow up action. The participants agreed to discuss these plans with senior officials upon their return to their countries. For its part, ILO/SKILLS-AP is ready to work with those countries which identify and articulate their needs, in a genuine partnership, with and between partner organizations in the Regional Skills Network, to assist them to develop their national skills strategies.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the continuing support of the Government of Japan and the Overseas Vocational Training Association and its staff for the ILO's SKILLS-AP programme and the Regional Skills Network. Their commitment continues to make opportunities for sharing ideas and building relationships between the members of the Network possible, and serves as a model to others. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Trevor Riordan who planned and organized this meeting, with the support of and Ms. Wipusara Rugworakijkul and Ms. Paveena Eakthanakit of SKILLS-AP. Many thanks also to Ms. Anne Richmond for her assistance in facilitating the working group discussions during the meeting and the preparation of this report. Special thanks also to Ms. Adrienne Bird, former Deputy Director General of the Department of Labour in South Africa, who prepared the background paper for the meeting and was the key resource person. I also wish to congratulate the participants for their excellent and thoughtful contributions during the meeting and their active participation.

Sachiko Yamamoto
Regional Director
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

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***ILO/SKILLS-AP/Japan Regional Technical Meeting on
Developing National Skills Strategies
Chiba, Japan, 27 – 30 March 2007***

Introduction and opening session

This regional technical meeting was held to discuss the key issues and major challenges in developing national skills strategies. It also aimed to explore how some of the recent successful examples of good practice can be used to assist selected developing countries going through the process of developing their own national skills strategies. The meeting was intended to assist countries to reorient national skills policies and systems to better focus on the needs of working people, to promote learning and ensure that skills are constantly renewed and adapted for a wide variety of potential jobs.

The meeting was opened with addresses from representatives of the ILO-Tokyo Office, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan, the Overseas Vocational Training Association and the Manager of SKILLS-AP. Ms Akiko Taguchi, Deputy Director, ILO Japan welcomed the participants to Japan on behalf of the ILO office and provided a brief review of the background to the ongoing support of the Government of Japan to the ILO in the area of skills development. She noted that the APSDEP program had been launched in 1978 with Japan's support as a regional program to promote TVET in Asia Pacific. It has now evolved and been integrated into the ILO's Regional Skills and Employability Programme for Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP). She expressed her hope that the discussions of the meeting would help countries to reorient their national skills strategies to focus on the needs of working people, and ensure their skills are renewed for wide variety of jobs. She looked forward to participants sharing ideas on how the common and the unique challenges of each country could be identified and addressed.

Mr. Atsushi Nara, Director, Overseas Cooperation Division, Human Resources Development Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare expressed his pleasure that the participants had arrived to see the cherry blossoms in bloom. He observed that strategies were the best way to achieve objectives, and that the most effective strategies were ones that were fully understood and agreed to by all parties. Such understanding and agreement arose from shared understanding of the facts and agreement on the goals. In Japan's case, there were significant challenges for the labour market as the peak of population growth had now been passed, and the number of retirees would begin to increase sharply. This meant a need for increased productivity and increased labour market participation among the whole population – particularly young people. It also raised questions of how to best transfer knowledge from the older to the younger generations. These issues underpin the 8th Human Resource Development Plan in Japan. He expressed a hope that the meeting would offer all participants the opportunity to scrutinize their own policies, and identify possibilities for mutual cooperation.

Mr. Isao Aoki, President, OVTA welcomed the participants to the centre. He noted that OVTA had been founded in 1982 as a joint enterprise of government and the private sector with a focus on supporting international cooperation in skills development. This included support to APSDEP in the past and to SKILLS-AP now. OVTA regularly hosts a large number of technical meetings and training sessions throughout the year, with large number of participants from across Asia and Pacific, but, he commented, this meeting had some new participants. He observed that many countries were struggling to reconstruct, following conflicts and natural disasters, and offered his sincere support and respect. He added that skills were important for national reconstruction and to rebuild societies where people can live together without fear and this was a common goal for

all countries. He concluded by stating it was a privilege for OVTA to offer the space for this meeting and to help cultivate partnerships and continuing friendships.

Mr. Trevor Riordan, Manager of SKILLS-AP said that the meeting represented a transition in Japan's long history of support to APSDEP. With the support of all delegates at the ILO's Asian Regional Meeting in 2006, APSDEP is now fully integrated into the Regional Skills and Employability programme for Asia Pacific. He thanked the Government of Japan for their continuing support. He cited the present meeting as an example of what regional programme could do. Many countries in the region have, are developing, or reforming, national skills strategies. The meeting offered both the opportunity for countries to share their own experiences, and the perspectives of an international expert, Ms. Adrienne Bird, the former Deputy Director General of the Department of Labour, South Africa, and the driving force behind one of the most dynamic national skills strategies in the world, to share comparative research on the subject. And given the importance of strong social dialogue in creating a strategy, the tripartite nature of the workshop was a critical element. The programme for the meeting and the list of participants are shown in Annexes 1 and 2 respectively.

Technical session 1: Introduction to national skills strategies.

The Chair, Mr. Y. Haryono Darudono (Employer, Indonesia) invited Mr. Riordan to introduce the topic. Mr. Riordan set the context for the discussion of national skills strategies by reviewing ILO's Recommendation Concerning Human Resource Development, Education, Training and Life Long Learning (Recommendation 195, adopted in 2004). As a 'state of the art' Recommendation reflecting current best practice and aspirations of the 180 member States of the ILO, it set strong guidance to all social partners in the issues that should be considered in developing human resources. Particular points to note within the recommendation that were relevant to national skills strategies (which are recommended in article 5(a)) included: that education and training are critical but not sufficient for decent work; that strategies have to be developed in social dialogue; that incentives to ensure investment of money and time in training are needed; and that access, especially for marginalized and excluded groups, is critical. He observed that as the different social partners have roles to play in Human Resources Development, they need to be involved in developing and implementing strategies. He also noted the important role of international cooperation, particularly in the area of migration.

The chair then introduced the expert, Ms. Adrienne Bird for the first of her two presentations - this one focused on introducing the role and main features of a national skills strategy. She began by noting that Recommendation 195 has stressed that education, training and life long learning had to be an integral part of the economic and social development plans of a country. In her research on the skills strategies of four countries, this link had turned out to be a key element. Skills development is a dimension of every aspect of national development: trade, sustainable development, technology, and even macro economics, if one asks who the macro economists are and where they were trained. Hence, a skills strategy entails thinking about all these economic and social development issues together. She described five linked problems: that (1) unclear or contested growth strategies led to (2) few signals so that HR development is not aligned to development needs, in a context where (3) training providers may have difficulty responding due to rigidities in their structures and (4) that labour markets may also have rigidities in terms of collective bargaining, lack of skill recognition and poor information, with in many countries an additional complexity (5) of migration, including 'brain drain' at the top end and low skill migration (in and out) at the bottom. The ILO's Recommendation suggests that what is needed to address this complex picture is a strategy.

A strategy, she clarified, means a systemic process of first defining where one wants to be, and where one is, and the steps to get to the destination. She cautioned against creating ‘future visions’ based only on past or known experience: often what is needed is a future that is substantially different from the past or present. Looking at other countries can be an effective way of identifying and assessing different possible futures. Another key feature of a strategy is that it requires thinking about the ‘whole system’ not the individual parts, as the relationship between the parts is as important as the individual pieces. Finally, the involvement of social partners is a key point because everyone wants to protect their own interests, and will continue to fight for them unless they believe that together they will get more than they can get on their own. Consequently, a vision of a shared future is critical, and represents to some extent a negotiated outcome. Ms. Bird said her observations were based on case studies of four countries (Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and South Africa). Each of these countries has growth and development strategies, each explicitly including HRD as a pillar within that larger strategy. She commented that the drivers of the growth strategies have two main concerns: Governance (meaning who is responsible for what), and Funding (what money is available, and under what conditions). Consequently, some of the major challenges to effective and coherent approaches to HRD in a country (gaps and overlaps in responsibilities, adequacy and source of funding, etc) are decided in terms of the overall growth and development plan, and to influence it, HRD strategies have to be visible at that level.

Ms. Bird then reviewed the four key elements within a strategy, as summarized in the following table:

COUNTRY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT AGENDA (Not only HRD)	For the country to succeed overall, how should HRD contribute to the overall growth and development agenda?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do these strategies imply / require from HRD? HRD VISION - How are these messages to be conveyed (market responsiveness / plan?) - How, if at all, is the HRD contribution to be assessed, by whom? 	
HRD RESULTS / OBJECTIVES (Assessed by intended beneficiaries)	To achieve impact, who should HRD deliver what to?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the employers happy with the graduates they are employing? - Are graduates able to find work, improve their positions? - Are community members able to create income with skills gained? 	
HRD ACTIVITIES Activities based on systems	To delivery to beneficiaries, how must HRD delivery systems and processes work / improve?	
	Systems: Pre-conditions (information), Financing (public and private), Delivery (quality, relevance), Coordination (duplication, gaps), Migration	
HRD DELIVERERS & RESOURCES	Who is actually going to do the work, with what resources?	
	People and institutions Do people need support, rewards, incentives, ...?	Budgets and other resources How much can be afforded? From which source? For who against what delivery targets. Efficiency?

Within the strategy must start with a Vision and defined Results and Beneficiaries. If this was not clear and if stakeholders and social partners did not agree, said Ms. Bird, there is no potential for implementation. The case study examples all emphasize the ways in which HR development supports the broader growth strategy. She stressed the importance of working to define the Vision, Results and Beneficiaries, the ‘top two’ elements of the framework, before moving on to

the issues which are largely operational. A major stumbling block for strategies was to focus only on the operation issues, without getting the ‘big picture’ right. She noted that strategies could cover areas of responsibility for a number of Ministries and agencies, and that important contribution of a strategic approach was to continually link to the broader economic and social development goals and to a higher, shared vision for HRD.

Mr. Takeshi Tokiwa (Government, Japan) was invited by the Chair to present on the Japanese HRD Promotion Law. Mr. Tokiwa stated that the purpose of the law was to promote the development of workers’ vocational ability and thereby enhance their employment security and status and contribute to Japan’s overall economic and social development. The law establishes obligations for both employer and state. It was originally enacted to respond to Japan’s needs for high skilled workers during a period of rapid economic development, and has been constantly revised to meet new needs. The most recent revision, in 2006, was to introduce a Japanese style dual system to improve transition of young people from school into employment. Japan also has a recurrent HRD Basic Plan, currently in its 8th 5 year cycle, which specifies issues to be addressed in HRD based on economic/labour analysis, but does not include numerical targets. It is intended to provide general signaling on labour market needs to the prefectural governments, each of which develop an annual plan for HR Development, responding to local needs and conditions. He noted that central level HRD information is more long-term trend and alignment to national development goals, while prefectural plans responded to more immediate local information drawn from job vacancy and company demand information. He concluded by stressing the importance of accessibility, stating that this was the key to effective HRD strategies as without accessibility, measures of success were meaningless.

The Chair then invited comments from the social partners on the panel. Mr. Muhammad Zaheer (Government, Pakistan) described the session as productive and thought provoking, from both a government and a tripartite point of view as it emphasized that no strategy could succeed unless all parties were involved. He suggested that it was primarily government’s role to provide a means to channel the many forces working on issues of HRD to work together so that the overall economy could benefit. In Pakistan, the government had observed the many different agencies and bodies working on training and had therefore established coordinating councils in three provinces, offering a framework to help providers work together more effectively. He supported the idea of a comprehensive strategy that all the stakeholders were part of, observing that without a shared strategy there could not be a success story. Government’s job is therefore to focus on governance issues: how to establish a vision, how to agree of a means to achieve it, and how to manage the transition, making sure necessary elements (such as labour market information) are in place. Mr. Ramzan Muhammad (Worker, Pakistan) said that the most important thing for workers is to ensure that there is an effective national tripartite mechanism. In many developing countries this mechanism is absent or weak, even if workers and employers are pressing for government commitment to social dialogue and tripartism. Another concern is that while decent work is the objective, in many countries ‘any work’ is still the first objective. However, he stated, the main issue is tripartite mechanisms, which are necessary for the development of effective skills strategies as well as being part of building democracy.

Technical session 2a: Current status of national skills strategies/policies

This was the first of two sessions in which country delegates shared a brief overview of their current approach to Human Resource Development. The first session was chaired by Ms. Tati Hendarti (Government, Indonesia).

Mr. Muhammad Zaheer (Government, Pakistan) presented information on the newly established National Technical and Vocational Education Commission (NAVTEC), an autonomous organization created to regulate, coordinate and provide policy development of HRD. It was established by the Prime Minister, with clear objectives and with a target of achieving 1 million skilled workers by 2010. NAVTEC works with employers to understand and define their needs for skilled workers and appropriate curriculum and standards. It also works to engage employers in providing short term training to increase the employability of unemployed persons, and bridge them into employment. Part of NAVTEC is devoted to research and provide practical support to the almost 1000 training institutions of Pakistan. NAVTEC was established by an Act of Parliament and has an annual budget of 83 million rupees.

Ms. Enkhuya Tumor-Ochir (Government, Mongolia) provided a quick review of the main economic and social indicators for Mongolia, which has been considerably impacted by the transition to a market economy. To date there has been no specific national skills strategies but a legal framework for skills HRD exists with a number of different laws and strategies. The Government Agenda for 2006 has a specific policy on vocational training: with the objective of increasing worker's labour market competitiveness. The Employment Promotion law of 2001 provides for several elements for HRD, including employment counseling, job matching and similar service. The Employment Promotion Fund provides resources to assist employers who provide on the job training and providers of short course training for unemployed and other vulnerable group. However the public training system is small, less than 30% of the total of almost 700 providers is public. Donors such as the ADB have a very prominent role, currently providing infrastructure and capacity building for 6 regional centres, 25 vocational skill centres, 40 vocational education centres, business training for small entrepreneurs and mobile training services for herders. The skill levels of the register unemployed are low, with 60% reporting themselves as having 'no skills'. Key issues for HRD in Mongolia include training to better address poverty, access for people with disabilities, improved quality of training, better materials, and improved vocational training management.

Mr. Abdul Wasi (Government, Afghanistan) described the situation of his country, which is trying to overcome the turmoil caused by more than 2 decades of conflict, which has led to unrest, dislocation and poverty. More than half the population of 31 million is under age 19, and there are in general very low skill levels among labour force, which is predominantly engaged in agriculture. Skills Development and Vocation Training are priority programs introduced by the President in 2004. This is defined by the National Skills Development Program, which has the goal of creating a national training and skill development system to provide Afghans with the skills they need. Specific objectives include coordination of training providers (mainly NGOs) to improve coverage; supporting trainees to find employment; and developing policies to support skilled people for employment in local and foreign labour markets. Two benchmark targets have been established: to complete a study of human resources (Labour market information capacity building and data) and to train 150,000 unemployed Afghans by the end of the year 1389 (2010)

The Chair then invited additional comments from the social partners on the panel. Mr. Namandakh Damdinjav (Employer, Mongolia) commented that full participation in skills strategies were a challenge for relatively social partner organizations. He added that in Mongolia, the main driver in VET issues was the Ministry of Education, and while there was no national skills strategy, the Ministry of Education had an Education Master Plan covering the whole education system, including vocational. Consequently, Mongolia effectively had two systems: short term training governed by the Ministry of Labour and long term training under the Ministry of Education, with separate funding sources. There was limited coordination between the

government and social partners, reflecting both limited capacity on the part of some of the social partner organizations, and the lack of coordination in government responsibilities. Mr. Muhammad Liquat Adil Quarishi (Worker, Afghanistan) said that as could be expected following many years of war the people of Afghanistan suffered from high levels of poverty and unemployment. While the workers hoped to see programs to improve national skills and vocational training, there were only a few projects operating. He stated it was important for all nations to develop national skills strategies, particularly to help unemployed people and workers and to support families and to build strong nations. A further comment added from the worker representative of Pakistan noted that the government speaker had not specifically mentioned the role of tripartism in his presentation.

Technical session 2b: Current status of national skills strategies/policies

The Chair Mr. Abdul Wasi (Government, Afghanistan) convened the second series of country reports.

Mr. Sour Heng (Government, Cambodia) explained that in Cambodia before 2004 TVET was the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and was mainly supply driven, based on time (not competency) qualifications. There was a National Training Board but it had little power, and there was generally low status for VET, with VET training not leading to any high qualifications. This system was unable to meet the challenges posed by the economy, where 300,000 new entrants annually encounter a labour market able to create only 50,000 new jobs. This in effect means there are young job seekers who will enter the informal economy each year, and therefore require skills for self employment. Overall the country lacks sufficient resources to meet the cost of developing a skilled workforce; and is also under pressure, from its membership in ASEAN, its desire to attract investment, and interest in sending workers abroad, to conform to internationally recognized skill standards. These drivers led to the creation of a new Ministry (Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training), and revitalization of the National Training Board, with the Deputy PM as the chair and representation by employers and workers to better understand their needs, and the development of a range of new policies and strategies to address issues such as poverty reduction, decentralized decision making, micro credit and small enterprise development, and building the capacity of training providers. Cambodia is working to have a more comprehensive approach to training and to meet its many needs.

Ms. Tati Hendarti (Government, Indonesia) provided an overview of the different elements of Indonesia's HRD system, which includes competency standards, apprenticeship, training facilities, and the different responsibilities, and frameworks. Overall, she explained, Indonesia has a competency based system: underpinned by a National Qualifications Framework and competency based approaches to training and certification. This is a relatively new approach and has been developed with the assistance of Australia. The next step in implementation is developing the legal basis, following on from the Law 13 of 2003 which established competency as the basis for all elements.

Mr. Jose Maria da Costa Soares (Government, Timor Leste) reported that Timor Leste, as a new country began from independence five years previously to build all its institutions, including those for HRD. A key principle of Timor Leste is social dialogue, so a tripartite approach has been adopted from the outset. The National Labour Force Development Institute has been established as an autonomous body, attached to Ministry of Labour and Community Resources. Members of the institute include the Ministers of Labour and Education, employers and workers organizations. It is funded by the government's Employment and Vocational Training Fund

which receives resources from the state budget and from donors. The institute's mandate is to: define & approve competencies; certify competency standards; and accredit public and private enterprises as places of certification. Stakeholders involved in the development of the institute included ministries, social partners and training organizations, including public, private and church providers. The budget has grown significantly each year and is currently \$2.9 million annually

The Chair invited comments from the social partners on the panel. Mr. Sing Teh (Employer, Cambodia) said that employers in Cambodia had become involved with national HRD issues after the changes of 200, and specifically the Government's development strategy (the rectangular strategy). In support of that, employers have taken on responsibility in new areas, such as training for unemployed people, and organizing a recruiting agency to help with overseas work opportunities. He said that currently there were only two employer members on the National Training Board and their participation is not very active. Employers have a more direct route to Government, having a regular, twice yearly meeting with the Cabinet where they can advise Cabinet on economic issues: to date that has been a more significant area of engagement. Ms. Sokny Say (Worker, Cambodia) commented that since Cambodia joined the WTO in 2005 many factories had closed and workers had lost their jobs. Because workers had been trained only in piece work and not the full range of sewing and designing, they were not able to find other work or start their own businesses. Some women workers had gone on to become 'beer girls', while most could not find work, and these outcomes were not good for the country. She said she was glad to hear that the Government would support training, but emphasized that skills training should impart the whole skill, not just a part. She added that her understanding was that some factories were moving to Vietnam, because employers saw Cambodian workers as not having the productivity they need, and emphasized that a critical problem for Cambodian workers was a lack of basic skills.

1st Working Group session: Key issues in national skills strategies/policies

This session was chaired by Ms. Oduntuya Demid (Worker, Mongolia) and introduced by Ms. Anne Richmond (ILO, Bangkok). Ms. Richmond explained that the purpose of the working groups was to provide additional time for discussion and to help participants reflect on and apply the information they had heard to their own circumstances, and hence to improve their understanding of the ideas. She set out guidelines for the work of the groups and requested them to discuss two questions: "What issues can Skills Strategies address?" and "What issues can Skills Strategies not address?", and to prepare a report for plenary discussion.

In reporting out, the two groups had developed complementary ideas. One group set out their understanding of the main issues national skills strategies could respond to, in terms of the framework provided by Ms. Bird. They said that for national economic development, HR Development contributed to:

- Economic Productivity
- Decent work
- Improve technology
- International Competitiveness
- Employment
- Innovation
- Social Partnership
- Quality and social life

On the second element of the framework, ‘Who must be trained for what benefit’, they proposed

- Employer: who would get the skills they need to contribute to increased productivity
- Job seeker: would increase their employability and contribute to increased entrepreneurship.
- Worker: increased employability which can contribute to get income security and improve standard of living.
- Migrant worker: would contribute to getting a job in another country and remittances
- People with Disabilities: would contribute to increase economic independence and employability; and promote social inclusion
- Women: would increase employability and promote gender equality
- Young People: would increase employability and contribute to reduction of social disorder

The second group’s responses were then added to this initial framework. That group had responded directly to the two questions, and therefore had stated a number of key messages which would be helpful in explaining the concept and purpose of a national skills strategy to others. They reported that a national skills strategy could:

- Set a vision/path to the future development of the country
- Help you use resources more efficiency
- Unify a number of different strategies connected to HRD
- Gets more forces/actors involved; and therefore be more sustainable over changing political and other contexts
- Help connect training to the needs of the market and be more relevant
- Clarify the roles of different parties

They also stressed that a national skills strategy could not do a number of other things:

- Ensure an individual gets a good job, because in the end they make their own choice
- Having a plan doesn’t mean you can implement it (government, economy, and other factors can intervene)
- Cannot compel participation of all stakeholders.
- Will not create new resources

There was considerable discussion of the ideas and issues raised. Participants noted that a critical feature of national skills strategies was priority-setting: that in most countries there were a variety of interests and pressures for training and skills development, and that there was in consequence considerable duplication and lack of efficiency in using resources. The discussion illustrated the degree to which participants understood and applied the concepts.

Technical session 3: Development of national skills strategies

This session was chaired by Ms Enkhtuya-Tumur-Ochir (Government, Mongolia). Mr. Trevor Riordan introduced the session, noting that the subject was challenging as skills strategies cover a large and complex range of issues. He acknowledged that the temptation was to start from the detail, but that as the discussion had showed, unless the process started from the overall development strategy and consciously included everyone, it would not succeed. He said that while it was possible to have a nicely written document called a strategy, without the hard negotiation and the shared responsibility for making the choices necessary for a strategy, it would not have a real impact. He said the next presentation from Ms. Bird would focus on the process, not as a simple ‘how to’ but as a description and analysis of how a number of countries had

addressed the challenge and moved into real implementation. This would be of use as the participants considered their own action plans.

Ms. Adrienne Bird said that her presentation would cover six issues to consider in implementation: who drives the strategy; how wide the strategy is (its scope); social dialogue on the strategy; implementation; monitoring; and lessons, with the last two, potentially workshops in their own right, covered lightly.

On the issue of **who drives** the strategy, she noted that in all four countries studied the national skills strategies have been closely linked with the national economic growth strategy. In all but South Africa, the leadership came from the Prime Ministers' office, in South Africa it was initially the Minister of Labour but subsequently the Deputy PM has taken the lead. On the question of **scope**, she observed that a national skills strategy normally covers a range of different Ministerial/Departmental responsibilities, usually including labour/vocational training, education, and may also include others, such as youth and entrepreneurship. In addition, the various National Skills Authorities (statutory bodies) have different mandated responsibilities. That means that there is almost inevitably overlapping and unclear sharing of responsibilities and this can become an area for conflict.

On **social dialogue**, she presented examples of how this process was undertaken in each of the four case study countries. Australia did a very extensive process that included interviews with key leaders, focus groups with special groups (for example young people), regional forums involving 2500 participants across the country, special round tables on specific interests, and a final national forum. In all it took 3 years to develop the national strategy, in a process that enabled all participants to identify their interests and provided the space and time to work out accommodations. Singapore's process took 15 months from the time the Government's first draft was released. South Africa's process took about 18 months. That process was managed by a statutory body (the National Skills Authority) which asked stakeholders to evaluate the then current strategy and commissioned research. The initial outline of the strategy was developed in a five-day national meeting, with representatives from all national partners and sectoral bodies. The meeting considered research and the findings of the stakeholder evaluations along with government plans for economic growth and development. Using a very structured process, a draft strategy was developed at the meeting and then widely discussed. Because of the process used to create the text, the representatives at the meeting were in effect co-drafters, and while the subsequent discussions were intended to gather feedback, they also served to market the strategy that had been developed and gain broad support. Only after there was broad support for the strategy was the negotiation on hard numbers and targets undertaken, within a ceiling amount available.

Ms. Bird explained that **implementation** issues include pre-conditions, financing, delivery and quality, policy coordination and migration. She said that preconditions meant having a visible 'currency' for training (often expressed in a National Qualifications Framework or other means of recognizing and transferring skill qualifications), and high quality information on labour market needs. Financing meant good understanding of and use of the actual revenues for training: whether they were derived from public funds (from budget); levy funds (from employers), or other sources: individual investments (such as tuition fees) and donor funds. Countries may set different bases for collecting additional revenues but they should encourage strategy-compliant behavior, for example, in Singapore employers must pay into the training levy if a larger than targeted proportion of their employees lack skills. Systems for disbursing revenues can also support the strategy, for example, in Australia some of the public funds provided to public

institutions allocated based on user choices. Training investments can also be used to support the national economic growth strategy, for example, Singapore attracts foreign investment with guarantees of setting up training centres, to deliver company-driven curriculum.

She provided some further examples of mechanisms which are used to ensure policy coherence with the strategy. For example, Australia's strategy exists at the national level but the budget funds are distributed to the States. However, a law provides that the State's subsequent expenditure is subject to negotiation, and the Federal government's position is established by the national skills strategy. Consequently, State expenditure must match the terms of the national skills strategy, or the funds may have to be paid back. Malaysia ensures policy coherence through overlapping plans: a ten year outline plan containing two five year plans, with targets for each five years. These are all aimed to achieve the overall objective of Malaysia being a developed country by 2020. She observed that these are both strong frameworks, though Australia's is based on negotiation and Malaysia's is state driven. Time did not permit further discussion of the final two points, monitoring and lessons.

The Chair summarized the main points and introduced Mr. Mian Tajammal Hussain (Employer, Pakistan) as the first of two social partner panelists. Mr. Hussain noted that the Government of Pakistan had created a national structure that included employers and helped ensure more relevant skills development. He said that while Pakistan had had significant economic growth it was not based on skills – Pakistan is largely agricultural, so if the weather and harvests are good, GDP is good. In terms of economic growth from a HR Development side, there was much yet to be done. He described employers in Pakistan as very active, employer needs had led to the development of organizations like the skills development council, which are now receiving government funding and are managed in a tripartite way. Trade unions role in the management is to select and support the application of trainees. However, at present the Skills Development Council was a small organization with limited funds. He observed that the new National Vocational Training Authority had not yet met with employers and workers to decide how it will be funded and the role of the social partners, and indicated his willingness to assist the government representative in raising the issue with the Prime Minister. The chair noted the strong interest of the Prime Minister in HRD in Pakistan, as a contrast to Mongolia where responsibility for HRD is divided.

Mr. Rigoberto Montiero (Worker, Timor Leste) said that from the point of view of developing countries, who have labour but few resources, a national skills strategy can be a way to both reduce poverty and improve the bargaining position of countries facing influxes of capital. Globalization, for many poor countries, meant a significant movement of workers into the informal economy as state companies privatize and lay off workers. He expressed concern that the four case studies focused on more developed countries and said that what would be most useful for developing countries would be ideas on realistic national strategies to assist developing countries to face their current challenges with the limited resources at their disposal. He called for a simple model of a national skills strategy, and ideas of how to work together to achieve it. He suggested that governments should manage and fund processes to develop a plan and commit to implementation. Finally, he asked for evidence of the results that had been achieved from the strategies in the case studies.

Further issues that came up in discussion included concerns about financing. Several speakers noted that there were limited government funds available and little capacity to introduce additional revenue sources such as employer levies, which would raise the cost of labour. Others noted that there were considerable funds used on training – some within companies, some by

individuals, as well as other potential sources of public funds (VAT and other) – that the development of a national skills strategy could help to better use. It was agreed that while donor funds could be used to develop systems and initial capacity, they should not be used for recurrent costs.

On the question of results from these strategies, Ms. Bird added that the South Africa strategy included hard targets and required an annual implementation report showing annual progress towards the five year target. This helps to track both implementation and whether the intended impact was occurring – for example, first take-up of a particular grant to industry, then whether it had the expected impact on productivity.

Another concern raised was the degree to which allocation decisions could really be strategic, or if there would continue to be political interference in the disbursement of funds – sometimes away from strategic priorities and well-performing organizations. Ms. Bird emphasized that the role of social dialogue was more than ‘talk’, it was about gaining influence and engagement so that in effect it changes the political landscape.

2nd Working group session: Key issues in the development of national skills strategies

This session was chaired by Mr. Fernando Afonso Da Silva (Employer, Timor Leste) and introduced by Ms. Anne Richmond (ILO Bangkok). Ms Richmond explained that as with the first working group, this one would provide further opportunities for in-depth discussion. She asked the groups to consider three questions: (1) To review specific ideas or points to recall from the presentations of the technical session; and to address the two issues raised in the previous technical session: (2) What should be considered for inclusion in a national skills strategy so that it was simple and workable in a developing country context; and (3) For each item included in a national skills strategy, how would it be checked to see if it worked or not.

One group reported out that it used the national skills strategy framework to work through an example to better understand the approach. They concluded that the central point of a strategy was that it addressed how funding was disbursed, bringing a tripartite mechanism to bear on this decision, promoting private sector involvement, and using a clear vision to coordinate action and use resources more efficiently. In their example, they had agreed on a specific focus for HR development (rural area agricultural workers, to become more productive) and then found that this helped them to identify the further work needed: research on best returns, skill identification, and the organization of training. They also found that the framework helped them to identify clear measures for success, considering the SMART approach, they would look at both whether the targeted activities were carried out, and if they had the intended effect.

The second group had considered a list of issues to be considered for inclusion within a national skills strategy, and suggested an approach to measurement for each. They recommended ten issues be addressed: (1) how resources are managed; (2) an institutional structure for participation; (3) a mechanism for devolving responsibility; (4) priorities, timetables, target groups (short & long term) established; (5) coordination with national economy and social development plan and its responsible body; have support of top authority and align with other frameworks (DW, EFA, etc); (6) core principles of ILO should be reflected - include Tripartism, Gender Equality, Decent Work; (7) should include LMI & NQF; (8) should be oriented to specific results that are monitored and evaluated; (9) should have the necessary legal framework; (10) Should have a clear, involving vision

In discussion participants expressed considerable interest in the ideas and examples, but said they would benefit from additional detail and examples on each point. Issues such as models for tripartite structures, means of involving the private sector and so on would be of immediate interest and use. Models from developing countries would be particularly valuable. They called for a 'template' that could be adapted to different country needs, along with example of how different countries had addressed the same issue. It was noted that in many cases trade unions in a developing country have many immediate calls on their time and have limited capacity, time or experience available for substantial involvement in tripartite HRD mechanisms, no matter how important for the longer term. The potential role of more developed country unions to support capacity in developing countries was noted. Ms. Bird added that the process itself can be a way to train and develop the social partners – in South Africa the first stage of development was a very open evaluation, involving all sectors in reviewing and assessing the impacts of the then current HRD policy, and thereby developing their understanding and ideas. Using a draft as the basis of consultation for the new Strategy also helped engage the social partners as they could discuss whether this was what they wanted rather than having to develop entirely new policy proposals.

Visits to training centres and industry

OVRTA had organized site visits to a public and private training centre. The participants found both centres highly interesting and there was lively discussion in both question and answer sessions following introductory explanations and site tours.

The Chiba Polytechnic is one of 50 similar training centres in Japan, it provides pre employment training in 11 different areas to people referred from the job centres as well as providing upgrading training to employed workers. Initial training to equip job seekers with entry level skills is free of charge to trainees; other short programmes are charged though in some cases the employer pays. Participant questions to the centre staff included how the curricula are developed, how industry is involved in defining their needs, the employment outcomes for trainees, and whether the training materials were available.

The Nissan Technical School is a private training institution; students are fee-paying and train for 2 or four years, aiming for a national skill qualification in motor mechanics. The fees are considerable (one million yen per year) though some assistance such as interest free loans is available. It is part of the Nissan Corporation but does not train exclusively for Nissan, and graduates are not assured of employment with Nissan. Questions raised included how the 'soft skills' of communication and motivation are taught, the employment outcomes for graduates, how the needs of the customers of the school (students, parents and employers) are sought, whether studies at the school were recognized by other institutions (for example towards a higher level certificate or degree) and whether the students and teachers were members of a union.

3rd Working group session: Preparation of National Action Plans

This session was chaired by Mr. Rigoberto Montiero (Worker, Timor Leste). Mr. Trevor Riordan (ILO- SKILLS-AP) provided background, asking the six tripartite country groups to complete the draft template and prepare a brief report back to the whole session. He stressed that the action plan was intended to describe action to be taken by the participants at the meeting on their return to their own country: it would describe their mutual understanding of the current situation and opportunities for creating or strengthening a national skills strategy in their country, and the concrete action they could take to inform other key individuals and groups.

Presentations of National Action Plans

Each country reported on their action plan. Copies of the plans are found at Annex 3. Ms. Richmond (ILO, Bangkok) provided an overview summary of the main issues and common features of the plans, under each of the major segments of the plans. For the first section, the elements already in place, she noted that all countries had reported on having different elements in place. All had referenced the legal framework, resources, other institutions and plans. All were well aware of the existing national economic development plans. Several countries had noted that while they might have national plans in place, there had been limited participation in their development or buy-in among major stakeholders, particularly the social partners.

On opportunities, interests and problems, she noted that many plans cited poverty and low skills as opportunities, particularly important because the ‘national skills strategy’ offered a way to draw in agencies and agendas that may not be associated with the usual vocational training picture. All countries had noted mis-matches in the labour market and that the skills strategy approach seemed to offer a way to bring the issues together, linking development needs with necessary skills. Equally, the plans had good appreciation of the different types of interest operating that would have to be addressed in gaining commitment.

In terms of the main drivers, there was consistency in identifying the top executive of the country as key, along with existing tripartite organizations, for preference, rather than newly created ones. She quoted Pakistan in saying that as a national skills strategy represents a national consensus, it seemed clear that there had to be wide participation and active engagement in those involved with the strategy, not leading it. Plans listed a wide range including equity groups, training providers, all ministries, key agencies such as a national planning body and statistical agencies, and the like.

In answering the question “Why do we need a national skills strategy” countries had made clear, compelling statements, such as Timor Leste’s ‘This is a way to achieve the national development goal’, to Afghanistan’s ‘This is a way to replace guest workers’, Cambodia’s interest in coordinating donors, or Mongolia’s desire to better coordinate resources, roles and responsibilities in order to get results. Ms. Richmond observed that each of the plans included a commitment to briefing others, and an intention to use tripartite means to broaden the knowledge, building on to existing tripartite processes for skills development.

Finally, she noted that in anticipation of demands for assistance from the ILO, the Office would need to issue the report of the meeting as soon as practicable, proceed to finalize and publish the full background report, and consider the further development of guidance materials.

Ms. Bird then used the national skills strategy framework as a model to conduct a quick evaluation/feedback on the meeting. She suggested that at the top level the *Vision* had been that countries adopt national skills strategies, and this would be judged by national drivers. For *Results*: these had been defined as the objectives of the meeting and it was for participants to judge if the programme was useful. In her view the high quality of the plans produced spoke to the effectiveness of the programme. She enquired as to the appropriateness of the *Activities*, many people were eager to see full information on the country reports and the case studies, as well as to get access to other country strategies. Ms. Bird closed by stressing that the workshop would be successful only if it ultimately brings benefits to the people of the different countries. Other participants added that the workshop had been a good opportunity for a tripartite meeting and a catalyst for further discussion in-country.

Mr. Riordan then presented a draft Common Understanding based on the discussions during the workshop. This was adopted and is attached as Annex 4.

Closing Session

The closing session was chaired by Mr. Trevor Riordan (ILO, SKILLS-AP)

Mr. Heng Sour (Government, Cambodia) thanked the support and resources staff. He said that during the week, he and his colleagues had developed a good understanding of the definition and meaning of a national skills strategy, the stages of development, and how they could and could not contribute to national development. He had found the emphasis on the role of social dialogue very useful and hoped to put the practical experience to work in his own country, for example, by creating a checklist to monitor the processes. He found the approach very practical and adaptable to different national situations. He urged the ILO to continue to provide support on this important issue, and that the colleagues would stay in touch and continue to encourage each other.

Mr. Bismas Semioto (Workers, Indonesia) thanked the host and the ILO for the opportunity to learn about national skills strategies. He noted that the Indonesian group had met with Indonesian migrant workers training at OVTA and that this illustrated the important role of HRD. While the chance to learn about national skills strategies was important, for some what was most important was the opportunity to meet and discuss in tripartite groups and to make commitments to follow-up together at the national level. He saw good commitment from Government and employers for follow up, but there were many other stakeholders who had to be brought together to understand national skills strategies, and he hoped ILO would be able to assist with this.

Mr. Azaraksh Hafizi (Employer, Afghanistan) on behalf of employers thanked ILO for the meeting and Japan for their support to make the meeting successful. He commented that in the four days of the meeting he had made new friends and begun to understand the problems of other countries in sharing views and visions. The meeting had identified problems, many are common, and there were different ways to resolve but there were common solutions also. He planned to use the materials and information in his country, not just for employers but for government and trade unions.

Mr. Riordan closed the meeting, observing that it had been one of the most interesting and successful of his experience. In part because it dealt with one of the most critical issues: if the strategy is wrong, money is wasted, but a good strategy can be the key to improving the skills and employability of a country's workforce. However, the real test of a successful meeting would be what happened next. The ILO would consider providing technical assistance, but mainly to those countries where there is a strong commitment to action and engagement of their own time, agendas and resources. He reminded participants that their first contact on requests for follow-up support should be their local ILO Office.

Finally, he thanked the participants for their energy and enthusiasm, welcoming Timor Leste in particular to their first Regional Skills meeting, Japan for their support, Adrienne Bird for her technical expertise, Anne Richmond for her facilitation of the Working Groups, and OVTA colleagues for their assistance.

Annex 1

ILO/SKILLS-AP/Japan Regional Technical Meeting on Developing National Skills Strategies

**Chiba, Japan
27 – 30 March 2007**

PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 27 March 2007

0800 – 0830	Registration/orientation
0830 – 0930	Individual meetings of Government, Employer and Worker participants
0930 – 1030	<i>Inaugural session</i> Addresses: Ms Akiko Taguchi, Deputy Director, ILO Japan Mr Atsushi Nara, Director, Overseas Cooperation Division, Human Resources Development Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan Mr Isao Aoki, President, OVTA Mr Trevor Riordan, Manager, SKILLS-AP Introduction of participants Programme and arrangements for the meeting Group photograph
1030 – 1100	Tea/coffee break
1100 – 1200	<i>Technical session 1: Introduction to national skills strategies</i> Panel Chairperson: Mr. Y. Haryono Darudono (Indonesia) Introduced by: Mr Trevor Riordan, ILO SKILLS-AP Presentations: Ms. Adrienne Bird, ILO Consultant Mr. Takeshi Tokiwa (Japan) Panel members: Mr. Muhammad Zaheer and Mr. Ramzan Muhammad (Pakistan) (5 minutes each). Questions and comments
1200 – 1330	Lunch

1330 – 1430 ***Technical session 2a: Current status of national skills strategies/policies***

Panel Chairperson: Ms. Tati Hendarti (Indonesia)
Presentations: Mr. Abdul Wasi (Afghanistan), Ms. Enkhtuya Tumor-Ochir (Mongolia), and Mr. Muhammad Zaheer (Pakistan) (10 minutes each)
Panel: Mr. Narmandakh Damdinjav (Mongolia), and Mr. Muhammad Liaqat Adill Quraishi (Afghanistan)

Questions and comments

1430 – 1530 ***Technical session 2b: Current status of national skills strategies/policies***

Panel Chairperson: Mr. Abdul Wasi (Afghanistan)
Presentations: Mr. Sour Heng (Cambodia), Ms. Tati Hendarti (Indonesia), and Mr. Jose Maria da Costa Soares (Timor Leste) (10 minutes each)
Panel: Mr. Sing Teh and Ms. Sokny Say (Cambodia)

Questions and comments

1530 – 1600 Tea/coffee break

1600 – 1730 ***1st Working Group session: Key issues in national skills strategies/policies (two mixed working groups)***

Panel Chairperson: Ms. Odontuya Demid (Mongolia)
Introduced by: Ms. Anne Richmond, ILO SRO-Bangkok

Wednesday, 28 March 2007

0900 – 1000 ***Presentations and Synthesis of the Working Group discussions***

Panel Chairperson: Ms. Odontuya Demid (Mongolia)
Facilitated by: Ms. Anne Richmond, ILO SRO-Bangkok
Presentations: Working Group Rapporteurs (10 minutes each)

Questions and discussion

1000 – 1030 Tea/coffee break

1030 – 1200	<i>Technical Session 3: Development of national skills strategies</i>
	Panel Chairperson: Ms. Enkhtuya Tumor-Ochir (Mongolia) Introduced by: Mr Trevor Riordan, ILO SKILLS-AP
	Presentation: Ms. Adrienne Bird, ILO Consultant Panel: Mr. Mian Tajammal Hussain (Pakistan) and Mr. Rigoberto Monteiro (Timor Leste)
1200 – 1330	Lunch
1330 – 1530	<i>2nd Working group session: Key issues in the development of national skills strategies (two mixed working groups)</i>
	Panel Chairperson: Mr. Fernando Afonso Da Silva (Timor Leste) Introduced by: Ms. Anne Richmond, ILO SRO-Bangkok
1530 – 1600	Tea/coffee break
1600 – 1700	<i>Presentations and synthesis of the Working Groups discussion</i>
	Panel Chairperson: Mr. Fernando Afonso Da Silva (Timor Leste) Facilitated by: Ms. Anne Richmond, ILO SRO-Bangkok Presentations: Working Group Rapporteurs (10 minutes each)
	Questions and discussion

Thursday, 29 March 2007

0900 – 0930	<i>3rd Working group session: Preparation of National Action Plans</i>
	Panel Chairperson: Mr. Rigoberto Monteiro (Timor Leste) Introduced by: Mr Trevor Riordan, ILO SKILLS-AP
0930 – 0950	Tea/coffee break
0950 – 1700	<i>Visits to training centres and industry</i>

Friday, 30 March 2007

0900 – 1000	<i>3rd Working group session: Preparation of National Action Plans (six tripartite country groups)</i>
	Arrangements for the Working groups: Mr Trevor Riordan
1000 – 1030	Tea/coffee break
1030 – 1200	<i>3rd Working group session: Preparation of National Action Plans (continued)</i>

1200 – 1300 Lunch

1300 – 1430 ***Presentations of National Action Plans***

Panel Chairperson: Mr Trevor Riordan, ILO SKILLS–AP
Country presentations: From one of the constituents in each country (10 minutes each)

Questions and discussion

1430 – 1500 Tea/coffee break

1500 – 1600 ***Synthesis of major issues arising out of the meeting and proposals for follow up***

Panel Chairperson: Mr Trevor Riordan, ILO SKILLS–AP
Rapporteur: Ms Anne Richmond, ILO SRO-Bangkok

Closing Session

Chairperson: ILO
Mr. Sour Heng and Mr. Sing Teh
(Cambodia), and Mr. Bismo Sanyoto
(Indonesia)

Annex 2 List of Participants

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Annex 3 National Action Plans

Annex 3.1: Action Plan of Afghanistan

1. As you know that Afghanistan is a post war country and we have many problems but we reconstructed different parts of our national life.
 - Reconstructed our educational and vocational system (for men and women)
 - Reorganized the political and administration system
 - Reorganized the private sector.
 - Reorganized the trade unions.
 - Started tripartite cooperation.
2. We have about 8mils labor power.
 - About 6 mils children and youth going to school and universities.
 - Our country is in the period of reconstruction.
 - Donor countries and international organization.
 - NSS support the economic situation but this is the part of our national security.
3. Our current and anticipated problems are:
 - No having the coordination between educational and vocational system and the labour markets demands.
 - We are transferring from socialist way of economy to the free market economy.
4. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) Afghanistan International Chambers of Commerce (AICC) and All Afghanistan Federation of Trade Unions (AAFTU) will drive NSS in the country.
5. The tripartite will be involved in developing NSS in our country with cooperation of ILO.
6. We need NSS because:
 - Resolved the poverty problem.
 - Create the jobs.
 - Replaced the guest workers by our skilled labours.
 - Compete in regional and international labour market.
 - Increase the GDP.
7. Each of us on return will try the best to do:
 - We will transfer the complete information from this useful meeting to our government, private sector and workers.
 - We will be in contact with ILO.
 - We will arrange new relationship between Government, employers, and workers to resolve the current problems.
 - We will strengthen the tripartite dialog for provide a useful NSS.

Annex 3.2: Action Plan of Cambodia

1. What elements of a National Skills Strategy do we already have in place in our country?
 - a. Rectangular Strategy – Growth, Employment, Equity, and Efficiency
 - b. National Strategic Development Plan 2006-2011
 - c. Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training’s Strategic Plan
 - d. Tri-parties (Social-Partnership) – National Training Board with the representative of government representative, training provider, employer, labor union representative, and international partner (ADB)
 - e. Active role player is defined – Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, and ADB

2. What are the opportunities for and interests in developing or strengthening a NSS in our Country?
 - a. Government is committing to the Rectangular Strategy which clearly mentions employment creation, and increasing productivity as the pillar of the strategy
 - b. Enhancing poverty reduction has been in the high spot of discussion among the public, researcher, civil society, and international partners.
 - c. Number of new entrant labor is increasing - around 300,000 every year.
 - d. 80% of labor force deploys in the informal sector with low payment
 - e. Time to improve the productivity and quality of workforce to sustain and upgrade the career.
 - f. The heat of competition among the region to retain national comparative advantage is high.
 - g. To fulfill new ambitious of sending workforce abroad.
 - h. Many international organizations bringing similar topic about developing national skill strategy.
 - i. Many ministries are challenging us in setting up their own way of standard and strategy.

3. What current or anticipated problems in our country could a NSS address?
 - a. How to help government achieve her Rectangular Strategy.
 - b. How to help achieving the National Strategic Development Plan 2006-2011
 - c. Help reducing poverty to 25% by year 2010 – agricultural productivity, better employment opportunity either at home or abroad.
 - d. Increasing or retaining Cambodian national competitive advantage position.
 - e. More active role in tri-parties involvement
 - f. Clearer definition of who will do what.

4. Who should be the drivers of the National Skills Strategy in our country?
 - a. The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training.
 - b. The employer.
 - c. Training provider

5. Who should be involved in developing the NSS in our country?
 - a. Ministry of labor and vocational training.
 - b. Other government relevant agencies.
 - c. Employer representative.
 - d. Labor union.
 - e. Researcher and Human Right Group.
 - f. International partner.

6. Given the points above, how will you answer the question “why do we need a national skills strategy in our country?”
 - a. To support the government rectangular strategy.
 - b. To join the government in reducing poverty reduction.
 - c. More efficiency in resource allocation.
 - d. We need to train the labor force who are in the informal sector.
 - e. For the formal sector we will need to train them for securing and upgrading the skill.
 - f. Improve productivity and quality of workforce to retaining the national comparative advantage.
 - g. New ambitious of sending labor abroad.
 - h. Many international organizations bringing similar topic about developing national skill strategy.

7. What will each of us do on our return? And what further action we will proposes?
 - a. Government: Report to the senior for information. And social partnership should be reconsidered.
 - b. Employer: Will encourage our representatives sitting at the National Training Board to be more proactive.
 - c. Employee: Requesting for a board committee meeting for reporting them this NSS.

Annex 3.3: Action Plan of Indonesia

1. What elements of a National Skills Strategy do we already have in place in our country?

- a. Legal Framework: Manpower act no. 13/2003 (Competency based training, skill certification, certification board, sectoral acts on standard competencies, National training system G.R. no. 31/2006)
- b. System: National qualification framework 9 level, competency based training system, certification system, accreditation system, quality assurance)
- c. Institution: National Profession Certification Board, Profession certification agency, Skill testing agencies, National training council, National Training Coordination Body)
- d. Infrastructure: 162 Vocational training center, 18 Productivity Training Center, 15 Transmigration Training center, Company Training Centers, Private training centers, Standard competency, training modules.

2. What are the opportunities for and interests in developing (or strengthening) a National Skills Strategy in our country?

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Supporting commitment from:
 - a. National Planning Body
 - b. Parliament
 - c. Minister of Manpower
 - d. ILO Convention 195
 - e. International Organisation
 - f. Employer Organisation
 - g. Union Organization
2. Labour market expansion
 - a. National
 - b. International

INTEREST

1. Unemployment reduction
2. Poverty alleviation
3. To increase workforce employability

3. What current or anticipated problems in our country could a National Skills Strategy address?

- a. Un-aligned Planning between National Economic Planning with HRD Planning
- b. No committed priorities
- c. Social dialog implementation : commitment and trust among stakeholders
- d. Lack of training infrastructure : training facilities and equipment,
- e. Lack of Training Quality: Instructors, training management, training program

4. Who should be the driver(s) of the National Skills Strategy in our country? (consider both individuals and institutions)

- a. President
- b. Tripartite Body
- c. Ministry of Manpower

5. Who should be involved in developing the National Skills Strategy in our country?

1. Government
 - Ministry of Education
 - Sectoral Ministry
 - National Plan Body
 - Central Bureau of Statistic
2. Parliament
3. Employers associations
4. Workers organizations
5. Private institutions

6. Given the points above, how will you answer the question “Why do we need a National Skills Strategy in our country?”

1. To decrease number of unemployment
2. To alleviate poverty
3. Need for economic recovery
4. To fulfil opportunity for overseas labour market
5. Efficiency of national resources
6. Giving access for disable persons, women, young persons to access labour market

7. What will each of us do on our return: who will we brief; and what further action will we propose?

1. Coordination with ILO Jakarta office
2. Method: meeting and workshop
3. Preliminary formulation on NSS involving stakeholders
4. Developing Action plan on NSS
5. Building commitment among stakeholder

Annex 3.4: Action Plan of Mongolia

1. What elements of a National Skills Strategy do we already have in place in our country?

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- National education strategy covering from basic to tertiary education system (Ministry of ECS)
- Social security sector strategy (MLSW)
- Legal framework from 2001 such as Vocational Education Law, Employment Promotion Law
- Government Agenda for 2004-2008
- Decent work country program

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

- Social dialogue
- National Council on Vocational education and training (Multi)
- MSWL
- MECS
- Training providers (public- long term and private- short term)
 - National Methodological centre
 - 6 Regional methodological centre
 - 25 employment training centre
 - 40 employment education centre

RESOURCES

- State budget
- Employment Promotion Fund from 2001

2. What are the opportunities for and interests in developing (or strengthening) a National Skills Strategy in our country?

- Skills to address the demand of increasing globalisation, new technology and changing patterns of work (construction, cashmere and mining)
- Economic growth and increase of foreign and national investment
- Professional associations and civil society movements started to be active which can be named as increasing public demand
- Increasing need of growing private sector
- Scientists are working on developing the National Development Programme
- International cooperation
- National program on Social Partnership is under drafting by the tripartite partners with assistance from the ILO
- Individuals are more motivated to obtain higher skills
- Experiences and lessons learned throughout transition period

3. What current or anticipated problems in our country could a National Skills Strategy address?

- It will improve coordination in VET activities which is currently caused by the discrepancies in institutional frameworks
- Commitment and capacity of social partners will be strengthened
- Systematic approach for improvement of education and skills of workers and promoting of HRD for public and private sectors
- It will help to conduct permanent and frequent need assessment survey of employers' need and to introduce flexible training curriculum
- National qualification framework will be created
- Introduction of monitoring system
- Will set up definite funding and accountability system
- Incentives for employers and workers

4. Who should be the driver(s) of the National Skills Strategy in our country? (consider both individuals and institutions)

- A tripartite body

5. Who should be involved in developing the National Skills Strategy in our country?

- MSWL/MESC and other ministries and agencies
- Employers and workers representatives
- Training providers
- Representatives of social groups such as youth, women, disabled people and informal economy and etc

6. Given the points above, how will you answer the question “Why do we need a National Skills Strategy in our country?”

- Increase contribution of HRD to the national economic and social development through employability, poverty alleviation and unemployment reduction
- It will create an integrated and well coordinated policy for development of the national HRD, with definite indication of roles, resources and responsibilities of stakeholders.
- Capacity of social partnership will be upgraded

7. What will each of us do on our return: who will we brief; and what further action will we propose?

- Briefing to relevant authorities (minister and presidents)
- Distribution of information to people related to VET
- Organise a tripartite meeting on the need to develop NSS
- Proposal for NSS guideline will be developed by three parties in accordance to international standards such as ILO recommendation 195
- Propose establishment of tripartite working on development of the NSS

Annex 3.5: Action Plan of Pakistan

1. What elements of a National Skills do we already have in place in our country?

Government continuously had been addressing the issue of TVET and various institutions at federal / provincial level like Pakistan Manpower institution , National Training Bureau, skill development councils, TEVTA, VTCs, RSP ,TUSDC, were created but there was no coordination and linkages among these. Realising importance of the skilled manpower for the development the Government established one **APEX BODY FOR TVET named NAVTEC:**

- FOCAL BODY / INSTITUTION – **NAVTEC established** under the law for regulation, coordination and INTEGRATED POLICY DIRECTION FOR TVET (Ordinance promulgated in November 2006), placed in the PRIME MINISTER’S OFFICE
- Active interaction with private sector/industries in TVET implementation & management to ensure skills in new technologies, trades and training methods and also to respond to the global trends.
- Shift from supply oriented to demand led TVET by involving all the stakeholders.

2. What are the opportunities for and interests in developing (or strengthening) a National Skills Strategy in our country?

- Congenial environment exists due to personal attention at the top most level – THE PRESIDENT & THE PRIME MINISTER to meet the strong growing economic development / growth of the new industry and shortage of skilled manpower and also link it with employability leading to eradication of poverty.
- Emphasis on the public –private partnership and inclusion of social partners to effectively enhance out reach to the grass roots level.

3. What current or anticipated problems in our country could a National Skills Strategy address?

- Strengthening of the focal institution for integrated policy direction in TVET.
- Low literacy level and poverty and enhancing institutions role in implementation and management.
- Lack of resources (financial & human resources)
- Besides above the most important issue of lack of “DONORS’ COORDINATION”
- Weak monitoring & evaluation system

4. Who should be the driver(s) of the National Skills Strategy in our country? (consider both individuals and institutions)

- Appex Body created by law – NAVTEC (with Regional Directorates of NAVTEC, Islamabad, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, NWFP provinces) in the PM office with the support of the top executive authority of the Government of Pakistan. In coordination with the Chief Executives of the Provinces including Districts at Tripartite level.

5. Who should be involved in developing the National Skills Strategy in our country?

The **NAVTEC** at the top level with the collaboration and coordination of all the stakeholders at Federal and Provincial level.

6. Given the points above, how will you answer the question “Why do we need a National Skills Strategy in our country?”

- Shortage of skilled manpower to cope with the growing needs of the economic development due to technological changes and low productivity, lack of innovations to meet the global challenges.
- Insufficient and outdated skill standards / curricula.
- Paucity of Labour Market Information (LMIS) and disconnect with the training needs and low productivity.
- Non existence of employment placement data of trainees.
- Lack of effective & efficient monitoring and evaluation system
- Weak participation of private sector in policy making and training delivery.
- Fragmented and uncoordinated delivery of TVET.
- To develop a TVET to produce about **ONE MILLION APPROPRIATELY SKILLED WORKERS ANNUALLY**.
- To meet the demand of KNOWLEDGE BASED economy
- To increase labour productivity
- To shift towards technology based industry and its efficient management.
- To establish NATIONAL TVET CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE and National / Regional / International accreditation of institutes.

7. What will each of us do on our return? Who will we brief?, and what further action will we propose?

- The Government delegate will brief its top management /executive in the NAVTEC HQ and also share with all the directors and regional directors about the proceedings and recommendations of the regional meeting.
- The employers’ delegate will brief the Employers’ Federation of Pakistan and the Skilled Development Council about this meeting.
- The labour delegate will brief the Pakistan Workers’ Federation regarding the out come of this meeting.
- We propose to request through our appropriate offices / channels / bodies to hold a National Conference / workshop with the collaboration of ILO in particular and other donor agencies to highlight the importance of the TVET and its strategic needs to have a National Skills Strategy and its effective and efficient implementation with the active involvement of all the stakeholders.

Annex 3.6: Action Plan of Timor Leste

1. What elements of a National Skills Strategy do we already have in place in our country?
 - National Labour Force Development Institute (NLFDI)
 - Employment and Vocational Training Fund (EVTF)
 - Draft for National Curriculum of Vocational Training
2. What are the opportunities for and interests in developing (or strengthening) a National Skills Strategy in our country?
 - The human resources development is part and stated in National Development Plan 2020 (NDP 2020).
 - The capacity and skill development is the important area of the Ministry of labour and community reinsertion.
 - Institutionalise of the Employment and Vocational Training Fund (EVTF) under the government rules and the establishment of National Labour Force Development Institute by the government.
 - Funding are available (1 % deduct from national revenue and donors contribution).
3. What current or anticipated problems in our country could a National Skills Strategy address?
 - High rate of poverty
 - High rate of unemployment
 - Un-skill labour force
 - Low formal education level
 - Lack of training centre and trainers
 - Lack of investment from both sector (private and Public)
4. Who should be the driver(s) of the National Skills Strategy in our country? (consider both individuals and institutions)
 - Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion
 - Ministry of Education and Culture
 - Employers Association and the unions
5. Who should be involved in developing the National Skills Strategy in our country?
 - Government (labour, Education, youth and Sport, Office of Promotion and equality and ministry of development as well as finance minister, etc.)
 - Social parties (employers organizations, unions)
 - Civil society groups (youth councils, NGO's, academic institutions, training providers including church training centre).
6. Given the points above, how will you answer the question "Why do we need a National Skills Strategy in our country?"
 - Poverty reduction and reduction of the un-literate and the human resource development is the goals of Timor Leste stated in National Development Plan 2020, so the national skill

strategies is to contribute to National economic development, equity opportunity to man and women and the guaranteed prosperity for workers and families.

- The national skill strategy as a guideline for development of human resources in promoting of skill labour force related to labour market demand.
- The government and stakeholders is committed to fund the human resources development in Timor Leste, through national labour force development institute.

7. What will each of us do on our return: who will we brief; and what further action will we propose?

- Follow-up meeting among tripartite group.
- The government rep will brief the employment and the vocational training expert.
- Both employer and union will brief the president of each organization.
- Together as tripartite will brief the minister of labour and community reinsertion as well as education minister for further discussion on establishment of national skill strategy of Timor Leste.
- Government will responsible for consultation process through workshop, round table discussion, assessment for social parties regarding to establishment of national skill strategy planning.

Annex 4

Common understanding on the key elements of national skills development strategies and their implementation agreed at the ILO/SKILLS-AP Japan Regional Technical Meeting, OVTA, Chiba, Japan 27-30 March 2007

Background

In 2004, the International Labour Conference replaced its 1975 Recommendation on Human Resources Development (HRD) with Recommendation 195, the “Recommendation on HRD: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning”. Section 5a of the new Recommendation states that “Members should define, with the involvement of the social partners, a national strategy for education and training...”. The purpose of the meeting was to explore guidelines for the implementation of this Recommendation.

National Skills Strategy (NSS)

Following debate on the subject, the participants agreed that a National Skills Strategy is a means to ensure that HRD directly contributes to national economic growth and social development through the effective allocation and efficient use of all education and training resources, aligned to the needs of targeted beneficiaries, agreed to through a process of active social dialogue.

Participants further agreed that national skills strategies have the best prospect of success if they are driven from as high a level as possible within government and if they have the active involvement of social partners. They often require a legal framework for legitimacy. For best results the governance and financing mechanisms should be clearly aligned to the achievement of the strategy – with clear roles, functions and accountabilities for funds assigned to implementing agencies that flow from the strategy. Competition between co-ordinating agencies is often inefficient.

Key elements of a National Skills Strategy – and their development

The participants agreed that a NSS normally entails the following elements, arrived at by answering, through a process of social dialogue, the indicated questions:

- ⇒ Firstly, a Vision statement which indicates, at a very general level, the desired contribution of HRD to the country’s national economic and employment growth and social development priorities. The vision statement answers the question - *Why have a national skills strategy at all? To what should it contribute?* HRD at this level is only one of a number of elements needed to meet the goals of growth and development, so it cannot be held exclusively responsible for its achievement.
- ⇒ Secondly, at the Results level, the NSS identifies the groups of people to be educated and trained or supported if the Vision is to be achieved. Linked to each group of people is a statement of the benefit that it is assumed will follow once they have learned the targeted skills, within an agreed timeframe? The timeframe is normally about five years, but can be broken into annual targets. The results answer the question: *Who will be prioritised and what benefit is it hoped they will enjoy once the education, training or support has been given?*
- ⇒ Thirdly, at the Activities level, the NSS lists the key actions that need to be done to achieve the Results. Broadly the areas of activities to be undertaken will be drawn from the

following menu: Pre-requisites (information gathering and analysis, the promotion of the quality of and society's confidence in qualifications (NQFs), career guidance and employment services); Financing (collection sources/vehicles and its distribution to lever strategy objectives); Delivery (public, NGOs and private improvement) and policy coherence. The Activities listed answer the question; *What must be done to achieve the results listed?*

⇒ Finally is the Resources level. The question here is '*Who will do the Activities (the work) and what resources and/or support and/or other incentives do they need to do it?*' It was agreed that Key Performance Indicators could be developed at this level. It was also agreed that looking for ways to improve efficiency is key.

Once a NSS has been developed, the participants recognised the importance of checking whether the resources and activities will deliver the results and whether the achievement of the results will be adequate from the perspective of the vision. To test this the NSS can be checked, working from the bottom up by asking: *Are the resources allocated and the activities listed necessary and sufficient to achieve the results? If 'no', then who will undertake the remaining required activities? If they are not under the control of the NSS agencies, can their support be secured or should the vision be scaled down? And finally, is there sufficient agreement on each of the questions.*

Monitoring and evaluation

The participants further agreed that monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of the strategy's implementation, at key points, is vital and they developed the following set of questions to help themselves design measurements of their strategy's success:

- ⇒ At the vision level: *Has HRD made its intended contribution? Are those responsible for the broader economic and social plans satisfied with HRD's contribution to the national effort?*
- ⇒ At the results level: *Have the targeted beneficiaries received the planned education, training and support? Has it brought the desired benefit to them?*
- ⇒ At the activities level: *Have the activities been completed – within the planned timeframes and budgets and to the required quality?*
- ⇒ At the resources level: *Have those responsible for doing the various activities done what was set out for them to do? Have they done it within the set timeframes and budgets?*

The participants noted that in practice the monitoring and evaluation of national skills strategies will need to be done 'bottom up', from the resources level to the activity level to the results and finally the vision.

Conclusion

Having developed this shared understanding of the elements of a national skills strategy and the means whereby it could be developed and its implementation monitored and evaluated, the participants agreed to prepare a follow-up action plan to pursue the development of national skills strategies at country level.