Korean National Commission for UNESCO co-hosts
2017 Training Workshop for Officials of National Commissions for UNESCO in Asia and the Pacific

20-23 June 2017, Bangkok, Thailand

The Korean National Commission for UNESCO co-hosted a Training Workshop for Officials of National Commissions for UNESCO in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand, from 20th to 23rd June, in cooperation with the UNESCO Bangkok Office and the Thai National Commission for UNESCO. The workshop was held to contribute to the effective functioning of National Commissions for UNESCO in Asia and the Pacific by helping their staff members better understand UNESCO’s structure and functions, and some of the current issues relevant to the Organization, while providing a forum for the exchange of ideas among participants.

Around 60 participants attended this workshop, including Mr. Kwangho Kim, the Secretary-General of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Gwang-Jo Kim, the Director of the UNESCO Bangkok Office, and Ms. Nongsilenee Mosika, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO. The speakers included two personnel from UNESCO Headquarters, Mr. Mohamed Djelid, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Strategic Planning and Mr. Stoyan Bantchev, Chief of the Participation Programme and Fellowships Section (ERI), as well as Dr. Lutz Möller, the Deputy Secretary-General of the German Commission for UNESCO. Representatives from the National Commissions of the following Member States took part: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cook Islands, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Samoa, Thailand, Tonga, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

The workshop took place over four days. The first day began with a lecture by Mr. Djelid on UNESCO’s structure and functions, and its current reform efforts. The Director of the UNESCO Bangkok Office and officials from each of the Bangkok Office’s divisions then led various sessions giving overviews of the status of implementation of the SDGs by Member States and UNESCO’s programme priorities for 2017.

On the second day of the workshop, representatives from UNESCO Headquarters and the German Commission shared their perspectives on cooperation between National Commissions and the UNESCO Secretariat. During discussions following these presentations participants agreed that there was a need for increased support for the National Commissions from the Secretariat and that it was necessary to strengthen exchanges and cooperation among National Commissions. The Bangkok
Office also gave its perspective on the subject through a presentation titled ‘The Way Forward: Cooperation with National Commissions Towards the Achievement of the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific’.

A number of informative presentations were also given on the second and third days of the workshop to help participants increase their practical skills and knowledge on various topics. These included presentations on the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the implementation of Global Citizenship Education, the use of UNESCO’s name and logo, and writing effective project proposals and reports. During the workshop’s final session, Mr. Bantchev, as Chief of the Participation Programme and Fellowships Section at UNESCO HQ, offered tips on writing applications for the Participation Programme, before giving participants time to work in small groups to draft and present a regional Participation Programme project proposal. Participants worked enthusiastically together on their proposals, which each received feedback from Mr. Bantchev.

On the final day of the workshop participants had an opportunity to visit Samsenwittayalai School, a UNESCO Associated School in Bangkok.

Dr. Möller commented that the workshop’s various sessions offered training on very hands-on issues that were relevant to the day-to-day work of National Commissions while also providing ideas and inspiration for colleagues on how they might possibly review and change the structure of their National Commissions, their modes of operation and their interaction with partners. Mr. Hilaire Sese, a participant from the Vanuatu National Commission for UNESCO, mentioned that the workshop had provided an avenue of exchange with the greater UNESCO family, through which officials at National Commissions could share experiences, difficulties faced within the scope of their respective mandates, and the successes of their respective National Commissions. Overall, participants said that the workshop had been very beneficial, helping both new staff and long-time officials of National Commissions to gain relevant new skills and knowledge.

Attachment: Photos and Summary Report of the Workshop

Photo 1: Training Workshop for Officials of National Commissions for UNESCO in Asia and the Pacific, held at the Bangkok Marriott Sukhumvit Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand in June 2017 ©UNESCO Bangkok Office

Photo 2: Group discussions on Participation Programme project proposals during the Training Workshop for Officials of National Commissions for UNESCO in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok, Thailand in June 2017 ©Korean National Commission for UNESCO

Photo 3: Session on Global Citizenship Education by Ms. Jihong Lee, Chief of the Training Cooperation Team at APCEIU, during the Training Workshop for Officials of National Commissions for UNESCO in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok, Thailand in June 2017 ©Korean National Commission for UNESCO