

Summary of the 9th Review Meeting of the ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme

as of 3-2- 2016

Introduction

1. The 9th Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme was held on 22-23 October 2015 at the Tsukuba International Congress Centre (Epochal Tsukuba), Ibaraki, Japan. It included a visit to the University of Tsukuba and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) in the afternoon of 23 October 2015. *(see Annex I)*
2. The Meeting was attended by a total of 152 participants. These included delegates from the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, Indonesia; the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Japan; the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia; the Commission on Higher Education, the Philippines; the Office of Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education Thailand, and International Relations Officers/University officials from 7 member countries of the AIMS Programme. Delegates from the Ministry of Education, Republic of Korea; the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Cambodia and the Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR, and representatives from universities in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar joined the Meeting as observers as well as and Centre Director and staff from SEAMEO RIHED. *(see Annex II)*

Opening Ceremony

3. Dr. Chantavit Sujatanond, Centre Director of SEAMEO RIHED, in her introductory remarks, welcomed all the distinguished delegates from the ministries and universities to the 9th Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme. With its aims to promote mobility of students and enhance the harmonization of higher education through students exchange in the Southeast Asian Region, SEAMEO RIHED's AIMS Programme was established to increase understanding, rapport and collaboration among ASEAN member countries. She stressed that the AIMS Review Meeting did not only serve as the tool of a solid support system but it also provided a coordinative platform for continuous dialogue and exchange of information for all stakeholders in the implementation of the AIMS programme. She emphasized that the collectively agreed study fields had become a major basis of developing further academic and research mobility among the participating countries. Lastly, she conveyed the sincere gratitude of SEAMEO RIHED and the AIMS member countries to the MEXT and the University of Tsukuba for hosting the event.
4. Mr. Hideto Matsumoto, Director-General of Higher Education Policy Division, Higher Education Bureau of MEXT, delivered his Welcome Remarks by stating that higher education in the recent years had placed emphasis on providing human capital that was capable to cater to the demands of the industries. He explained that, in order to produce good quality citizens, countries would have to effectively address many social needs that arised from their particular situations and circumstances. He shared to the Meeting that since Japan joined the AIMS Programme in 2013, the Japanese government had been continuously working on promoting

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student exchange programmes between Japan and the ASEAN member countries as an effort that was being taken to enhance knowledge sharing and cooperation in matters related to the economy, politics, business and other related platforms. The number of both inbound and outbound students had increased and there was an expectation that this would further increase in the future. He ended his speech by wishing every delegate success and the Meeting to have productive outcome.

5. Dr. Benton Calorine Fern, Vice President and Executive Director for Global Affairs, the University of Tsukuba, delivered her Opening Remarks by conveying her deep appreciation to the work of SEAMEO RIHED and the ministries and universities participating in the AIMS Programme. She shared her reflection on the purpose of the AIMS Programme which was to prepare the students for their work environment after their graduation. Consequently, she stressed that communication and collaboration among the countries were required in order to establish strong higher education community. She added that since 2013, Japan had selected 7 projects from Japanese universities that would be dovetailed to the contexts of the AIMS Programme. With the most important mission was to provide students participating in the exchange programmes experiences in globalization and internationalization. Lastly, she wished that the Meeting would be fruitful for all delegates.

Programme Overview and Update

6. Centre Director of SEAMEO RIHED presented the Programme Overview and Update of the AIMS Programme to the Meeting. (*see Annex III and III.I*)

VDO Presentation from the University of Tsukuba

7. The University of Tsukuba made a VDO presentation on its research and academic programmes as well as its vision and plans for the future.

Country Report

8. The country reports presented and focused on different frameworks, tools and planned activities to improve the quality, scope and relevance of the AIMS Programme. The expansion of the programme and the need to increase the number of exchange students to respond to the ASEAN and ASEAN plus 3 were also challenges that needed to be addressed by all participating countries. The other issues that were thoroughly discussed were: visa problems, financial support from the governments, efficiency of IROs, credit transfers, establishment of alumni network and current needs of global competencies. (*see Annex IV, IV.I, IV.I.I, IV.II, IV.III and IV.IV*)

Introduction of International Programmes at the University of Tsukuba as Showcase of Good Practices of Management

9. The representative from the University of Tsukuba presented the Trans-ASEAN Global Agenda Education Programme-ASEAN International Mobility for Students (TAG-AIMS) Programme and its implementation. (*see Annex V*)

Discussion of Ministry Representatives

10. The Discussion Group composed of the ministry representatives covered the following topics:

1. Proposal of the Republic of Korea (ROK) to participate in the AIMS Programme

The representative from ROK presented the proposal to the Meeting. The Meeting adopted the consensus to allow ROK to join the AIMS Programme. The participation of ROK shall follow the same principle and procedure as applied to the accession of Japan. The multilateral MoU shall be signed by the authorized representatives from the ministries of all members countries through an official protocol during the 10th Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme. *(see Annex VI, VI.I, VI.II and VI.III)*

2. AIMS certificate, logo and iAward

2.1 The Meeting agreed to have only the AIMS logo to be placed on the AIMS certificate which shall be implemented soonest preferably by the first semester of 2015-2016.

2.2 The AIMS logo proposed by SEAMEO RIHED was adopted.

2.3 The Meeting agreed to put the iAward Programme on hold for the time being. *(see Annex VII and VII.I)*

Discussion of University Representatives Responsible for Academic Affairs

11. The representatives from the universities constituted the group that discussed the 10 study fields. The relevance of the existing disciplines implemented under the AIMS programme and challenges to match the inbound and outbound students for each discipline, especially the three new disciplines introduced into the programme were discussed.

12. The common problems raised in the group discussion were visa issues, commitment from the governments, basic standard of student accommodation, etc.

13. The groups suggested to improve the AIMS programme: to establish the exchange of postgraduate students and academic staff and to have joint research and consolidating research works along with establishing short term exchange programmes as well as combined study internship. The AIMS website was also raised by most of the groups as an important platform for information sharing.

14. The groups suggested that participating universities should have a serious look at the competencies and learning outcomes for the courses offered by participating universities, the constructively aligned deliveries of the outcome attainment. Moreover, the aligned assessment tasks students to complete in demonstrating how well they had achieved the learning outcomes. This would allow for a more transparent comparison of courses between home and host universities and facilitate fair and justified credit transfer and grades obtained by students. It would also ensure more student-centred deliveries in achieving the varied targeted outcomes

15. As regards the 3 new study fields, it was reported and noted that there was a small number of universities participating in the Meeting. Therefore, there was a need to encourage more universities to join. The comparability of syllabi and course contents among universities were also discussed in terms of similarities and differences for the purpose of managing course matching for student exchange. Moreover, it was noted that the universities had been collaborating with both government and private sectors in supporting internship, conferences and other activities that would expose students to diversified environments and situations. The different academic calendars among the member countries participating in the AIMS Programme were also noted to be a challenge in implementing the courses of the 3 additional study fields. Thus, the possibility of merging the 3 study fields was discussed for further consideration. It was therefore decided that SEAMEO RIHED shall coordinate the further discussion on the academic calendar.

16. The group reports are provided in *Annex VIII*.

Discussion of Country Group

17. Group discussions by country were held. The discussions were on (1) pertinent issues, or challenges encountered, and how to minimize them; and (2) networking among AIMS university members.

18. The issue of student visa was extensively discussed by the participants, especially as regards of confusing and complicated process of visa application, the delay of visa issuance, the type of visa and the proper duration of stay, etc. The other issues brought up by the country groups were: budget allocation, appropriate standard of student accommodation, general services for overseas students, limited quota of exchange students at each university, lack of awareness of IROs and a small number of courses conducted in English. In addition, the Meeting suggested that each country should consider to use their local English proficiency tests instead of TOEFL or IELTS. To respond to these issues, the Meeting proposed to set up a steering committee (composed of ministries and university representatives) to help tackle the technical and management matters prior to the Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme. Moreover, trainings organized in order to increase awareness and work efficiency of staff of the IROs were also mentioned.

The AIMS Website

19. Mr. Nitipong Srisoontaraporn, a Programme Officer of SEAMEO RIHED presented the structure of the AIMS Website to the Meeting. The AIMS Website was to serve as an information sharing platform and effective communication channel to help improve understanding of course contents and credit transfer among the participating universities. In addition, specific training programmes should be posted by the website for the information of the IROs, in order to raise their awareness and increase their capacity to the academic needs of the exchange students of the AIMS Programme. In addition, SEAMEO RIHED requested the member countries and universities to provide the relevant information to be

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uploaded on the website. Such information should include university information package for exchange students, course descriptions, course syllabi, statistical information of inbound and outbound students, etc. Moreover, SEAMEO RIHED, in conjunction with the Indonesian AIMS website currently being developed as presented in the country paper, shall cooperatively work with Indonesia on the website construction. This shall be in combination with the website cited above. *(Annex IX and IX.I)*

Presentation of Sophia University

20. The representative of Sophia University presented the Sophia-ASEAN International Mobility for Students (SAIMS) Programme on trans-discipline relating to conservation of nature and environment. *(See Annex X and X.I)*

Discussion and Wrap-up Session

21. Three policy actions were proposed to be taken in the immediate future. These were: 1) the Steering Committee for the AIMS Programme shall be established to work on technical and management policy issues with member countries and universities financially supporting it on a voluntary basis, 2) the ministries shall request their respective Bureaus of Immigration the standard duration of stay permit while the Ministries of Foreign Affairs shall be requested to issue the proper student visas to inbound students, and 3) the objectives of the AIMS Programme shall be revisited in order to plan the broader scheme of the AIMS Programme.

The 10th Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme

22. The head representative of the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia informed the Meeting on the willingness of the Malaysian Government to host the 10th Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme tentatively set in either October or November 2016. MoU to allow ROK to participate in the AIMS programme shall be signed at the 10th Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme.

Adoption of the Meeting

23. The Meeting adopted the minutes of the 9th Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme subject to further editing. The Meeting concluded with the forging of friendship and solidarity among all participants and building of linkages among the representatives of ministries and universities.

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