11th Session of the Regional Committee on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific in conjunction with the expert seminar on the National Information Centers

Co-organized by UNESCO Bangkok, Korean Council for University Education (KCUE) and Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Korea

23-24 May 2012, Seoul, Republic of Korea

General Information

Background

The Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific was adopted in Bangkok in 1983. A total of twenty-one countries have ratified the regional convention to date. Since the adoption of this Convention, the Regional Committee has been meeting biennially to examine the periodic reports presented by Member States on the progress and difficulties in applying the Convention.

Today, with increasing student mobility and enrolment, the challenges of cross-border higher education in the region are even more pressing: education systems including quality assurance systems are different from country to country; information on the quality of higher education institutions or programmes is not easily accessible. In addition, the diversification of higher education institutions, programmes and modes of delivery have made the assessment of a qualification much more complicated. Thus, to enhance student mobility and the cross-border exchange of researchers and other higher education professionals in the Asia-Pacific region, further regional cooperation and sharing of relevant information are urgently needed.

At its 8th Session in Kunming, China on 2005, the Regional Committee decided to revise the 1983 Convention to respond to these and other emerging trends in higher education. A Working Group was established to revise the text, taking into account the comments and feedback received from Member States through on-line discussions and face-to-face meetings held in conjunction with the 9th Session of the Regional Committee Meeting in Seoul, Republic
of Korea (May 2007), in Bangkok, Thailand (April 2008) and the 10th Session of the Regional Committee Meeting in Manila, Philippines (May 2009).

Subsequently, the International Conference of States (ICS) was held in Tokyo, Japan on 25-26 November 2011, to examine and adopt the amendments to the 1983 Regional Convention. The Conference ended with the adoption of the revised text and the signing of the revised Convention by nine Member States. As a follow-up to ICS, UNESCO Bangkok is organizing a series of seminars and workshops to raise awareness of the Convention and to discuss the actions in pursuit of the enhancement of quality cross-border higher education through the Convention.

Considering the importance of information-sharing and networking, the government of the Republic of Korea and the Korean Council of University Education (KCUE) kindly agreed to host the 11th Session of the Regional Committee. It will be held in conjunction with an expert seminar on the establishment and networking of National Information Centers (NICs) in Member States and the development of the Qualification Recognition Network in the Asia-Pacific region. The Seminar will provide opportunities for information sharing on NICs and revitalization of existing networks, such as the Asia-Pacific Academic Recognition Network (APARNET). The 11th Session of the Regional Committee will be held on 23 May 2012, followed by the Seminar to be held on 24 May 2012.

Objectives

The main objectives of the 11th Session of the Regional Committee are as follows:

- To raise awareness of the revised Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition on Higher Education Qualifications;
- To facilitate dialogue among Member States on the progress and challenges encountered in the ratification and application of the Regional Convention;
- To agree upon a plan of follow-up actions related to the Regional Convention, e.g. maintaining the Working Group for drafting an ‘explanatory note’ and ‘subsidiary text’ etc.;
- To discuss the establishment of National Information Centers and the development of Qualification Recognition Network in Asia-Pacific region.
**Participants**

Participation in the meeting is by nomination of the Member States and by invitation of UNESCO Bangkok and the co-organizers of the Republic of Korea. Representatives from State Parties which have ratified the revised Convention and observers from non-state parties, NGOs, IGOs and experts from other Regional Conventions are expected to attend the meeting.

**Dates**: 23-24 May 2012

**Venue**: President Hotel, Seoul, Republic of Korea

**Language**: English will be the working language

**Tentative Program**

**1st day**: Regional Committee Meeting

- Election of Bureau (Chair, 2 Vice-chairs, Rapporteur)
- Report from the Secretariat
- Overview of the Revised Regional Convention (Working Group members)
- Country reports regarding the obstacles to signing and ratifying the revised Convention
- Discussion on follow-up actions

**2nd day**: Expert seminar on the establishment of the National Information Centers and the development of the Recognition Network in the Asia-Pacific region

- Necessity of establishment of National Information Centers and information sharing
- Inviting member states to join UNESCO Higher Education Portal
- Case of the Lisbon Convention (ENIC-NARIC) and its implications for the Asia-Pacific
- Networking of NICs in the Asia-Pacific region: Experience of APARNET
- Country cases regarding NICs : current situation and the way forward
- Panel discussion on the establishing and networking of NICs

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