

The Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific

**Sixth Session of the Regional Committee
Bangkok, Thailand, 10 November 2000**



**UNESCO PRINCIPAL REGIONAL OFFICE
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
Bangkok**

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FINAL REPORT



**UNESCO PRINCIPAL REGIONAL OFFICE
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
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1. Introduction

The Sixth Session of the Regional Committee for the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific was held concurrently with the International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Standards, Mechanisms and Mutual Recognition in Bangkok, Thailand on 10 November 2000.

The session was organized by the UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with the Ministry of University Affairs, Thailand.

The main purpose of the meeting was as follows:

- Review of progress made to date in the ratification and implementation of the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific,
- Review of country reports on national policies and strategies for implementation of the Regional Convention for Mutual Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education,
- Consideration and adoption of new strategies and recommendations for promotion of the ratification and implementation of the regional convention,
- Cooperation with SEAMEO RIHED, ASAIHL, UMAP etc,
- Coordination with other regional committees and conventions, and
- Renewed efforts to enhance information exchange through updating Handbook of Diplomas, Degrees and other Certificates in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific, and the Directory of National Information Centres.

2. Official Opening and Greeting

The sixth session was opened by H.E. Mr. Suchon Charmpoonod, Minister of University Affairs, Thailand. In his congratulatory address, he commended UNESCO for having possessed such vision and the initiative as to have thought about the developments of the future world and brought about the adoption of Asia and the Pacific Regional Convention as early as 17 years back. He said that, throughout this period, the government of Thailand had supported UNESCO's initiative and assured that it would continue to do so with a hope that the new government after the election will take positive attitudes towards ratifying the convention.

Dr. Zhou Nanzhao, Director *a.i.*, UNESCO-PROAP, Bangkok, in his congratulatory notes welcomed all participants on behalf of Koichiro Matsuura, the Director General of UNESCO. He expressed gratitude to Dr. Hyun-Chong Lee, the Secretary General of the Korean Council for University Education, for being the Chairman of the Regional Committee, and thanked H.E. Mr. Suchon Charmpoonod, Minister for University Affairs, Thailand and his staff for their contribution to the preparation of the meeting. He stated that in a knowledge economy, success of investment in higher education is contingent upon the strengthening of cooperation at regional and worldwide level. He added that in cooperation with Member States and other inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, UNESCO has spearheaded the promotion of international academic mobility, including mutual recognition of qualifications in higher education to facilitate internationalisation of higher education.

Dr. Hyun Chong Lee, the chairman of the committee, in his greeting remark stressed on the need for universities of Asia and the Pacific to adapt their programmes to the evolving and changing demands of global society. Universities have long been associated as being focal points for the exchange of ideas of differing nature, he said and added that they have served as springboards for the emergence of invaluable avenues for the improvement of human welfare. He went on to elaborate on the steps needed to be taken to promote the co-operative relationship between the countries of the region, particularly in the exchange of information in the field of education, in making suitable strategies for learning mobility and in facilitating the exchange of both human and capital resources. He also outlined on the measures already taken to facilitate credit transfer and mutual recognition of courses.

Dr. Lee spoke of the establishment of link programmes with a view to increasing the interaction of scholars, administrators and government authorities. He also remarked on the importance of 'internationalization of academic curricula and the necessity to maintain quality in education.' He reiterated that member countries should, despite the

many linguistic, cultural and political barriers, take steps to use the modern technological tools in an effective way.

3. Election of Officers

The Sixth Session of the Regional Committee was attended by representatives from eleven States Parties to the Convention; Australia, China, DPR of Korea, Holy See, India, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Korea and Sri Lanka, observers from three non-states parties; Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, and observers from concerned organizations; ASAIHL, SEAMEO-RIHED and UMAP (list of participants attached).

The Regional Committee elected Ms. Margaret Pearce, Director, Quality and Recognition, Higher Education Division, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Australia, as Chairperson. This was followed by the election of Mr. Li Jun, Deputy Director-General, The Office of Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council (ADCSC), People's Republic of China, as first Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Chae Ryang Il, Director of Department of Higher Education, The Ministry of Education, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as second Vice-Chairman. Professor K. Tillekeratne, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka was elected as the Rapporteur.

4. Presentation of Country Reports

Australia

The Country Report presented by Ms. Margaret Pearce included the following main points.

Australia views the Regional convention and other similar arrangements elsewhere in the world as a very useful means to promote cooperation on academic recognition and mobility.

Australia possesses well-established mechanisms for implementing and promoting provisions of the Regional conventions. The National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) develops criteria and procedures for both in-country and foreign higher educational qualifications, disseminates information on education systems.

Australia has also developed bilateral relations for mutual recognition of higher educational qualifications with Germany, France, Italy, Malaysia and Thailand and initiated a number of projects such as the APEC Engineer project and the ASEAN projects, aimed at improved international arrangements for mutual and professional recognition.

Peoples' Republic of China

The Country Report presented by Prof. Xi Shitong included the following main points.

China has identified education sector as a priority for the 21st Century, because its development and reformation could transform the 'population burden' to a 'human resources asset'. The main strategies planned for the higher education sector are to increase in the allocation of funds, increase in admissions, strengthen discipline development and selective improvement of institutions.

China has entered into several bilateral agreements with fourteen countries and negotiations are underway with two other countries. Further, China encourages and supports its institutions to strengthen exchanges and collaborative programmes with foreign institutions. This year Academic Degree Committee of State Council (ADCSC) has authorized two organizations, namely the Service Centre of Study Abroad of China and National Development Centre of Degree and Postgraduate Education of China, to carry out recognition activities of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees of foreign countries and those of China.

As a matter of established policy, China endeavours to promote and enhance the quality and mobility in higher education.

Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea

The Country Report presented by Mr. Chae Ryang Il included the following main points.

There are two categories of higher education, namely the regular system of University education and the 'on the job' higher education that involves work in special colleges and factory based specialized schools. Whatever the category of higher education, all such education programmes require to comply with educational standards set by the State.

Screening Committees of Academic Degrees and Titles in the areas of Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Medical Science have been set up under the apex body of the State Committee of Academic Degrees and Titles.

DPR of Korea has entered into bilateral agreements with a number of countries regarding recognition of Diplomas and Degrees.

Holy See

The Country Report presented by Rev. Bro. P. Martin Komolmas included the following main points.

There are two types of academic centres at University level viz; Ecclesiastical Faculties and their Affiliated Institutes, and Catholic Universities for which the Holy See bears responsibility all over the world. Of these only the former type is affected by the Holy See's adherence to the UNESCO Regional Convention.

Holy See has developed its system of recognising degrees of academic institutions of other Parties to the Convention.

India

Due to the absence of the nominated representative of India, Dr. Anthony Stella, the participant of the International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education, who is the Deputy Adviser of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) of India, was invited to brief the situation in India on mutual recognition of higher education qualifications. The main points presented by Dr. Stella were as follows.

India, being one of the very large democratic countries, has the world's 2nd largest System of higher educational network with more than 11,000 institutions of higher education - 259 universities and nearly 10,750 colleges, 8 million students and 0.4 million teachers. Main players in the higher education system in the country are the governments - central and state, and the University Grants Commission. Central Government is responsible for major policy formulations relating to higher education in the country. It provides grants to UGC and establishes central universities. Though the State Governments are the major providers and responsible for establishing and maintaining State universities and colleges through constitutional provision, in recent years the federal government takes increasing interest in evolving national perspectives and standards. This meaningful partnership between the states and the center was facilitated in 1976 by amendment to the constitution making education as a

concurrent subject, meaning that both the federal and state governments have joint responsibility in promoting education. The coordination between them is facilitated through the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in which all the state ministers for education are members.

The awards and qualifications of different State Universities and Colleges are quite variable in many ways. Inter state migrations were limited because of these variations in the early decades of the post second world war era. Equivalence of the academic programs was established, whenever such necessity arose and mostly in the professional area, at the institutional level through statutory committees. After a while, the institutional arrangements were found inadequate and therefore a centralized mechanism was evolved through an Equivalence Centre located at the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) office, New Delhi. It was manned by a few experts, who, based on some database, would issue a certificate of equivalence. To serve the volume of demands that grew, after a decade or so, all the full member universities of AIU agreed formally to mutually recognize the awards of each other on a reciprocal basis. This agreement was based on the fact that AIU has stipulations and criteria for any university to become its full member, including a mandatory team visit to assess the institution for its eligibility. Some of the very close by countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan can become an associate member of AIU fulfilling their criteria and enjoy the automatic recognition of their awards.

During the past 2 decades, the government efforts have brought in a lot of uniformity in the structure of academic qualifications, which has facilitated mutual recognition of degrees within the country. Today, the existing State level Qualifications Framework followed in all the 30 States, including the union territories, are practically uniform and therefore could be readily configured into a National Quality Framework. Because of this uniformity in the qualifications framework, establishing the equivalence and extending the mutual recognition of the qualifications based on the number of years of study and curricular content between the States do not pose any problem. Academic and workforce mobility within the nation is well in place. However, no National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has been evolved. There are also regional disparities within the country in the quality and standards of qualifications awarded due to socio-cultural divergence.

While there is some reluctance to evolve and maintain the NQF, India is convinced in having suitable mechanism to promote the quality of qualifications awarded. Quality concern is well articulated in the National Policy on Education (1986) and consequently the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has been established in 1994 after a series of consultative discussions through out the country. In addition, there are about 30 speciality councils that ensure together the minimal threshold quality of the professional qualifications through appropriate recognition procedures. Some of the speciality councils have established their own accreditation bodies for their fields like

the National Board of Accreditation of All India Council for Technical Education and the Board of Accreditation of Indian Council for Agriculture Research. NAAC does the assessment and accreditation of the institution as a whole, while NBA like any other Professional Accrediting agencies elsewhere accredits the programs leading to specific qualifications. Thus 'quality' equivalence will, soon be in place through the national level quality assessment efforts.

Kazakhstan

The Country Report presented by Mr. Abdumutalip A Abzhapparov included the following main points.

The higher education system comprises the following levels: Baccalaureate, Magistracy, and Professional Higher education (PHE). There is another level of higher education equivalent to PHE in the engineering fields.

Legal base of Kazakh educational sector was adopted in 1999. Of the 27 Government decrees issued so far, 13 are on higher education.

Science and Education have been identified as the priorities for the 21st Century and internal cooperation in Higher Education is seen as the main thrust.

Kazakhstan, having ratified the Regional Convention on Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific, fully supports the implementation of the Article 3 of the Convention.

Procedure to recognize awards issued by foreign Institutes is carried out in accordance with the regulations framed by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Maldives

The Country Report presented by Dr. Mahamoodh Shougee included the following main points.

Earlier the Maldivians proceeded to India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka for higher studies. Later they started seeking higher educational opportunities in the Western World and South-East Asia and the Pacific.

It is very important for a country like Maldives to accept the covenants of the agreement in view of the diverse nature of the qualifications possessed by the expatriate personnel working there.

In 1999 seven Tertiary Level Institutes were merged to form the Institutes of Higher Education. Private Sector institutes also offer Diplomas in conjunction with foreign Universities.

Two professional councils, namely the Nurses Council and the Medical Council, and the Maldivian Accreditation Board (MAB) have been established this year.

MAB is expected to facilitate the preparation of a local qualification framework and an accreditation quality assurance mechanism to encourage the participation of the private sector in the provision of further education and higher education. The Maldives Qualification Framework (MQF) once developed would pave the way for credit transfer between Maldivian Institutes and other Institutes of higher learning in Asia and the Pacific thereby making student mobility possible.

Mongolia

The Country Report presented by Dr. R. Bat-Erdene included the following main points.

Reorganization of higher education in the public sector started in 1990. In the meantime a number of private institutions have appeared on the scene. Since 1998, the Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) have been classified into Universities and Colleges – whilst the Universities conduct research and postgraduate studies, the Colleges function as undergraduate teaching institutions. Since 1990s there has been a gradual democratization of structures in the higher education sector together with the introduction of legislation protecting academic freedom and promoting institutional autonomy.

Higher Education Law of 1995 empowers the institutions offering the programmes of study to confer academic degrees, viz; Bachelor, Master and Doctorate. This law also requires that teaching in all the HEIs be organized on the basis of credit hours and that a minimum number of credits be acquired depending on the programme of study. Relevant practical training is an essential component of the higher educational curriculum.

As required by Education law of 1995, a national body for accreditation of higher education was set up in 1998. It is mandatory for all the HEIs to go through the process of accreditation. During the initial phase most of the public sector HEIs and only a few private institutions participated in the process.

Nepal

The Country Report presented by Mr. Gunanidhi Nyanpane included the following main points.

The 9th five-year plan (1997 - 2002) currently in progress stipulates that education be used as a vehicle for achieving national development by developing human resources.

Ministry of Education is functioning as a nodal agency for effective implementation of the provisions of the Regional Convention. Whilst the Ministry may issue directions to the University to give effect to the provisions of the convention, Universities have begun to play a proactive role by initiating action to resolve accreditation issues with foreign agencies or universities on a reciprocal basis.

Republic of Korea

The Country Report presented by Dr. Hyun-Chong Lee included the following main points.

Korea has been actively pursuing international exchanges of youth, students and scholars in the fields of culture and education through intergovernmental agreements and international organisations with a view to promoting mutual understanding and inter-country cooperation, developing of Korean studies at overseas institutes and sharing of information and experiences in the area of scientific development.

Students with outstanding achievement are provided with government scholarships to pursue higher studies abroad. The Ministry of Education provides scholarships to foreign students for studying in Korea. The number and the scope of bilateral agreements entered into with countries in the region are on the increase.

Seoul Digital University which is due to be operational by 2001 will provide courses through the Internet in the areas of Law, Business, Finance and Insurance, e-Commerce, Communications, Multi-media and arts and General education.

The new International General Education Curriculum comprising an array of subjects including English, Mathematics, Basic Sciences, Psychology and World History is due to be launched in four Korean Universities. This will result in the internationalization of the curriculum and thereby facilitate transfer of credits between the four participating Korean Universities and the designated Universities in USA.

Sri Lanka

The Country Report presented by Prof. K. Tillekeratne included the following main points.

In Sri Lanka some of the quality assurance measures are already in place while others are yet under discussion. The target is to complete setting up a comprehensive quality assurance system by 2001. The system envisaged would enable national comparison of standards maintained by any Sri Lankan University with any other in-country or foreign University. It would also enhance student mobility.

Sri Lankan Universities have embarked upon modularizing course contents and adopting a bi-semester academic year with a view to establishing criteria for comparing courses in different universities and subsequently developing a National Common Credit Currently System for higher education.

In order to facilitate maintenance of quality and comparable standards in all Universities, it has been proposed to establish a hierarchy of discipline-based Inter-University Committees with Inter-University Discipline Committees at the first level, Inter-University Discipline Cluster Committees at the second level and the Inter-University Higher Curriculum Committee at the apex.

Presently accreditation bodies exist only in some professional fields. The proposed Quality Assurance Agency would be expected to look after the yet unattended parts of the system and develop an overall accreditation system for Sri Lanka.

5. Briefing by UNESCO-PROAP and other Concerned Agencies on Key Issues and Challenges

UNESCO-PROAP

Professor Wang Yibing, Specialist in Higher Education at UNESCO PROAP and Secretary to the Committee informed the meeting of the major activities conducted by UNESCO in the area of higher education since 1998, the instrumental role of UNESCO vis-a-vis the Regional Conventions on Mutual Recognition of Studies Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education, the PROAP strategies on implementation of the Regional Convention, and an update on the ratification of the Regional Convention.

a. Activities conducted by UNESCO - Higher Education Quality and Mobility

The World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) held in October 1998 at Paris, identified the 'higher education quality and mutual recognition' as the major issue. At the Regional Follow-up Committee for WCHE held in November 2000 at Kuala Lumpur requested UNESCO PROAP to consider to develop proper quality indicators in higher education as a major reference for policy makers of Member States in evolving their own national and institutional quality indicators in the future.

b. The instrumental role of UNESCO

The recommendations of the Seven Regional Conventions held so far have been implemented by UNESCO in order to promote mutual understanding of higher education and degree systems, university mobility and mutual recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees by Universities and Member States. Of the 33 countries from Asia and the Pacific that participated in the State Conference for adoption of the Regional Convention in December 1983, 18 countries have ratified the convention while five countries have signed but not yet ratified it.

c. PROAP strategies on implementation of Regional Convention

The UNESCO UNITWIN and UNESCO Chairs programme, which is the major programme in Higher Education in UNESCO, is designed to develop University networking process, including to promote mutual understanding through linking arrangements among higher education institutions covering a wide range of academic fields. Of the currently established UNITWIN Networks and UNESCO Chairs,

numbering about 400, almost a tenth are in Asia and the Pacific. Since building partnerships with various stakeholders is an important strategy in implementing the regional convention, PROAP has forged sound partnerships with regional organisations such as SEAMEO-RIHED, UMAP, AAOU, ASAIHL etc., by supporting their activities in improving the quality and mobility of higher education and mutual recognition of higher educational qualifications. Some of these activities have been implemented in 2000 and others are left for 2001.

d. Update on ratification of the Regional Convention

Some countries in the region, which had signed but not ratified the convention, have been stepping forward to ratifying the convention. Ratification of the convention by India quite recently is a noteworthy event. In the Philippines, the ratification proposal has gone through the Congress and is now awaiting passage through the Senate. It is hoped that the imminent ratification of the convention by Philippines will have an encouraging effect on its neighbouring countries, the ASEAN members in particular.

Prof. Wang highlighted the necessity to correct prevailing misunderstanding that, once ratified, the state party concerned will have to recognize all qualifications from the rest of the states-parties, which is not true. The real impact is that it will be placed in a better position to facilitate the recognition process.

ASAIHL

Dr. Ninnat Olanvoravuth, Secretary General of the Association of South-East Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL) stated that the primary focus of the Association has been the facilitation of academic exchanges between member universities whose number presently stands at 150. The annual academic exchanges which once stood at 30 has been reduced to 20 due to downturn of the economies of the region. He added that the objectives of the Association include fostering the development of the member universities, cultivation of a sense of regional identify and liaising with other regional organisations and international organisations such as UNESCO-PROAP which are concerned with education and research. The Association would be celebrating its 44th anniversary in December this year.

UMAP

Mr. Laurie Fisher, Project Manager, International Relations, Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC), tracing the history of the University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP), stated that it was created in 1993 with a view to promoting

University staff and student exchanges in Asia and the Pacific, presently has a membership of 28 Universities and the UMAP has facilitated 2,400 exchanges in 1999. He further said that in order to overcome the Credit Transfer Problem, the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Australia provided funds to start a pilot project entitled 'UMAP Credit Transfer System (UCTS)' and AVCC was appointed as a Project Manager enabling the launch of the project in 1999.

UCTS, though based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), is not student driven, nor is it centrally funded. A five-year trial of the Project began in July 1999. All UMAP members have been invited to participate, on voluntary basis, and all university fields of study are included in the trial.

Regarding the progress made by UCTS, Mr. Fisher expressed that it is most encouraging and to date national Workshops for Universities have been held in Australia, Thailand, Canada and Japan. Universities in Thailand, Australia and Japan are now using the UCTS as part of their student exchange programmes and the Thai Government has formally endorsed the scheme. UCTS is being closely studied by a number of other countries and their Universities as the future model for their exchange programmes.

As for the future, UCTS was seen as a concrete and practical way to achieve many of the aims of the UNESCO convention. The development work has been done and it is operational. What is now needed is promotion. A UCTS-UNESCO partnership could be a win-win situation. Happily, UMAP and the UCTS steering committee are keen to work with UNESCO to achieve this objective.

SEAMEO RIHED

Dr. Padoongchart Suwanawongse, Director, SEAMEO RIHED, described about his Centre, i.e. the Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (RIHED) which is one of the 15 Centres of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). RIHED has three main functions, i.e. training, research, and information dissemination. On training, an emphasis is placed on higher education management for administrators. Presently, there is a regular international programme with a duration of one year on "Higher Graduate Diploma in Higher Education Management", and there are regional workshops and seminars on specific themes in higher education management offered by RIHED in collaboration with its partners.

He emphasized the wish for continued collaboration between SEAMEO RIHED and other organizations and institutions having similar objectives in the Southeast Asian region, especially UNESCO PROAP.

6. Decisions and Recommendations

Following a wide ranging discussion, the committee unanimously adopted the following decisions and recommendations.

6.1 Taking cognizance of the remarkable impact the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific has had on higher education in the region and the effort made by UNESCO PROAP as its Secretariat in its implementation;

Appreciating the efforts of States Parties that have ratified the convention and committing themselves towards implementation of the covenants of the convention;

Appreciating the interest expressed by observer States to sign and ratify the Regional Convention;

Requests the Secretariat to publish this report and circulate it to all Members States and those which have not yet signed and ratified this regional convention in particular;

Requests UNESCO HQs to brief UNESCO regional Member States' delegates on the outcomes of the Sixth Session of the Regional Committee;

Requests UNESCO PROAP to work closely with Member States as well as SEAMEO-RIHED, ASAIHL, UMAP etc, to encourage the interest of non-signatory States to ratify and implement the regional convention and other regional organisation;

6.2 Considering the importance of quality assurance and transparency and confidence building in the quality of higher education institutions among countries of the region as bases for mutual recognition of qualifications;

Endorsing and appreciating the efforts of UNESCO PROAP in co-organising the 'International Seminar on Mutual Recognition of Qualifications in University Mobility', with NIER, Tokyo, Japan in January 2001;

Appreciating the proposal made by the Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) of Australia to host the next session of the Regional Committee for the Regional Convention in 2002 or 2003;

Urges UNESCO PROAP to work together with DETYA, Australia, to hold the above cited session.

6.3 Taking into account the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of Internet as a powerful tool for information exchange and the fact that information exchange is an absolute pre-condition in mutual recognition of qualifications;

Appreciating the efforts taken by some States Parties in establishing national information centres on higher education qualifications and quality assurance procedures in higher education;

Urges UNESCO PROAP to establish an electronic network of regional national information centres to facilitate exchange of information on education systems and qualification, based on UNESCO PROAP Website.

6.4 Appreciating the efforts made by SEAMEO RIHED in compiling the handbook on Diplomas, Degrees and other certificates in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific in co-operation with UNESCO PROAP, which has been published;

Request all states concerned to provide and update information to enable SEAMEO RIHED and UNESCO PROAP to revise the handbook.

6.5 Bearing in mind the complexity of mutual recognition of higher education qualifications in a vast and diversified region and the fact that several regional organizations have implemented programmes of particular relevance to qualification recognition in certain fields in this regard in the region such as UMAP and the APEC HRD Group;

Appreciating the effort made by UMAP in introducing UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme (UCTS) to facilitate student mobility in Asia and the Pacific;

Requests UNESCO PROAP to continue its effort in building sound partnership with regional stakeholders and to work in conjunction with UMAP in particular to ensure the success of the UCTS.

Annex I

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of the Chair, the Vice-Chair and the Rapporteur.
3. Approval of the agenda.
4. Review of progress made to date in the ratification and implementation of the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific
5. Review of country report on national policies and strategies for implementation of the Regional Convention for Mutual Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education
6. Consideration and adoption of new strategies and recommendations for promotion of the ratification and implementation of the regional convention, which may include
 - a. Co-ordination with other regional committees and conventions
 - b. Renewed efforts to enhance information exchange through updating Handbook of Diplomas and the Directory of National Information Centres

Annex II

SCHEDULE OF WORK

Friday, 10 November 2000

- 10:00 **Opening of the Meeting** (Chaired by Dr. Hyun-Chong Lee)
- Greeting Remark by Dr. Hyun-Chong Lee
 - Welcoming Remark by H.E. Mr. Suchon Charmpoonod, Minister for University Affairs, Thailand
 - Congratulatory Message by Dr. Zhou Nanzhao, Director a.i. of UNESCO PROAP
- 10:30 **Election of the Bureau Members**
(Chaired by Dr. Hyun-Chong Lee)
- 10:45 **Approval of Agenda**
(Chaired by Ms. Margaret Pearce)
- 11:00 **Review of Progress in the Ratification and Implementation of the Regional Convention**
(Reported by Dr. Wang Yibing)
- 11:20 **Presentation of Country Reports**
(Reported by a representative of each country)
- 11:20 - 11:35 Australia
- 11:35 - 11:50 China
- 11:50 - 12:05 DPR Korea
- 12:05 - 12:20 Holy See
- 12:20 - 12:35 India
- 12:35 Lunch
- 13:35 - 13:50 **Presentation of Country Reports (Continued)**
- Kazakhstan
- 13:50 - 14:05 Maldives
- 14:05 - 14:20 Mongolia
- 14:20 - 14:35 Nepal

14:35 - 14:50	Republic of Korea
14:50 - 15:05	Sri Lanka
15:05 - 15:15	Briefing by Concerned Agencies on Key Issues/Challenges UMAP
15:15 - 15:25	ASAIHL
15:25 - 15:35	SEAMEO RIHED
15:35 - 15:55	Break
15:55	Consideration and adoption of new strategies and recommendations for promotion of the ratification and implementation of the regional convention
17:00	Closing

Annex III

Congratulatory Notes

By

Dr. Zhou Nanzhao

Director a.i., UNESCO PROAP, Bangkok

H.E. Mr. Suchon Charmpoonod, Minister for University Affairs, Thailand,
Representatives from Member States,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of UNESCO Director-General, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, I take great pleasure in welcoming all of you to the 6th Session of the Regional Committee of the Regional Convention on Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific. In the first place, I would like to convey our sincere gratitude to Dr. Hyun-Chong Lee, Secretary-General of Korean Council for University Education, for having been presiding over and contributing to this committee as its chairperson for the past three years. Our thanks go also to H.E. Mr. Suchon Charmpoonod, Minister for University Affairs, Thailand, and his dedicated staff for their tremendous contribution to the preparation of the meeting, which have brought us together.

We may well recall that the regional convention was adopted at the International Conference of States held in Bangkok, 1983, and that the first session was held in Bangkok, 1990. All the important first steps regarding the regional convention were taken in this city, Bangkok. Again, the first meeting of the Committee in the 21st Century, is taking place in Bangkok, the 'City of Angel'. Therefore, I want to join distinguished Committee members in highly commending and thanking our Thai colleagues in the Ministry of University Affairs and higher education community for their pioneering efforts in promoting the regional convention.

At the dawn of the 21st Century, in which knowledge and information flows across national borders and knowledge becomes the key resource in the production of wealth over both labour and capital, higher education in this region is confronting major challenges. Countries of this region are trying to catch up or to be in the forefront in making huge amount of investment in higher education. However, no matter how much a country invests in its higher education system, there is no guarantee that the investment will produce successful results, if no endeavours are made to strengthen its regional and international linkages.

In view of increasing internationalization, co-operation at regional and worldwide level should be made as an integral part of the institutional missions of higher education

institutions and systems. In co-operation with Member States and other inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, UNESCO has endeavored to promote international academic mobility, including mutual recognition of qualifications in higher education, as a means to advance knowledge and knowledge-sharing/transferring. Continued support will be given to the inter-governmental committee in charge of the application of the regional convention on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education.

As institutions responsible for the generation, distribution and dissemination of knowledge, universities should be kept open and strive to strengthen exchange and co-operation in all aspects - input, process, and output - of their higher education system. This could be a mandate given to universities facing the 21st century's challenges.

In this regard, I am glad to inform you that the regional convention on recognition of qualifications in higher education was recently ratified by the Government of India. Some countries in this region, which have signed but not yet ratified the convention, are also moving toward joining the convention in near future. It is obvious that the above trend implies a favourable environment for mutual recognition. Meanwhile, it presents major policy issues for us to discuss at this session of the committee meeting.

I hope, and firmly believe, that with exchange of experiences and ideas, review of progress made, and examination of challenges ahead, this session will mark another important step forward in the history of higher education in the direction of internationalization and mutual recognition of qualifications in higher education in Asia and the Pacific.

I wish the meeting a great success.

Annex IV

Congratulatory Address

By

Mr. Suchon Charmpoonod
Minister of University Affairs, Thailand

Mr. Chairperson of the Regional Committee,
Distinguished Regional Committee Members and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be with you today at the Sixth Session of the Regional Committee for the Regional Convention on Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific.

Almost 17 years have passed since the first gathering in Bangkok was conducted to adopt the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention. Our Prime Minister, then Minister of Education, had expressed his support to UNESCO's initiative. I wish to note that Excellency Chuan has continued to follow the development with keen interest. I have a strong belief that our new government to be formed in the next few months will also hold the same position, realizing well how significant it is for higher education institutions to recognize one another's degrees.

May I commend UNESCO for its stunning vision to pursue this very crucial issue. Thinking of the fact that 17 years back, we would not have imagined how fast the world has developed with speedy paces of advances in science and technology. We did not even think much about the physical mobility of people within and across the region, let alone instant mobility through cyberspace. Today, we see more people living and working in another country and the trend is only on the increase. We have become very immersed in visiting the virtual world of education. The global village has indeed influenced the ways we think and act. It is thus essential for us to have some mechanisms to cope with challenges and facilitate the current and future movements for the betterment of higher education and heightened quality of our human resources.

I wish to note here that from the report I have given, the past two days of the International Conference on Quality Assurance being in sessions at the moment, has been able to draw the close attention of both overseas and Thai participants. Their interactions should be able to open up new opportunities for many agencies and institutions in the Asia-Pacific region to work collectively. The ASEAN University Network will have its special workshop tomorrow to discuss AUN-QA Alliance while other national and regional groupings should soon follow suit, all of which will contribute and correspond nicely to the serious intention and commitment of UNESCO.

May I congratulate Unesco for its untiring endeavors. I hope it keeps up its good work to be champion in thinking and leading for the best of quality of higher education in the region and beyond.

Thank you.

Annex V

Greeting Remark

By

Dr. Hyun-Chong Lee

Former President of the Regional Committee

H. E. Mr. Suchon Charmpoonod, Minister for University Affairs, Thailand;
Dr. Zhou Nanzhao, Director, UNESCO PROAP;
Representative of member countries, many concerned agencies in this region,
It is my pleasure to open the 6th Session of the Regional Committee for the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific.

According to John Naisbitt, the 21st Century will be "the age of Asian Renaissance". The modernization of Asia will forever reshape the world as we move toward the next millennium. At the same time as Asia is modernizing, the Asian conscience is rising. It is very much the Asianization of Asia. I am more and more convinced that this Asianization movement is the good sign of the organizational model for the twenty-first century – "a collection of networks between the west and the east through mutual educational recognitions and co-operation." The networking between the west and the east is a powerful phenomenon. One of the significant powerful phenomena is recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education activities, which are higher educational linkages among member countries in this region.

In contemporary society, universities have been the converging points for major revolutionary forces as well as the springboards for the emergence of viable ideas for improving human welfare. Furthermore, for the survival of human beings in this global village era, the university role cannot be limited to its national context but must be expanded to the international level. In these sense, in the ambiguous but irresistibly determining world of our time, a vital university must have the institutional dynamism to adapt its program to the rapidly changing demands of a society of global interdependence. These waves of globalization are adding to the educational changes regionally as well as globally, without any question. Within the notion of globalization, it is clear that fundamental shifts in international relations are emerging more than ever in educational fields within countries in Asia-Pacific region.

Since UNESCO regional convention consisting of 18 member countries in the Asia-Pacific region has successfully implemented a variety of co-operative activities: the exchange of information, the making strategies for learning mobility, and facilitating the exchange of human and capital resources. Furthermore, to promote the co-operative

relationship between countries of this region, many proposals and challenges were newly made by concerned agencies such as UMAP, ASAIHL, SEAMEO-RIHED, etc. Firstly, UMAP UCTS was introduced to facilitate credit transfer and mutual recognition of learning experience. Secondly, several Member States such as Australia, Korea, and Thailand established educational linkage for the exchange of students and faculty very actively.

As a chairman of UMAP and the president of regional committee, I would like to suggest 'Asia-Pacific community, as well as Asia-Pacific colleges without wall.' In particular, we have to build socio-cultural solidarity so called 'South-South, North-North, South-North and West-East co-operative line' in the age of learning mobility. How do we promote the mobile learning in our region, which are necessary to create by us?

First of all, we should not expect to seek a uniform socio-cultural monopoly among our member countries, we have to respect socio-cultural differences and similarities that each member countries has, and common parts of socio-cultural aspects but we have to find a uniform educational awareness to build the concept of cultural autonomy. Secondly, we should increase the emphasis on the gathering and interaction of scholars, administrators and government authorities from the member countries through joint activities to facilitate Asia-Pacific educational enterprise. Thirdly, we have to facilitate an Information Clearing house on higher education of member countries. Fourthly, we have to consider the internationalization of our curricula and maintain the quality assurances.

For all these reasons, the 2000 regional convention will certainly play the major role for promoting mutual co-operation and mind-sharing among Pacific Rim countries to bridge the educational gaps among our member countries. There will certainly be many obstacles to overcome: linguistic, cultural, political, and regulatory barriers; the need for innovative leadership; the financial assistance for the growth of telecommunications, educational networks and programme development, and organizational and managerial problems.

However, today's developing technologies prevent us from unparalleled tools for reaching those who wish to learn and providing them with a wide range of learning resources and opportunities. It is up to our representatives of our member countries to grasp these tools and learn to use them in the most effective way possibly in [the age of learning cafeteria].

Again, I would like to encourage all of you to join this ambitious 21st century educational enterprises.

Thank you very much.

Annex VI

Progress in Ratification and Implementation of the Regional Convention - Report of the Secretariat -

by

Dr. Wang Yibing

Programme Specialist on Higher Education, UNESCO PROAP

1. Higher Education Quality and Mobility - A Major Concern of UNESCO

The recent global debate for the issues of higher education, including the issue of higher education quality, was made in the World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE), October 1998, Paris, organized by UNESCO, which was gathered by more than 5,000 participants from 182 countries. The issue of higher education quality and mutual recognition was stated as a major issue in the World Declaration on Higher Education adopted at the WCHE. It points out that:

- 1) *Quality in higher education is a multidimensional concept, which includes all aspects of higher education such as Buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment*
- 2) *Internal self-evaluation and external review conducted by independent specialists, if possible with international expertise are vital for enhancing quality, recognized at international level.*
- 3) *Due attention should be paid to specific institutional, national and regional contexts in order to take into account diversity and to avoid uniformity.*
- 4) *Concerned stakeholders should be an integral part of the institutional evaluation process.*
- 5) *Quality also requires that higher education should be characterized by its international dimension: exchange of knowledge, interactive networking, mobility of teachers and students, and international research projects, while taking into account the national cultural values and circumstances.*
- 6) *Staff development, in particular through the promotion of appropriate programmes for academic staff development, including teaching/learning methodology and mobility between countries, between higher education institutions, and between higher education institutions and the world of work, as well as student mobility within and between countries.*
- 7) *New information technologies are important tools in this process, or into their impact and know how.*

The recently organized first session of the Regional Follow-up Committee for the World Conference in Higher Education in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia had a detailed discussion regarding quality issues and invited UNESCO PROAP to take further steps to develop proper quality indicators in higher education as a major reference for policy makers of Member States in developing their own national and institutional quality indicator in the future.

The declaration of WCHE points out further that:

UNESCO should further promote international academic mobility as a means to advance knowledge and knowledge-sharing in order to bring about and promote solidarity as a main element of the global knowledge society of tomorrow, including through strong support for the joint work plan (1999-2005) of the six intergovernmental committees in charge of the application of the regional conventions on the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas in higher education and through large-scale co-operative action involving, inter alia, the establishment of an education credit transfer scheme, with particular emphasis on South-South co-operation, the needs of the least developed countries and of the small states with few higher education institutions or none at all.

2. The instrumental role of UNESCO - The Regional Conventions on Mutual Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education.

In the area of higher education under the umbrella of UNESCO, the following seven regional conventions were launched and have been implemented by UNESCO in order to promote mutual understanding of higher education and degree systems, university mobility and mutual recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees between universities and Member States. The seven conventions are as follows:

- *The Latin America and the Caribbean convention on mutual recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education adopted in 1973,*
- *International Convention on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education in the Arab States and European States bordering on the Mediterranean in 1978,*
- *Convention on the recognition on studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education in the Arab States adopted in 1978,*
- *Regional Convention on the recognition of studies, certificates, diplomas and degrees and other academic qualifications in higher education in the African States adopted in 1981,*
- *The Regional Convention on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education in Asia and the Pacific adopted in 1983, and*
- *The Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European region adopted in Lisbon, 1997 to respond to new needs for the recognition of studies and qualifications in higher education in Europe, jointly with the Council of Europe.*

In Asia-Pacific region, 33 countries participated in the Conference of States for adoption of the Regional Convention from 12 to 16 December 1983. Among them, 18 countries ratified the regional convention, which are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Australia, China, DPR Korea, Holy See, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Korea, Russia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Turkmenistan. Countries such as Thailand, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Viet Nam and Philippines signed but not yet ratified the convention.

The Regional Committee for implementing the Convention, consisted of State Parties to the regional convention, meet at least once every two years in ordinary session. The 6th session of the committee is now being held at this hotel in Bangkok two years after its 5th session was held in Paris during the WCHE. Its main function is to promote the ratification and application of the convention. The committee receives and examines periodic reports from the State Parties on progress to date and difficulties met with in applying the convention, promote mutual understanding between different higher education and degree systems, and build partnership with all stakeholders aiming at university mobility and mutual recognition of qualifications.

3. PROAP Strategies on implementation of the Regional Convention

1) Promotion of recognition via UNESCO UNITWIN and UNESCO Chairs Programme

The UNESCO UNITWIN and UNESCO Chairs programme, which was launched in 1991 by the 26th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO, is the major programme of Higher Education in UNESCO. The objectives of the programme are as follows:

- To stimulate the transfer and sharing of experiences,
- To reinforce the twining between the higher education institutions for the advancement of knowledge and its application in development, and
- To promote mutual understanding, equitable sharing of knowledge & skills and mutual recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees to serve human sustainable development and culture of peace

The programme is designed to develop university networking and other linking arrangements among higher education institutions at the inter-regional, regional and sub-regional levels. The Programme is based on the spirit of academic solidarity, which is needed in order to set in motion a process leading to strong and durable links amongst higher education and scientific institutions worldwide. Special emphasis is laid on building up such links among the higher education institutions between south and north and south and south in particular. The current number of the UNITWIN Networks and UNESCO Chairs established reached around 400 with participating higher education

institutions from 90 countries. We have 40 Networks and Chairs in more than 20 countries in Asia and the Pacific region. They cover a wide range of academic fields ranging from the natural sciences to environmental and ecological issues, science and technology, social and human sciences, educational sciences, culture, communication, as well as peace, democracy and human rights.

2) Building Partnership with various stakeholders

Building partnership becomes an important strategy for PROAP in implementing the regional convention. PROAP has developed a sound partnership with various regional organizations such as SEMEO-RIHED, UMAP, AAOU, ASAIHL, AUAP, and so on through co-sponsoring and co-organizing various joint activities in improving quality and mobility of higher education and mutual recognition of higher education qualifications.

3) Recent actions taken and to be taken for the international quality assurance issue with involvement of or financial support from UNESCO PROAP

The following meetings were organized to raise and discuss the issue of the quality assurance in Asia-Pacific region by the initiative of UNESCO PROAP with one of its objectives to promote mutual understanding of different higher education and degree systems and mutual recognition of qualification in higher education, which include the following:

- National Workshop on Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 4 – 7 April 2000, Dalat University, Viet Nam;
- First Session of the Regional FU Committee to World Conference on Higher Education, 2 – 3 November 2000, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and
- International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 8 – 10 November, Bangkok, Thailand, which is co-organized by MUA, Thailand, SEAMEO-RIHED and UNESCO PROAP in collaboration with the various organizations such as UMAP, ASAIHL, AUAP, the British Council, AVCC, etc. One of the conference's purposes is to promote the mutual recognition of higher education qualifications.

The following activities will be organized in this regard:

- The International Conference on Learning and Teaching On-Line - Practices, Challenges and Prospects, 10 – 12 January 2001, Guangzhou, China. Quality issue on learning and teaching on-line is one of the topics included for discussion.
- The International Seminar on Mutual Recognition of Qualifications in University Mobility, 29 January – 10 February 2001, NIER, Tokyo, Japan.
- Updating Handbook on HE Qualifications in Asia and the Pacific, which was published first in 1998 in collaboration with SEAMEO RIHED.

In addition, a number of new UNESCO UNITWIN and UNESCO Chairs have recently been and will be created, such as:

- UNESCO Chair on Higher Education Research, Peking University, China, initiated by HQs;
- UNESCO Chair on Women and Leadership in Higher Education, UKM, Malaysia;
- UNESCO UNITWIN Network on Higher Education Research and Training at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand;
- UNESCO UNITWIN NETWORK for Advancement of Education via IT between University of Macau, Hong Kong Institute of Education and South China Normal University, Guangzhou; and
- Some new Chairs possibly being created in Central Asia and Cambodia.

4. Major Progress in Ratification of the Regional Convention

For the past 2 years, since the Fifth Session of the Regional Committee for the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific was held during the World Conference on Higher Education in Paris, October 1998, significant progresses were made in ratification of the regional convention. UNESCO PROAP has observed that some countries in this region, which have signed but not yet ratified the convention, have been stepping forward to the ratification of the regional convention.

Among them, it must be the best news that India has recently ratified the regional convention on 2 August 2000, which entered into force with respect to India on 2 September 2000, one month after the deposit of this instrument of ratification according to the terms of Article 18 of the convention.

The Philippines has been stepping forward to the ratification of the regional convention. The ratification proposal has gone through the Congress and was now submitted to the Philippine Senate for its consideration in October 1999. The Philippine ratification of the regional convention, as I hope, would be an encouraging sign for its neighbouring countries in particular ASEAN Member States to move in the same direction since ASEAN claimed and declared to be a free-trade zone by 2003, which will mean a freer flow of manpower and mutual recognition of qualifications will be a practical issue to be dealt with by governments of its Member States.

5. Conclusion

In the globalized and networked world, no single higher education institution can survive within its boundary, without the co-operation with other institutions nationally, regionally, and internationally. Therefore, the quality assurance in general and the mutual recognition cannot be dissociated from the quest for international co-operation, in which UNESCO plays a vital and instrumental role.

Annex VII

Country Reports

AUSTRALIA

Ms. Margaret Pearce

Objectives and Potential Benefits of the Regional Convention

Australia accepted the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific in 1985. Australia is also a party to the 1979 Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees Concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the European Region, and recently signed and will shortly ratify the Lisbon Recognition Convention. For Australia, these Conventions and their associated form represent very useful means to promote cooperation on academic recognition and mobility.

Obligations

By signing and ratifying the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention, each party signals commitment, within the framework of its own legislative and constitutional arrangement, to:

- promote recognition of higher education qualifications,
- maintain fair and open assessment procedures, and
- exchange information and collaborate with UNESCO on matters concerning mobility and recognition.

Parties to the Convention also undertake three basic obligations:

- to transmit the text of the Convention to the institutions and authorities concerned and to encourage them to apply the principles of the Convention – especially where decisions relating to admission to educational institutions and to credit for partial studies or entry to professional practice are outside the control of the State (Article 6),
- to maintain a national information centre, enabling the collection, processing and filing of all information relating to studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education (Article 9.1), and
- to cooperate with all Contracting States in the collection of information on systems of post-secondary education, programs and qualifications (Article 9.2).

The implementation of the Convention by Australia

Australia has well-established mechanisms for implementing and promoting the Convention's obligations. A key role is played by the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR), set up in 1989 within the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, to facilitate the development of a national framework to ensure appropriate recognition of overseas qualifications in equitable, open and transparent processes.

NOOSR's functions include:

- promotion of transparent and equitable procedures and criteria for the assessment of qualifications, for both academic and professional purposes, in line with the Convention's obligations. This includes the development of protocols and codes of good practice for the assessment and recognition of higher education qualifications,
- providing assessments of overseas educational qualifications which establish the educational level of those qualifications in Australian terms,
- collecting, developing and disseminating information on education systems, Australian and overseas, in conjunction with other national information centres,
- providing information, advice and assistance in relation to the recognition of overseas qualifications and skills to individuals and organizations.

NOOSR produces information about the Australian education system, including the *Country Education Profile - Australia*, and has established a web site with information about the Australian education system and links to (i) State and Territory education systems and (ii) Australian universities' web sites.

NOOSR also publishes:

- *Country Education Profiles* (CEPs) which describe the education systems of over 90 countries and provide a guide to the assessment of their qualifications for general employment purposes, and
- *Guiding Principles for the Assessment and Recognition of Overseas Educational Qualifications*, which assist competent authorities in their assessments. Australia is one of the few countries to have published such extensive assessment guidelines and to have facilitated public access to information on overseas qualifications evaluation criteria and procedures.

These activities, which represent a significant contribution to the advancement of the objectives set out by the Convention, demonstrate what can be achieved to address academic recognition issues within the framework provided by the Convention.

Bilateral academic recognition arrangements

Another part of Australia's strategy to improve international arrangements for the recognition of qualifications is the development of bilateral relations for the mutual recognition of higher education qualifications and, in some cases, the possibility of mutual recognition of vocational and professional qualifications.

In recent years, Australia has signed five bilateral memoranda of understanding on mutual recognition of qualifications with Germany, France, Italy, Malaysia and Thailand. The agreements with Malaysia, Italy and Germany include recommendations to awarding institutions regarding an appropriate level of recognition of qualifications. The MOUs signed with France and Thailand provide for work towards a broad framework for cooperation on the mutual recognition of educational awards issued by institutions from both countries.

Improved Professional Recognition Arrangements in the Region

Australia has been also engaged in recent years in projects aimed at improved international arrangements for mutual professional recognition. Apart from tangible outcomes such as identifying barriers to recognition of qualifications and the signing of some MOUs, these initiatives also provided opportunities for the exchange of views on criteria and procedures for the recognition of higher education qualifications. These initiatives, while on the one hand facilitating trade in professional services by reducing barriers to the recognition of qualifications, are also valuable in establishing synergies with the internationalisation of education systems.

The APEC Engineer project - The most significant project in the area of improved regional arrangements for professional recognition is the APEC Engineer project - an initiative of NOOSR and the Institution of Engineers, Australia (IEAust), developed under the auspices of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Human Resources Development Working Group (HRDWG). Participation included professional, regulatory and licensing bodies, and government officials, from the following APEC economies: Australia, Canada, China, Hong Kong China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the United States.

This project developed a mechanism to facilitate mobility for professional engineers in the region by reducing barriers to the recognition of engineering qualifications. The APEC Engineer is founded on two frameworks: the Substantial Equivalence Framework and the Mutual Exemption Framework. The Substantial Equivalence Framework sets the criteria against which applicants are assessed for status as an APEC Engineer. The Substantial Equivalence criteria are:

- Completion of an accredited or recognised engineering program,
- Eligibility for independent practice within home jurisdiction,
- Completion of a minimum of seven years practical experience since graduation,
- Completion of at least two years in responsible charge of significant engineering work, and
- Continuing professional development at a satisfactory level.

Candidates assessed as meeting these criteria will be identified on APEC Engineer Registers maintained by their home economy and available to regulatory and licensing authorities in other economies via the Internet. For engineers on the Registers, the Mutual Exemption Framework provides for partial or total exemption from registration or licensing requirements in another participating economy.

At the time of this report, seven member economies have been authorised to operate APEC Engineer Registers: Australia, Canada, Hong Kong China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and New Zealand. It is expected that Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, the United States and Viet Nam will be authorised to operate APEC Engineer Registers in the next year.

ASEAN projects - In recent years NOOSR encouraged Australian professional bodies in six occupations (accounting, architecture, engineering, law, nursing and surveying) to develop a better understanding of the structure, organization and regulatory arrangements of their counterparts in the region, with a particular focus on ASEAN countries. This activity was useful as it documented current recognition practices in the region and identified barriers to mutual recognition of qualifications as well as opportunities for possible agreements.

This is an update of NOOSR contribution to the *World Directory of National Information Centres for Academic Recognition and Mobility*:

Title: National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR)

Type of institution: Federal authority for assessment of comparability of general higher education and technical level qualifications. NOOSR assessments are opinions on the relative standing of a qualification - they are not binding on higher education institutions, professional or regulatory bodies or any other party. NOOSR is also a national information centre.

Mailing address: National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, GPO Box 1407, CANBERRA, ACT 2601, AUSTRALIA

Telephone: +61 2 6240 7628

Telefax: +61 2 6240 7636

Email: noosr@detya.gov.au

WWW: <http://www.detya.gov.au/noosr>

Administration: The National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) is part of the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) and is currently supported by advisory panels, which provide expert advice.

Director: Mr Giancarlo Savaris

Library, documentation, computer: Library is fully computerized and contains approximately 15,000 books and background papers and 90 journal titles. NOOSR operates an extensive local area network of personal computers.

Office hours: 8h30-16h51

Open to Callers: NOOSR does not have a shop front, contact with NOOSR is by telephone, fax and email.

Functions:

- promotes transparent and equitable procedures and criteria for the assessment of qualifications;
- provides assessments of overseas educational qualifications to establish their level in Australian terms;
- collects, develops and disseminates information on education systems, Australian and overseas, in conjunction with other national information centres;
- provides information, advice and assistance in relation to the recognition of overseas qualifications and skills to individuals and organizations;
- provides policy advice on overseas skills recognition issues to the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, government agencies, employer organizations, professional bodies, ethnic and community organizations and individuals; and
- promotes international arrangements for skills recognition.

CHINA

Prof. Xi Shitong

1. System and Structure of Higher Education

a) System and Structure.

Elementary education includes preschool education, primary school education and general middle school education. It generally takes five or six years for the primary school education. The general middle school education is divided into two three-year stages: elementary middle school and high middle school. The primary school and elementary middle school educations are compulsory education. The total study period for them is nine years. Middle professional education includes professional high middle schools, middle speciality schools and middle normal schools. The study period in these schools are from two to four years. There are three categories in the higher education, they are general higher education, higher education for adults and higher professional education.

General Higher Education

Institutions in China include universities and full-time institutes for various special field studies. The general institutions include comprehensive universities, universities and institutes for special field studies, colleges or higher professional schools. Graduates of high middle schools and students qualified to the graduates can be admitted to obtain speciality education at these institutions.

The study periods at different education levels are different: it generally takes four years for undergraduate education, it may takes five years or longer for some disciplines. It takes two or three years for studies at colleges and high professional schools. Postgraduate study includes two stages, for master and doctor degrees respectively. It takes two and a half years for a master degree, and three or four years for a doctor degree.

Higher Education for Adults

With guarantee of degree education standards higher education for adults in China train students according to the formal teaching programs. After fulfill the designed teaching program the students can follow relevant procedures to apply for Bachelor degrees. The education organizations include broadcast and television universities, institutions for

workers, institutions for peasants, and etc. There are two standards, degree study standard and non-degree study standard. The degree study includes undergraduate study and special field study. The non-degree study includes professional training, study for a speciality certificate, study for a professional qualification certificate and continuous study after university or college graduation.

Relevant Laws, Regulations and Important Documents

- National Degree Regulations of PRC, 1980
- Temporary Executive Methods of National Degree Regulations of PRC, 1981
- Compulsory Education Law of PRC, 1986
- Temporary Regulations of General Higher Learning Institution Establishment, 1986
- Temporary Regulations of Examination for Study by Oneself in Higher Education, 1988
- Outlines of Education Reformation and Development of China, 1993
- Law of Teachers of PRC, 1993
- Law of Education of PRC, 1995
- Regulations of Teacher's Qualification, 1995
- Law of Professional Education of PRC, 1996
- Regulations of Education by Social Resources, 1997
- Law of Higher Education of PRC, 1998
- Action Plan of Education Promotion towards the 21st Century, 1999
- It is our working target to persevere to put into practice these laws, regulations and important documents.

b) Reformation of Higher Education in China.

Significant changes of higher education have taken place in China since nineties, in the period of the 9th Five-year Plan in particular.

The reformation of higher education includes five aspects: education operation system, management system, investment system, admission, fee and employment system and internal management system of institutions. The overall aim is to streamline relations between government, society and institutions, form and perfect a new system of state planning, macro-management and institution self-operation facing society according to laws and regulations.

In aspect of education operation system, the traditional model that the State takes all responsibilities to higher education was changed. A new system is under development.

In the system the State takes the main responsibility while whole society and individuals play active roles in education operation. The State encourages and supports development of institutions operated by individuals or communities.

In aspect of management system reformation, relations between institutions, government and society are gradually streamlined through ways of co-sponsor, adjustment, cooperation and merger. Education is operated at central and provincial government levels. They share responsibilities in which the provincial governments take the main coordinate managing responsibility. As the result system separation by vertical and horizontal administration, duplication of education operation, were gradually changed. At the same time the governments simplifies administration and allow institutions to have more power to operate by themselves facing society according to laws and regulations. In order that higher education can meet requirements of modern science and technology development, train high-qualified personnel with innovation ability, optimize education resources and enhance the operation efficiency Chinese government accelerates reformation of higher education management system in recent years.

- Up to now most institutions from more than 400 institutions have been shifted to be co-sponsored by central and local governments in which the local government takes the main. All of these were managed by the State ministries and commissions before;
- A number of institutions have been shifted to be administrated by the Education Ministry. They should be sponsored by the State, but used to be administrated by industrial ministries before;
- 612 institutions have been merged to 250 in the whole country;
- A number of institution groups have been formed through ways of various types of collaboration and exchanges. These institutions share resources, supplement each other by each superiorities, combine different disciplines and raise standards of all together. 227 such actual groups of collaborations have been formed among 317 institutions; and
- Collaborations in education operation among institutions, enterprises and research institutes by sharing benefits have raised teaching and research standards of institutions, promoted commercialization of research achievements. Such collaborations exist among 241 institutions and more than 5,000 enterprises and research institutes. Therefore tight combinations were formed among industries, institutions and research institutes.

In aspect of investment system reformation for higher education, the old system relying solely on government funding has been gradually reformed. A new system has been

established. In the system government funding takes the main while a part of running cost is collected through multi-channels.

In aspect of reformation of admission, fee and employment system, at the base that all citizens have equal education opportunities, a new system of fee has been established. Based on local economy a certain amount of tuition fee for higher education is paid by students or their families. At same time studentships for students with moral characters and study excellences, subsidizes, student loans and part-time job foundations and fee exemption for students from poor families are put into operation. After graduation most students select their jobs by themselves under guidance of State plan. In addition the Education Ministry now carries a reformation on examination system for institution admission. The trends will be much more helpful for that the institutions can admit qualified students and have more powers to operate by themselves, the middle schools can make more efforts to carry out moral character education. All of these will lay a good foundation for training personnel with innovation ability.

Degree and Postgraduate Education

The 13th meeting of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of PRC discussed and approved National Degree Regulations of PRC in 1980. Following that, the State Council approved Temporary Executive Methods of National Degree Regulations of PRC in 1981. Academic standards for Bachelor, Master and Doctor degrees are specified. Therefore, a degree system of the new China has been established.

In the recent twenty years achievements have been made in degree and postgraduate education in China. These achievements are well known by the world.

- A large number of Bachelors, Masters and Doctors are trained independently in China that provides development of Chinese modernization with qualified high-level personnel;
- A degree awarding system was basically established. In the system the discipline categories are fairly complete and the degree quality can basically be guaranteed;
- A number of training bases for special personnel of high level were established. They are both teaching centers and research centers.; and
- International exchanges and collaborations are widely conducted.

At present, the enrollment of postgraduate students in China is more than 230,000, among them 54,000 for Doctor degrees. In China 655 units are authorized to award Master degree, 303 units are authorized to award Doctor degrees, and 55 institutions have established their graduate schools. The scope of the discipline covers 12 discipline categories, namely philosophy, economics, law, education, literature, history, science,

engineering, agriculture, medicine, military and management. In addition there are 11 professional degrees, namely MBA, Architecture (Bachelor and Master), Law Master, Education Master, Engineering Master, Clinical Medical (Doctor and Master), MPA, Agricultural Application Master, Veterinarian (Doctor and Master), Oral Medicine (Doctor and Master), Public Health (Doctor and Master). People who are qualified to an equal standard can apply for Master or Doctor degrees according to specified procedures. A number of foreign students gained their Master or Doctor Degrees at Chinese institutions.

Project 211

To meet requirements of high-qualified personnel and high-standard research achievements for Chinese economic construction and social development China started in 1994 Project 211, an important project of higher education development. The Chinese government will make efforts to concentrate central and local resources to support about 100 institutions and a number of key disciplines in the 21st century. Up to 1998, 300 Master and Doctor awarding discipline units were listed in Project 211.

c) Management System of Higher Education. The institutions in China are administrated by the Education Ministry, relevant State ministries and committees and provincial governments. Institutions at Hong Kong and Macao are administrated by those two special administrative district government respectively.

The institutions are administrated at two levels, the State ministries and committees and local governments. At the State level, the Education Ministry takes responsibility to administrate all of general education in China while the State ministries and committees administrate their own institutions.

There were 1071 general institutions in China in 1999. Among these institutions 46 are administrated by the Education Ministry, 202 by other State ministries and committees, 823 by local governments. The enrollment at all these institutions was 4,134,200.

In 1999, there were 871 independent institutions for adults, and those general institutions also carry teaching programs by communication and evening schools. The enrollment was 3,054,900.

The Education Ministry takes responsibilities to make education development plan of whole country, to give macro-guidance to education of all categories and at all levels, to make policies, to coordinate, monitor, evaluate and provides with services.

The State Council approved Academic Degree Committee of State Council (ADCSC) in

1980. ADCSC consists of one chairperson, several vice-chairpersons and a number of members. All of these chairpersons and members are appointed by the State Council. The Office of ADCSC is the standing body of ADCSC. The State Council entrusts the Education Ministry to charge the Office, which is jointly running with the Office of Postgraduate Education of the Education Ministry.

There are three levels in Chinese degree administration system. ADCSC directly charges the degree work of whole country; the degree committees of local governments coordinate the work at their own provinces according to relevant State laws and regulations. With approvals of ADCSC institutions and research institutes are authorized to award Bachelor, Master and Doctor degrees. They have their own degree committees to charge the relevant activities.

d) Category of Institutions

At present there are 12 categories of general institutions in China, namely comprehensive universities, science and technology universities, agriculture universities and colleges, forestry universities and colleges, medical universities and colleges, normal universities and colleges, language and cultural universities and colleges, finance and economy universities and colleges, politics and law universities and colleges, sport universities and colleges, art universities and colleges and others.

The institutions for adults include the following categories: broadcast and television universities, institutions for workers, institutions for peasants, colleges for administrators, education colleges, independent colleges by communication, and communication departments, evening schools, part-time adult classes, and etc operated by general institutions.

2. The Structure and Organization of Education

a) Education for Teachers

1) Education for preschool teachers.

The main task of education for preschool teachers is to train qualified teachers for kindergartens. There were 61 middle normal schools for preschool teachers and 58,000 students in whole country in 1998. In addition some general middle normal schools and professional high middle schools also attach classes for preschool teachers training. The study period is three or four years. These schools mainly admit graduates of elementary middle schools.

2) Education of general middle normal schools.

The main task of this sort of education is to train teachers of primary schools. There were 875 middle normal schools, among them 815 are general middle normal schools, and 920,000 students in China in 1999. The study period is three or four years. They mainly admit graduates of elementary middle schools.

3) Education of general normal institutions.

The main task of this sort of education is to train teachers of middle schools. There were 229 general normal institutions and 690,000 students in China in 1998. Normal universities, four years normal colleges and three or two years normal colleges mainly admit graduates of high middle schools. The study period at undergraduate level is four years. The main task is to train teachers of middle schools. The study period at specified field level is three or two years. The main task is to train teachers of elementary middle schools. The normal institutions also carry postgraduate education and actively take part in training teachers of middle schools.

4) Development of teachers of institutions.

Teachers of institutions were directly selected from the graduates without any sort of job training before. In the recent twenty years the quick developing postgraduate education in China and graduates with higher degrees from famous foreign universities provide institutions with a large number of high-qualified teachers. In recent years a system of continuous education for institution teachers in various ways has already been established, such as single course study, teaching assistants for high-standard teachers, visiting abroad, visiting scholars, various kind of study classes and so on. The aim is to fully enhance quality and teaching and research abilities of teachers through training and exchanges.

b) Part-time Studies.

As a way of education for citizens, the adult education expands the channel of personnel training and can therefore improve knowledge and skills of citizens. In addition the State also provides adults with a channel to obtain formal education and degrees. The institutions emphasize development of non-degree education and adopt various ways to meet needs of different types of adult studies. The adult students can gain certificates if they have accumulated a certain number of single courses to satisfy course requirements for a degree.

Study by Oneself

Study by oneself is a common way for adults to improve their own education level and skills. The study by oneself here means that after leaving school a person raises his or her own level according to a target and a study plan made by themselves through self-studying. The adults can upgrade their levels through self-studying.

The State started in 1980 to organize examinations for study by oneself of higher education that gives opportunities and possibilities for adults to take higher education through self-studying. The main purpose of the examinations is to check knowledge and skills of those people who wish to take higher education through self-studying. The examinations are organized in unified ways by provincial committees for higher education self-studying examinations. The subjects are defined according to teaching programs of each special field. People who have passed the examinations can gain certificates of single field. They can also apply for Bachelor degrees from full-time institutions authorized to award Bachelor degrees.

Distant Learning

In the recent years the quick development of IT accelerates the moving steps of distant learning in China. The Education TV Station of China broadcast more than 60 hours education programs to whole country through three satellite channels every day. The education TV stations cover 80% of cities of district level. Up to the end of 1999 there were already 79 central, provincial and local education TV stations and more than 16,000 satellite ground stations in the education system of China. The programs are appropriate to students at middle or higher levels. It also serves training courses for teachers of middle and primary schools as well as short-term professional training for countryside people.

Application of people who are qualified to equal standards for Master and Doctor degrees

ADCSC passed “Temporary Rules of Awarding Master and Doctor Degrees to the Employed People who are Qualified to Postgraduate Graduation” and its implement details in 1990. On the base of practices ADCSC issued “Rules of Awarding Master and Doctor Degrees to People who are Qualified to Postgraduate Graduation” in 1998. These documents specify the rules of requirement to applicants, procedures of acceptance and degree awarding, and approval procedures of authorization for units to carry out the activities.

According to these rules it has to keep the standards and guarantee quality to application of Master and Doctor degrees by those people who are qualified to postgraduate

graduation. The applicants should have at least five years experiences in the applied field or relevant fields. Besides they should have recently published academic papers or works at national or international journals, these papers or works should carry importance to his or her working fields.

To guarantee the quality ADCSC organizes foreign language examination and comprehensive examination of speciality courses unified in whole country every year since 1995.

c) Professional Education

The system of professional education in China includes education of professional schools and professional training. The education of professional schools can further be divided into elementary, middle and higher professional education.

The elementary professional education is that at elementary middle school level. It is mainly professional elementary middle schools that conduct this sort of education. These schools admit graduates from primary schools or teenagers who are qualified to primary school graduates. The study period is three or four years. These schools train workers, peasants and other employees who carry a kind of elementary professional bases and certain professional skills. These schools mainly distribute over economy undeveloped areas of China. It is a part of Nine-year compulsory education system.

The middle professional education is basically professional education at high middle school level. It consists of middle speciality schools, skilled worker schools and professional high middle schools. They are the main body of professional education in China, and play dominant roles in training primary and middle class practice personnel with various types and at various levels. The study periods are from two to four years.

The higher professional education mainly admit graduates from general high middle school and middle professional schools. The study period is two or three years. In this way these two stages of professional education connect. The higher professional education mainly trains speciality or management personnel of middle and high levels. It emphasizes to train practice type or technological type personnel.

To conduct professional training in various forms shows its importance in professional education day by day. At present the training is mainly charged and managed by education and labor departments. Enterprises are encouraged to conduct training for their own employees.

d) Teaching Language

Chinese is the main teaching language at schools of various types and at various levels. Chinese and language of ethnic group are both used at the autonomous regions.

e) Academic Year

Academic year is divided into two semesters in China. The first semester starts in September while the second starts in February of each year. Besides there are legal winter and summer vacations and national holidays of New Year's Day, the International Labor's Day at the 1st of May, the International Children's Day at the 1st of June and the National Day at the 1st of October.

f) Admission of Institutions

Admission for General Institutions

1) Basic Requirements

Chinese citizens who apply for admission examination of institutions should love their motherland, abide by the laws. They should be graduates from high middle schools or qualified to the graduates. They are health and under 25 years old. Besides they have to take part in admission examinations unified in whole country.

2) Admission Examination

Strict examinations system for institution admissions can guarantee the quality of new students in China. Subjects and dates are defined by the Education Ministry. The unified admission examinations of China are arranged at 7, 8 and 9 of July of each year.

The admission examination system for institutions is under reformation at present. For the examination subjects more power to select examination subjects will be given to institutions meanwhile students can have more choices accordingly; For examination contents links to actual life and ability testing will be more emphasized; For the admitting procedure the way through networks will be gradually adopted.

Besides admission examinations arranged two times every year at Spring and Autumn are under testing. Examination papers, management and organization of examination and student selecting are managed and controlled by autonomous regions for the institutions that locate at the regions and use language of ethnic group. Applicants who apply for these institutions don't necessary take part in unified examination of country.

Admission for Institutions for Adults

The institutions for adults admit from administrators, workers, peasants, previous and current high middle school graduates. They have to pass unified examinations for adult higher education. The examinations are organized by the State or provincial committees in May of each year.

g) Study Levels of Higher Education

1) Non-degree Study (two or three years in general)

After completion of designed courses and passing examinations the students of short training classes at general institutions, those of short-term professional universities and those of institutions for adults will be given graduate diplomas or certificates recognized by the State, but no degrees.

2) Study for Bachelor Degrees (four years in general)

The undergraduate students will be awarded Bachelor degrees if they meet the following requirements:

- The students have completed all courses designed in the teaching programs and have been approved to graduate; and
- The records of course studies and graduate theses show that the students have quite well gained fundamental theory, special knowledge and basic skills in their fields and have primary ability to carry scientific research or special technological work.

3) Study for Master and Doctor Degrees

- The students with Bachelor degrees or qualified to a same standard will be awarded Master degrees if they meet the following requirements:
- After passing examination the students have been admitted to study two and a half years or three years at institutions or research institutes authorized to award Master degrees, and have passed examinations of Master degree courses and theses. The records can meet a specified standard; and
- The students show that they have gained solid fundamental theory and systematic specialized knowledge of their fields and have ability to carry scientific research or special technological work independently.
- The students with Master degrees or qualified to a same standard will be awarded Doctor degrees if they meet the following requirements:
- After passing examination the students have been admitted to study three or four years at institutions or research institutes authorized to award Doctor degrees, and have passed examinations of Doctor degree courses and theses. The records can meet a specified standard;
- The students show that they have gained solid and extensive fundamental theory and systematic and deep specialized knowledge of their fields and have ability to independently carry scientific research or special technological work; and

- They have made creative achievements in sciences or special technologies.

3. Education for Foreign Students

a) Special Requirements for Admission of Foreign Students

To admit and train foreign students is an important work in international exchange of Chinese education. It has always been emphasized by Chinese government. Since foundation of PRC in 1949 a rather systematic management model of foreign student education with Chinese features has been gradually formed. China has trained a large number of personnel in science, education, foreign affairs and management for many countries, especially for developing countries. It have made active contributions to develop and consolidate relationship in politics, international relation, economy trade, and the exchange of culture, education and people between China and other countries of the world.

In the recent fifty years after foundation of PRC the institutions of China have totally admitted more than 350,000 foreign students of various types from more than 160 countries and districts. Among these students nearly 83,000 students gained studentships from Chinese government while more than 270,000 are self-paid students. China accepts foreign students based on bilateral agreements between Chinese and foreign countries' governments and also accepts students sent by other international organizations. Institutions of China may also admit foreign students based on inter-school agreements with institutions of foreign countries.

The foreign students should abide by Chinese laws and regulations, abide by regulations and rules made by institutions, and respect social customs of Chinese.

1) Category and Requirement of Admission of Foreign Students

- Undergraduate students. They should be qualified to a standard of graduates of high middle schools of China, and under 25 years old. The study period is four or five years.
- Postgraduate students. They should be qualified to graduates of undergraduate study in China (Bachelor degree), and are recommended by two professors or associate professors. Their graduate certificates and degree certificates should be evaluated and recognized. If they have completed undergraduate studies in China and wish to study further for Master degrees at the same or other institutions they have to take part in and pass the admission examinations. The applicants with outstanding records and recommendations may be admitted without examination subject to an

approval. Their ages should be under 35. The study period is two and a half or three years.

- Students for Doctor degrees. They should be qualified to Master degree standard of China, recommended by two professors or associate professors and approved by the institution applied. Their ages should be under 40. The study period is three or four years.

2) Admission examination. After submitting application the students of natural science, engineering, agricultural and medical subjects should take standard examinations of fundamental mathematics, physics and chemistry. The students of economic (business) administration should take examination of fundamental mathematics. According to relevant regulations the examinations are organized by and taken in Chinese Embassies at the countries.

3) Language requirement. The students who are not skilled in Chinese or skilled not enough to study should learn Chinese and pass a language proficiency test before normal speciality studies. The postgraduate students of Chinese philosophy, economy, law, education, Chinese language and culture, Chinese history, art and traditional Chinese medicine should first take two years of basic Chinese courses.

4) Degree and certificate. The students may have graduate certificates after completion of studies and passing examinations. The students may also have certificates of Bachelor degrees or Master degrees according to the National Degree Regulations of PRC. The postgraduate students for Doctor degrees may gain Doctor degrees after passing the final examinations and oral examination of theses. Those students who failed to pass examinations may have certificates of study.

b) On Bilateral Agreement of Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees

1) Sign of bilateral agreement. Chinese government always considers that to carry out activities of recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees and sign bilateral agreements between countries have important and practical meanings for promotion of people exchanges in the world. China is a country that signed the Regional Convention on Recognition of Studies,

Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific. Besides active implementation of responsibilities and duties specified in the Convention China actively develops bilateral collaborations with other countries. In recent years China has already hold bilateral talks and signed agreements of recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees with 14 countries.

To implement the above agreements the Office of ADCSC agreed Service Center of Study Abroad of China and National Development Center of Degree and Postgraduate Education of China to carry out recognition activities of studies, diplomas and degrees of foreign countries and those of China respectively.

2) Main problems and obstacles

- Education and degree systems of countries are not same. There are quite differences in recognitions of education and qualifications. The criteria are not unified in school systems, degree standards, subject categories, admissions, teaching programs, curriculums, teaching contents and new student qualifications. All of these brought about difficulties in recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees.
- There are a quite lot of differences of studies and levels among schools of various levels and types even in one country such as differences between full-time and part-time schools, public and private schools. However, all of these schools can award degrees and graduate certificates. Some of these certificates even can't be recognized in their own country. This made a lower comparability of studies, diplomas and degrees among countries.
- The information exchanges on education and degree systems among countries are very limited. Especially, the new development of education and degree systems happen in countries should be known by the member States of the Convention.

3) Suggestions

- The member States should adopt effective measures to build up channels for the executive departments of all countries to constantly exchange information. Quick development of network technology brought about large space and possibility to the exchanges. The exchanges and trust can be strengthened among the member States through exchanges of samples of study, degree and graduate certificates and diplomas.
- To meet the trends of economy globalization and promote collaborations

of education and economy among countries all of the countries should more actively push recognitions of studies and degrees and promote people exchanges.

- At present more efforts should be made to sign bilateral agreements of recognition of study and degree certificates to strengthen international exchanges and collaborations.

DPR Korea

Mr. Chae Ryang-II

1. Country Profile

Korea is located in the northeastern part of Asian continent. Korea has an area of 222,209 square kilometers, of which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the northern half of the country, holds 1,222,762 square kilometers. Korea borders with China and Russia on the north bounded by the Amnok and Tuman Rivers and the seas on the east, the west and the south. The population of DPR Korea is 21,200,000. Korean people are homogeneous nation with one language and with the same customs. The Korean language is spoken by all Koreans wherever they live on the peninsular or in other parts of the world. Speaking and writing the same language among the entire Korean people has been a crucial factor in forming strong nationality.

2. National Education System

DPR Korea, which, on the basis of people-centered idea of Juche, has always given priority to education ahead of all other sections, has made sincere efforts to introduce universal free compulsory education systematically. The universal compulsory primary education had been enforced in 1956, universal secondary compulsory education in 1958, universal 9-year technical compulsory education in 1967 and followed by universal 11-year compulsory education in 1972.

The education at all levels has been conducted free of charge since 1959 by law. The universal compulsory education comprises one-year pre-school, 4-year primary school and 6-year secondary school education. Pre-school education is mainly undertaken by kindergartens, which admit children of 4-years old and give them education for 2 years. According to the statistics of 1998, there were 14,303 kindergartens with 752,000 children. The length of schooling in primary school is 4 years, which admit 6-year old children and educate them for 4 years.

In 1998, there were 4,933 primary schools with 1,610,000 children. Secondary education is undertaken in the senior middle schools, which admit primary school graduates and educate them for 6 years. In 1998, there were 4,812 senior middle schools with 2,182,000 students. Those who finish 11-year schooling can go to higher education institution. Higher education is the highest stage of the national education system, which has two categories, the regular system of higher education and the system of higher education on the job. The regular system of higher education consists of 2-3 years specialized schools and 4-6 years universities. The system of higher education on the job consists of 5-year factory colleges, 5-year farm colleges, 5-year fishermen's colleges, 5-year evening courses and correspondent courses of the universities and 3-year factory specialized schools. There are also 2-year post-graduate

courses and doctoral institutes, which have master course (3-4 years) and doctor course (2-3 years)

3. Types and Characteristics of Degrees and Diplomas

All education programs in the country must comply with state educational standards including requirements for minimum contents of education and educational level of graduates. Graduate certificate of specialized schools gives to its holder the right to professional activities as “Technician”.

The diploma or “Engineer” or “specialist” is conferred after no less than 4 years of studies in the universities and confirms the award of the qualification of engineer or specialist in a definite field. 6 years of studies are obligatory for medical university. The diploma gives rights to carry on professional activity in accordance with the education obtained and to apply for entrance to post-graduate or doctoral institute. Academic degrees and titles in the country are state commendation and honorary titles, which are conferred to those who have contributed valuable scientific achievements to the development of national science and technology and the building of powerful and prosperous nation. Academic degrees include Master and Doctor; academic titles Associate professor, Professor, Associate academician and Academician. In the DPR Korea unlike in other countries the State screens and judges Academic degrees and titles in a unified way.

The following is the system and procedure of screening and conferring academic degrees and titles. At the top stands the State Committee of Academic Degrees and Titles Conferment, under which there are Screening Committees of Academic Degrees and Titles for Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Medical Sciences respectively. Each of these screening committees has its sub-committees for different subjects. A vice-premier of the DPR Korea Cabinet, which has its standing office led, heads the State Committee of Academic Degrees and Titles Conferment by the Secretary-General. Screening Committees and their Sub-committees are non-standing organizations composed of authoritative scholars in relevant sciences and subjects.

1) Screening and Conferment of Degrees

(1) Mastership

- A candidate should pass Candidacy Minimum Examinations of majoring subject, foreign language and related basic subject.
- A candidate should have one essay published about his/her study and receive Certificate for the study application from relevant ministries.
- A candidate's dissertation is presented to a relevant sub-committee, which then asks some authoritative scholars to assess it.

- The sub-committee holds the open screening, in which the candidate presents his/her paper and answers questions raised by its members. The sub-committee judges the academic value and economic importance of the dissertation as well as the candidate's qualification. Then follows the secret voting, the result of which is submitted to the screening committee.
- The screening committee makes the final decision; according to the result of which the State Committee confers the mastership to the candidate makes the final decision.

(2) Doctorate

- A candidate should pass Candidacy Minimum Examinations of majoring subject, first and second foreign languages and related basic subject on the basis of having mastership degree.
- A candidate for doctor of basic sciences should have 5 essays published about new principles and theories in the relevant sciences.
- A candidate for Doctor of Applicable Sciences should have more than 2 published essays on new solutions to the scientific and technological issues essential for the country's economic development and receive a certificate for the application of scientific and technological achievements which should be adopted as technical assignment, technical norm, blue-print, guideline or State standard by relevant ministries.
- The Sub-committee holds the open screening, in which the candidate presents his/her paper and answers questions raised by its members. The sub-committee judges the academic value and economic importance of the dissertation as well as the candidate's qualification. Then follows the secret voting, the result of which is submitted to the screening committee.
- The screening committee makes the final decision; according to the result of which, the state committee confers the doctorate to the candidate makes the final decision.

2) Screening and Conferment of Academic Titles

(1) Associate Professorship

- Candidacy Criteria
 - Mastership
 - Lecturing beyond the set norm for the last 3 years
 - Tangible contribution to the solution of scientific and technical issues essential for the development of science

and technology as well as national economy after winning Mastership

- For natural sciences more than 2 textbooks or reference books and more than 10 essays
- For social sciences more than 3 textbooks or reference books and more than 10 essays
- Training of one master

- Screening

Application for associate professorship is submitted by a candidate's institution to the Ministry of Education, which confirms his/her eligibility. Once the screening committee for a given science makes a decision the State Committee of Academic Degrees and Titles confers Associate Professorship to the candidate.

(2) Professorship

- Candidacy Criteria

- Doctorate and Associate Professorship
- Lecturing beyond the set norm for the last 3 years
- Tangible contribution to the solution of scientific and technical issues essential for the development of science and technology as well as national economy after winning Doctorate
- For educational field, more than 4 textbooks or reference books and more than 20 essays
- For sciences more than 5 textbooks or reference books and more than 30 essays
- Training of 6 masters

- Screening

Application for professorship is submitted by a candidate's institution to the Ministry of Education, which confirms his/her eligibility. Once the screening committee for a given science makes a decision the State Committee of Academic Degrees and Titles confers Professorship to the candidate.

(3) Associate Academician and Academician Title

A Candidate for Associate Academician or Academician is nominated by his/her scientific or education institution. The State Committee of Academic Degrees and Titles makes the final decision and confers the title to the candidate

4. International Recognition of Diplomas and Degrees

DPR Korea has reached a number of bilateral agreements regarding recognition of the Diplomas and Degrees in higher education with many countries. DPR Korea is one of the signatories of the UNESCO Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific.

<Education System of the DPR Korea>

28	Doctor Course (2-3 yrs)				Higher Education
27					
26					
25					
24	Post Graduate	Master Course (3-4 year)			
23					
22					
21					
20					
19	University (4-6years)			Teacher Training College (3 years)	
18				Specialized School (3 years)	
17					
16					
15	11 Ys Ed	Senior middle school (6 years)			Secondary Education
14					
13					
12		Primary School (4 years)			Primary Education
11					
10					
9	Kindergarten (2 years)			Pre-school Education	
8					
7	Nursery (4 years)				
6					
5					
4					
3					
2					
Age 1					

HOLY SEE

Rev. Bro. P. Martin Komolmas

The Holy See is now party to four UNESCO Regional Conventions in the field of Higher Education, namely those for Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico, 1974), for the European Region (Paris, 1979), for the Countries of Africa (Arusha, 1981) and for the countries of Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 1983)

1. Structure of the Higher Education System

The Academic Centres at university level for which the Holy See bears responsibility all over the world are classified according to two types in light of the finality and contents of the studies: Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties and Catholic Universities. Ecclesiastical Faculties may exist alone (free-standing), within an Ecclesiastical or a Catholic University or within a civil university

Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties are engaged in teaching and research in the religious sciences proper to the Church. These institutions are governed by a common academic legislation everywhere in the world, i.e. the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* of 1979 and they confer degrees on the authority of the Holy See. At present, these institutions number one hundred and fifty-five, and are listed in the *Index Generalis Universitatum et Facultatum Ecclesiasticarum inclusis Institutis incorporatis, aggregatis et aliquibus autonomis (exclusis Institutis affiliatis)*, published in Rome, 1998.

It is only these Ecclesiastical Faculties and their Affiliated Institutes, and not the Catholic Universities, that are affected by the Holy See's adherence to UNESCO Regional Conventions. Affiliated Institutes are those in which an Ecclesiastical Faculty, sometimes in the same country, sometimes outside the country, oversees the courses and awards the degree for first cycle studies.

Catholic Universities likewise are found in many countries of the world: for instance, the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas de Aquino in Manila or the "Jochi Daigaku" (Sophia University) in Tokyo. These, however, follow the academic legislation and structure of the respective nations. They teach and research, in the light of the Christian faith, in the disciplines common to all universities. These universities and university-level colleges (about nine hundred in number) award degrees on the basis of civil authority. The recognition of their degrees outside the country where they are located is had in the same way as that of the degrees of the civil universities of their country. Catholic Universities are governed by Canon (Church) Law, the Apostolic Constitution

Ex Corde Ecclesiae, the Ordinances for local application of the same and the Statutes of the Institution.

2. Educational System of the Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties

The three major Faculties of an Ecclesiastical University are Theology, Philosophy and Canon (Church) law. There are, however, other areas of studies, which can be included in an Ecclesiastical University or constitute an Ecclesiastical Faculty or Institute. A partial listing of these can be found in “Appendix II” of *Sapientia Christiana* (for instance: Biblical Studies; Oriental Ecclesiastical Studies; Moral Studies; Church History; Christian Spirituality; Catechetics; Liturgical Studies; Sacred Music; Ecumenical Studies; Psychology; Social Sciences; Arabic-Islamic Studies, and so on).

In order to illustrate the fundamental structure of this educational system and the goals of its diverse stages, what follows will take as example the Faculty of Theology. There would be analogous information for the other Faculties, which can be gleaned from the above-mentioned Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* and from the Statutes and Program of Studies of the individual institutions.

The Faculty of Theology consists of three cycles.

The first cycle lasts for three years (or five years, if it has not been preceded by a two-year curriculum of philosophy). This cycle provides a fundamental introduction to the subject matter and to its proper scientific methodology, and when successfully concluded ends with the degree of Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology (S. T. B.).

The second cycle lasts for two years and consists in the beginnings of a specialization in the field. Successfully concluded, this cycle ends in the Licentiate in Sacred Theology (S. T. L.).

The third cycle, lasting for “a suitable time” (usually at least two years) and involving the completion of scientific formation and the writing and defense of a doctoral dissertation concludes successfully with the Doctorate in Sacred Theology (S. T. D.).

Generally, the language of instruction in an Ecclesiastical Faculty is that of the place. In some instances, it is possible that Latin may be used for this purpose. Even where the language of the place is used, some courses may be offered in one or another of the more commonly spoken modern languages.

A suitable knowledge of Latin is required for enrolling in any of the Faculties of sacred science. Depending on the material studied, Greek, Hebrew and other ancient languages may also be required. For the level of the third cycle, usually two modern languages in

addition to the student's mother tongue are ordinarily required. In all cases, the Faculties may set the language requirements they judge appropriate.

3. Qualifications for admission to the Faculty of Theology (also in the case of foreign students)

“To enroll in a Faculty in order to obtain an academic degree, one must present that kind of study certificate which would be necessary to permit enrolment in a civil university of one's own country or of the country where the Faculty is located” (*Sapientia Christiana*, art. 32 § 1)

“The Faculty, in its own Statutes, should determine what, besides what is contained in § 1 above, is needed for entrance into its course of study, including ancient and modern language requirements” (*Sapientia Christiana* art. 32 § 2).

Entrance into the second cycle requires the attainment of the degree of the previous one or the completion of studies judged by the Faculty to be equivalent. Entrance into the third cycle requires the previous attainment of the Licentiate in the field of studies.

4. Recognition of qualifications awarded in foreign countries

When a student has begun studies in one institution and wishes to pursue them in that of another Party to the Convention, the receiving institution may demand that its particular requirements for enrolment in a certain curriculum be respected (art. 1 § 1. a).

For its part, the Convention pleads in favour of “adopting a dynamic approach in matters of admission to further stages of study, bearing in mind knowledge acquired, as attested by certificates, diplomas and degrees...” (art. 2. 2. iv) and of “adopting flexible criteria for the evaluation of partial studies, based on the educational level reached and on the content of the courses taken” (art. 2 § 2. v).

With regard to the Holy See's recognition of the degrees of the academic institutions of other Parties to the Convention, the following points may be recalled:

- a) There are certain offices within the Church for which an ecclesiastical (canonical) degree is required, e.g. officials of an ecclesiastical tribunal, teachers of a sacred discipline or of disciplines connected with the sacred in an Ecclesiastical Faculty (cfr. *Sapientia Christiana*, Norms of Application art. 17), and in some countries the teaching of Catholic Religion in primary and secondary schools, etc.

- b) A degree earned in an institution of another Party can be recognized for teaching in an Ecclesiastical Academic Centre, when it is not a question of sacred disciplines or disciplines connected with the sacred.
- c) It is also possible that a doctorate of an institution of another Party can be recognized even in the teaching of the sacred disciplines, provided that the person holds the ecclesiastical (canonical) licentiate in the discipline to be taught.

5. Practical Application, to date, of recognition of degrees issued by institutions dependent on the Holy See

The Congregation for Catholic Education, the department of the Holy See responsible for the Ecclesiastical Academic Centres, is not in possession of information regarding cases of the recognition of degrees by appeal to the principle that both the State in question and the Holy See are signatories of this Convention. On the other hand, the Congregation does know that the degrees granted by Ecclesiastical Universities, Faculties and Institutes are recognized in many States in virtue of other juridical instruments. In countries where such matters are subject to diplomatic concordats, the degrees in question have simultaneously ecclesiastical and civil recognition. In others, an agreement may exist between local ecclesiastical and civil authority for the recognition of ecclesiastical academic degrees. The countries, in which these arrangements exist at present, however, are not within the geographical area of the present Convention (some examples: Germany and Austria in the first group and Argentina and Nicaragua in the second).

An example of another kind of instrument of recognition, and this within the region of the Bangkok Convention, is found in the Republic of the Philippines. There exists there an "Order" N. 129, S. 1991 of 18 November 1991, signed by the Secretary of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, which provides for the Government's recognition of degrees in the theological and biblical fields earned in the Ecclesiastical Faculties of the Holy See, whether located within the Republic of the Philippines or outside of the country.

6. Holy See's Office responsible for questions relating to the recognition of studies

The Congregation for Catholic Education¹ has an Office for Authentication (*Vidimazione*), which assists in obtaining civil recognition in some countries for degrees conferred on the authority of the Holy See. This office guarantees the validity of the document attesting to an academic degree. The holder of such a degree must present it for two further acts of authentication: at the Secretariat of State of the Holy See and then

¹ Address: Palazzo delle Congregazioni, Piazza Pio XII, Vatican City State – Tel. +39.06.69884167 Fax +39.06.69884172

at the Embassy or at the Consulate of the Nation in which the recognition is desired. The civil effects of degrees thus authenticate have their value in accordance with the academic legislation of the various nations.

30 September 2000

Ecclesiastical Faculties in the Asia-Pacific Region

1. ALWAYS

Pontifical Institute of Theology & Philosophy
(St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary)
Alwaye 683 103, Kerala, India
Tel: (0484) 623745, 623746

2. BANGALORE

“Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram”
Pontifical Athenaeum of Theology and Philosophy
Dharmaram College
Bangalore 560 029, India
Tel: (080) 553.60.95
Fax: (080) 553.60.46

3. BANGALORE

St. Peter's Pontifical Institute
Malleswaram West Post
Bangalore 560 055, India
Tel: (080) 334.14.07, 334.96.21
Fax: (080) 331.64.75

4. BANGALORE

Centre of Canon Law Studies at St. Peter's Pontifical Institute of Philosophy
and Theology
Malleswaram West Post, Bangalore 560 055, India
Tel: (080) 3341407, 3349621
Fax: (080) ---

5. BANGALORE

Kristu Jyoti College
Bosco Nagar
Bangalore 560 036, India
Tel: (080) 8510.212, 8510.012
Fax (080) 8512.012

6. DALAT

“Vien Dai-Hoc Dalat” Faulte de Theologie
College Pontifical Saint Pie X
B.P. 88, Dalat, Viet Nam

7. DELHI

“Vidyajyoti”- College of Theology
Faculty of Theology
23, Raj Niwas Marg, Delhi 110054, India
Tel: (011) 252.42.31

8. HONGKONG

Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy
6, Welfare Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong, China
Tel: (0852) 2553.0265
Fax: (0852) 2873.2720
Email: hsscol@hk.super.net

9. KOTTAYAM

Paurastya Vidyapitham
Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies
P.B. 10, Vadavathoor
Kottayam 686 010, Kerala, India
Tel: (0481) 578.525, 578.319, 571.807, 571.809

10. MADRAS

Satya Nilayam Institute of Philosophy and Culture
Faculty of Philosophy
Sacred Heart College
81, Lattice Bridge Road, Thiruvannamipur, Madras 600.041, India
Tel: (044) 4928.314, 4928.503

11. MANILA

Pontifical University of Santo Tomas
España Street, Manila 1008, Philippines
Tel: (02) 731.31.01
Fax: (02) 731.40.66

Claretians
Institute for Consecrated Life in Asia (ICLA)
526 Tandang Sora Ave., Culiab
U.P. P.O.Box 4, Diliman, Quezon City 3004, Philippines
Tel: (02) 932.03.43, 932.03.44, 932.03.45
Fax: (02) 932.03.46

12. MANILA

Loyola School of Theology
Ateneo Campus University
Loyola Heights, Quezon City
P.O.Box 4083 Manila, Philippines
Tel: (632) 922-4439, 924-4951-54
Fax: (632) 924-4442
Email: lstadmin@pusit.admu.edu.ph

13. NAGOYA

Faculty of Theology
Nanzan University
18 Yamazato-cho, Showa-Ku, Nagoya 466, Japan
Tel: (052) 832-3111
Fax: (052) 833-6985

14. PUNE

Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth
(Pontifical Athenaeum of Pune)
Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Nagar Road, Ramwadi
Pune 411 014, India
Tel: (0212) 681968, 681401, 680169

15. RANCHI

Raculty of Theology Ranchi
17, Karbala Tank Rd., P.B.5 Ranchi – 834001 Bihar, India

16. SHILLONG

Sacred Heart Theological College
Mawlai, Shillong 793 008, Meghalaya, India
Tel: (0364) 22.36.28, 22.16.43
Fax: (0364) 22.11.73

17. SYDNEY

Catholic Institute of Sydney
99 Albert Road, Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135, Australia
Tel: (02) 752.9500
Fax: 902) 746.6022

18. TAIPEI

Fu Jen Catholic University
Faculty of Theology (St. Robert Bellarmino)
Hsinchuang, Taipei Hsien 24205, Taiwan
Tel: (886/2) 906-9792, 901-7256
Fax: (886/2) 906-2439
Email: thcg1001@fujens.fju.edu.tw

19. TIRUCHIRAPALLI

St. Paul's Seminary
P.B. No. 36, Tiruchirapalli – 620001, India
Tel: (0431) 460851, 466150, 466190

20. TOKYO

“Jochi Daigaku” – Sophia Catholic University
Faculty of Theology
7-1 Kioi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102, Japan
Tel: (03) 3238-3761
Fax: (03) 3238-3999

21. Togyakarta

Fakultas Kepausan Teologi “Wedabhakti”
(Pontifical Faculty of Theology “Wedabhakti”)
Jl, Kaliurang Km 7 – Kentungan, Kotak Pos 1194, Yogyakarta 55011,
Indonesia
Tel: (274) 8809-57
Fax: (274) 8809-81

28 September 2000

KHAZAKSTAN

Bangkok, Thailand, 6-10 November
2000

Convention on Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific

6th Session of the Regional
Committee

Bangkok, Thailand, 6-10 November
2000

System of higher education in Kazakhstan

- Baccalaureate;
- Magistracy;
- Professional higher education.

Bangkok, Thailand, 6-10 November
2000

Legal base of Kazakh educational sector

- Law “About Education”;
- Law “About License”;
- 27 Government Decrees 27 (13 - about Higher Education);
- Orders of the Ministry of Education and Science

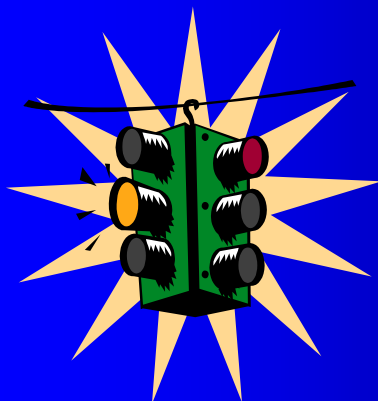
Bangkok, Thailand, 6-10 November
2000

Implementation of the Regional convention

- The goals;
- Obligations, which require urgent actions:
 - Recognition of diplomas of secondary education;
 - Determination of recognition procedure
- Accepted fully;
- Implementation of Convention articles:
 - The diplomas are recognized;
 - There is an order of recognition in Kazakhstan

Bangkok, Thailand, 6-10 November
2000

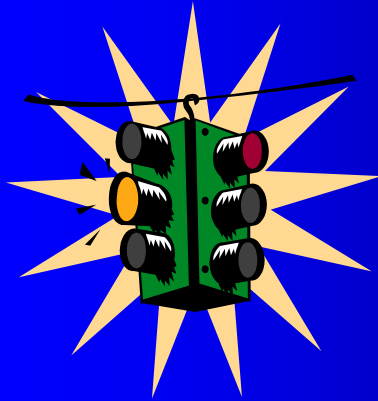
Recognition of Diplomas in Kazakhstan



- Law “About Education”, Article 16
- Orders of the Ministry

Bangkok, Thailand, 6-10 November
2000

Recognition of Diplomas in Kazakhstan: state agency



- Department of Higher Education;
- Republic Information Center of Education

Bangkok, Thailand, 6-10 November
2000

Main goals for recognition of Diplomas

- To continue study in Kazak universities;
- To be employed in Kazakhstan



Bangkok, Thailand, 6-10 November
2000

Order of recognition

- Applying procedure
 - Procedure steps
 - Test and interview
 - (if necessary)
 - Conclusion
- ⇒ Diploma holder or interested organization
 - ⇒ To recognize or not

Bangkok, Thailand, 6-10 November
2000

Procedure steps

1. Existing of International Treaty
2. Confirmation of
 - Diploma by the University which gave it;
 - Accordance of this University activity to Educational standards in the country where University is;
3. Compare with following parameters according to Kazakh state standards:
 - Length of study
 - List of subjects and hours of study
 - Classification of the specializations

Bangkok, Thailand, 6-10 November
2000

Convention on Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific



Bangkok, Thailand, 6-10 November
2000

MALDIVES

Dr. Mahamoodh Shougee

Introduction

The Maldives is among the 18 States Parties of the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas, and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific. This brief paper, prepared for the Sixth Session of the Regional Committee for the Recognition of Studies, reviews how Maldives has performed, and would perform in the future, in accordance with the aims, guidelines and actions stipulated in the Regional Convention.

The following four inter-related aspects are highlighted in this paper, together reviewing the progress made in accordance with the Regional Convention:

- 1. The Maldives: setting the local context for Regional Convention*
- 2. Establishment of a mechanism to recognize certificates, diplomas and degree*
- 3. Formation of professional councils*
- 4. Formation of the Maldives Accreditation Board and its impact on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees and student and professionals mobility to and from the Maldives*
- 5. The establishment of the Maldives College of Higher Education*

The Maldives: the Context for the Regional Convention

The Republic of Maldives is an archipelago of 1190 coral islands situated in the Indian Ocean, belonging to the South Asian Region. These islands are grouped into 24 natural atolls. The local population of 260,000 people live on only 199 inhabited islands of which the population on the capital island, Male', is estimated at 70,000.

Maldivians have always placed a high value on higher education, although higher education was not available locally until very recently. The value placed on higher education is evident from the fact that Maldivians have always traveled abroad to all corners of the world in search of higher education. Historically, and to a great extent even today, local scholars and experts who have obtained their education abroad have received community respect and recognition. And, they often tend to occupy key positions of influence and service. Thus, Maldivians have always, and continue to, not only recognize the qualifications obtained abroad but also value them immensely.

This value placed on studying abroad is evident from the number of students going abroad to pursue academic studies. For example, from 1995 to 2000, a total of 876 students have been sent by the Government to study abroad (Ministry of Human Resources, Employment and Labour, 1999). These students include 477 diploma level students, 307 degree-level students, 82 Masters level students and 10 candidates to pursue doctoral studies. They are sent abroad on scholarships received from donor countries and through loan assistance from international banks and agencies.

Furthermore, an increasing number of private candidates are studying abroad. The most popular destinations are Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka, Australia and the United Kingdom. It is estimated that over 3000 Maldivian students are studying abroad, and for a developing nation with 260,000 people, this is a significant number of students.

Maldivians also welcome foreign nationals to practice their professions in the country. The steady economic growth over the past few years has meant that an increasing number of skilled, professional and unskilled workers are being employed. The growing economy, and lack of skilled labour means that a high percentage of expatriates are employed in all sectors of the economy. It is estimated that currently 25,000 expatriates are working in the Maldives; about half employed in semi-skilled, skilled and professional positions. Expatriates make up most of the teachers in secondary education, many of the doctors and medical staff, and business professionals such as accountants and managers. Thus, mobility of professionals into the country to support economic development remains a need in the Maldives.

In order to practice one's profession, foreign nationals and Maldivians who obtain qualifications abroad are not generally required to validate their qualifications in the Maldives (recent developments as a result of the formation of a Nurses Council and Medical Council are discussed below). As a result, among the 25,000 foreign nationals in the Maldivian workforce, 1535 professional are educators (teachers) and 753 are health professionals (doctors and nurses). Although accurate statistics are not available, it is estimated that thousands of business and engineering professionals are also working in the Maldives. These practitioners who hold qualifications from abroad are not subjected to a process of verification or validation of their qualifications.

Recognition of Foreign Qualifications for Government Purposes

A result development that related to the Regional Convention is that on 1 April 1996, the Government made a decision to provide, in addition to the basic salary, a "higher education allowance" and a "professional allowance" to qualifying employees. The Higher Education Allowance is provided for those who have obtained at least an undergraduate degree and to receive the "Professional Allowance" he/she would have to have completed at least a one-year certificate or diploma. To be eligible for these

allowances, the certificates, diplomas and degrees would have to be obtained from an institution that is acceptable to the Government.

To determine the eligibility for these two allowances, a Committee to Review Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees for recognition was formed at the Department of Public Examinations in 1997. This Committee reviews foreign and local qualifications and recommends those deemed appropriate for Government recognition.

In reviewing qualifications, the Committee determines if a qualification falls within one of the following:

1. Certificate
2. Diploma
3. Higher Diploma
4. Degree
5. Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate
6. Masters Degree
7. Ph.D.

For official recognition a “certificate” must meet the following requirements:

1. The entrance requirement must be at least Grade 7 standard (basic education standard in the Maldives)
2. The candidate must have engaged one academic year full-time study to obtain the certificate
3. The institution that conferred the qualification must be accredited or officially recognized in the respective country.

The requirements for the recognition of a “diploma” are as follows:

1. The minimum entrance requirement should be passing in five secondary examination subjects, or completion of secondary school with two years of experience, or completion Grade 8 with 4 years of experience.
2. The candidate must have engaged one academic year full-time study to obtain the certificate.
3. The institution that conferred the qualification must be accredited or officially recognized in the respective.

The requirements for the recognition of a “degree” are as follows:

1. The minimum admission requirement should be the completion of the General Certificate of Examination, Ordinary Level, 3 subjects, plus obtained two years of work experience, or 3 passes at Ordinary Level plus two passes at the Advanced Level, or completion of a diploma plus two years of work experience.

2. Three years of full-time study towards the degree in an institution recognized by the respective country.

Within two years, in 1998 and in 1999 this Committee has deliberated over 112 certificates, diplomas and degrees. **Tables 1, 2 & 3** shows the number of certificates, diplomas and degrees recommended for approval by the Committee.

Table 1: Certificates Recognized by the Committee for Recognition of Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees

Country	Certificates Submitted	Certificates Approved	Certificates not Processed
Australia	2	1	1
Egypt	1	0	1
England	3	2	1
Germany	1	1	0
India	3	1	2
Japan	2	2	0
Malaysia	1	1	0
Saudi Arabia	8	7	1
Pakistan	16	12	4
Sri Lanka	2	2	0
Total	39	29	10

Table 2: Diplomas Recognized by the Committee for Recognition of Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees

Country	Diplomas Submitted	Diplomas Approved	Diplomas not Processed
America	1	0	1
Australia	5	2	3
Egypt	2	2	0
England	5	2	3
India	5	1	4
Malaysia	1	1	0
Pakistan	16	16	0

Sri Lanka	8	1	7
Thailand	1	1	0
UK	1	0	1
USA	3	3	0
Total	52	30	22

Table 3: Degrees Recognized by the Committee for Recognition of Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees

Country	Degrees Submitted	Degrees Approved	Degrees not Processed
Egypt	16	11	5
England	1	1	0
India	4	4	0
Malaysia	1	1	0
Pakistan	22	17	5
Qatar	3	1	2
Saudi Arabia	20	13	7
UAE	1	1	0
USA	1	1	0
Total	69	50	19

This Committee has been able to provide a process to recognize local and foreign qualifications using a consistent standard. However, just this year, it has been recognized that a fully functioning accreditation body is needed to recognize local qualifications and to set a quality assurance mechanism. This development is further explored under the sub-title of “Establishment of the Maldives Accreditation Bard”.

Formation of Professional Councils

Just this year, two professional councils have been formed in the Maldives: the Maldives Nurses Council and the Maldives Medical Council. The purpose of these councils is to set standards of professional practice in the respective areas. Nurses who want to practice in the Maldives, both local and foreign, and medical doctors would

have to be registered with their respective council. In order to be registered as a practitioner it is required for nurses and doctors to have obtained a professional qualification from a recognized institution. Foreign professionals would be required to be registered with counterpart professional bodies in their home countries.

This development would obviously standardize and raise the quality of practice in these areas. It is also a move to standardize the standard of practice in the Maldives with international standards in the respective professions. It is yet to be seen that if other professional groups such as teachers and accountants would form such professional bodies to self-regulate standards.

The Establishment of the Maldives Accreditation Board (MAB)

In July 2000 the Maldivian Government announced the decision to establish a Maldives Accreditation Board (**MAB**). The body was to include 10 members and a Chair appointed by the Government. The membership, appointed on 25 October 2000, comprises of local expertise in Education, Engineering, Health Sciences, Information Technology, Law and Shariah and Management. It also include professionals in curriculum development, teaching and assessment and supervision. The Board and its Secretariat will be operating under the Ministry of Education.

MAB is expected to have two very positive impacts that relate to the Regional Convention. They are:

1. Provision of a local qualification framework and an accreditation and quality assurance mechanism to encourage private participation in the provision of further and higher education

Several private parties now offer certificate-level training in the Maldives. Such parties have also expressed the desire to offer diplomas and degrees, with the approval of the Government. Increasingly overseas institutions are also expressing interest to locally offer diploma and degree level academic programs. However, Government has not approved private institutions to offer diplomas or degrees due to the lack of a national qualification framework and an accreditation and quality assurance mechanism. Therefore, a key reason for the establishment of the Maldives Accreditation Board is to promote private sector participation in education by accrediting local diploma and degrees. It would further encourage international institutions to offer diploma and degree programs in the Maldives.

2. Facilitation of student mobility

The very first tasks of MAB would be the development of a Maldives Qualification Framework (MQF) and the approval of a criterion to be used in local accreditation of institutions and programs. The MQF developed by MAB is expected to meet the international standards, mirroring the Australian and New Zealand qualifications framework. The proposed MQF would include three levels of certificates, two levels of diplomas, undergraduate degrees and graduate degrees. The criterion for accreditation is expected to consider nominal contact hours, credit points, breadth and depth of curriculum, teacher quality, assessment methods and availability of teaching-learning facilities. The MQF and accreditation criterion is expected to facilitate admission of Maldivian students to institutions in the region and receive advanced credit for studies undertaken in the Maldives. It would also facilitate international students to obtain admission to institutes of higher education in the Maldives.

Once the newly established Maldives Accreditation Board begins to function, the earlier mentioned Committee for Recognition of Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees is expected to be dissolved and the Board will be then likely to resume the responsibility of recognizing all qualifications, foreign and local.

The Development of Higher Education and its Impact on Student Mobility

In 1997, UNESCO PROAP prepared a report titled “Towards the Establishment of a Tertiary Educational Institution in Maldives, recommending the establishment of a tertiary institution in the Maldives. The report outlined the following reasons for this: (1) increasing enrolment in secondary education (2) diminishing international assistance in the form of overseas scholarships (3) the national shortage of skilled and professional labour (4) to contribute to the overall economic and social development of the Maldives.

Following this report, and other subsequent studies, existing post secondary institutes that were operating under different Government Ministries came together in forming the Maldives College of Higher Education. Today, the Maldives College of Higher Education consists of the institutes listed in Table 4.

Table 4: MCHE Institutes and Student Enrolment in 1999

Institute	Enrolment in Long-Term Courses	Enrolment in Short-Term Courses
Institute of Teacher Education	426	-
Institute of Health Sciences	147	-
Institute of Management and Administration	107	508

Maldives Institute of Technical Education	221	-
Rural Youth Vocational Training Centre	76	40
Institute of Hotel and Catering Services	92	226
Institute of Shariah an Law*	-	-
Maritime Training Centre	-	263
Tertiary Institute for Open Learning	-	-

Source: MCHE, 1999

* Established 2000

MCHE, through its various institutions, is currently offering 28 certificate and 7 diploma programs (1999). The Strategic Plan (2000 – 2005) of MCHE identifies the need to standardize these certificates, diplomas, and in future degree programs. Without a standardized qualification framework courses that suggest the same level, vary considerably in terms of the length of study, entry requirements, and evaluation criteria. This obviously hinders student mobility vertically and horizontally within the College and within the post-secondary sector in general. The need will be obviously addressed when MAB begins its functions. Thus, the development of MCHE programs would be oriented to enable recognition of studies and promotion of international student mobility.

Conclusion

Due to the lack of higher education opportunities in the Maldives, Maldivians have been extremely open to value and recognize qualifications obtained from abroad. Maldivians welcome foreign qualifications and welcome expatriate professionals to practice their respective professions in the Maldives. However, with the growing number of qualifications, with varied entry requirements and length of study, emerging locally and abroad, Maldives also has to develop mechanisms to evaluate and recognize both foreign and local qualifications. The formation of the Nurses Council, the Medical Council, and finally the Maldives Accreditation Board is likely to steer Maldives towards a balanced approach to quality assurance and recognition of qualifications. Such a balance approach would maintain the Maldivian openness to recognizing foreign qualifications, promote student mobility, standardize local qualifications with international standards and provide a mechanism to support quality assurance in higher education.

MONGOLIA

Dr. R. Bat-Erdene

1. COUNTRY PROFILE

Mongolia is a landlocked nation located in the heart of Central Asia with an area of 1.560 million square km, bordering the Russian Federation to the north, and the People's Republic of China to the south, east and west. According to the year 2000 Population and Housing census's preliminary results, the population stood at 2.382 million with an annual growth rate of about 1.5 percent. In 1999, the percentage of population aged under 15 years was 35.8 and people aged under 35 make up 75 percent of the population, with 58.6 percent urban inhabitants (NSO, 2000). Mongolia is a homogeneous nation populated mainly by Mongols, but a small proportion (up to 5 percent) is represented by Kazaks. The official language is Mongolian and since the 1940s has used the Cyrillic alphabet replacing a thousand years-old traditional script.

By the time the Mongolian nation came to the dramatic attention of the world in the early 13th Century, it already had a long and noteworthy history. First human settlements going back 500 thousand years, were found in Mongolian territory, and early large-scale empires such as the Gunns Empire (400-300 B.C.) had their origin from this part of the world. In more recent times, after declaration of the People's Government in 1921, a single party, the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, held a power until 1990. In 1992, a new multi-party Constitution was adopted, with a democratic alliance government in power from 1996 to 2000, when the MPRP was re-elected on a social justice platform. During this century, Mongolia has maintained close political and economic ties with the USSR, particularly through CMEA, but was never one of its constituent republics. In the period since 1991, Mongolia has been in the midst of transition from a single-party ruled command economy to an energetic multi-party democracy and market-oriented economy.

2. EDUCATION SYSTEM

The national education system consists of a complex set of successive education programs for formal schooling and a broad range of non-formal educational activities devoted to the various target groups of the population. In 1999, the enrollment rate of 3 to 7 years olds in kindergartens was 30.0 percent. There are 668 primary and secondary schools throughout Mongolia. The enrollment rate of 8 years and 7 years olds in first grade of primary schools is 92 percent and 19.7 percent, respectively, with 90.6 percent of children aged 8-15 years enrolled in educational institutions. Over all, there were 85,200 students attending higher and vocational training institutions in 1999 (NSO, 2000).

The following levels of education and corresponding formal schooling institutions in Mongolia are:

- 1) pre-school education – kindergartens;
- 2) in contrast to international K-12, general education in Mongolia is ten years (4-years primary, 4-years secondary, and 2-years upper secondary.) Basic education (4+4) is compulsory and provided by the state free of charge. Many primary and secondary schools are combined on one school campus.
- 3) technical education and vocational training. TEVT is provided by the professional training and production centers. As well, some branches of colleges and universities provide education in TEVT.
- 4) higher education (diploma, bachelor, master, and doctorate) are awarded by colleges and universities.

The Ministry of Science, Technology, Education and Culture (MOSTEC) is the central state administrating body that formulates nation-wide educational policy and sets the standards for each level of formal education. As well, general provisions on educational matters such as scheduling of the school year, preparation and publication of textbooks for general secondary education, and state examination procedures are administered by the Ministry. During the last decade, significant changes in educational administration and management have taken a place in response to political and economic changes brought about by transition from a central command economy to a market-oriented and democratic society.

As stated in the State Policy on Education adopted by the State Great Hural (the Parliament) in 1995, the Government of Mongolia has introduced a decentralization in the education sector through delegation of authority to local governors and even to individual educational institutions. For their part, higher educational institutions enjoy much freedom and autonomy in terms of both academic and institutional management (Weidman et al, 1997, 1999).

3. HIGHER EDUCATION

3.1) Types of higher education institutions

The first modern type of higher educational institution – the National University of Mongolia (initially it was named as Mongolia State University) - was established in 1942. The National University of Mongolia is the only comprehensive university in the country. Until recently, higher educational programs were offered by 7 fully state-subsidized public universities and institutes. Since 1990, some former specialized secondary schools such as Finance and Economics Technikum and Commerce Technikum, were reorganized as colleges and began to introduce undergraduate higher education programs. From 1990, private institutions started appearing. The new

Constitution adopted in 1992 permitted setting up private and non-government property-based institutions to individuals who met pre-conditions set by the government (Spaulding, 1992). Nowadays, more than 100 private higher educational institutions are offering programs, mainly in the fields of economics, management, law, computer science, languages, and performing and fine arts.

Table 1. Higher educational institutions, enrolment (at the beginning of 1998/99 academic year)

Types of institutions	Number	From which		Enrolment		
		Public	Private	Total	In public	In private
Universities	9	8	1	35 800	34 900	900
Colleges	109	27	82	38 400	16 300	22 100

Source: *Mongolian Statistical Yearbook 1999* (2000). Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia: National Statistical Office

According to the 1995 Education Law and its 1998 Amendments, the types of higher educational institutions are classified as ‘university’ and ‘college’. Universities are considered to be research and graduate study dominated, while colleges are mainly orientated to undergraduate courses. Public institutions are non-profit organizations, while for their part, private institutions may be either non-profit or for-profit.

3.2) Coordination of higher education

Until recently, higher education in Mongolia was totally controlled by the state. The period since the late 1980s has been characterized by gradual transformation to more democratic structures. Starting with the an introduction of elected presidency of higher educational institutions by academic staff, self-governance and major principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy have gone forward, are now protected by state legislation. The government’s power is limited to nation-wide general policy formulation and strategic planning, licensing of the establishment of new institutions, and setting general typical provisions for teaching and research. However, the Ministry maintains holding authority to appoint its representatives to the governing boards of the institutions and implement its policy through board decisions (Bat-Erdene et al, 1999). In accordance with the legislation, the founder of the institution should compose 51 to 60 percent of the board members. The Ministry is authorized as a founder of public institutions.

Prior to 1993, education at all levels was free and fully subsidized by the government. A student fee structure in higher education was introduced in 1993, but the government continues to provide financial assistance in the form of grants and loans to students from low income families and to those who demonstrate outstanding achievement. In addition, public institutions receive allocations for facility maintenance costs. A major condition for receiving government financial support is that the institution must be accredited (see section on accreditation of higher education institutions).

3.3) Institutional governance (on academic degrees)

The Higher Education Law of 1995 states that academic degrees are to be conferred by institutions that offer the program. Previously, undergraduate degrees were conferred by the State Examination Commission established by the Minister. Graduate degrees (formerly, *ded erdemten*, now equalized to Ph.D., and *doktor*, now D.Sc.), were considered as academic degrees and conferred by the Supreme Council for Academic Degrees and Titles chaired by the Minister and composed of academics from respective fields.

In order to confer academic degrees at undergraduate level, the Rector of the institution establishes an examination committee consisting of professors from the institution and academics in related fields from other institutions. To award a graduate degree, a dissertation committee must be composed. Although new regulations empowering the institutions are now in force, universities and colleges are still requesting the Ministry to approve the composition of the final examination committees.

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS

4.1) Types of degrees and diplomas

Formerly, higher educational institutions used to mainly offer undergraduate programs leading to the award of a higher education diploma with the title of “specialist”. Since 1995, the both the Education Law and Higher Education Law regulations now structure the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate (Ph.D.). Some institutions such as the Mongolian Technical University, confer a “diploma” (associate degree) that is equal to the first two years of a bachelor’s degree.

Meanwhile, the Academy of Sciences, a special statutory academic body, is authorized to confer the degree of Doctor of Science for outstanding and remarkable contribution to the national scientific endeavor. In this sense, Doctor of Science is rather the title that indicates distinguished achievement than an award-bearing degree.

4.2) Title and abbreviation of degrees and diplomas

Both the Education Law and Higher Education Law clearly state that higher educational institutions in Mongolia confer academic degrees. This contrasts with former professional “specialist” degrees. However, degrees conferred by accredited institutions in the fields of humanities, social sciences, management, engineering and education are generally considered to be certification for career entry into a profession. The titles of various degrees indicate the field of study. For example, Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in physics, Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Mongolian language and literature, Master of Science

(M.Sc.) in chemistry, etc. Titles of programs are modified by the Ministry in consultation with institutions in order to coordinate programs offered by different institutions. At the same time, it can be noted that titles and their qualifications are currently in the process of formation. Therefore, titles and degrees awarded by institutions vary. Special attention should be given to differences between old and new degrees as well as institutions authorized to confer degrees.

4.3) Information contained in the degree document

The document certifying an academic degree is called the Diploma. Before the enactment of current law, all public institutions issued diplomas with a uniform format which was approved by the Ministry. Since 1995, there is no unified format for diplomas since the diplomas are issued by the institution. Even so, there is a Ministry regulation that all diplomas must contain the following: full name of the holder, name of the program offered, title of the degree conferred, and name of the institution. In addition, all diplomas are supplemented with annexes (type of academic transcript) that indicate names of courses taken by the holder, related credits and grades, and title and final examination grade of dissertation/thesis defense.

5. STUDY PROGRAMS

5.1) Number of credits and sequence of study

Degrees prominent in higher educational programs consist of three components: general education (liberal arts), basic professional education (foundations of the field), and specialized education (a major). This type of classification has been in practice since the first university was established in 1942. The proportion of each component in the degree structure was determined by the Ministry. Currently, ratios of the three components vary depending on fields of study and the institution offering the program. However, the Ministry made a recommendation that ratios of the components should be 3:4:3 respectively. The number of elective and optional courses increases as the student advances in the degree program.

As stated in the 1995 law and 1998 amendments, teaching at higher educational institutions is organized on the basis of credit hours. Till recently, only class hours were used for the design and organization of curriculum. The academic year is divided into two semesters, each of which is 15 to 17 weeks long. A credit is defined as an academic content unit that is equal to in average 15 hours of lecturing or 30 hours of practical work. For other forms of learning such as independent study and laboratory work, the calculation of credits is made by the institutions themselves with a focus on peculiarities of the field. The Education Law states that the program leading to the BA degree must be not less than 120 credits. In practice, it takes 4 years of study as a minimum. If the

program is double-majored, the required total number of credits would increase accordingly and the component ratio differ.

Master's programs have been designed to accumulate at least 30 credits at master's level courses with a bachelor's degree entry. Up to 6 credits of the thirty may be counted for a thesis component. In the interim period of implementing the new credit system, independent individual works of scholarship may be equalized to course requirements.

Doctoral programs require advanced level courses and the completion and defense of a dissertation work, altogether not less than 60 credits after the master's degree. Up to 18 credits of the total are for the dissertation.

Exception can be seen in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, public health, veterinary science, and law which have total cumulative credits reaches up to 252 and require up to 6 years of study. For example:

Medicine: 6-years-252 credits (General Physician) + 2-years (60 credits (at residence) – MD or 60 credits-MMSc) + 2-years Ph.D in Medicine;

Dentistry: 5-years (228 credits-Dentist), + 2-years (60 credits at residence-MMSc), + 2-years-Ph.D in Dentistry;

Pharmacy: 5 years (157 credits-Pharmacist), + 2-years (60 credits-MPSc), + 2-years-Ph.D in Pharmaceutical Science;

Public health management: 5 years (190 credits-BPH), + 2-years (60 credits-MPH), + 2-years-Ph.D in Public Health.

5.2) Practical experience

Practical training is considered a necessary part of the higher educational curriculum. Different types of practical training are exercised by the institutions: seminars, directed study, labs, and learning practice within campus, technological practice, observatory surveys under supervision in workplace conditions, and pre-diploma independent practice at selected work stations. Duration and types of practical training vary depending on the fields of study.

Extensive practical training is required for medical, engineering, veterinary, and performing arts programs. Up to 10 weeks long pre-diploma practical training is planned for schedule in all undergraduate programs.

At the graduate level, practical training has a more research-oriented character. Both thesis and dissertation works require conducting independent research.

5.3) Grading and evaluation

Assessment and grading of student performance and achievement is regulated by the institutions. However, the Ministry has directed universities and colleges to introduce an equalization formula which unifies the grading system within Mongolia and also parallels that used internationally, ie, A, B, C, D, and F, with a figure equivalent of 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0. Until 1998, a 5-figure grading system was used in Mongolia, although in reality only four of them, specifically, 5, 4, 3, and 2 (5 being highest and 2 standing for fail) were used. In effect, grades previously used can easily be transferred to the new international version. It should be noticed that those students who did not pass at least one course requirement would not be conferred a degree.

6. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Citizens who have accomplished complete general secondary education have a right to compete for entrance to undergraduate programs. Competitive entrance examination is practiced by all higher educational institutions. The examination is held once a year, usually at the end of June and early July. Exemption can be made for the talented, such as those who demonstrate outstanding results on national and international contests (for example, educational Olympiads). Since 1997, when the National Examination for Accomplishment of General Secondary Education was introduced, universities and colleges were recommended to change their entrance examination procedures, specifically using minimum scores from the National Examination for both enrolment in a particular program and as a precondition for admission. Secondly, instead of only examining subject contents of secondary school, tertiary entrance also included suitability and preparedness for particular study programs using appropriate alternative methods of assessment, such as interview, taking up references, assessing creativity, and so on. Because of remoteness, entrants from rural areas are examined locally. In this case, examination is made by joint commissions of different institutions. In fact, with the mushrooming of private institutions, entrance to tertiary-level courses these days is simplified. But admission to institutions with high reputation is still very competitive (Weidman et al, 2000).

For the master's and doctor's programs, admission is organized in a similar way. Admission examination procedures are set and administered by the relevant institutions.

7. DEGREE CONFERRING AGENCY

As already noted, degrees are conferred by the institutions. Students who successfully accomplish course requirements of their program, are accepted to take a final examination or defend a thesis. The rector/president of the institution establishes the final examination committee comprising professors and leading specialists in the field, including staff from related ministries. Decisions of the committee are approved by the rector/president.

8. ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In accordance with provisions in the Education Law of 1995, a national body for higher education accreditation was subsequently established in 1998. While all higher education institutions were required to undergo accreditation, there was a phase-in period with most of the public and only a few of the leading private institutions participating in the first year. Only those institutions which have passed the accreditation process are eligible to receive government financial support and likewise students enrolled in these institutions are eligible for government grants and loans.

Initially, the National Accreditation Council for Higher Education (NACHE) was established by the government in 1998 with the intention of transforming the Council in near future into an independent external agency. A majority of the Council board members are rectors and academicians of participating higher education institutions. A group of the first 19 institutions were accredited as higher education institutions for a 5-year term. The government made a decision to change the statute of NACHE as non-government autonomous body in August, 2000. Accreditation of academic programs (as distinct from accrediting institutions) is foreseen to start next year and preparation activities are underway.

In reference to the establishment of NACHE, in recent years higher education institutions have begun to practice internal self-evaluation exercises as an internal quality assurance mechanism. Overall, it should be noted that the entire process of accreditation is at an initial stage (Weidman et al, 2000).

9. DEGREES AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

As mentioned above, there is a shift in Mongolian higher education from a professional degree system to academic degree system. Therefore, in some fields such as medicine, law, and accountancy, licensing of professional practice has been introduced. The main precondition for licensing is to be a degree holder in the corresponding field from an

accredited institution. As well, a similar license requirement for entering the teaching profession is proposed for introduction in the near future.

10. INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF DEGREES

The Government of Mongolia sees mutual recognition of and agreements with other governments on educational certification and qualifications as tools to enhance quality of education delivered and, at the same time, secure rights of degree holders to be employed consistent with professional status. As a preparatory stage to join international conventions on the recognition of qualifications and certificates, the Ministry of Education gives importance to conducting comparative curriculum analysis and benchmarking exercises.

Prior to 1990, there were regular consultation meetings between representatives of Soviet bloc countries aimed at coordinating the unification of higher education programs. Since that time, every former member state is faced with dramatic change, including change in their higher education systems. So new cooperation and joint effort with interested parties and other nations is actively sought. Mongolia has signed a bilateral intergovernmental agreement on mutual recognition and equivalence of certificates with the People's Republic of China, and currently talks with the Russian Federation on this matter are underway.

NEPAL

Mr. Gunanidhi Neupane

Introduction of Nepal

Nepal, situated in the central Himalayas with sharp contrast in elevation and climate, has a total area of 147484 Sq. Kilometer. Situated between China in the north and India in the West, East and South with a population of approximately 21 million and growing at the rate of over two per cent per annum. The Himalayan Kingdom is divided into three regions, running east to west. They are the Mountain, the Hill and the Terrai (Plain). The Mountains area lies at an altitude varying from 4877 meters to 8848 meter above the sea level. This region includes the worlds' highest peak Sagarmatha (Mount Everest, 8848 meter). Another is the Hill region which lies between the altitude of 610 meter to 4877 meter above the sea level. The third is a Terrai region which form a low flat land. This region has a 47.7 per cent population.

Higher Education in Nepal.

Achieving a relevant, cost effective, beneficial and competitive higher education system has been the central goal of all higher education efforts in Nepal since 1950s. However, throughout the development history of higher education in Nepal, has had to encounter the constrained environment of scarce resources, geographical situation, the pressing demand to expand the excess of higher education and the unavoidable circumstances, such as internal disturbances and violence in different parts of the country.

As a member of the United Nations, Nepal has initiated different efforts to implement the U. N. call for the qualitative higher education by recognizing the following values

1. Every one has the right to education. (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 20 Para 1)
2. Higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
3. The State Parties shall make higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity. (Convention Against Discrimination In Education, 1960, Article 4)

In Nepal, Tribhuvan University, established in 1959, was the first country's premier University for giving higher education in the field of Science, Law, Commerce, Humanities, Sanskrit, Forestry, Medicine and Engineering, which is progressing on its own way till today. Later on, in 1987, separate University known as Mahendra Sanskrit

University was established to give higher education, especially in the area of Sanskrit. Since 1992 Kathmandu University, a private University, also been involved in providing higher education in Management, Medicine etc. In addition to their own constituent campuses several private campuses affiliated to these Universities, with more than 95 per cent of an affiliation in this regard are with T.U. and are providing higher education. With an introduction of Higher Education Board under the Act of Higher Education Act 1990, many high schools, mostly private schools, have upgraded their level up to twelve (10 +2 system). Two more University, Purbanchal (Eastern) University and Pokhara University, have been established under the Act in 1995 and 1997 respectively.

Policies in Higher Education

According to the 9th 5 year plan (1997 to 2002) the objective of the education shall be to develop education as a main instrument for achieving national development by developing human resources to alleviate poverty and to improve the standard of living through socio-economic upliftment, to produce citizens who are dedicated to democracy and are capable, productive, disciplined and responsible to human rights and social duties.

In the 9th plan, the following policies have been formulated to develop and improve the higher education system in Nepal.

- 1) The policy of cost-sharing by beneficiaries of higher education shall be implemented. Arrangements shall be made to provide loan and scholarship to bright and poor students. Participation of private and non-governmental agencies shall be encouraged to reduce the pressure on government resources tied to development of higher education.
- 2) Basic and technical research shall be encouraged in higher education. Necessary mechanism shall be developed to take the knowledge and skill received from research to the concerned field.
- 3) The policy of assisting the universities in establishing physical, human and appropriate educational infrastructures shall be continued.
- 4) Policy shall be taken to operate open university to expand the opportunities for higher education.
- 5) Special education programming shall be strengthened and operated to provide educational opportunities for the disabled persons to get education from literacy level to higher education. Non-governmental organizations and communities shall be encouraged to participate in the development of special education.

- 6) Scholarship programs for women, backward ethnic groups and dalit (down trodden) class shall be effectively implemented.
- 7) Emphasis shall be given to educational research designed to furnish suggestions for formulation of appropriate educational policies in non-formal and formal education, selection and experimentation of appropriate educational programmes etc.
- 8) Policy measures shall be taken to encourage access and expansion of women's education with a view to increase the participation of women in education.
- 9) A fixed part of gross domestic product shall be appropriated to make sure that education sector shall be durable, sustainable, continued and free from hindrances. This policy shall be implemented in the Ninth plan.
- 10) Higher education policy shall be formulated in accordance with the need for manpower in agriculture, industry and vocational fields. Educational policy shall be refined on the basis of the recommendations to be submitted by the recently constituted High Level National Education Commission.

Strategies and Policies For the Implementation of the Regional Convention on Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education .

As a party to the Convention on Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and Pacific, Nepal has strong commitment to implement the provision set forth in convention. For this, Ministry of Education of Nepal is working as a nodal agency to deal with the problems that comes under this Convention . Ministry of Education may give direction to the Universities to give effect to the provision of the Convention and may also act as requested by the Universities to approach with the foreign agencies or Universities to resolve the problems on reciprocal basis for the mutual benefit of all countries in achieving the quality in higher education as well as to recognize the studies, Diplomas and Degree of all countries.

Without effecting the role of ministry as stated above, the particular University has also developed its own system for the recognition of foreign studies, including Diplomas, and Degrees in Nepal. For this, there is a specific branch called curriculum development center (C.D.C) under T. U. To deal with these issues. There is a Committee, headed by Rector of the university which decides the issues relating to equivalence of foreign studies including Diploma and degrees.

In all the cases in which recognition has been given to the examinations of other universities and bodies as equivalent to the corresponding examinations of this

university such recognition is available only to those universities and bodies which reciprocate with this university and applicable only to such students as have attended a regular course of studies laid down for the examination at a collage affiliated to the university or included among its constituent collage or an institution recognized by the body concerned. Following are the standard setout by C.D.C [T.U. Directory of Recognition and Equivalence Of Educational Qualification , 1999,p.1]

- 1) All the examinations of the statutory universities and institution of India provided that for the purpose of determining the class or division the standards laid down by this university shall be taken into account.
- 2) All the examination of the universities of U.K., London, Edinburgh, Leeds, Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester.
- 3) The Master's and Doctorate degrees of the following universities: Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, Yale, California, Chicago, Oregon, Michigan, Syracuse, Cornell, Pennsylvania, New York.

General Information

1. Students passing S.L.C and Intermediate level examinations and also Bachelor in arts and Commerce level examination from Universities or Boards outside Nepal must have passed in English as one of the subjects or must have passed a qualifying examination in English later, for equivalence to the corresponding examination of the Tribhuvan University. Such type of qualifying examination shall be conducted by T. U. Examination Division.
2. The English language course prescribed by the institutions of India consisting of 50 Full Marks different academic level shall be one full paper of three hours duration as conducted by the External Examination as a separate subject to qualify for higher studies in Tribhuvan University: Such courses of English offered in lieu of vernacular paper shall not be acceptable to qualify for higher studies .
3. Students having passed B.A./B. Com. Degrees from the Calcutta University and the North Bengal University with the additional compulsory language paper of English must have passed in compulsory English subject separately in accordance with the T.U. Regulations as mentioned on Article 1 above to qualify for higher studies in T.U.
4. The three years degree corse examination of Indian Statutory Universities, whether university conducted or college conducted, have been granted equivalence as follows.

Indian Statutory Universities Examinations Examination

T.U.

First Year examination of three years degree course

Intermediate

Second year examination of the three years degree course

Third year of Bachelor (only for 2 yrs Bachelor Degree course)

The basis of recognizing the foreign student's Diploma and degrees has been the principle of reciprocity as stated above

However , this principle is not implemented properly by other countries .The studies ,Diplomas and Degrees awarded by Nepalese Universities are facing some difficulties to get the recognition as it is expected.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Dr. Hyun-Chong Lee

1. Significance in Higher Education of Korea

- Korea has been trying to increase international exchanges in Higher Education area in many ways, which are categorized as 1) international exchange of education and culture through intergovernmental programs commissioned by bilateral agreements and participation in exchange activities with international organizations, 2) dispatching Korean students to foreign countries to contribute to the development of the nation after studying foreign culture, science, and technology, 3) affording convenience to foreign scholars who study Korean studies and students who want to come and study in Korea, 4) promoting mutual understanding and inter-country cooperation by means of youth exchange, and 5) exchange of scholars to provide for a sharing of information and experiences and scientific development.
- As of 1999, Korean government has bilateral cultural agreements with 81 countries and educational exchange agreements with 3 countries. Exchange programs provided under such agreements are intended to lead interactive exchanges of information, mutual understanding, and cooperation between different peoples.
- Korean government encourages and supports the development of Korean Studies at overseas institutes of higher learning by providing grants for staff and development and lectures, facilitating the exchange of academics, financing research and publication and supplying materials. Currently, 167 universities and research institutes in 37 countries are performing research in Korea Studies.
- Korean Proficiency Test (KPT) was newly developed for the purpose of enhancing understanding of Korean cultures and language. The first test was given 1997 and a total of 1,722 people passed the test. The third test was taken in 7 countries last year.
- 70 college graduates with outstanding achievement are granted government-sponsored full scholarships - \$18,200 per year for 2 to 3 years – to finance their studies at overseas institutes of higher learning. In addition, to help Korean college students to get specialized knowledge, the government provides research scholarship of \$38,000 per year for 3 years for those who would study at overseas doctorate courses.

- Ministry of Education scholarship are provided for foreign students who wish to study in Korea for advanced degrees or in connection with short-term language and study tour programs. Foreign students in countries with which Korea has diplomatic relations are entitled to apply for the scholarships. It takes three to four years to obtain master's and doctoral degrees. The Korea Research Foundation is responsible for providing counselling for scholars and students who wish to study abroad and giving information on studying abroad. Foreign grantees of government scholarship were 78 during the period of 1997-1999.

- At the meeting of the Korean and Japanese education ministers in Seoul, the issue of overseas students was discussed. The Japanese government announced in early March that it plans to boost its recruitment of Korean students to study in Japan by 1,000 over the next 10 years. At first, 100 students were chosen in the Korean-Japan program to be sent to Japanese universities of engineering in 1999. It is estimated that 40,000 to 50,000 Korean students now study in Japan. However, the number of Japanese students pursuing studies in Korea is much smaller. Reducing the gap in terms of total numbers of students could be the first task to improve relations between Korean and Japan.

- The follows are currently ongoing activities in Korea:
 - Open policy for studying overseas from middle school
 - Joint efforts of educational exchanges with Chinese universities
 - Joint efforts of international co-operations with AVCC in higher education
 - Volunteering services with Russia, China, Mongolia, Vietnam, and Philippines as one of college internship programs
 - Forming national coordinating body composed of deans of 192 international education and exchange divisions in Korean Council for University Education
 - Developing ASEM-related computer tutoring programs with Russia, China, Mongolia, Vietnam, and Philippines

2. International Student Exchange

- Currently, numbers of Korean students study abroad are up to 154,219, which is about 25 times as many as those of foreign students studying in Korea. They are wide spread out to 71 countries. 53,888 Korean Students (35%) stay in Canada for study, 42,890 (28%) in the U.S., and 9,526 (6%) in Australia as of 1999. The statistics shows that most of Korean students stay in the countries, which use English. On the contrary, among all of 6,279 foreign students studying in our country, 1,684 foreign students (27%) are from Japan, 1,182 (19%) from China, 432 (7%) from Taiwan. Table 1 show these in detail.

Table. 1. Statistics on student exchange

Year	Students send		Students received	
	1997	1999	1998	1999
Numbers of countries	69	71	106	108
Numbers of Students	133,249	154,219	5,329	6,279

- In addition, government supported financially both foreign and Korean students who want to study outside of their own country. Since 1977, 1,639 Korean students have got financial assistance from the government. Majors of students who got the assistantship have been mainly composed of Engineering (902 students), Social sciences (255 students), and Liberal arts (87 students).

3. Innovative Activities of Korean Universities

- Seoul Digital University, in which students have classes only through Internet, is going to open early next year. Academic areas to be open are law, business, finance and insurance, electronic commerce, informational communication, international area studies, multimedia and arts, communications, general education. The university is going to be an important cornerstone to begin a new era of cyber education in higher education of Korea.
- New curriculum has been developed at a few Korean universities for students who are preparing to study abroad. Youngnam University, Myungji University, Dongshin University, and Hannam University are about to starting “international General Education Curriculum” from next semester (Spring, 2001). The curriculum will contain common subjects such as English, Mathematics, Basic Sciences, Psychology, and World History and so on. Students’ obtained credits from the program have effects only when they are admitted as students to the designated universities in the U.S., which have agreements with those four Korean universities.

SRI LANKA

Prof. K. Tillekeratne

The Higher Education System

In Sri Lanka, the main institutional system which offers degrees and related qualifications comprises twelve Universities of the conventional model and one Open University. These Universities derive their legal authority to offer degrees by an Act of Parliament. While each University enjoys academic autonomy, all of them come under the purview of the University Grants Commission (UGC) whose functions include the disbursement of funds, formulation of student-admission criteria and setting administrative guidelines and norms. Each University has its own governing body called the Council, the Senate which is the highest academic policy making body, the Faculty Boards of study which report to the Senate, and a plethora of committees to facilitate decision making at all levels.

The twelve conventional Universities admit students into the undergraduate programmes directly from the senior secondary schools and provide undergraduate education without levying fees. The present enrolment of undergraduates in these Universities stands approximately at 35,000 which represents 2% of the relevant age group.

These Universities may also conduct fee-levying courses such as Bachelors Degree programmes for external students and postgraduate programmes. These opportunities are widely made use of and the numbers presently enrolled in such programmes are in excess of one hundred thousand.

The Open University offers a very wide variety of fee levying programmes of study and the number of students registered currently stands approximately at 18,500.

Outside the system of Universities, Sri Lanka also has a few degree awarding institutions, created by Acts of Parliament, to service special sectors of national activity - an example being the National Institute of Education, which, apart from performing a variety of other educational functions, also offers Diplomas, Bachelor and Master courses for school teachers and educational administrators who are already in service. However, this paper confines itself to quality assurance in the University system of Sri Lanka.

The future vision regarding academic quality assurance in the Sri Lankan University system is depicted in the Figure 1. As indicated there some of the quality assurance measures are already in place while others are yet under discussion. The target is to

complete setting up a comprehensive quality assurance system by mid 2001. The system that is envisaged would enable rational comparison of standards maintained by any Sri Lankan University with any other in-country or foreign University. It would also enhance student mobility between Universities.

Of the many aspects encompassed by the Figure 1, I shall try to elaborate on a few essential ingredients necessary for progressing towards the envisioned quality assurance system.

Modularization of Course Content

As a first step towards establishing comparability of similar programmes of study in different Universities, the Universities of Sri Lanka have embarked upon modularizing the course contents and adopting a bi-semester academic year. Whilst this system has been accepted by the Faculties of Arts, Science and Management, the Faculties such as Medicine, Engineering and Law which prepare students for specific professions are still debating the issue. Together with the modularization a fully-fledged course-credit system with the usual attendant characteristics has been adopted.

This form of assessment will, in the future, constitute the basis for a Common Credit Currency system among the Sri Lankan Universities.

Intra-University and Inter-University Curriculum Committees

A hierarchy of Curriculum Committees, starting from Department level and culminating in the University Curriculum Committee, exists in each University (see Figure 2). The faculty-based Standing Committees of the UGC have an inter-University composition and are responsible for monitoring quality. It has been felt that these Standing Committees are unable to deal with all the details pertaining to maintenance of quality and comparable standards in all Universities. The alternative that has been proposed is a hierarchy of discipline-based Inter-University Committees with Inter-University Discipline Committees at the first level, Inter-University Discipline Cluster Committees at the second level and the Inter-University Higher Curriculum Committee at the apex.

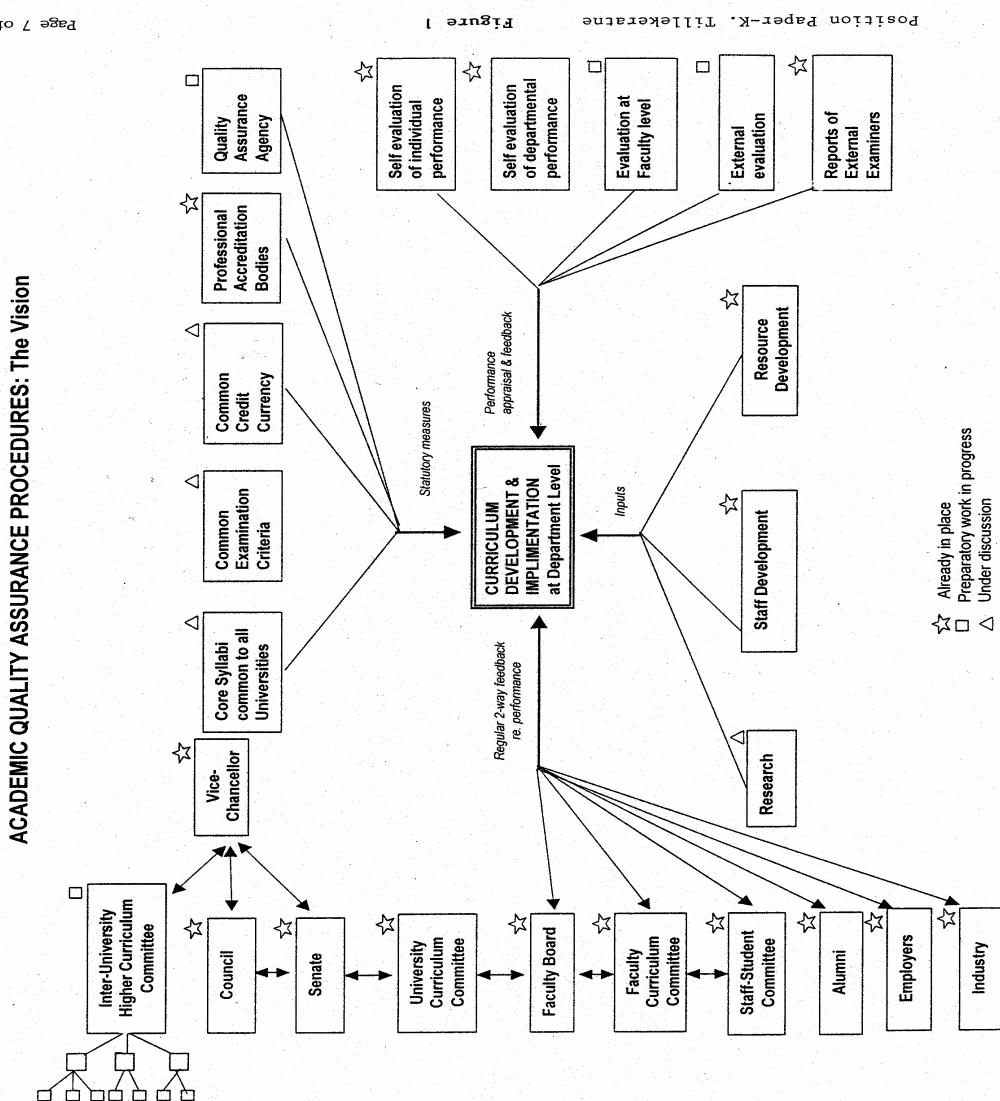
The function of this sequence of committees is envisaged to be the specification of standards for each discipline and this would involve, among other things, the formulation of core modules for each discipline. While each University teaching the discipline will be obliged to offer the core-modules, it would have freedom to develop the elective modules within a broad framework of standards.

Issues of Accreditation

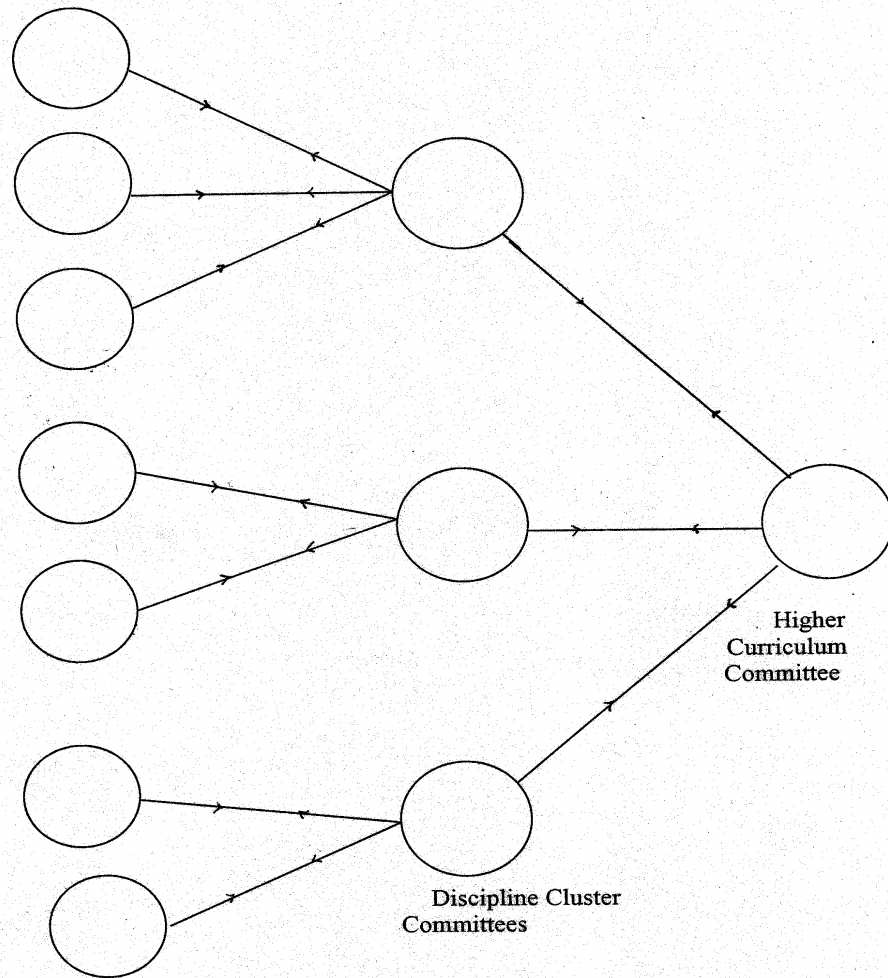
Presently accreditation bodies are in existence in the professional fields such as Medicine, Engineering, and Law. The recognition by the respective body is a requirement to practice the profession in Sri Lanka.

However, in the case of Liberal Arts and Sciences no such formal mechanisms exist for regulating standards. The proposed Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) would be expected to fill this void. Further the QAA would be empowered to deal with problems arising out of Diploma/Degree courses conducted within Sri Lanka by Institutions acting on behalf of non-resident mother-institutions which have been increasing in numbers in the recent years causing concern to the authorities as well as the public.

Academic Quality Assurance Procedures : The Vision



Inter University Committees



Discipline Committees

Figure 2

Inter-University Committees

Annex VIII

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPANTS

AUSTRALIA

Ms. Margaret Pearce

Director, Quality & Recognition, Higher Education Division
Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
14 Mort Street, Canberra ACT 26004, Australia
Tel: (61 2) 6240 9653
Fax: (61 2) 6240 7846
E mail: margaret.pearce@detya.gov.au

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. Li Jun

Deputy Director General
The Office of Academic Degrees Committee of the
State Council (ADCSC)
#35 Damucang Hutong Street, Xidan
Beijing 100816, P.R. China
Tel: (86-10) 66096882
Fax: (86-10) 66021964
Email: Lijun@moe.edu.cn

Mr. Xi Shitong

Professor in Heat Transfer and President Assistant
Shanghai Jiaotong University
Shanghai 200030, P.R. China
Tel: (86-21) 62933411 (ext. 11)
Fax: (86-21) 62819803
Email: stxi@mail.sjtu.edu.cn

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Mr. Chae Ryang Il

Director, Dept. of Higher Education
Ministry of Education
DPR Korea National Commission for UNESCO
Tel: (850-2) 3827222
Fax: (850-2) 3814660

Mr. Kim Chang Min

Senior Secretary, National Commission for UNESCO
DPR Korea National Commission for UNESCO

Tel: (850-2) 3827222
Fax: (850-2) 3814660

HOLY SEE

H.E. Msgr Adriano Bernardini
Apostolic Nuncio/Ambassador
Apostolic Nunciature (Vatican Embassy),
217/1 Sathorn Tai Road, Bangkok 10120, Thailand
Tel: (66-2) 2125853
Fax: (66-2) 2120932
Email: vatemb@mozart.inet.co.th

Rev. Bro. P. Martin Komolmas
FSG,
President of Assumption University (ABAC)
Hua Mark, Bangkok 10240, Thailand

INDIA

Dr. Antony Stella
Deputy Adviser
National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)
"Aragini Bhavana", 2nd floor,
2/4, Dr. Rajkumar Road, P.B. 1075, Rajajinagar,
Bangalore 560010, India
Tel: (91-80) 338-4045,
Fax: (91-80) 338-4047
Email: naac@giasbqol.vsnl.net.in

KAZAKHSTAN

Mr. Abdumutalip A. Abzhapparov
Director of the Department of Higher Education
Ministry of Education and Science
Kazakhstan
Tel: (3172) 333780
Fax: (3172) 333779

MALDIVES

Dr. Mahamoodh Shougee
Chief Educational Supervisor
Ministry of Education
Ghazee Building, Male, Rep. of Maldives
Tel: (960) 321529, Mobile No. 778232
Fax: (960) 321201
Email: admin@consultbfs.com.mv
shougee@thauleem.net

MONGOLIA**Dr. R. Bat-Erdene**

Chairman

National Accreditation Council for Higher Education

Tel: (976-1) 351252, 353537

Fax: (976-1) 322612, 353537

Email: bmostec@magicnet.mn**NEPAL****Mr. Gunanidhi Neupane**

Associate Professor of Law

Faculty of Law, Tribhuvan University

Nepal Law Campus, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: (977-1) 418782, 483548

Fax: (977-1) 412460

Email: unesco@nncu.wlink.com.np**REPUBLIC OF
KOREA****Dr. Hyun-Chong Lee**

Secretary-General

Korean Council for University Education

27-2 Youido-Dong, Youngdeungpo-Koo

Seoul 150-742, Korea

Tel: (82-2) 7833066

Fax: (82-2) 7849806

Email: leehc@kcue.or.kr**SRI LANKA****Prof. K. Tillekerate**

Vice-Chancellor, University of Kelaniya

Email: vc.kln@dynaweb.lk

C/o Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO

Ministry of Education & Higher Education

Isurupaya, Battaramulla, Sri Lanka

Tel: (94-1) 864809

Fax: (94-1) 872158

Email: slncu@slt.lk**INVITED PARTICIPANTS****ASAIHL****Dr. Ninnat Olanvoravuth**

Secretary-General

The Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning

Ratasastra Building, Chulalongkorn University

Henri Dunant Road, Bangkok 10330, Thailand

Tel: (66-2) 2516966
Fax: (66-2) 2537909
Email: ninnat99@hotmail.com

**SEAMEO-
RIHED**

Dr. Padoongchart Suwanawongse
Director
SEAMEO RIHED
5th floor, Ministry of University Affairs Building
328 Sri Ayutthaya Road, Rajthevee, Bangkok 10400, Thailand
Tel: (66-2) 6445418 (ext. 518, 523)
Fax: (66-2) 6445421
Email: rihed@seameo.org

UMAP

Mr. Laurie Fisher
Project Manager, International Relations
Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
One Geils Court, Deakin ACT 2600, Australia
Tel: (61-2) 62858224
Fax: (61-2) 62858211
Email: l.fisher@avcc.edu.au

INVITED OBSERVERS

MALAYSIA

Ms. Rosanizi bt. Ahmad
Assistant Director,
Policy Division, Department of Higher Education
Ministry of Education
Level 2, Block J (North), Damansara Town Centre
50604 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tel: (603) 2583425
Fax: (603) 2551223
Email: nizie73@hotmail.com

**MALAYSIA
(Cont'd)**

Mr. Najmi bin Mohd Noor

Accreditation Manager, National Accreditation Board
Ministry of Education Malaysia
Tel: (603) 79687012
Fax: (603) 79569496
Email: najmi@lan.moe.gov.my

Dr. Mohd Yahya Nordin

National Accreditation Board, Ministry of Education Malaysia
Tel: (603) 79687012
Fax: (603) 79569496
Email: myahya@lan.moe.gov.my

Mr. Mohamad Dzafir Mustafa

National Accreditation Board
Ministry of Education Malaysia
Tel: (603) 79687012
Fax: (603) 79569496
Email: dzafirm@lan.moe.gov.my

Mrs. Mazlinawati Mohamed

National Accreditation Board
Ministry of Education Malaysia
Tel: (603) 79687012
Fax: (603) 79569496
Email: mazlinawati@lan.moe.gov.my

Mrs. Zakiah Abdul Wahab

National Accreditation Board
Ministry of Education Malaysia
Tel: (603) 79687012
Fax: (603) 79569496
Email: zakiah@lan.moe.gov.my

PHILIPPINES

Hon. Mona D. Valisno

Commissioner
Commission on Higher Education, Republic of the Philippines
Tel: (63-2) 6361690
Fax: (63-2) 6364870
Email: chedco@info.com.ph

THAILAND**Ms. Jiranee Tantiratanawong**

Senior Advisor for Education Standards

Ministry of University Affairs

328 Si Ayutthaya Road, Bangkok 10400, Thailand

Tel: (66-2) 6445913

Fax: (66-2) 2464030

Email: jeranee@mis.mua.go.th

SECRETARIAT**UNESCO****Dr. Wang Yibing**

Programme Specialist in Higher Education

UNESCO PROAP, Bangkok, Thailand

Tel: (66-2) 3910577(ext. 204)

Fax: (66-2) 3910866

Email: y.wang@unesco-proap.org

Mr. Kim Chon-Hong

Associate Expert on Higher Education

UNESCO PROAP, Bangkok, Thailand

Tel: (66-2) 3910577 (ext. 207)

Fax: (66-2) 3910866

Email: chkim@unesco-proap.org