



Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies

Newsletter, July 2015



The APO Board and STAC Meetings

The 8th Board Meeting of the APO was held on 25 – 26 June 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand to monitor the progress made on the implementation of the APO's annual work plan 2015 and to guide the strategic direction of the APO. The meeting reviewed the 2015 interim activity report, and the 2014 final and 2015 interim financial reports, including the status of 2015 membership dues from various members. The APO Board also deliberated on the criteria and methodology for assessing the hosting

arrangement of the APO Secretariat. The 6th APO Board Meeting in July 2014 had invited the Finance, Risk and Audit Subcommittee to present their criteria, methods and timeline for discussion. In addition, the APO Board discussed the succession planning for the APO Director. The current APO Director is scheduled for retirement in July 2016.

The APO Board Meeting was preceded by the first ever meeting of the APO's Strategic Technical Advisory Committee (STAC), which was held at the World Bank Bangkok office on 24 June. The STAC extensively discussed on the proposed 8 concept briefs of research proposals and recommended to the APO Board approval of 7 concept briefs pending revisions by principle investigators. It directed another concept brief to be resubmitted for review before being recommended for approval by the APO Board. The STAC also discussed the renewal of out-of-date Health System in Transition (HiT) reviews and plans for its next meeting, which will focus on a technical discussion of an area of the APO's work in 2015.



Update on the APO Fellows

Congratulations to Pham Ngoc Minh, PhD, who is completing the Developing Asia Health Policy Fellowship (2014-2015) on 31 July. Dr Minh is the first fellow to be awarded the post-doctoral fellowship, a joint collaborative program between the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia Pacific Research Center (APARC), Stanford University, and the APO. At Stanford, he conducted research on epidemiological trends and policy

perspectives of diabetes in Viet Nam, particularly those among adults in mountainous areas of the country. His research findings, together with the data on global burden of diseases, will be published as a working paper. We wish him success in all of his future endeavours.

We would also like to congratulate Dr. Darika Saingam, who has been awarded the Developing Asia Health Policy Fellowship for 2015-2016. Dr. Saingam, Researcher at the Epidemiology Unit of Prince Songkla University, Thailand, will start her term on 1 October 2015. She holds a PhD on Epidemiology from Prince of Songkla University, Thailand. She has significant research experience on risk behaviour and alcohol consumption among Thai students.

Dr. Vasoontara Yiengprugsawan was awarded the APO Fellowship to coordinate a Comparative Country Study on Health System Responses to the Burden of Non-Communicable Disease in Middle-Income Asian Countries with Rapidly Ageing Populations to be published in 2016. Under her guidance, a kick-off meeting with the lead authors from Thailand and Sri Lanka, along with faculty from Australian National University (ANU) and the Secretariat, was held to finalize the study protocol and plan for the implementation of the country studies. The team aims to present the preliminary findings of the Study at the International Association for Gerontology and Geriatrics Congress on 19-22 October 2015 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Dr Vasoontara started her Fellowship on 1 September 2014 and will conclude on 29 February 2016. She is based at the ANU's Research School of Population Health and received support from faculty at the University of Melbourne, Australia. [Read more.](#)



The APO Events

The APO co-organized launches of its products in 2015.

Myanmar HiT Launch. Myanmar launched its Health Systems in Transition (HiT) review on 5 March 2015 at an event hosted by the Ministry of Health in Nay Pyi Taw. The Myanmar HiT, an APO product, is a first such report on health sector to be produced in Myanmar. The Vice Minister of Health, Myanmar delivered special remarks at the event, which was attended by approximately 50 representatives of the health sector community, policy makers, implementers, researchers, and development partners.

Responding to Quality of Care Needs in the Asia Pacific Region. The APO in collaboration with the Department of Health, Philippines, Asian Development Bank, the Joint Learning Network, and ACCES Health International organized a series of events on Responding to Quality of Care Needs in the Asia Pacific Region on 5 June 2015. One of the sessions was dedicated to the launch of the APO's Policy Brief on Quality of Care. The event was attended by about 120 health sector professionals from the Philippines.

Thailand HiT Launch. Thailand launched its Health Systems in Transition (HiT) review on 25 June 2015 at an event hosted by the Ministry of Public Health. The Thailand HiT, an APO product, is a first such report on health sector to be produced in Thailand. H.E. Professor Rajata Rajatanavin, Minister of Public Health, Thailand, officiated the launch, which was attended by approximately 75 government officials, development partners, academics and the APO board members. At the launch, APO Board Chair Dr. Suwit Wibulpolprasert, who is Advisor to the Minister of Public Health, announced Thailand's decision to become a life member of the APO, the first APO member to do so. [Read more.](#)



New Brochure

The APO has prepared a [new brochure](#) to reflect the changes in its governance. The new brochure gives a brief overview of the APO and its work in the region. The tri-fold brochure, which has been uploaded to the [APO's website](#), is also available in printed version.



Latest Publications

In 2015, the APO released the following publications:

Health System in Transition (HiT) reviews for Thailand, Republic of Korea, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Solomon Islands. 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 Brief on Quality of Care. 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.](#)

Comparative Country Studies on Public Hospital Governance in Asia and the Pacific Vol.1 No.1 2015. The Comparative Country Studies are country case studies pulled together into edited volumes of papers. The APO supports original research on topics for which the published evidence base within the Asia Pacific region is under-developed. These comparative country studies originate through Study Working Groups, who draft generic protocols, conceptual frameworks that are used to guide individual country case studies. [Read more.](#)



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