12th Session of the Regional Committee on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific in conjunction with Regional Workshop on the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications

Co-organised by UNESCO Bangkok, the Australian Government’s Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education and the Korean Council of University Education (KCUE)

21-23 May 2013, Bangkok, Thailand

Concept Note

Background

An International Conference of States (ICS) was held in Tokyo, Japan on 25-26 November 2011, to examine and adopt the amendments to the 1983 Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education. The Conference ended with the adoption of the revised text and the signing of the revised Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (from here on cited as the AP Convention) by nine Member States.

Since the ICS, UNESCO Bangkok has been organising a series of regional seminars and workshops to raise awareness among Member States of the AP Convention and to discuss the ways in which the AP Convention can help ensure and enhance the quality of cross-border higher education. At the 11th Session of the Regional Committee, held in Seoul, Republic of Korea in 2012, the Regional Committee proposed the idea of preparing a Toolkit to help Member States ratify and implement the AP Convention. They also agreed to revitalise the existing Asia-Pacific Academic Recognition Network (APARNET) to facilitate information sharing among Member States.
Since then, UNESCO Bangkok has established a technical Working Group (WG) to prepare the Toolkit which will contain (i) explanatory notes on the revised Convention, (ii) criteria and procedure to assess foreign qualifications and (iii) an advocacy brief on the ratification of the AP Convention. To prepare the draft ‘Toolkit for the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications: A Reference for Asia-Pacific Practitioners’ the WG has held online discussions as well as a face-to-face meeting in Nanjing, China in October 2012. The final text of the AP Convention has also been officially distributed to Member States for ratification purpose.

The Korean Council of University Education (KCUE) and the Australian government (Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education) kindly agreed to co-organise the 12th Session of the Regional Committee. It will be held in conjunction with a Regional Workshop on the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, where the draft Toolkit and good policies and practices will be shared.

Objectives

The main objectives of the 12th Session of the Regional Committee are to:

- Raise awareness of the AP Convention among national officers and to assist Member States in moving forward toward ratification.
- Facilitate dialogue among Member States on the processes and challenges encountered in the ratification of the AP Convention.
- Promote the draft “Toolkit for the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications” prepared by the WG.
- Share good practices related to the recognition of foreign qualifications.

The main objectives of the Regional Workshop are to:

- Promote a common understanding of the key tools for recognition of foreign qualifications, i.e. regional/national qualification framework (RQF/NQF), National Information Centres (NIC), diploma supplements, etc.
- Facilitate better understanding of the basic principles of the recognition of foreign qualifications, in particular the concept ‘substantial differences’.

Participants

Participation in the meeting is by nomination of the Member States and by invitation of UNESCO Bangkok and the co-organisers – the KCUE and the Australian government. Representatives from State Parties which have ratified the 1983 Convention and observers from non-state parties, NGOs, IGOs and experts from other regional conventions are expected to attend the meeting.

Dates: 21-23 May 2013
**Venue:** Marriott Bangkok Hotel Sukhumvit

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

**Tentative Program**

**12th Session of the Regional Committee (Day 1)**

- Report from the 11th Session and election of Committee Members
- Overview of the AP Convention
- Presentation of country reports focused on progresses and challenges in ratifying and implementing the AP Convention
- Introduction to the draft Toolkit
- Discussion on necessary follow-up actions

**Regional Workshop on the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (Day 2 and 3)**

- Presentations of country cases and regional trends
- Panel discussion focusing on RQF/NQF, diploma supplements, etc.
- Workshop on the concept ‘substantial differences’

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