THE NEEDS FOR A REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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Regional Workshop on Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 5 Aug 2014
• Qualifications Framework (QF)

– A qualifications framework is an instrument for classifying qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning outcomes. (APEC Human Resources Development Working Group, June 2009)
• National QF – Benefits

– Considerable benefits are expected of NQFs.

➢ If backed by a good system of quality assurance, they can support the development of workers’ skills, facilitate educational and labour market mobility, and help improve the access of individuals to higher and different levels of education and training over their lives.
Education and training providers and authorities are able to design more consistent and linked qualifications when descriptors of qualifications are developed within NQFs.

Employers benefit in their recruitment and training of staff when they can understand and have confidence in qualifications.
The international recognition of an economy’s qualifications can be enhanced by the transparency of qualifications to which an NQF contribute.
Within Asia and the Pacific, the diversity of higher education systems create pressure to establish a region-wide qualifications framework.

A proposal for a voluntary regional framework (APEC Human Resources Development Working Group, June 2009)
All economies see benefits in linking their NQFs regionally and internationally.
The advantages that such links can bring are:

- the greater potential for international and regional recognitions of national qualifications,

- the facilitation of the mobility of labour and students (regionally), the liberalisation of trade in education and training, and the greater transparency of national qualifications systems.
CURRENT SITUATION

• In Asia and the Pacific
  ➢ Increasing emphasis on regional level collaborations and harmonization of reform initiatives.
  ➢ Countries acknowledged the significance and modality of building closer alignment of their higher education systems to some reference points.
But the higher education regionalization/harmonisation scenario in Asia and the Pacific is too complex.

Making harmonisation of higher education systems a big challenge (seems undoable).

In the final analysis however we need some framework in order to benefit from this highly diverse systems.
MALAYSIA’S PERSPECTIVE

- Malaysia participated in many expert groups working towards RQF, such as the ASEAN qualifications (reference) framework
Malaysia is committed to two project proposals under the Asean regional cooperation to improving quality education.

✓ Regional Interoperability of National Qualifications Framework
✓ Regional Credit Transfer System Harmonisation.
In the context of Asia and the Pacific, way forward is that we should be working towards a regional qualifications framework (as a reference framework too) and one which is voluntary (agreed way back in 2009 – [APEC Human Resources Development Working Group, June 2009])
as a common reference instrument, aims to facilitate the realisation of a quality education and training system at the Asia Pacific region level.

as a platform or medium to facilitate comparability and equivalence of qualifications across the education and training systems, and with other regional and international frameworks.
MALAYSIA’S PERSPECTIVE

• Developing confidence in the system
• In terms of functionality
• But may progress slowly in the absence of political will (political will/ political constitution makes it works in Europe and not elsewhere)
A voluntary reference framework: only a voluntary or enabling RQF would be acceptable, not one that will have binding force within an economy.
While we agree that there are benefits for a regional qualifications framework, the diverse systems and complex political realities in Asia and the Pacific make it imperative that we deal with the political will in the first instance.
THANK YOU