



## Meeting Report of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Review Meeting of The Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme

11-13 November 2019

Hotel Nikko, Bangkok, Thailand

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### INTRODUCTION

- 1 The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Review Meeting of the Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme was held on 11-13 November 2019 at the Hotel Nikko in Bangkok, Thailand. On the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of AIMS Programme, the Meeting was co-organised and hosted by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI), Thailand. The Programme appears as **Annex 1**.
- 2 As part of the 13th Annual Review Meeting of AIMS Programme, the RIHED 60th Anniversary and AIMS 10th Anniversary Ceremony was conveyed on Day 1 while SEA-HiEd Student Forum on Mobility and Employability was carried out on Day 3.
- 3 In total, the Meeting was attended by 303 participants. This includes 1) Guests of Honour and Partners who were invited to the ceremony of RIHED 60th Anniversary and AIMS 10th Anniversary; 2) participants of the SEA-HiEd Student Forum on Mobility and Employability; 3) government and university representatives from 9 AIMS Member Countries, namely Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam; 4) speakers and panellists; 5) students; 6) observers from non-AIMS Member universities and 6) organisers from MHESI, Thailand, and SEAMEO RIHED. The List of Participants appears as **Annex 2**.

### Day 1, 11 November 2019

#### *RIHED 60th Anniversary and AIMS 10th Anniversary Ceremony*

#### Opening

- 4 To commemorate the RIHED 60th Anniversary and AIMS 10th Anniversary, SEAMEO RIHED provided video presentations on the history of RIHED over the last 60 years and the achievements of AIMS Programme during the last decade.
- 5 Dr Chantavit Sujatanond, Centre Director of SEAMEO RIHED, delivered the welcome speech conveying the appreciation to participants for their attendance to the Meeting. She noted that the 13th Annual Review Meeting of AIMS Programme takes place as part of SEA-HiEd Week, which entails a series of events that brings together a diverse community of stakeholders to discuss the future of higher

education in the region and beyond. She expressed her gratitude to the MHESI, Thailand, for co-hosting the Meeting. It was noted that the Programme has undergone the considerable expansion in its network and a scale of mobility since the pilot initiative started in 2010. She highlighted that the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Review Meeting of the AIMS Programme aims to not only recognise the Programme's milestone over a past decade but also reaffirm a mutual effort to continue engaging in student mobility and broader academic collaborations in the region.

- 6 In his opening speech, Prof. Dr Wichit Srisa-an, former Minister of Education of Thailand, conveyed the congratulatory remarks on the achievements of RIHED and AIMS Programme. He emphasised that RIHED had been established based on the region's need to facilitate cooperation in the field of higher education and enhance a role of higher education and research for the development of Southeast Asian countries, which continue to be relevant in today's context. He also noted the SEAMEO RIHED's role in promoting the harmonisation and alignment of higher education in the region by bringing a collective commitment from each of the SEAMEO Member Countries and their partners. With another important milestone for the AIMS Programme, he expressed that SEAMEO RIHED will continue to put forward key issues in higher education and advance efforts towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals for the development of the region.

#### **Official Launch of the New AIMS Logo**

- 7 SEAMEO RIHED presented that AIMS Logo Design Contest had been conducted in collaboration with the MHESI, Thailand, to enhance the visibility and awareness of the AIMS Programme. The contest process had been ongoing throughout the year and the eligibility to entry had been given to students currently studying at AIMS Member Universities regardless of their previous participation to the AIMS Programme.
- 8 It was reported that the final selection had been made in the 4<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting of the AIMS Programme held in Malaysia in July 2019 based on following selection criteria: relevance, aesthetic quality; originality; and implication represented.
- 9 SEAMEO RIHED invited Ms Benedikta Melania Rahmawati from Sriwijaya University (Indonesia), the winner of AIMS Logo Design Contest, to present the concept behind the new logo. She explained that the logo consists of 3 colour themes: green represents harmony, environment, restores energy and sustainability; blue represents peace and stability, implying the principle of balanced mobility and reciprocity; and red represents robust regional mechanisms with a strong support system.

#### **Signing Ceremony of New AIMS Letter of Intent**

- 10 Over the past decade, AIMS has been undergoing a constant expansion with a growing number of Member Countries, universities and students participating in the Programme. On the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, ministry representatives from all AIMS Member Countries were invited to sign the new Letter of Intent to acknowledge the broader scope of AIMS and reaffirm a collective commitment toward further enhancing student mobility in the region. With the completion of Signing Ceremony, the Programme officially welcomed Singapore as the 9<sup>th</sup> Member Country.

### **Proud to be AIMS: Voice of the 1st Generation of AIMS**

- 11 Mr Chanokphol Chaisuparakul, a programme alumnus of the first batch from Thailand, shared his experience of joining the mobility. As a former exchange student to the National University of Malaysia, he shared that how the mobility experience had offered him the exposure to cultural diversity and opportunities for gaining various skills, all of which had shaped his personal growth and professional career as an entrepreneur. His presentation appears as **Annex 3**.

### **AIMS Student Speech Contest**

- 12 As part of the AIMS anniversary activities, the Meeting conducted the AIMS Student Speech Contest. Student representatives from Member Countries, who had been nominated through a national selection before the Meeting, were invited to share their insights into student mobility and global issues. Members of the AIMS Steering Committee from respective countries served as contest judges.
- 13 Through 2 rounds of speeches, following student representatives were determined as awarded contestants: Ms Grace Rattanadit (Thailand); Mr Benjamin Josiah H. Granada (Philippines); and Ms Emi Tsuyuki (Japan).

### **Day 2, 12 November 2019**

#### **The Journey of the AIMS Programme**

- 14 SEAMEO RIHED presented the Programme overview and achievements made during the 10 years of implementation. It was reported that with the latest update of mobility data as well as the addition of new member universities, the Programme had mobilised more than 4900 students from 78 universities across 9 countries since 2010. The presentation informed participants of some Programme updates, including the nomination of new universities from Indonesia, Republic of Korea and Singapore, and the summary of 4<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting held earlier the year.
- 15 SEAMEO RIHED also showed the result of the survey on disability inclusion that had been circulated among member universities before the meeting. The survey was carried out to collect information about the preparedness of member universities in accommodating the needs of students with disabilities. The result showed that 80 per cent of member universities currently offer supporting facilities and services available for people with disabilities, including counselling service and barrier-free campus infrastructures. Despite these, member universities expressed that people with disabilities may still face challenges in accessing particular places inside or outside the campus and obtaining necessary various supports from university staff. It was discussed that continuous dialogue and information sharing among member universities will be necessary to enhance the inclusiveness of the Programme and respond to the diverse needs of learners including people with disabilities. The presentation appears as **Annex 4**.

#### **Keynote Address**

- 16 In his keynote presentation, Prof. Dr Supachai Yavaprabhas, Former Centre Director of SEAMEO RIHED, shared that the AIMS Programme had been initiated in response to the region's need to create a common platform for student mobility due to the challenges derived from differences in higher education systems across countries. In this context, SEAMEO RIHED launched the Programme with Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand which was designed in a way that facilitates collaboration among policymakers, international relations office staff and academics. He noted that principles and mechanisms of the AIMS Programme today remain crucial in making the Programme inclusive and sustainable for the benefit of all stakeholders involved in this regional effort. The presentation appears as **Annex 5**.

#### **Experiences and Outcomes of Students Participating in the AIMS Programme**

- 17 Assoc. Prof. Dr Nakao Nomura (Chair of Research Working Group) and Prof. Dr Kiyong Byun (Research Working Group Secretariat) shared the result of the research project carried out in 2018 and 2019 in support of the government of Republic of Korea and members of Research Working Group nominated by respective Member Countries. They presented that the 2 rounds of the survey had been conducted on the optimal number of students from each Member Country who had participated in the exchange to capture the better understanding on the outcomes of their Programme participation.
- 18 It was reported that the survey had identified the high level of student satisfaction and learning outcomes particularly concerning intercultural competencies. Noting the impact of the AIMS Programme in influencing the educational experience of participating students, it was suggested to continue the effort for similar research activity in the future to measure and inform Programme outcomes. The presentation appears as **Annex 6**.

#### **Report by Member Countries: National Achievement and Future Expectation**

- 19 The session invited representatives of AIMS Member Countries to report a national update and overall achievement so far since the time of joining the Programme. As it marked a decade of implementation, each country presented the national achievement from the account of their contribution to the AIMS Programme as well as what they had benefited from the Programme. The session also encouraged respective Member Countries to share their views on the future vision and expectation of the Programme. Ministry representatives from all Member Countries presented on these accounts, namely, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The presentations appear as **Annex 7-15**.

#### **Future of AIMS: What is the AIMS Programme that you wish to see?**

- 20 The session invited participants to discuss key issues of AIMS Programme that had been identified by governments, universities, students and alumni in the past Annual Review Meetings and Steering Committee Meetings. With the facilitation of SEAMEO RIHED, the session adopted the World Café method to encourage the participants to exchange their views on 4 pre-determined topics and discuss how the AIMS Programme can move forward with further improvements.

#### *Student Internship*

- 21 The participants discussed that the definition of internship widely varies across countries. Expressing that visa arrangement is often a concern in conducting student internship, they shared that different types of visa are required once payment for students is involved. In other cases, a challenge was identified that students cannot engage in internship activities with a student visa and they are required to possess a work permit. Besides, it was shared that industries may have limited incentives to offer an internship to students for less than a certain period.
- 22 Taking into consideration the challenges identified, the participants suggested some potential models that may be adopted in implementing internship in the AIMS Programme. One idea expressed was to conduct an internship at research facilities or labs on campus where students are studying to alleviate the visa-related and other legal concerns. Other suggestions included establishing a uniform internship guideline between SEAMEO RIHED and governments and forming a research working group to examine current practices and policies relevant to the internship.

#### *Inclusiveness & Equity*

- 23 The session encouraged the participants to discuss various dimensions of inclusive education. The participants shared that limited facilities or infrastructures to support students with disabilities, including mental disabilities, is a common challenge many Member Universities face. Concerning the inclusion of students of all ages, it was shared that there are universities that impose age limit to applicants, resulting in excluding students in a certain age group to join the Programme. The lack of promotion targeting students with diverse age group was commonly discussed as a point for improvement at both institutional and national levels.
- 24 Besides, the participants discussed the need to enhance gender inclusiveness in the Programme participation especially about disproportionate gender ratio in particular disciplines and supportive environment for students in a sexual minority group. The session also revealed that there is a certain degree of a socio-economic barrier for students to join the Programme. While it was generally shared that family income is not one of the selection criteria, some participants expressed that in reality, scholarships do not cover every expense and students are required to make an additional financial contribution. Relevant to this point, the participants also shared that socio-economic status of family inevitably influences the student's choice of study destinations under the AIMS Programme, especially when students wish to study in countries with higher living expenses.

#### *Expansion of AIMS*

- 25 The participants exchanged their views on the potential expansion of the AIMS Programme. They identified the need to update the Programme disciplines in response to the current interconnected world, particularly in the area of information technology and digital industries. The suggested new disciplines are as follows: Creative Industries (such as design or art); Forestry; Medicine (including clinical medicine and rehabilitation); Information Technology; Disaster Management; and Political Science. Concerning cross-discipline mobility, there was a general call for fewer restrictions by disciplines and more flexibility in respective disciplines.

- 26 The participants also expressed general agreement for mobility for teaching and non-teaching staff, noting that staff mobility is already ongoing at some universities but not necessarily under the AIMS Programme. It was suggested to establish a general guideline to facilitate staff mobility in the Programme.
- 27 Also, the session discussed the possibility of expanding the Programme to include mobility in Master and Doctorate level. The participants showed general agreement for the vertical expansion especially for research purposes and opportunities for joint supervision. They also shared views on other types of mobility that the Programme may undertake in the future, including short-term exchanges and virtual mobility.

#### *Future Mode of AIMS*

- 28 The session provided the participants with the opportunity to brainstorm on a potential financial mechanism of the Programme, in addition to the government funding, which further ensures sustainability. There were various views exchanged on potential models including partial funding between government and students and the self-sponsoring model by students without the financial support provided in case they can afford their participation. To obtain more financial resources, it was suggested to organise activities at the national or regional level that can generate income to support the Programme.
- 29 In terms of management structure, the participants recommended each Member Countries to establish a national committee to oversee and operate the Programme at the national level.

### **Day 3, 13 November 2019**

#### ***SEA-HiEd Student Forum on Mobility and Employability***

- 30 As part of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities, AIMS Student Forum was conducted on the topic of Redefining Mobility in the Disruptive Era. A total of 16 student representatives from AIMS Member Countries participated in the Forum and discussed significant issues related to student mobility, including revisiting past and current development of AIMS Programme, opportunities and challenges as well as the future trends of student mobility in the region and beyond. The Forum was chaired by Dr Jessada Salathong, Assistant to the President for International Affairs from Chulalongkorn University in Thailand.
- 31 Through the discussion in the Forum, the student representatives presented the *Bangkok Joint Statement on Redefining "Mobility" in the disruptive era*. It was informed that SEAMEO RIHED takes lead in submitting the Joint Statement to the SEAMEO High Officials Meeting and SEAMEO Council. The Joint Statement appears as **Annex 16**.

#### **Mobility Beyond AIMS: Sharing Experience from other mobility schemes**

- 32 The session invited representatives from other student mobility schemes operated in the region to the panel to exchange perspectives and insights into student mobility. Facilitated by SEAMEO RIHED, the

session engaged in dialogue with following representatives: Dr Colin Steinbach, First Counsellor and Head of Political, Press and Information Section, Delegation of the European Union to Thailand (Erasmus Program); Prof. Shingo Ashizawa, Deputy Secretary-General of UMAP (UMAP Program); Asst. Prof. Dr Seon Joo Kim from Pukyong National University (Campus Asia Program); Mr Arief Maulana, Programme Manager, SHARE for Nuffic (SHARE Program); and Ms Nadira Erawan, HR and Alumni Officer in ASEAN Foundation (ASEAN Foundation Mobility Scheme).

- 33 The panellists shared the information about their respective student mobility initiatives including their operation mechanisms, achievements and scopes as well as challenges and opportunities identified through the regional implementation. Their presentations appear as **Annex 17-21**.

#### **Employability: Students Visions and the Future of Work**

- 34 The session aimed to reflect the common interests of Southeast Asian youths towards their future careers and discuss what roles universities can play in preparing students for the rapidly changing labour market. Following panellists were invited to the panel discussion: Ms Pin Kasemsiri, Co-founder of CareerVisa Thailand; Ms Kate Alyzon Ramil, President of Erasmus Mundus Association, the Southeast Asia Chapter; Ms Kiruthiga Jeevantham, UKM Student and CEO of AK Viewpoint Enterprise; and Dr Jakarin Srimoon, Dean of Internship School of Management, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC). Facilitated by SEAMEO RIHED, the session engaged in perspectives from diverse panellists on issues around student's career paths, discussing how higher education and students themselves can support the transition from education to work.
- 35 The session also showed the result of the survey that had been conducted targeting students participating in the 13<sup>th</sup> AIMS Annual Review Meeting to collect their views on career-related issues. According to the survey, some of the important aspects when it comes to a future career that had been commonly referred to by respondents were work-life balance and making social contributions through one's work. Besides, it was also shared that students tend to value obtaining practical experiences as much as acquiring educational qualifications such as grades and degrees, especially when transferrable skills are seen highly relevant in the today's changing society. The presentation appears as **Annex 22**.

#### **Closing**

- 36 Dr Chantavit Sujatanond, Centre Director, SEAMEO RIHED, provided the wrap-up remarks and summary of the entire meeting. She noted that the 13<sup>th</sup> AIMS Annual Review Meeting, held in the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Programme, was able to offer another important milestone for all stakeholders involved including governments, universities, students and alumni as well as to SEAMEO RIHED as the Programme Secretariat. The summary presentation appears as **Annex 23**.
- 37 The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Philippines, announced that the 14<sup>th</sup> AIMS Annual Review Meeting will be hosted by the Philippines in 2020.
- 38 The Meeting was adjourned at noon.