

December 16, 1983

## **REGIONAL CONVENTION ON THE RECOGNITION OF STUDIES, DIPLOMAS AND DEGREES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

### **PREAMBLE**

The States of Asia and the Pacific, Parties to this Convention,

Guided by a common will to strengthen the bonds by which geography and history have linked them,

Recalling that, as stated in the Constitution of Unesco, the purpose of the Organization is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture.

Mindful of the need to intensify their cultural exchanges with a view to facilitating the economic, social, cultural and technological development of each and all of the countries of the region of Asia and the Pacific and to promoting peace there,

Anxious in particular to strengthen and extend their collaboration with a view to making optimum use of their potential so as to encourage the advance of knowledge and continually improve the quality of higher education and convinced that, within the framework of such collaboration, the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education, by allowing students and specialists to move more freely, constitutes a prerequisite for accelerating the development of the region, which demands the training and full employment of increasing numbers of scientists, technicians

Convinced that the great diversity of the cultures and higher education systems existing in the Asia and the Pacific region constitutes an exceptional resource and anxious to enable their peoples to take full advantage of this cultural resource by facilitating access for the nationals of each Contracting State, in particular its students, teachers, researchers and members of the professions, to the educational resources of the other Contracting States by authorizing them to continue their training and research in the higher educational institutions of the other States, with due regard for their domestic legislation,

Recognizing also the substantial diversity which exists in the region in educational traditions and systems, in traditions and requirements for professional practice and in constitutional, legal and administrative arrangements,

Recalling also that many Contracting States have already concluded bilateral or subregional agreements on equivalence and recognition among themselves, but desirous, after making efforts at bilateral and subregional level and strengthening such efforts, of extending their collaboration to the whole region of Asia and the Pacific,

Considering that because of the diversity and complexity of courses it may not always be feasible to establish between diplomas or degrees of different countries, or even of different higher educational institutions in the same country, an equivalence based on the notion of a strict equality of value and that, for the purposes of authorization to move on to further stages of study, recourse should be had to a method of recognition of studies which, in the interests of both social and international mobility, allows of evaluating the level of competence reached, consideration being given to the learning attested by the diplomas or degrees obtained and to any other experience regarded by the authorities concerned as guaranteeing that competence,

Considering that the recognition by all the Contracting States of studies, certificates, diplomas and degrees obtained in any one of them is calculated to develop the mobility of persons and the exchange of ideas, knowledge and scientific and technological experience,

Noting that this recognition constitutes one of the conditions necessary for:

1. enabling means of education existing in their territories to be used as effectively as possible for the common good,
2. ensuring that teachers, students, research workers and members of the professions have greater mobility,
3. alleviating the difficulties encountered on their return by persons who have been trained abroad,

Desiring to ensure that studies, certificates, diplomas and degrees are recognized as widely as possible, taking into account the principles of the promotion of lifelong education, the democratization of education, and the adoption and application of an education policy allowing for structural, economic, technological and social changes and suited to the cultural context of each country,

Determined to sanction and organize their future collaboration in these matters by means of a convention which will be the starting-point for concerted dynamic action taken in particular by means of national, bilateral, subregional and multilateral machinery already existing or set up for the purpose,

Mindful that the ultimate objective set by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization consists in preparing an international convention on the recognition and the validity of degrees, diplomas and certificates issued by establishments of higher learning and research in all countries',

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

## **I. DEFINITIONS**

### **ARTICLE 1**

1. For the purpose of this Convention, the 'recognition' of a foreign certificate, diploma or degree of higher education means its acceptance by the competent authorities of a Contracting State and the granting to the holder of the rights enjoyed by persons possessing a national certificate, diploma or degree with which the foreign one is assessed as comparable by competent authorities within the Contracting State. Such rights extend to either the pursuit of studies or the practice of a profession, or both, according to the applicability of the recognition.

(a) Recognition of a certificate, diploma or degree with a view to undertaking or pursuing studies at the higher level shall entitle the holder to be considered for admission to the higher educational and research institutions situated in any Contracting State under the same conditions as those applying to holders of a comparable certificate, diploma or degree issued in the Contracting State concerned. Such recognition does not exempt the holder of the foreign certificate, diploma or degree from complying with any conditions (other than those relating to the holding of a diploma or degree) which may be required for admission by the higher educational or research institution concerned in the State granting such recognition.

(b) Recognition of a foreign certificate/diploma or degree with a view to the practice of a profession constitutes recognition that the holder has received the technical training required for the practice of that profession. Such recognition does not exempt the holder of the foreign certificate, diploma or degree from complying with any other conditions for the practice of the profession concerned which may be laid down by the competent governmental or professional authorities of Contracting States concerned.

(c) However, recognition of a certificate, diploma or degree may not entitle the holder in another Contracting State to more rights than he would enjoy in the country in which it was conferred.

2. For the purposes of this Convention:

(a) 'secondary education' means that stage of studies of any kind which follows primary or elementary education and the aims of which may include the preparing of pupils for access to higher education;

(b) 'higher education' means all education, training or research at post-secondary level.

3. For the purposes of this Convention 'partial studies' means periods of study or training which, although not constituting a complete course of study, are such that they add significantly to the acquisition of knowledge or skills.

## **II. AIMS**

## ARTICLE 2

1. The Contracting States intend to contribute through their joint action to the promotion of the active co-operation of all the nations of the Asia and the Pacific region in the cause of peace and international understanding and to the development of more effective collaboration with other Member States of Unesco with regard to a more comprehensive use of their educational, technological and scientific potential.

2. The Contracting States solemnly declare their firm resolve to co-operate closely within the framework of their legislative and constitutional structures with a view to:

(a) enabling the educational and research resources available to them to be used as effectively as possible in the interests of all the Contracting States, and, for this purpose:

(i) making their higher educational institutions as widely accessible as possible to students or researchers from any of the Contracting States;

(ii) recognizing the studies, certificates, diplomas and degrees of such persons;

(iii) elaborating and adopting terminology and evaluation criteria that are as similar as possible in order to facilitate the application of a system capable of ensuring the comparability of credits, subjects of study, certificates, diplomas and degrees, and of the conditions of access to higher education;

(iv) 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, and also the individual's other relevant qualifications, so far as these may be deemed acceptable by competent authorities;

(v) adopting flexible criteria for the evaluation of partial studies, based on the educational level reached and on the content of the courses taken, bearing in mind the interdisciplinary character of knowledge at higher educational levels;

(vi) establishing and improving the system for the exchange of information regarding the recognition of studies, certificates, diplomas and degrees;

(b) constantly improving curricula in the Contracting States and methods of planning and promoting higher education, including harmonization of the conditions of access to higher education on-the basis of not only the requirements for

economic, social and cultural development, the policies of each country and also the objectives that are set out in the recommendations made by the competent organs of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization concerning the continuous improvement of the quality of education, the promotion of lifelong education and the democratization of education, but also the aims of the full development of the human personality and of understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and in general all aims concerning human rights assigned to education by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and the Unesco Convention against Discrimination in Education;

(c) promoting regional and worldwide co-operation in the matter of comparability and recognition or equivalence of studies and academic qualifications.

3. The Contracting States agree to take all feasible steps at the national, bilateral and multilateral levels, in particular by means of bilateral, subregional, regional or other agreements, arrangements between universities or other higher educational institutions and arrangements with the competent national or international organizations and other bodies, with a view to the progressive attainment of the goals defined in the present article.

### **III. UNDERTAKINGS FOR IMMEDIATE APPLICATION**

#### **ARTICLE 3**

1. The Contracting States agree to take all feasible steps to give recognition, as defined in Article 1, paragraph 1 (a), to secondary school leaving certificates and other diplomas issued in the other Contracting States that grant access to higher education with a view to enabling the holders to undertake studies in institutions of higher education situated in the respective territories of the Contracting States.

2. However, admission to a given educational institution may, without prejudice to the provisions of Article 1, paragraph 1 (a), be dependent on the availability of places and also on the conditions concerning linguistic knowledge required in order profitably to undertake the studies in question.

#### **ARTICLE 4**

1. The Contracting States agree to take all feasible steps with a view to:

(a) giving recognition as defined in Article 1, paragraph 1 (a) , to certificates, diplomas and degrees with a view to enabling the holders to pursue advanced studies and training and undertake research in the institutions of higher education situated in their territory;

(b) defining, so far as possible, the procedure applicable to the recognition, for the purpose of the pursuit of studies, of