

The 9<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Regional Center of Expertise (AP RCE) Meeting was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2016, hosted by RCE Cha-am at the Sirindhorn International Environmental Park (SIEP) in Cha-am, Petchaburi Province, Thailand. Together with the International Conference on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (ICCBES) for Sustainable Development Goals: Policies and Practices on June 27-29 and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES) Capacity Building Workshop on Policy Support Tools on July 1-2, as its back-to-back events, the 9<sup>th</sup> AP RCE Meeting was rendered more significant as it was within the celebration of the 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle Birthday Anniversary of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

### **Opening Programme**

The meeting started off with an opening remark by Dr. Munirah Ghazali, overall meeting facilitator. Dr. Sonjai Havanond, the Director of SIEP welcomed the participants. Dr. Havanond briefly emphasized that SIEP, the lead stakeholder of RCE Cha-am, needs the cooperation of the RCEs to implement its programmes, especially those related to the implementation of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of His Majesty the King of Thailand.

Dr. Mario Tabucanon, speaking on behalf of the Global RCE Service Centre, reminded members of the RCE community's support to the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) expressed during the 9<sup>th</sup> Global RCE Conference in Okayama, Japan. GAP and SDGs were therefore the focal discussions of the meeting.

It was reported that the Global RCE community had grown to 146 members. With this, the network had to be strong and robust in its operation and in the conduct of its activities. This could be well-effected through self-assessment of RCEs. The output of the regional meeting was important since the outcome will be presented and followed up during the 10<sup>th</sup> Global RCE Conference in Yogyakarta. It was announced that Dr. Kiran Chhokar had been appointed as a new regional adviser of AP RCEs as of January 2016.

### **Introduction of Participants**

The newly acknowledged RCEs in the Asia-Pacific region that were represented at the meeting were duly recognized. Participants made their self-introduction.

## **Review of the 8<sup>th</sup> AP RCE Meeting**

Mr. Bernabe Mijares Jr of RCE Bohol presented the highlights of the 8<sup>th</sup> AP RCE Meeting, held in the University of the Philippines, Cebu Campus, Cebu City on March 6-7, 2015 and in Bohol Island State University, Tagbilaran City, Bohol on March 8, 2015. The highlights of the review included the discussion on the strategic roadmap for promoting ESD beyond 2014 with ways for making substantial contributions to the Global Action Program on ESD.

## **Progress of the Global RCE Network**

Ms. Kyoko Shiota of UNU-IAS reported on the progress of the Global RCE Network. The presentation mainly comprised two parts: (1) development of RCE Network and (2) overview of RCE-related activities, implemented since April 2015. The first part focused on the recognition of new RCEs in Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East and the Americas. The addition of these newly acknowledged networks rendered a total of 146 RCEs worldwide. Moreover, the projects submitted by the RCEs that were given awards of recognition were also highlighted. The second part of the report was a presentation of the events globally, both past and forthcoming, with data on dates of implementation, brief description of events and the initiating RCEs.

Ms. Shiota also discussed features of the Global RCE Portal, accessing Facebook for RCEs, RCE Bulletin and how to submit articles and RCE-related publications, specifically Policy Briefs which would entail co-authorship of experts from UNU-IAS, linking projects of RCEs with policies. She announced that one publication on health is underway and those who were interested were encouraged to submit their manuscripts.

## **Strategic Direction and Strategy: Roadmap for the RCE Community and the Progress on the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD**

The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) officially ended in December 2014. Thereafter the successor programme has been the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), hence, discussion on the strategic direction, strategies and roadmap for the RCEs should align with GAP on ESD implementation.

The overall goal of the GAP is to generate and scale-up action at all levels and in areas of education and learning to accelerate progress towards sustainable development. From this the GAP is achieved mainly by the objectives of re-orienting education and learning (that is, integrating ESD in the education agenda) and strengthening education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that

promote sustainable development. Simply put, the GAP is education-learning related which requires a whole institution approach.

There are five specific priority areas identified under the GAP, namely (1) advancing policy, (2) transforming learning and training environments, (3) building capacities of educators and trainers, (4) empowering and mobilizing youth, and (5) accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level. It was emphasized that it is in priority area 5 that the RCE network could specifically contribute to the GAP implementation.

ESD is essential in the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation. There are 17 goals with 169 targets and over a hundred indicators. An element of UNU-IAS' strategic vision relative to the SDGs is to bridge the gap between learning and sustainable development through research and actions that advance knowledge across geographic, knowledge and sectoral boundaries. There is a synergy between the UNU-IAS acknowledged network of higher education institutions called ProSPER.Net and RCE and that it should be recognized that the SDGs and targets are interlinked. The roadmap for RCEs involves three strategies, namely (1) strengthening governance to better coordinate ESD/SD learning and actions within the RCE community, (2) enhancing the capacity and development of local and regional stakeholders to contribute to both local and global sustainable development initiatives, and (3) strengthening the impact of actions related to SD/ESD by linking local and regional SD and ESD debates and processes with international platforms.

### **Updates on AP RCE Collaborative Activities**

Update on the collaborative activity between RCE Penang and RCE Tongyeong was reported by both Dr. Munirah and Ms. Won J. Byun. Ms. Byun interacted with the participants virtually since she could not be physically present, as she was attending to another joint project with RCE Greater Western Sydney.

A video presentation on the Sejahtera Project of RCE Tongyeong was aired. Therein, it was explained what Sejahtera Project is, how other RCEs participated and could continue to participate with it and how RCE personnel and researchers could avail of the facility. Dr. Munirah informed the body that personnel from RCE Penang will visit Sejahtera Center.

Ms. Byun further shared another undertaking for participants to possibly join. It was the International ESD Forum open to everyone who was interested but teachers were favorably encouraged to join since the themes would emphasize on schools. Ms. Byun expressed optimism that the conference will be a success.

RCE Okayama representatives informed the participants on the Okayama Award. While flyers were distributed for detailed information, it was emphasized that those joining were required to present the project. There was only one award but which could be given to up to two groups. The deadline of the application was on July 29, 2016.

Dr. Chhokar talked about the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace (MGIEP) and Sustainable Development. She announced that the institute invites participants to its peer to peer learning that focuses on digital learning. Accordingly, their projects were always linked with the curriculum. One that had already been done was about migration.

The Sirindhorn International Environmental Park (SIEP) for its part played a video presentation to inform participants of the nature of their existence and their activities, including those that foster collaboration. Finally, a representative from UNESCO Bangkok talked about their programs and expressed interest to know more about what RCEs do for possible networking. They were currently collecting in Asia-Pacific good practices on community-based action for publication and dissemination and would encourage collaboration on this undertaking.

Dr. Tabucanon pointed out that UNESCO ASPNet may be a good start to connect with schools which are closer in location to the individual RCEs. He further suggested that projects be developed around ESD so as to mobilize these schools to work with RCEs.

### **Introduction to Break-out Session**

The primary aim of the sessions was to come up with an action plan at the regional level. Actions and action points applicable to all RCEs within the region would be identified from the action plan template distributed beforehand to individual RCEs and from the discussion. They would then be linked to the priority areas and presented during the plenary for comments as a regional action plan using the existing template. The draft regional action plan would then be circulated to the individual RCEs for further comments and therefrom be put together in a format for the Asia-Pacific Regional RCE discussion at the 10<sup>th</sup> Global RCE Conference. The following were the groups for the break-out sessions: Higher Education; Schools and Youth; and Community.

## Evaluating ESD in RCEs: The Start-up Tools

The afternoon session of the conference took off with a discussion on evaluating ESD in the RCEs by Dr. Unnikrishnan Payyappallimana of UNU-IAS. In his presentation, he emphasized that the assessment is a self-reflection, that is, it is the RCE that is assessing itself, its collective identity.

Dr. Payyappallimana shared that the specific objectives of evaluating ESD in RCEs are (1) to collectively learn through an appreciative review of an RCE, (2) to improve transformative learning and sustainability and (3) to strengthen work of the RCEs as a networked community. There are six areas to be evaluated each with specific questions to be addressed. These areas are (1) RCE coordination and networking, (2) activities and their effects, (3) transformation and sustainability, (4) strategic areas and linkages, (5) Global Service Center and its role, and (6) value creation assessment.

After his presentation, Dr. Payyappallimana opened the floor for discussion by asking suggestions for the improvement of the instrument and for the manner of conducting the assessment. The following summary points of the interaction:

### Issues deliberated included the following:

- *The assessment model is an "Open Framework."*
- *Questions are not definitive. Participants can suggest questions that are not reflected. Are they the right questions? Can they be simplified?*
- *Does the evaluation require that old RCEs go back to the year of implementation for evaluation?*
- *What if there is a disparity of the reality of the past and the present? How is it reconciled?*
- *Is it a general agreement that assessment is required for RCEs?*
- *RCEs can do the evaluation beyond what is suggested. The RCEs are in the right position to determine their assessment.*
- *Learning experience is that people may have different perceptions about RCEs.*
- *The evaluation is not by stakeholders. It is by the whole RCE.*
- *There is no regular format for the conduct of self-evaluation.*
- *Old RCEs can go back and look afresh at what they have done since the beginning or go back at least 3 years.*

During the assessment session, the following RCEs expressed interest in conducting self-assessment:

1. Srinagar (Abdhesh Gangwar)
2. Northern Mindanao (Dexter Lo)
3. Bangalore (Santosh Sutar)
4. Kodagu (Santosh Sutar)
5. Bohol (Bernabe Mijares)
6. Iskandar (Wai Yoke Wong)
7. East Arunachal Pradesh (Bulia Pulu)
8. Delhi (Monmi)
9. Greater Phnom Penh (Nareth Nut)
10. Penang (Munirah Ghazali)
11. Borderlands Mexico-USA (RCE Candidate - Carolina Lopez)

After the discussion and interaction on the evaluation of RCEs, the meeting proceeded with the awarding of certificates of honor and appreciation to the plenary speakers, moderators and presenters. Then there was a video presentation of RCE Yogyakarta as initial information and partial acquaintance of the venue of the 10<sup>th</sup> Global RCE Conference.

### Reporting of the Break-out Session

Dr. Chhokar presided over the plenary that heard the presentation of output of the break-out sessions. The following reflect the groups with corresponding discussion and suggestions from the rest of the participants:

Group	Discussion	Questions/Suggestions
School and Youth	o Health education through school	➤ How do interested RCEs support the plan?
	o DRRM youth education for preventive action	➤ Compile the output as an open document until the end of July so any RCE can access them to be transformed into a document of the Global RCE Network.
	o Program may be more than 1 year	➤ Annual report is not enough. Pass the document in English

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ WASH or Health technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ and have it published.</li> <li>➤ Is there a plan for a database or a network center for the many IECs?</li> <li>➤ It can also be a description material. Any RCE may do the action plan</li> </ul>
--	---	--

Group	Discussion	Questions/Suggestions
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There was no further discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Coordinate with the first group with DRRM action plan.</li> </ul>

Group	Discussion	Questions/Suggestions
Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There was no further discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Steering committee will be created for the implementation of the offering of a curriculum.</li> </ul>

Each group produced a working draft of the Asia-Pacific regional action plan on their respective theme. These drafts would be further developed.

### Orientation of the Workshop for the following day

After the plenary discussion, Dr. Unni proceeded to orient the participants of the workshop which was to be conducted in the following day. He introduced Ms. Suneetha Subramanian of UNU-IAS, an expert on the values of ecosystems, as the overall facilitator, and Ms. Maria Fernanda as a co-facilitator and resource speaker on a GIZ project. In preparation for the workshop, Dr. Unni advised that participants reflect on the ecosystem services that their RCEs were doing.

## Closing Session

Dr. Sonjai Havanond of RCE Cha-am was pleased with the many joint project ideas expressed and the ideas that were conceptualized. He expounded that projects were not only for a specific RCE area but for the wider RCE community in Asia-Pacific for capacity building, learning and education. Further, he emphasized that the meeting and the preceding conference enhanced understanding, especially local knowledge, as well as the local people but qualified that scientific knowledge itself is difficult to understand and to be implemented in the local level. He concluded in saying that he hoped that the participants were happy and that he was willing to assist the participants in any of their needs.

Dr. Mario Tabucanon described the day as very productive. He said that they had accomplished a lot of what they aimed at. Then he highlighted the takeaways, those that the participants learn and should bring back to their respective stations. These were the following:

- ✓ Deepen understanding of the RCE movement;
- ✓ See the direction/pathway forward through the roadmap developed for the RCE community; It is the basis for developing the action plans;
- ✓ Follow through many things for the first round of the action plan;
- ✓ Put the draft action plan for circulation to all RCEs;
- ✓ Welcome suggestions to enhance the action plan;
- ✓ Refine plans before the 10<sup>th</sup> Global RCE Conference;
- ✓ Attach action plan of the individual RCEs to the regional action plan; and
- ✓ The assessment is very important. Take time to digest the issues.

Dr. Tabucanon thanked RCE Yogyakarta for the hosting of the upcoming 10<sup>th</sup> Global RCE Conference. He noted that finalization of the programme was underway. He also announced that the submission of proposal for the next AP RCE Meeting was already



opened. He reminded that the hosting of the meeting and conference was voluntary and that it was best that RCEs consult their stakeholders for the holding of the event.

Dr. Tabucanon also thanked RCE Cha-am for graciously hosting the meeting. He noted that it was the second time that it had hosted which he described as an excellent contribution to the community. Finally, he thanked all RCEs which attended, through their representatives, the 9<sup>th</sup> AP RCE Conference.

### **Group Photo**

The 9<sup>th</sup> AP RCE Conference in SIEP, Cha-am, Petchaburi, Thailand culminated with a group photo.

Prepared by:

**BERNABE M. MIJARES JR**

Director of RCE Bohol in BISU

Edited by:

**the Global RCE Service Centre**

## Annex 1: List of Participants

1. Last Name	2. First Name	3. Middle Name	4. Name of RCE
Senin	Muhamad	Khairul Anuar	RCE Central Semenanjung
Khalid	Norzula	ani	RCE Central Semenanjung
Nut	Nareth		RCE-Greater Phnom Penh
Chhokar	Kiran	Banga	RCE Regional Advisor (Asia-Pacific)
Imron	Muhammad Ali		RCE Yogyakarta
Astuti	Puji		RCE Yogyakarta
SUTAR	SANTOSH	RAGHUNATH	RCE Kodagu
PULU	BULIA		RCE East Arunachal Pradesh
GHAZALI	MUNIRAH		RCE Penang
Barua	Monmi	-	RCE Delhi
Hidayanto	Dwi	Nugroho	RCE East Kalimantan
Sakkhamduang	Jeeranuch		RCE Greater Phnom Penh
López C.	Carolina		RCE Central Semenanjung
Arisaka	Miki		RCE Hokkaido Central
GANGWAR	ABDHESH	KUMAR	RCE Srinagar
Lucero	Bertha Alicia	Rivas	Candidate RCE Borderlands México-USA
Campos	Ana Paulina	Pérez	Candidate RCE Borderlands México-USA
Pham	Hoa	Thi	RCE Southern Vietnam
WANDE GONGBA			RCE Greater Shangri-la
Mijares	Bernabe Jr	Milana	RCE-Bohol
pham	ngoc		RCE Southern Vietnam
KANAUJIA	AMITA		RCE Lucknow
Ahmad @ Shaari	Mohammad Zohir		RCE Penang
WONG	WAI YOKE	-	RCE Iskandar
Itano	Naotaka		RCE Okayama
Miyazaki	Shinya		RCE Okayama
Furusawa	Reita		RCE Chubu
Lo	Dexter		RCE Northern Mindanao
Zanoria	Huberto		RCE Cebu
Sathyarajan	Sachin		RCE Trivandrum
Martin	Betsan		RCE Waikato
Magtoon	Wichian		RCE Maha Sarakham
Gomontean	Bhuvadol		RCE Maha Sarakham
Boonpook	Chawalit		RCE Maha Sarakham

Udchachon	Mongkol		RCE Maha Sarakham
Sriwilai	Prathan		RCE Maha Sarakham
Molasy	Honest	Dody	(RCE Candidate)
Anwar	Anwar		(RCE Candidate)
Wei	Chen		RCE Hohhot
Miura	Ushio		UNESCO Bangkok
Dobias	Robert		USAID ADAPT Project, Bangkok
Suzuki	Wataru		IGES
Contreras del Valle	Maria	Fernanda	GIZ
Ledoze	Solena		UNDP
Koetz	Thomas		IPBES
Gassner	Anja		
Tabucanon	Mario		UNU-IAS
Payyappallimana	Unnikrishnan		UNU-IAS
Subramanian	Suneetha		UNU-IAS
Shiota	Kyoko		UNU-IAS
Suzuki	Ryoko		UNU-IAS