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SESSION TWO

**EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION:
OUTCOMES OF REGIONAL WORKSHOP, MARCH 2007**

This paper was prepared by the partner agencies involved in this workshop: SPBEA, UNESCO, UNICEF, PRIDE, PREL and the Forum Secretariat.

OUTCOMES DOCUMENT OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD AND CARE EDUCATION WORKSHOP, SOLOMON ISLANDS, 26-30 MARCH 2007

Purpose

This paper seeks the Ministers' support and endorsement of four recommendations emerging from the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) regional workshop that was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands from 26-30 March 2007.

Background

2. Increasingly, ECCE is being recognised as an important area for government intervention in the region. Forum Ministers for Education have in the past endorsed various recommendations on ECCE, including strengthening national policies, clarifying government roles and responsibilities, addressing resource requirements and developing national plans of action. Despite this, development in ECCE has been erratic in Pacific island countries.

ECCE Regional Workshop, Solomon Islands, 26-30 March 2007

3. 'Supporting learning from 0-8, creating the future' was the theme of the ECCE workshop held in the Solomon Islands from 26-30 March 2007. It was co-hosted by seven agencies and included: the Solomon Islands Government, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), PRIDE, PIFS, UNESCO and UNICEF and SPBEA. 42 participants representing government and NGOs engaging in ECCE from 14 Forum countries attended the workshop.

4. The workshop recognized that interventions for ECCE ought to begin at birth and would include preschool, kindergarten and the transition to classes 1 and 2. It acknowledged that all agencies dealing with the health, care, development and education of young children from birth to 8 year olds ought to work collaboratively to ensure that children are well prepared to enter the formal school system. Moreover, it acknowledged the importance of grounding ECCE in the children's own languages and cultures. Furthermore, the workshop noted that many Pacific countries were yet to develop their ECCE policy and did not have an adequate data management system to capture relevant ECCE data. The workshop also noted that national governments have been hesitant at committing to ECCE because of high budgetary implications.

5. The participants discussed at length the way forward for ECCE in Forum countries. They made the following recommendations.

Recommendations

6. Ministers of Education are invited to consider, endorse and implement the following recommendations by 2010:

- (a) That each Government work with appropriate stakeholders to develop its national policy for children aged 0-8 years.
- (b) That (i) a national advisory body is established to advise government on early childhood matters; and
(ii) A regional council is established to coordinate professional and community issues relating to early childhood in the Pacific.
- (c) That early childhood curriculum, teaching pedagogies, assessment strategies, resources and teacher education are grounded in local cultures and languages.
- (d) That data for 0-8 year olds in both licensed and unlicensed centres are included in the education management information system.