United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Council for Higher Education Accreditation
CHEA International Quality Group
Annual Meeting

29th of January 2015
Washington DC, United States

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

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Outline

- The context

- UNESCO's action as a standard-setter in higher education

- Current work towards a global normative instrument

- Next steps

The Context

Recognition – a global issue impacted by changes in higher education

- Globalization

- increased internationalization

- technology and its role in making higher education more accessible, affordable, available

- diversification of provision and providers

- demographic challenges

- the massification of higher education and the increased focus on quality, quality assurance and the need for robust frameworks

- mobility - of people, higher education programmes and institutions – both inter and intra-regional

- the move towards building regional higher education and research areas

the need for a global framework

UNESCO as a standard-setter in higher education

- Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in **Latin America and the Caribbean (1974)**

- Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab and European States Bordering on the **Mediterranean (1976)**

- Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the **Arab States (1978)**

- Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and others Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the **African States (1981)**

- Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the **Europe Region (1979)**

- Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in **Asia and the Pacific (1983)**

- **Recommendation** on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education (1993)

Modernization of the Conventions

A "new generation" of recognition conventions (the "revised" conventions):

- Europe (1997)

- Asia and the Pacific (2011)

- Africa (2014)

- Latin America and the Caribbean?

- Arab region?

Towards a global normative instrument

- International Conference of States, Tokyo (Nov 2011)

- Feasibility study (2012)

- International Experts' Meeting, Nanjing (Oct 2012)

- UNESCO Executive Board (April 2013)

- General Conference (Nov 2013)

- International Experts' Meeting, Paris (July 2014)

- The diversification of provision and providers
- The diversified and growing student population
- Demographic trends and the mobility that they will entail
- The emergence of new models of internationalization of higher education
- Changes in the paradigm of learning

Continuing Trends

- Focus on Employability

- Competition

- Rankings

- Quality assurance and qualifications frameworks

- The blurring divide between higher education and postsecondary vocational education and training

Aims:

- Raise awareness of recognition at the policy level
- Encourage inter-regional cooperation and mobility
- Raise the visibility in the public mind that the world is moving towards a far more global higher education community hence the need to build a more equitable and more transparent higher education sector worldwide
- Promote cooperation in recognition between regions and bilateral levels
- Provide a frame for sharing good practices in recognition

Basic principles:

- Equity and the importance that qualifications be assessed in the same way regardless of the country of origin of the qualifications

- Recognize higher education as a public good that should be accessible to all

- Adopt the principle of substantial difference

- Build trust; enhance graduate employability; reaffirm institutional autonomy

- Quality assurance as a major part of recognition processes

- Foster the establishment of networks of recognition experts

- Develop a global instrument that is not overly prescriptive

Key issues:

- Build on the regional recognition conventions and help revitalize/operationalize the less active ones

- Trust and transparency – critical factors of a global convention, as well as for the regional ones

- Need to do a comparative analysis of existing regional conventions and to have a clearer view of the recognition challenges in each region

- Focus on improving the current status of existing regional recognition conventions

- Flexibility (in education & in recognition principles)
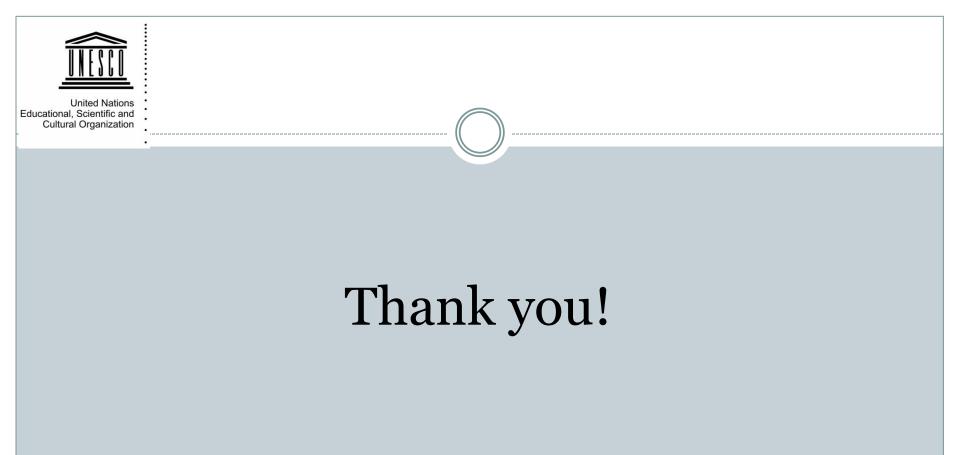
Implementation modalities – guiding principles

- Ensure proper participation and wide ownership
- Include flexible conditions that do not put barriers to implementation
- Monitor what works and what does not work in the regional conventions, and help build capacities to strengthen the regional recognition conventions
- Bring together regional players in Recognition to identify barriers to recognition and modalities to overcome them
- Identify the need for new recognition tools

Next steps

- Draft the preliminary report requested by the General Conference and consult broadly on the key aspects

- Develop the political dialogue around a possible global recognition convention

- Convene another experts' meeting to discuss the draft preliminary report for the 38th General Conference

- Support regional initiatives for modernization of regional conventions

Thank you!

UNESCO ED/PLS/HED

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/higher-education/