

Dear colleagues and friends,

On behalf of the three bodies which have organized this experts meeting, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and the Netherlands Organisation for International Co-operation in Education and Research (Nuffic), I am pleased to welcome you to this experts meeting on cross border higher education for development.

Higher education is in the general global discourse on development, back where it belongs: without highly trained people social and economic development are unthinkable.

Cross Border Higher Education in its many manifestations, such as student mobility, staff mobility, offshore campuses, foreign providers or e-learning, can be a vital component of capacity building in developing countries, in terms both of quality and of quantity. New trends might offer more opportunities, but may also pose new risks. We shall explore how to deal with those opportunities and threats.

Aid and trade are no longer seen as contradictory, as hostile forces. On the contrary. Trade is seen, increasing, as a crucial factor for development. Although not always easy to find, there is a point where aid and trade are in balance, where they reinforce one another. Also in the provision or rather the importation of cross border education it is vital to find that balance point.

An increasing number of developing countries now has a higher education strategy document. Few have included cross border education as an integral part of that strategy, and a very few have a distinct strategy on cross border education dealing with such issues as relevance of curricula or scholarships, quality assurance, financial and fiscal implications, and the relation between private and public universities. We shall look at the strong elements for such a strategy and at the pitfalls to be avoided.

The foundations of this seminar lie in the publication by Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin, Rick Hopper and Massimo Geloso Grosso, which, in case it did not get to you in time, may be found in your folder.

The foundations are also the goal of this seminar: your best and worst experiences, your scientific knowledge, your fresh ideas and the exchange between us will be input for the final, thus enriched version of the book.

We hope that all of us will be able to contribute from our expertise. We hope that all of us will learn from each other. We hope that the proceedings of this seminar will, next to the Book, will offer new insights, policy recommendations and practical guidance, particularly for developing countries which wish to supplement their provision of tertiary education with elements brought in from across their borders.

I wish you all a very fruitful seminar.

I would now like to give the floor to our co-organizer Jamil Salmi of the World Bank.

Jos Walenkamp