

PREFACE

The World Conference on Education for All - Meeting Basic Learning Needs was held at Jomtien, Thailand, from 5 to 9 March 1990. It was sponsored by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), served as an associate sponsor of the World Conference and lent active support to it in pursuance of Commission resolution 45/3 of 5 April 1989 on Regional support for International Literacy Year.

The World Conference unanimously adopted the *World Declaration on Education for All* and the *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs*. Those two documents represented a global consensus on an expanded vision of basic education and provided the basis for a renewed commitment in all countries to ensure that the basic learning needs of everyone – children, youth and adults – will be met effectively.

In following up the World Conference, the Commission, at its forty-sixth session, held at Bangkok in June 1990, emphasized the importance of taking an intersectoral and interdisciplinary approach to education for all to ensure that education would reach all sections of society and be relevant to the people's life and needs. It also recognized that regional cooperation and the exchange of experience were vital compliments to national efforts toward achieving education for all by the year 2000. With that view, the Commission adopted resolution 46/5 on Regional follow-up of the World Conference on Education for All - Meeting Basic Learning Needs.

In that resolution, the Commission endorsed the secretariat proposal to convene at Bangkok in 1990 a meeting of senior officials to formulate a regional programme of action in support of education for all in the ESCAP region; urged all members and associate members to contribute actively to the development of that regional programme of action through the participation of high-level policy makers in the meeting of senior officials; invited all concerned United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, as well as interested non-governmental or-

ganizations, to participate actively in the formulation of that programme of action; and requested the secretariat to undertake further follow-up activities on the basis of the regional programme of action formulated by the meeting of senior officials, as well as to report to the Commission at its forty-seventh session on the programme of action in support of education for all in the ESCAP region.

With a view to facilitating a coordinated inter-agency effort in implementation of resolution 46/5, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP convened an inter-agency consultation on a programme of action in support of education for all in the ESCAP region at ESCAP headquarters, Bangkok, in July 1990. Representatives of eight agencies in addition to ESCAP and the Asian Development Bank attended the consultation.

A preliminary version of the draft regional programme of action in support of education for all in the ESCAP region, prepared by the secretariat with the assistance of Mr. Victor M. Ordonez, a senior consultant, was reviewed at the inter-agency consultation, which also focused on three related topics concerning the meeting of senior officials: inter-agency coordination in preparation for the meeting; inter-agency coordination in convening the meeting; and inter-agency coordination in follow-up of the meeting.

On the basis of the views and suggestions expressed by various agencies at the inter-agency consultation, as well as their written comments, the draft programme of action in support of education for all in the ESCAP region was revised and finalized for presentation at the meeting of senior officials.

In pursuance of Commission resolution 46/5, the Meeting of Senior Officials on a Programme of Action in Support of Education for All in the ESCAP Region was held at ESCAP, Bangkok, from 29 to 31 October 1990. ESCAP organized the meeting with the co-operation of the UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. The Meeting was attended by 45 participants from 25 ESCAP members and associate member countries. Seven of the participating countries were represented by development planning and finance ministries, and the remaining 18 by education ministries. Nine United Nations bodies and specialized agencies including ESCAP and two inter-governmental organizations were also represented.