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Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies

Newsletter, February 2015



Changes in APO Governance

The Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (APO) is pleased to announce its new Board Chair, Dr. Suwit Wibulpoprasert, effective 1 January 2015. Dr. Wibulpoprasert, Vice Chair, International Health Policy Program Foundation (IHPPF) and Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Foundation (HITAF), was elected unopposed by the 7th APO Board Meeting held in New Delhi, India on 12-13 December 2014.

The APO Board also adopted the terms of reference for the Finance, Audit and Risk Subcommittee, and confirmed the appointment of WHO South East Asia Regional Office as its third Standing Member. The decision to create the Subcommittee was taken at the 6th APO Board Meeting in July 2014. The other two Standing Members are the Asian Development Bank (Chair, Eduardo Banzon) and the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office.

Furthermore, the Board adopted the terms of reference for the Strategic Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) emphasising the strategic nature of STAC and setting up biennium planning period. The STAC is chaired by Dr. Toomas Palu, World Bank. Its Standing Members are the APO Board Chair (ex-officio), ADB, the Philippines, Bangladesh, the 5 STAC review panel members (de facto), and the Research Hub Directors (ex-officio).

New Research Hub Network

The APO Board has appointed 4 reputed research institutions as its 3 Research Hubs for the period of 2015 to 2017. The new Research Hubs are:

- [Duke Kunshan University](#), Peoples Republic of China with Dr. Shenglan Tang as Director:
- [University of Tokyo](#), Japan, and [International Health Policy Program \(IHPP\)](#) with Dr. Kenji Shibuya as Director; and
- [Nossal Institute](#) at the University of Melbourne, Australia with Dr. Peter Annear as Director.

The APO's Research Hub Network plays a critical role in its research output. Members work with the APO to produce Health Systems in Transition reviews, Policy Briefs, Comparative Country studies, Policy Dialogue events and host its fellows. Reputed research institutions and individual researchers based in the Asia Pacific region are appointed to serve as Research Hubs for a period of 3 years.

APO at Prince Mahidol Conference

The APO sponsored a half-day side event on Learning from practice: HTA capacity development across Asia at the Prince Mahidol Award Conference on 26 January 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was organized by the Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Foundation (HITAF). Dr. Dale Huntington, Director, APO facilitated the meeting that brought together the 7 country case study authors and reviewed the first draft of working paper that will eventually be published as an APO Policy Brief and a Working Paper. Each case study analysed the development of Health Technology Assessment (HTA), identifying policies that were conducive to the development of national HTA capacity. The session was attended by approximately 75 participants.

In addition, The APO Secretariat organized meetings of the Strategic Technical Advisory Committee and the Finance, Audit and Risk Subcommittee as side events to the conference.

Latest Publications

In 2014, the APO released the following publications:



Health System in Transition (HiT) reviews for the following countries:

- Myanmar
- Lao PDR
- New Zealand

The HiT review is a systematic and comprehensive review of a country's health system. It assesses the health system's core components —organization and governance, financing, physical and human resources, service provision, and health reforms. [Read more](#)



Policy Briefs on:

- Strengthening vital statistics systems
- Purchasing arrangements with private sector to provide primary health care in underserved areas
- Dual practice by health workers in South and East Asia

The Policy Briefs are short reports that synthesize evidence and experience from different contexts in relation to particular policy challenges in a concise (maximum 25 pages) report backed up, if necessary, by a research paper. These Policy Briefs are tailored to provide policymakers with evidence-informed policy options to topics that confront policy in the region. [Read more](#)



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