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First Global Forum on
International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the
Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education

“Globalization and Higher Education”

FINAL REPORT

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First Global Forum on
International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the
Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education

“Globalization and Higher Education”

FINAL REPORT

I. Introduction

1. The first Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications, organized by the Division of Higher Education, took place at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, on 17-18 October 2002.
2. This Global Forum was launched as part of UNESCO’s mission to respond to the ethical challenges and dilemmas facing higher education as a result of globalisation. The Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications aims to provide a platform for dialogue between a wide range of higher education providers and stakeholders and to link existing frameworks dealing with international issues of quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications.
3. An objective of the meeting of experts (Category VI, Article 56, Manual of the General Conference, 2002) was to propose to the Director-General of UNESCO an Action Plan for implementation in the 2004-2005 biennium currently under preparation.
4. The meeting brought together 120 participants representing a wide range of higher education providers and stakeholders.
5. Participants included the Presidents and related experts from five of the six Regional Committees in charge of the application of the UNESCO Conventions on the recognition of qualifications in higher education in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States, the Mediterranean, the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention for the Europe Region, including North America (the Lisbon Recognition Convention) as well as an expert from the Latin America and the Caribbean Region.
6. Partners from inter-governmental organizations including the Commonwealth of Learning, the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the International Labour Organization, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the World Bank, as well as non-governmental organizations including Columbus, Education International, the European University Association, the International Association of Universities, the International Association of University Presidents, the International Baccalaureate Organization, the International Council for Open and Distance Education, the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies of Higher Education, and the United Nations University participated.
7. In addition, representatives of the higher education community such as students from the Association des états généraux des étudiants de l’Europe (AEGEE) and the National Union of Students in Europe (ESIB), new providers of higher education, including virtual and open universities (the African Virtual University, the Hong Kong Open University and Indira Gandhi National Open University) as well as for-profit universities, corporate universities and business (Cap Gemini Ernst & Young University, Hewlett Packard University Relations and the University of Phoenix) were present.

8. The World Trade Organization (WTO) expressed its regret that due to financial restrictions it was unable to participate in the meeting. Colleagues at the WTO had however provided valuable inputs to the UNESCO Secretariat on possible links between existing frameworks. They offered advice to inform discussions on the trade in education services related to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) by pointing to modalities that could be used during the ongoing negotiations. (Annex I: Final List of Participants).

II. Opening of the Global Forum and Organization of Discussions

9. Mr John Daniel, Assistant Director-General for Education on 17 October 2002, opened the First Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications.

10. The working languages of the First Global Forum were English and French in the plenary discussions. Speeches made in one of the working languages were simultaneously interpreted into the other languages. Workshops/Working Groups were held either in one or both of the working languages. The majority of documents were made available in both working languages.

11. The First Global Forum included three Plenary Sessions and two Parallel Workshop/Working Group sessions. The First Plenary Session centred on 'Implications of Globalization in Higher Education'. The Second Plenary Session highlighted 'Perspectives from the Regions'. The final Plenary Session outlined a Follow Up- Strategy for the Global Forum. The Parallel Workshop/Working Group Sessions focussed on four main topics: trade in higher education services - education as a public or private good; quality assurance and accreditation; learning and learners; and the recognition of qualifications. The Parallel Thematic Workshops on 17 October 2002 aimed to provide debate and exchange of views. The Parallel Working Groups on 18 October 2002 focussed on proposing elements for an Action Plan for UNESCO to carry out in the framework of the Global Forum in 2004-2005. (Annex II: Final Programme).

III. Summary of Discussions

12. The discussions of Session I: 'Implications of Globalization for Higher Education', chaired by Mr F.K. Seddoh, Director of the Division of Higher Education, UNESCO, centred on new developments in higher education arising from the emerging knowledge society. In his opening speech, 'Automobiles, Bananas, Courses and Degrees... An ABC of Higher Education and Globalization', Mr John Daniel outlined the relevance of the UNESCO Constitution to globalisation and higher education. Mr Daniel also identified key principles that should guide the deliberations of the Global Forum (Annex III: Opening Speech by Mr John Daniel, Assistant Director-General for Education). Mr Madan Pant of the Indira Ghandi National Open University, India then delivered a Keynote Speech in which he explored the changing nature of higher education in the post-Internet age, stressing the need for a fresh look at Intellectual Property definitions, ownership and protection to create a more effective framework appropriate in the Knowledge Era.

13. The ensuing Panel Discussions focussed on borderless higher education and its implications for quality assurance and recognition of qualifications. Ms Robin Middlehurst of the University of Surrey, UK stressed the need for more sophisticated categories linked to quality assurance arrangements that recognise and value diverse forms of learning and learners. Mr Dirk Van Damme of the Flemish Inter-University Council (VLIR), Belgium provided an overview of the functions of higher education in constructing the global knowledge society and the dimensions of an international academic value-system. Mr Van Damme called for a policy framework for the role of higher education in the

sustainable development of the global knowledge society. Ms Mala Singh of the Council of Higher Education, South Africa provided a response to the Panel discussion by engaging with key issues raised in the two papers and relating them to the objectives of the Global Forum. Ms Singh stressed that the growth of borderless education and the location of borderless providers within an international public policy framework for higher education underscores that a serious research agenda must accompany these developments. Ms Singh concluded by stating that it was the responsibility of the Global Forum to ensure that a negotiated policy framework, workable procedures and effective tracking and monitoring of education purposes be integrated into discussions concerning higher education and the public good.

14. This Panel discussion was followed by four Parallel Thematic Workshops, that aimed to provide debate and exchange of views. The topics of the workshops centred on : i. Global Markets and Shared Responsibilities in Higher Education – Trade in Higher Education Services; ii. The Impact of Globalization on Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications; iii. Diversity of Learning and Learners; and iv. Public vs. Private Higher Education – Public Good, Equity and Access. (Annex IV: Reports from Thematic Workshops).

15. Session II: 'New Providers in Higher Education' was chaired by Ms Svava Bjarnason, of the Observatory on Borderless Education. This session centred on the presentation of Mr Jorge Klor de Alva of Apollo International, United States entitled 'Perspectives from a For-Profit Higher Education Provider'. Mr Klor de Alva outlined the University of Phoenix programme, its main objectives, philosophy, target audience and assessment policy. Mr Klor de Alva also gave an overview of Apollo International that provides higher education in countries outside the United States on a transnational basis.

16. Session III : 'Perspectives from the Regions' was chaired by Mr John Daniel, Assistant Director-General for Education. This session started with a presentation from Ms Uvalic-Trumbic, summarizing the activities since the Expert Meeting on the Impact of Globalisation on Higher Education in September 2001 that initiated the Global Forum. Ms Uvalic-Trumbic then gave a concise overview of the six UNESCO regional conventions and one UNESCO inter-regional convention on the recognition of qualifications ratified by some 130 Member States and highlighted them as a framework complementary to GATS.

17. The ensuing Panel discussion in this Session provided inputs from Presidents and related experts from five of the six Regional Committees in charge of the application of the UNESCO Conventions on the recognition of qualifications in higher education in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States, the Mediterranean, the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention for the Europe Region, including North America (the Lisbon Recognition Convention) as well as an expert from the Latin America and the Caribbean Region.

18. The presentation from the Africa Region discussed the current review of the African Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications ('Arusha Convention') to address new developments in higher education. The representatives from the Asia and Pacific Region pointed out the role of international trade in higher education in the region, and highlighted the example of India, as both an importer and exporter of higher education. The direct relation between the development of ICTs and trade in higher education were stressed. The Arab States presentation focussed on a report on new providers in the region. The representatives from the European Region outlined the Bologna Process, which aims to establish a European Higher Education Area by 2010. The possibility of using the Lisbon Recognition Convention as a standard within the context of GATS was called for by stating that 'we must remember that GATS is not the only game in town!'. The expert from the Latin America and Caribbean Region provided an overview of new providers in the region and stressed the

need for quality assurance mechanisms for new providers. The Mediterranean Recognition Convention representatives highlighted the need for inter-regional information exchange.

19. Four Parallel Working Groups that aimed to provide elements towards an Action Plan for UNESCO to implement the Global Forum followed this Panel discussion. The topics of the working groups centred on: i. Towards Policy Frameworks on Transborder Higher Education - Guiding Principles; ii. Quality Assurance and Accreditation - Establishing International Frameworks; iii. Recognition of Qualifications and Competencies - Input to the Regional Committees; iv. Empowering the Learner - Developing Tools for Students, Parents and Employees. (Annex V: Reports from Working Groups).

20. Session IV: 'Follow – Up Strategy' was Chaired by Mr John Daniel, Assistant Director-General for Education. This session started with Reports from the Working Groups in Session IV. This was followed by a presentation of the conclusions of the meeting by the Rapporteur General, Ms Carolyn Campbell of the United Kingdom.

21. The Rapporteur General, Ms Carolyn Campbell, provided a summary of the conclusions by highlighting UNESCO's role in the Global Forum. Ms Campbell stated that the Global Forum was reminded of UNESCO's support for the principles of access to quality higher education for all on the basis of merit as a human right and of education remaining a 'public good'. It was noted, however, that UNESCO acknowledges that public and state are not synonymous and there are no necessary links between the free exchange of ideas and public funding. The Rapporteur General also stressed that UNESCO was striving to highlight how public agendas could be shared between private and public providers. The proposed further liberalization of trade in education services in the current round of GATS negotiations formed an additional backdrop to the Global Forum meeting. UNESCO's intentions at international level in this respect were focused on promoting fair trade and internationalisation.

22. Mr Daniel, in his closing remarks, stated that UNESCO perceives the Global Forum as a stepping stone in a fast moving process and very much as a collective endeavour. In particular, quality assurance and accreditation structures, as a well-organized community, need to get along with the different existing frameworks. In this field, it was stressed that UNESCO plays a coordinating rather than a regulatory role vis à vis the different activities and projects.

23. Mr Daniel stressed UNESCO's specific role and functions, as delineated in its Medium Term Strategy¹, as a *standard-setter* at the intergovernmental level to strengthen its own existing normative instruments such as the regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications. This can be realized, Mr Daniel stated, by updating and modernizing these conventions to respond to their specific regional contexts while at the same time putting them into a larger international framework complementary to GATS. In addition, it was highlighted that UNESCO's roles and functions are to provide *capacity building* at the regional and national level based on needs (e.g. in quality assurance and accreditation); and to fulfil its *clearinghouse* functions, (e.g. revising the Study Abroad publication and updating its Internet information tools).

IV. Decisions and Recommendations

24. The participants agreed that the Global Forum should continue as a platform for exchange between the various partners and stakeholders in international and transborder higher education for a

¹UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy 2002-2007, Article 30, defines UNESCO's functions as *a laboratory of ideas, a standard-setter, a learning house, a capacity-builder in Member States, a catalyst for international cooperation.*

period of at least four years in the first instance. The Global Forum should provide an inclusive space to share information between different partners, networks and stakeholders in higher education. It should also initiate debate on the social, political, economic and cultural dimensions underpinning globalization and higher education.

25. The participants also agreed that there is a need to build bridges between education (i.e. academic values and principles) and trade in higher education services. UNESCO, the WTO as well as OECD could act as complementary organizations providing a joint forum for discussing both the cultural and commercial aspects of trade in higher education. There should be exploration by UNESCO of the implications of offering the World Conference on Higher Education Declaration and the regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications as international standards in the context of GATS (reference GATS Article 1.6) and of 'what is necessary to ensure quality' (reference GATS Article 6.4).

26. The lack of research on the concept of global public good and empirical evidence on the impact of borderless education on widening access to higher education was particularly highlighted. Hence, a well-defined research agenda, it was stressed, is needed as an important substantive component of the Global Forum activities that could provide input to policy frameworks at the national level.

27. After a two-day debate with presentations and discussion in plenary, four thematic workshops, four working groups², the Global Forum proposed an Action Plan for UNESCO covering a range of standard-setting, capacity building and clearinghouse activities as follows:

IV.1 Standard-setting

IV.1.1 Guiding Principles

- a. Background: Participants felt that the higher education community needs to develop a policy framework and guiding principles similar to those that exist increasingly in the business world.
- b. Action: Development of guiding principles. These principles will aim to be inclusive to allow and encourage all institutions of the diversified higher education sectors to adhere to them. These principles shall primarily aim to inspire and provide guidance, particularly in the UNESCO context, rather than seeking to regulate. They will be based on existing principles, codes, and declarations.
- c. Implementing Partner(s): Expert Group representing diversified stakeholders.

IV.1.2 Review of Regional/Intergovernmental Conventions

- a. Background: To allow the regional/intergovernmental conventions on the recognition of qualifications to be responsive to current challenges, a need for updating and reviewing was identified.
- b. Action: Reinforcement, reviewing and updating of the existing regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications to respond to new needs and to represent international standards in the GATS framework. In addition the feasibility of establishing a revised international framework for the recognition of qualifications will be explored.

² See Annex II: Final Programme; Annex IV: Reports from Thematic Workshops and Annex V: Reports from Working Groups.

- c. Implementing Partner(s): Bureaus of the regional/intergovernmental committees for the conventions on the recognition of qualifications; invited experts and partners.

IV.1.3 Research on Public Good and the Impact of Transborder Higher Education

- a. Background: Further to the complexity of discussions on the issue of 'global public good', a need for research on and articulation of what is meant by 'public good' especially in the emerging higher education context was identified.
- b. Action: Research on and articulation of what is meant by 'public good' especially in view of the rapid growth in private national and transborder higher education provision in certain regions and member states. Furthermore, research on and data about the impact of transborder higher education on access to higher education.
- c. Implementing Partner(s): will be identified

IV.2 Capacity Building

IV.2.1 Quality Assurance and Accreditation

- a. Background: A need for capacity building at the regional and national levels for quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms within a strengthened international framework was recognized. In this regard it was highlighted that national quality assurance frameworks should not discriminate against new providers while at the same time the quality of all educational provisions should be optimal. This point however posed challenges to the higher education community with regard to the issue of core academic values.
- b. Action: Capacity building at the regional and national levels for quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms within a strengthened international framework. This action would adopt a gradual approach, taking into account activities/projects under way to increase transparency and information. The possible use of Article 6.4 of the GATS as a tool to define what is necessary to ensure quality was highlighted.
- c. Partners: CHEA, INQAAHE, IAUP, OECD, UNESCO Secretariat (Headquarters and Field), World Bank, others?

IV.2.2 Informed Decision Making for Stakeholders in the Education Process

- a. Background: A need to empower higher education stakeholders for better-informed decision-making in the new world of higher education was highlighted. This initiative would aim to provide information to protect students from inadequate learning resources, low-quality provisions, degree mills and bogus institutions. This initiative would also aim to provide decision-makers at the governmental and institutional level with information and skills necessary to better navigate in the new higher education space.
- b. Action: Provide capacity building for higher education stakeholders by developing information tools as well as skills training on the diversity of learning institutions, learning and learners. This activity would include guidance and training on diversified provision of higher education, some examples of which were provided at the Global Forum (e.g. open courseware initiatives such as that of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and institutions such as the African Virtual University, Hong Kong Open University and the

Indira Gandhi Open University). Existing projects such as the Higher Education Open and Distance Learning Knowledge Base Project will be used to this end.

- c. Implementing Partners: Institutions above, CHEA, COL, UNESCO Education and Communication Sectors.

IV.3 Clearinghouse

IV.3.1 'Study Abroad' Publication Reflecting New Developments in Higher Education

- a. Background: To be responsive to new developments in higher education provision, the Study Abroad Publication, a key resource of UNESCO to promote student mobility, needs to address new forms of learning, and new types of learners. The need for effective student input in this publication was stressed.
- b. Action: Revise Study Abroad to include courses offered through open and distance learning. In addition, include a guide for potential learners in this publication that would address: multiple entry points and diversity of learning (e.g. age, culture, geography, need). This activity would encourage mechanisms for effective student input through all stages of the learning process (before, during and after formal study).
- c. Implementing Partner(s): Expert Group to be defined

IV.3.2 Enhanced Internet Resources to Address New Developments in Higher Education

- a. Background: In view of the need expressed for greater information on new developments, a need for an electronic space to share information on activities of the Global Forum was identified.
- b. Action: Development and further elaboration of Internet resources to disseminate information on the activities of the Global Forum.
- c. Partners: UNESCO Headquarters, all partners of the Global Forum.

V. Closing

28. At the end of the Global Forum, Mr John Daniel, in his closing remarks thanked the participants for their active contribution to the First Global Forum and the spirit of co-operation that they demonstrated during its proceeding. Participants expressed their thanks to UNESCO for providing an open space for dialogue between a wide range of stakeholders engaged in a constructive intellectual debate on a topic of increasing interest worldwide.

The working documents, regional inputs and reference documents, as well as the majority of the presentations of this First Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications are available on the UNESCO website at: http://www.unesco.org/education/studyingabroad/launch_gf02

First Global Forum on
International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the
Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education

"Globalization and Higher Education"

FINAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Representatives of the Regional Conventions on the Recognition of Studies

1. Mr Abdel Bagi Abdel Ghani Babiker
President of the Regional Committee for the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the Arab States
P.O. Box 12125
Khartoum, Sudan
Tel: + (249) 11 796529
Fax: + (249) 11 779312 / 779129
Email: abagi3@yahoo.com
2. Mr Sjur Bergan
Co-Secretary of the Intergovernmental Committee for Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (the Lisbon Recognition Convention)
Head, Higher Education and Research Division
Council of Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France
Tel : + (33) 3 88 41 26 43
Fax: + (33) 3 88 41 27 06
Email: sjur.bergan@coe.int
3. Mr Ananivi Doh
President of the Regional Committee for the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States
Directeur des Etudes et Programmes
Université de Lomé
B.P. 1515
Lomé, Togo
Tel.: + (228) 25 08 37 / 06 743 33
Fax: + (228) 21 85 95
Email: ananivi.doh@tg.refer.org
4. Mr Michael Gallagher
Regional Committee for the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific
Group Manager International
Department of Education, Science and Training
Loc. 751, C OP Box 9880
Canberra, ACT, 2600, Australia
Tel: + (61) 2 6240 8140
Fax: + (61) 2 6240 8161
Email: mike.gallagher@dest.gov.au

5. Mr Paul Heywood
President of the Intergovernmental Committee for the application of the International Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab and European States bordering the Mediterranean
Head, Malta Equivalence Information Centre (MEIC)
University of Malta
Room 102
Msida MSD 06, Malta
Tel : + (356) 21 454 085
Fax: + (356) 21 316 941
Email: meic@um.edu.mt

6. Ms Polonca Miklavc Valencic
Rapporteur of the Intergovernmental Committee
for the application of the Mediterranean Convention
Vice-President of the ENIC Network
Counsellor to the Minister
Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
Zupanciceva 6
Ljubljana, Slovenia
Tel: + 386 1 47 85 390
Fax:+ 386 1 47 85 669
Email: polona.miklavc@mss.edus.si

7. Mr Andrejs Rauhvargers
President of the Intergovernmental Committee for Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (the Lisbon Recognition Convention)
Latvian Rectors' Council
Raina Bulv. 19
Riga LV-1586, Latvia
Tel.: + (371) 9 22 4175
Fax: + (371) 7 24 3091
Email: andrejs.rauhvargers@aic.lv

8. Mr Juma Shabani
Secretary of the Regional Committee for the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States
Director UNESCO Office-Harare
P.O Box H.G. 435
Highlands Harare, Zimbabwe
Tel: + 2634776116
Fax: +2634776055
Email: j.shabani@memo.unesco.org

9. Mr Lazar Vlasceanu
Co-Secretary of the Intergovernmental Committee for Council of Europe/UNESCO
Convention on the Recognition of Qualification concerning Higher Education in the European Region (the Lisbon Recognition Convention)
UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO – CEPES)
39, Rue Stirbei Voda Street
Bucharest R-70732, Romania
Tel.: + (40)131 59957
Fax: + (40)131 23567
Email: l.vlasceanu@cepes.ro

10. Mr Yibing Wang
Secretary of the Regional Committee for the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO Bangkok Office (PROAP)
920 Sukhumvit Road
Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Tel: + (66) 2 3910 577
Fax: + (66) 2 3910 866
Email: y.wang@unesco Bangkok.org

Inter-Governmental Organizations

11. Ms Andrea Hope
Education Specialist (Higher Education)
The Commonwealth of Learning (COL)
1285 West Broadway, Suite 600
Vancouver, BC V6H 3X8, Canada
Tel.: + (1) 604 775 8226
Fax: + (1) 604 775 8210
Email: ahope@col.org
12. Mr Richard Hopper
Education Specialist
World Bank
1818 H Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20433, U.S.A
Tel : + (1) 202 473 5444
Fax: + (1) 202 477 0944
Email: rhopper@worldbank.org
13. Mr Kurt Larsen
Principal Administrator
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
2, rue André Pascal
75016 Paris, France
Tel.: + (33) 1 45 24 92 02
Fax: + (33) 1 45 24 91 12
Email: kurt.larsen@oecd.org
14. Ms Keiko Momii
Administrator
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
2, rue André Pascal
75016 Paris, France
Tel.: + (33) 1 45 24 91 85
Fax: + (33) 1 45 24 91 12
Email: keiko.momii@oecd.org
15. Mr Per Nyborg
Chair, Committee for Higher Education and Research
Council of Europe
UHR, Pilestredet 46B
Oslo NM-0167, Norway
Tel : + 47 22 45 3950
Fax: + 47 22 45 3951
Email: per.nyborg@uhr.no

16. Mr Roger O'Keeffe
Principal Administrator
European Commission
B7-7/23
B 1049 Bruxelles, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 295 1381
Email: Roger.O'Keeffe@cec.eu.int

17. Mr Bill Ratteree
Education Sector Specialist
Sectoral Activities Department
International Labour Office (ILO)
CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland
Tel : + (41) 22 799 7143
Fax: + (41) 22 799 7046
Email: ratteree@ilo.org

18. Mr Pierre Sauvé
Senior Economist
Trade Directorate
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
2, rue André Pascal
75016 Paris, France
Tel.: + (33) 1 45 24 15 40
Fax: + (33) 1 45 24 15 39
Email: pierre.sauve@oecd.org

19. Ms Jacqueline Smith
Administrator
Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE)
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
2, rue André-Pascal
75775 Paris Cedex 16
France
Tel : +33 (0) 1 45 24 93 23
Fax : + 33 (0) 1 42 24 02 11
Email : jacqueline.smith@oecd.org
Web : <http://www.oecd.org/els/education/higher>

20. Mr Peter van der Hijden
Principal Administrator
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 2000
Brussels, Belgium
Tel.: + (32) 02 296-52 29
Fax: + (32) 02 299-41 53
Email: peter.van-der-Hijden@cec.eu.int

21. Mr Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin
Administrator
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
2, rue André Pascal
75016 Paris, France
Tel : + (33) 1 45 24 92 29
Fax: + (33) 1 45 24 91 12
Email: Stephan.Vincent-Lancrin@oecd.org

Non-Governmental Organizations

22. Mr Sven Caspersen
Rector and Chair of the IAUP Commission on
World Wide Accreditation
International Association of University Presidents(IAUP)
Aalborg University
Fr. Bayers Vej 5
P.O. Box 159
DK 9220 Aalborg, Denmark
Tel : + 45 96 35 95 00
Fax: + 45 98 15 15 22
Email: sc@aua.auc.dk
23. Mr James Cemmell
Member of the Committee on Commodification of Education
The National Union of Students in Europe (ESIB)
Avenue Toison d'Or, 17a
B-Brussels, Belgium
Tel : + 32 2 502 23 62
Fax: + 32 2 511 78 06
Email: jamespearl@hotmail.com
24. Mr Marco Antonio Dias
Consultant
United Nations University (UNU)
1, rue Miollis
F-75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel: + (33) 1 45 68 30 08
Email: m.dias@unesco.org
Email: mardias@wanadoo.fr
25. Mr Carlo Di Benedetto
Communities of Mediterranean Universities (CMU)
Head Office Coordinator
Dipartimento di Farmacologia e Fisiologia Umana
Facolta Medica
Piazza G. Cesare
Policlinico I-70124
Bari, Italy
Tel : + 39 080 5478420/17/16
Fax: + 39 080 5478417/16
Email: cdbe@cimedoc.uniba.it
Email: fisiol@cimedoc.uniba.it
26. Ms Eva Egron-Polak
Secretary - General
International Association of Universities (IAU)
1, rue Miollis
F-75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel : + (33) 1 45 68 26 27
Fax: + (33) 1 47 34 76 05
Email: iau@unesco.org
27. Ms Monique Fouilhoux
Education International (EI)
5, Boulevard du Roi Albert II
1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel : + (32) 2 224 06 43
Fax: + (32) 2 224 06 06
Email: monique.fouilhoux@ei-ie.org

28. Mr Ian Hill
Deputy Director-General
International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO)
Route des Morillons 15
1218 Grand-Saconnex
Geneva, Switzerland
Tel : + (41) 22 791 77 40
Fax: + (41) 22 791 02 77
Email: ianh@ibo.org

29. Mr Gerd Köhler
GEW/ Education International
Reipenberger Str. 21
D60489 Frankfurt/M, Germany
Tel.:+ (49) 69-78973315
Fax:+ (49) 69-78973103
Email: koehlerg@gew.de

30. Mr Bernard Loing
General Delegate at UNESCO
International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)
5, rue Jean-Carriès
75007 Paris, France
Tel.:+ (33) 1 43 06 55 55
Fax:+ (33) 1 45 66 40 08
Email: b.loing@noos.fr

31. Ms Marjorie Peace Lenn
Executive Director
Representative of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies of Higher Education (INQAAHE)
Center for Quality Assurance in International Education
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 515
Washington, D.C.20036, U.S.A
Tel : + (1) 202 293-6104
Fax :+ (1) 202 293-9177
Email: lennm@aacrao.org

32. Mr Daniel Samoilovich
Executive Director
Columbus
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel.: + 33 1 45 68 45 80/81/82
Fax: + 33 1 45 66 80 34
Email: columbus@unesco.org

33. Ms Andrée Sursock
Deputy Secretary -General
European University Association -EUA
42, rue de la loi B-1040
Brussels, Belgium
Tel.: + (32) 2 230 55 44
Fax: + (32) 2 230 57 51
Email: andree.sursock@eua.be

34. Mr Mark Thompson
Professor Emeritus
University of British Columbia
(CEART)
2053 Main Mall
Vancouver BC V6T 1Z2, Canada
Tel : + (1) 604 8228375
Fax: + (1) 604 8228517
Email: mark.thompson@commerce.ubc.ca

35. Ms Concepción Vasquez
Evaluation Project Responsible
Columbus
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel.: + 33 1 45 68 45 80/81/82
Fax: + 33 1 45 66 80 34
Email: columbus@unesco.org

36. Ms Lesley Wilson
Secretary General
EUA-European University Association
Aarlenstraat 39-41
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium
Tel.: +32 2 230 55 44
Fax: +32 2 230 57 51
Email: Lesley.wilson@eua.be

Experts and Observers from Member States

37. Ms Mariam Assefa
Executive Director & CEO
World Education Services
568 Broadway, Suite 301
New York, NY 10012, U.S.A
Tel.: + 1 212 219 7306
Fax: + 1 212 966 6395
Email: massefa@wes.org

38. Mr Henri Awit
Secretary General
Saint Joseph University
Beirut, Lebanon
Tel: + 961-3 34 7098/99
Fax:+ 961-1 61 1773
Email: service.academique@usj.edu.lb

39. Mr Abbas Bazargan
Professor of Educational Research Methodology
And Statistics
Faculty of Psychology and Education
University of Teheran
P.O Box 13145-314
Tehran, Iran
Tel : + (98) 21 228 7640
Fax: + (98) 21 873 2074
Email: abazarga@chamran.ut.ac.ir

40. Mr Yves Beaudin
Interim National Co-ordinator
Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials
P.O Box 37
Aylmer, QC J9H6R4, Canada
Tel : + 1 416 962 8100 ext. 242
Fax: + 1 819 682 9874
Email: y.beaudin@cmecc.ca
41. Mr Michel Benard
Hewlett Packard University Relations
Hewlett-Packard Laboratories
HP Europe – 150, Route du Nant d’Avril
CH 1217 Meyrin, Switzerland
Tel.: + (41) 22 780 8345
Fax :+ (41) 22 780 8123
E-mail: michel_benard@hp.com
42. Mr Håkon Bjørnes
Director General
Ministry of Education and Research
Department of Policy Analysis and International Affairs
P.O. Box 8119 Dep
0032 Oslo
Norway
Tel: +47 22 24 75 18
Fax: +42 22 24 27 32
Email: hakon.bjornes@ufd.dep.no
43. Mr Colin Brock
University of Oxford
Department of Educational Studies
15, Norham Gardens
Oxford, OX2 6PY, England, UK
Tel :+ 01865-274024 or 274048
Fax:+ 01865-274027
Email: Drcbrock@aol.com
Email: Colin.brock@edstud.ox.ac.uk
44. Mr Andrew Brown
ELearn Accredite
164 Old Road
Oxford OX3 8SY
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 7779 021464
Email: andrew.brown@elearnaccredit.org
45. Mr Dumitru Chitoran
Consultant
Division of Higher Education
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel : +33 (0) 1 45 68 21 07
Fax: +33 (0) 1 45 68 56 27
Email: d.chitoran@unesco.org

46. Mr Bruno Curvale
Chargé de mission
Comité National d'Evaluation (CNE)
43, rue de la Procession
75015 Paris, France
Tel.: (33) 1 55 55 68 40
Fax: (33) 1 55 55 63 94
Email: bruno.curvale@cne-evaluation.fr

47. Ms Sabrina Coletti
Conference Manager
World Education Market – WEM
Reed Midem
B.P. 572
11, rue du Colonel Pierre Avia
75726 Paris cedex 15
France
Tel : + 33(0) 1 41 90 49 78
Fax : +33 (0) 1 41 90 49 60
Email : sabrina.coletti@reedmidem.com

48. Ms Sylvie Fasel Berger
Scientific Collaborator
Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance
of the Swiss Universities (OAQ)
Effingerstrasse 58, CH-3008
Bern, Switzerland
Tel.: + 41 313 801 157
Fax: + 41 313 801 155
Email: sylvie.fasel@oaq.ch

49. Mr François Gorget
Chef du Bureau des Institutions multilatérales et de la francophonie
Délégation aux relations internationales et à la coopération
Ministère de la jeunesse, de l'éducation et de la recherche
4, rue Danton
75006 Paris
France
Tel : +33 (0) 1 55 55 65 87
Fax : +33 (0) 1 55 55 61 23
Email : francois.gorget@education.gouv.fr

50. Ms Suzy Halimi
Commission nationale française pour l'UNESCO
57, Boulevard des Invalides
75700 Paris SP 07, France
Tel : + (33) 1 53 69 35 65/ 53 69 37 80
Fax: + (33) 1 53 69 32 23
Email: suzy.halimi@univ-paris3.fr

51. Mr Tor Halvorsen
Associate Professor
Department of Administration and Organisation Theory
The Faculty of the Social Sciences
University of Bergen
Christies gt.17. 5007
Bergen, Norway
Tel.: + 47 55 58 20 47
Fax: + 47 55 58 98 90
Email: tor.halvorsen@aorg.uib.no

52. Mr Eivind Heder
Director-General
Royal Ministry of Education and Research
Postboks 8119 Dep
N-0032 Oslo, Norway
Tel.: + 47 22 24 75 03
Fax: + 46 22 24 27 32
Email: eivind.heder@ufd.dep.no

53. Mr Tomek Helbin
President
Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe
European Students' Forum (AEGEE)
P.O. Box 72
1040 Brussels Ett.-1
Belgique
Tel.: +32 2 245 23 00
Fax: +32 2 245 62 60
Email: tomek.helbin@aegee.org

54. Mr Rolf Heusser
Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance
of the Swiss Universities (OAQ)
Effingerstrasse 58, CH-3008
Bern, Switzerland
Tel.: + 41 313 801 157
Fax: + 41 313 801 155
Email: rolf.heusser@aoq.ch

55. Mr Ivan Ivic
University professor
Faculty of Philosophy
Belgrade University
Cika Ljubina 18/20
11000 Belgrade, Yugoslavia
Tel: + 381.11.639724
Fax:+ 381.11.639356
Email: iivic@unicef.org.yu

56. Ms Sally M. Johnstone
Director
Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications (WCET)
P.O. Box 9752
Boulder, Colorado 80301-9752, U.S.A
Tel.: + (1) 303 541 232
Fax: + (1) 303 541 0291
Email: sjohnstone@wiche.edu

57. Ms Magdallen Juma
Interim Deputy Executive Director
African Virtual University (AVU)
Othaya Road, Lavington
P.O. Box 25405
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel.: + (254) 2 57 58 03/04
Fax: + (254) 2 57 58 02
Email: mjuma@avu.org

58. Mr Festus Kaberia
Deputy Commission Secretary
Commission for Higher Education
P.O. Box: 54999
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel : + (254) 2 22 22 33
Fax: + (254) 2 22 22 18
Email: che@kenyaweb.com
59. Mr Alexandre Kane
International Relations
Project Manager
Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris
Education Division
28, rue de l'Abbé Grégoire
75279 Paris Cedex 06
France
Tel : +33 (0) 1 49 54 28 83
Fax; +33 (0) 149 54 28 70
Email : akane@ccip.fr
60. Mr Jorge Klor de Alva
Chairman and CEO
Apollo International
4635 E. Elwood Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85040, U.S.A
Tel : + 1 480 557 17 22
Fax: + 1 480 557 24 45
Email: jkalva@apollogrp.edu
61. Ms Jane Knight
Comparative International and Development Education Center
Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE)
University of Toronto,
252 Bloor Street West,
Toronto, ON, M5S 1V6, Canada
Tel.:+ (416) 923-6641
Fax:+ (416) 926-4725
Email: janeknight@sympatico.ca
62. Ms Tove Kvil
Adviser
Royal Ministry of Education and Research
Postboks 8119 Dep
N-0032 Oslo, Norway
Tel.: + 47 22 24 77 40
Fax: + 47 2224 27 33
Email: tove.kvil@ufd.dep.no
63. Ms Karen McBride
Vice-President, International Relations
Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
600-350 rue Albert Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 1B1, Canada
Tel : + (613) 563-3961 ext. 290
Fax: + (613) 563-9745
Email: rcavan@aucc.ca

64. Mr Chun Ming Leung
Vice-President (Technology and Development)
The Open University of Hong Kong
30 Good Shepherd Street, Homantin
Kowloon, Hong Kong
Tel : + 852 2768 6082
Fax: + 852 2789 1515
Email: cmleung@ouhk.edu.hk

65. Mr Grant McBurnie
Executive Officer International
Monash University
Building 73, Wellington Road
Monash University 3800, Australia
Tel : + 613 99 05 20 94
Fax: + 613 99 05 53 40
Mobile + 041 85 62 840
Email : grant.mcburnie@adm.monash.edu.au

66. Ms Lueny Morell
Director
University Relations Latin America
Hewlett-Packard Company
Highway 110 North Km 5.1
P.O Box 4048
Aguadilla, PR 00605, U.S.A
Tel: + 1 787 819-7418
Fax: + 1 787 819-6287 / 805-5442
Email: lueny.morell@hp.com

67. Mr Fujio Ohmori
Inspector
Higher Education Bureau
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
3-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8959, Japan
Tel : + 81 3 3581 4509
Fax: + 81 3 3591 8044
Email: f-ohmori@mext.go.jp

68. Ms Berit Olsson
Assistant Director-General of SIDA
Head of Department for Research Cooperation (SAREC)
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
105 25 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: + (46) 8 6985314
Fax:+ (46) 8 6985656
Email: berit.olsson@sida.se

69. Mr Madan Pant
Former Pro -Vice-Chancellor
Indira Gandhi University
SR&E Division, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi
New Delhi – 110068, India
Tel:+ 124 63 83 929
Fax:+ same as above
Email: mmpant@mmpant.org

70. Mr John Porter
Learning Programmes Coordinator
UK eUniversities Worldwide Limited
Artillery House, 11-19 Artillery Row
London SW1P 1RT, United Kingdom
Tel.: + 44 0 207 340 6440
Fax: + 44 0 207 340 6470
Email: mferns@ukeu.com
Email: japorter@glam.ac.uk
- M. Jean-Pierre Regnier
Secrétaire général adjoint
Commission nationale française pour l'UNESCO
57, Boulevard des Invalides
75700 Paris 07 SP, France
Tel : +33 (0) 1 53.69.37.82
Fax : +33 (0) 1 53.69.32.23
Email: jean-pierre.regnier@diplomatie.fr
Web : <http://www.unesco.org/comnat/france/>
71. Ms Annick Rey
Chargé de mission
Comité National d'Evaluation (CNE)
43, rue de la Procession
75015 Paris, France
Tel.: + 33 1 55 55 63 49
Fax: + 33 1 55 55 63.94
Email: annick.rey@cne-evaluation.fr
72. Mr Marcel Ross
Ministère de l'Éducation - DRE
1035, rue de la Chevrotière, 2^e étage
Québec (Québec) G1R 5A5, Canada
Tel : + 418 528 60 99
Fax: + 418 644-6755
Email: marcel.ross@meq.gouv.qc.ca
73. Ms Margarita Sianou
Deputy Executive Director, Evaluations
World Education Services Inc.
568 Broadway, Suite 301
New York, NY 10012, U.S.A
Tel.: + 212 219 7310
Fax: + 212 219 63 95
Email: msianou@wes.org
74. Mr Steven Smith
Director of Education
Cap Gemini Ernst & Young University
Rue du Nid de Geai
78910 Béhoust, France
Tel: + (33) 1 30 88 37 81
Fax:+ (33) 1 30 88 38 00
Email: steven.smith@cgey.com

75. Mr Christian Tauch
Leiter Internationale Abteilung/Head International Department
Hochschulrektorenkonferenz HRK
Association of Universities and Other Higher Education Institutions in Germany
Ahrstr.39
D - 53175 Bonn, Germany
Tel.: + (49) 228 887 120
Fax: + (49) 228 887 180
Email: tauch@hrk.de
76. Ms Marijk C. Van der Wende
Professor
CHEPS, University of Twente
PO Box 217
7500 AE Enschede
Netherlands
Tel.: + (31) 53 489 3263
Fax: + (31) 53 434 9203
Email: m.c.vanderwende@cheps.utwente.nl
77. Mr Gerben Van Lent
Program Director
ETS Europe
Donskerkhof, 3512 Bm
Utrecht, Netherlands
Tel.:+ 31 30 230 37 30
Fax:+ 31 30 230 37 31
Email: gvanlent@ets.europe.org
Email: vanlent@attglobal.net

Task Force Members and Associate Members

78. Ms Svava Bjarnason
Head of Policy and Research
Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU)
36 Gordon Square
London, United Kingdom
Tel.: + (44) 20 7380 6714
Fax: + (44) 20 7387 2655
Email: s.bjarnason@acu.ac.uk
79. Ms Carolyn Campbell
Quality Assurance Agency HE (UK)
Southgate House
Southgate Street
Groncester GLI IUB, United Kingdom
Tel.: + (44) 20 8392 3668
Fax: + (44) 20 8392 3735
Email: c.campbell@qaa.ac.uk
80. Ms Sylvie Didou
Departamento de Investigaciones Educativas
Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Avanzados/Instituto Politécnico
Nacional Calzada Tenorios, 235
Mexico DF, Mexico
Tel.: + (54) 83 28 00
Fax: + (56) 03 39 57
Email: didous@data.net.mx

81. Ms Judith Eaton
President
Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)
One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20036-1135, U.S.A
Tel : + (1) 202 955 6126
Fax: + (1) 202 955-6129
Email: eaton@chea.org

82. Mr Arumugam Gnanam
Chairman
National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)
41, 3 Cross St. Kaverinagar
Pondichery 605010
Bangalore, India
Tel.: + (91) 413 200081
Fax: + (91) 413 201852
Email: gnanama10@hotmail.com

83. Ms Robin Middlehurst
Professor, University of Surrey
School of Education Studies
University of Surrey
Guildford, GU2 TXH, United Kingdom
Tel. : + (44)1483 259190
Fax.: + (44)1483 259526
Email: r.middlehurst@surrey.ac.uk

84. Mr Peter Okebukola
Executive Secretary
National Universities Commission
Plot 430, Aguiyi Ironsi Street
Maitama District
P.M.B. 237, Garki G. P O
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel :+ (234) 9 413 3185
Fax:+ (234) 9 413 3520
Email: pokebukola@nuc.edu.ng

85. Ms Mala Singh
Executive Director: Higher Education Quality Committee
Council on Higher Education (CHE)
P.O. Box 13354,
The Tramshed, 0126
Pretoria, 0002, South Africa
Tel : + (27) 12 392 9132
Fax: + (27) 12 392 9110
Email: singh.m@che.ac.za

86. Mr Dirk Van Damme
Professor of Education
VLIR – Flemish Inter-University Council
Egmontstraat 5
1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel.: + (32) 2 550 15 94
Fax: + (32) 2 512 29 96
Email: dirk.vandamme@vlir.be

87. Ms Yumiko Yoshikawa
Associate Professor
Faculty for the Assessment and Research of Degrees
National Institution for Academic Degrees
3-29-4 Otsuka, Bunkyo-ku
Tokyo 112-0012, Japan
Tel.: + (81) 3 3942 9628
Fax: + (81) 3 3942 9676
Email: yosikawa@niad.ac.jp

Observers from Permanent Delegations to UNESCO

88. Mr Alrafaei Abdulaziz
Deputy Permanent Delegate of
Bahrain to UNESCO
Permanent Delegation of Bahrain to UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75015 Paris, France
Tel.: + (33) 1 45 68 31 10
Fax: + (33) 1 47 34 48 04
Email: dl.alrafaei@unesco.org
89. Mr Toshikazu Ishino
Minister-Counsellor
Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel.: + (33) 1 45 68 35 23
Fax: + (33) 1 47 34 46 70
Email: deljpn.ed@unesco.org
90. Ms Dominique Levasseur
Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel.: + (33) 1 45 68 35 18
Fax: + (33) 1 43.06.87.27
Email: delcnd.ed@unesco.org
91. Mr James Matthew
Deputy Permanent Delegate of Australia to UNESCO
4, rue Jean Rey
75724 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel.: (33)1 40 59 33 45
Fax: (33) 1 40 59 33 53
Email: matthew.james@dfat.gov.au
92. Mr Koisuke Otani
First Secretary
Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel.: + (33) 1 45 68 35 41
Fax: + (33) 1 47 34 46 70
Email: deljpn.px@unesco.org

93. Mr José Tavares
Deputy Permanent Delegate
Permanent Delegation of Indonesia to UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel: +33 (0)1 45 68 29 72
Fax: +33 (0) 1.45.66.02.37
Email: del.Indonesia@unesco.org
94. Ms Zhu Xiaoyu
Deputy Permanent Delegate
Permanent Delegation of China to UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel: + 33 (0)1.45.68.34.56
Fax: +33 (0)1.40.56.34.24
Email: dl.chine1@unesco.org
95. Mr Zhai Jianjun
First Secretary
Permanent Delegation of China to UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15, France
Tel: + 33 (0)1.45.68.34.56
Fax: +33 (0)1.40.56.34.24
Email: dl.chine1@unesco.org

UNESCO Secretariat
Education Sector

96. Mr John Daniel
Assistant Director General for Education
Education Sector
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel : + (33) 1.45.68.10.46
Fax: + (33) 1.45.68.56.28
Email: j.daniel@unesco.org

Division of Higher Education

97. Mr Francisco Komlavi Seddoh
Director
Division of Higher Education
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel.:+ (33) 1.45.68.11.86
Fax:+ (33) 1.45.68.56.28
Email: k.seddoh@unesco.org
98. Ms Monique Pastel
Division of Higher Education
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel.:+ (33) 1.45.68.11.83
Fax:+ (33) 1.45.68.56.28
Email: m.pastel@unesco.org

ORGANIZER OF MEETING:

Access, Mobility and Quality Assurance Section (ED/HED/AMQ)

Division of Higher Education

99. Ms Stamenka Uvalic-Trumbic
Chief, Section for Access, Mobility and Quality Assurance
Division of Higher Education
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel.: + (33) 1.45.68.08.32
Fax: + (33) 1.45.68.56.26
Email: s.uvalic-trumbic@unesco.org

100. Ms Zeynep Varoglu
Assistant Programme Specialist
Section for Access, Mobility and Quality Assurance
UNESCO
Division of Higher Education
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel.: + (33) 1.45.68.08.32
Fax: + (33) 1.45.68.56.26
Email: z.varoglu@unesco.org

101. Ms Karima Pires, Study Abroad Unit
Section for Access, Mobility and Quality Assurance
UNESCO
Division of Higher Education
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel : + (33) 1.45.68.11.24
Fax: + (33) 1.45.68.56.32
Email: k.pires@unesco.org

102. Ms Salwa Woloch
Section for Access, Mobility and Quality Assurance
Division of Higher Education
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel.: + (33) 1.45.68.09.86
Fax: + (33) 1.45.68.56.27
Email: s.woloch@unesco.org

Section for Reform and Innovation in Higher Education Systems (ED/HED/REF)

Division of Higher Education

103. Ms Katri Pohjolainen Yap
Programme Specialist
Section for Reform and Innovation in Higher Education Systems
Division of Higher Education
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel: +(33) 1 45 68 10 82
Fax: +(33) 1 45 68 56 27
Email: k.pohjolainen@unesco.org

104. Ms Liliana Simionescu
Programme Specialist
Section for Reform and Innovation in Higher Education Systems
UNESCO
Division of Higher Education
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel: +(33) 1 45 68 11 82
Fax: +(33) 1 45 68 56 27
Email: l.simionescu@unesco.org
105. Ms Veronica Borjesson
Associate Expert
Section for Reform and Innovation in Higher Education Systems
UNESCO
Division of Higher Education
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel: +(33) 1 45 68 05 39
Fax: +(33) 1 45 68 56 27
Email: v.borjesson@unesco.org
106. Ms Terry Kim
Associate Expert
Section for Reform and Innovation in Higher Education Systems
UNESCO
Division of Higher Education
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel: +(33) 1 45 68 10 90
Fax: +(33) 1 45 68 56 27
Email: t.kim@unesco.org
107. Ms Milena Caceres Valderrama
Section for Reform and Innovation in Higher Education Systems
Division of Higher Education
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel: +(33) 1 45 68 24 42
Fax: +(33) 1 45 68 56 27
Email: m.caceres@unesco.org

Teacher Education Development Section (ED/HED/TED)
Division of Higher Education

108. Ms Mariana Patru
Programme Specialist
Section for Teacher Education
Division of Higher Education
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel: +(33) 1 45 68 11 84
Fax: +(33) 1 45 68 56 27
Email: m.patru@unesco.org

109. Mr Lucio Sia
Programme Specialist
Section for Teacher Education
Division of Higher Education
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel: +33 (0) 1 45 68 10 92
Fax: +33 (0) 1 45 68 56 27
Email: l.sia@unesco.org

Networking and Institutional Development Section (ED/HED/NID)

Division of Higher Education

110. Mr Dimitri Beridze
Chief,
Networking and Institutional Development Section
Division of Higher Education
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel : +33 (0) 1 45 68 09 87
Fax: +33 (0) 1 45 68 56 27
Email : d.beridze@unesco.org
111. Ms Carmen Piñan
Programme Specialist
Networking and Institutional Development Section
Division of Higher Education
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel : +33 (0) 1 45 68 11 22
Fax: +33 (0) 1 45 68 56 27
Email : c.pinan@unesco.org
112. Ms Hassmik Tortian
Assistant Programme Specialist
Networking and Institutional Development Section
Division of Higher Education
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel : +33 (0) 1 45 68 09 37
Fax: +33 (0) 1 45 68 56 27
Email : h.tortian@unesco.org

Executive Office, Education Sector

113. Mr A. Sannikov
Regional Education Adviser for Europe
Regional Coordination and Institutes
Executive Office, Education Sector
UNESCO
7, place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France
Tel : +33 (0) 1 45 68 08 75
Fax: +33 (0) 1 45 68 56 27
Email : a.sannikov@unesco.org

Culture Sector

114. Ms Guiomar Alonso
Programme Specialist
CLT/ACE/CES
Cultural Enterprise Section
UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75015 Paris
Tel : +33 (0) 1 45 68 44 83
Fax: +33 (0) 1 45 68 55 95
Email : g.alonso@unesco.org

Communication and Information Sector

115. Mr John Rose
Senior Programme Specialist
Infostructure Section
Information Society Division
UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75015 Paris, France
Tel.:+ 33 1 45 68 45 29
Fax:+ 33 1 45 68 55.83
Email: j.rose@unesco.org

UNESCO INSTITUTES AND CENTERS

UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES)

116. Mr Jan Sadlak
Director
UNESCO European Centre for Higher Education
39, Stirbei Voda Str.
R- 70732 Bucharest, Romania
Tel.: + 40-1 313 08 39
Fax: + 40-1 312 35 67
Email: cepes@cepes.ro

International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)

117. Ms Susan D'Antoni
International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)
7-9 rue Eugène Delacroix
75116 Paris, France
Tel.: + 33 1 45 03 77 00
Fax: + 33 1 40 72 83 66
Email: s.dantoni@iiep.unesco.org
118. Mr Keith Holmes
Resident Fellow
International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)
7-9 rue Eugène Delacroix
75116 Paris, France
Tel.: + 33 1 45 03 77 00
Fax: + 33 1 40 72 83 66
Email: k.holmes@iiep.unesco.org
119. Ms Michaela Martin
Programme Specialist
International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)
7-9 rue Eugène Delacroix
75116 Paris, France
Tel.: + 33 1 45 03 77 52
Fax: + 33 1 40 72 83 66
Email: m.martin@iiep.unesco.org

First Global Forum on
International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the
Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education

"Globalization and Higher Education"

FINAL PROGRAMME

Thursday, 17 October 2002

- 9:00 - 9:30 **Registration**
- 9:30 - 12:30** **Session I: Implications of Globalization for Higher Education**
Chair: Mr F. K. Seddoh, Director, Division of Higher Education, UNESCO
- 9:30 - 10:00 **Opening Address: Higher Education and Globalization**
Mr John Daniel, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO
- 10:00 - 10:45 **Keynote Presentation: Higher Education, Globalization and Knowledge Societies**
Mr Madan Pant, Indira Gandhi National Open University, India
- 10:45 - 11:00 **Coffee Break**
- 11:00 - 12:00 **Panel:**
Developments in Borderless Higher Education - Markets, Providers, Quality Assurance and Qualifications
Ms Robin Middlehurst, University of Surrey, United Kingdom
- Outlooks for the International Higher Education Community in Constructing the Global Knowledge Society*
Mr Dirk Van Damme, Flemish Inter-University Council, Belgium
- Respondent*
Ms Mala Singh, Council on Higher Education, South Africa
- 12:00 - 12:30 **Questions and Answers**
- 13:00 - 15:00 **Lunch Break**
- 15:00 - 16:30 **Parallel Thematic Workshops (Debate and Exchange of Views) – Annex I**
1. Global Markets and Shared Responsibilities in Higher Education: Trade in Educational Services
 2. Impact of Globalization on Quality Assurance and Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications
 3. Diversity of Learning and Learners
 4. Public vs. Private Higher Education: Public Good, Equity, Access
- 16:30 - 17:00 **Coffee Break**

- 17:00 - 18:00** **Session II: New Providers in Higher Education**
Chair: Ms Svava Bjarnason, Observatory on Borderless Higher Education
- 17:00 - 17:45 **Presentation:** *Perspectives from a For-Profit Higher Education Provider*
Mr Jorge Klor de Alva, Chair and CEO, Apollo International, United States
- 17:45 - 18:00 **DISCUSSION**
- 19:00 - 21:00** **Reception**

Friday, 18 October 2002

- 10:00 - 13:00** **Session III: Perspectives from the Regions**
Chair: Mr John Daniel, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO
- 10:00 - 11:00 **Introduction:**
Ms Stamenka Uvalic-Trumbic, Division of Higher Education, UNESCO
- Panel:**
- *Asia and the Pacific:* Mr Michael Gallagher (Australia), Mr Arumugam Gnanam (India), Mr Wang Yibing (UNESCO, Bangkok)
 - *Africa:* Mr Ananivi Doh (Togo), Mr Peter Okebukola (Nigeria), Mr Juma Shabani (UNESCO, Dakar)
 - *Latin America and the Caribbean:* Ms Sylvie Didou-Aupetit (Mexico)
- 11:00 - 11:30 **Coffee Break**
- 11:30 - 13:00 **Panel Continued:**
- *Mediterranean States:* Mr Paul Heywood (Malta), Ms Polonca Miklavc-Valencic (Slovenia)
 - *Europe:* Mr Andrejs Rauhvargers (Latvia), Mr Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe), Mr Lazar Vlasceanu (UNESCO, CEPES), Mr Peter van der Hijden (European Commission)
 - *Arab States:* Mr Abdel B. Babiker (Sudan), Mr Henri Awit (Lebanon)
- Discussion**
- 13:00 - 14:30 **Lunch Break**
- 14:30 - 15:30 **Parallel Working Groups (Proposing an Action Plan) – Annex II**
1. Towards Policy Frameworks on Transborder Higher Education: Guiding Principles
 2. Quality Assurance and Accreditation: Establishing International Frameworks
 3. Recognition of Qualifications and Competencies: Input to the Regional Committees
 4. Empowering the Learner: Developing Tools for Students, Parents and Employees
- 15:30 - 16:00 **Coffee Break**

16:00 - 17:30 **Session IV: Follow-Up Strategy**
Chair: Mr John Daniel, Assistant Director-General, UNESCO

16:00 - 16:30 **Reports from Working Groups:**
Ms Eva Egron-Polak (1); Ms Andrée Surssock (2);
Mr Juma Shabani (3); Mr Oludare Ogunlana / Mr James Cemmell (4)

16:30 - 17:00 **Conclusions**
Ms. Carolyn Campbell (Rapporteur General)

17:00 - 17:30 **Closing Remarks**
Mr John Daniel

ANNEX I **THEMATIC WORKSHOPS (DEBATE AND EXCHANGE OF VIEWS)**

Thursday, 17 October 2002

15:00 - 16:30 **Thematic Workshops (Debate and Exchange of Views) ***

1. *Global Markets and Shared Responsibilities in Higher Education: Trade in Educational Services*

The workshop will offer an opportunity for a broad exchange of views on threats and opportunities related to the liberalization of trade in educational service, the effects of GATS on higher education developments, and the responsibilities of international organizations and national authorities in this respect. A number of reference documents will be provided as background to this discussion. Different views and approaches will be expressed on the controversial issue of trade in services.

Moderator: Ms Jane Knight (Canada)

Rapporteur: Mr Lazar Vlasceanu (UNESCO, CEPES)

Speakers:

Mr Kurt Larsen / Mr Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin (OECD)

Ms Marjorie Peace Lenn (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies of Higher Education)

Ms Monique Fouilhoux (Education International)

2. *Impact of Globalization on Quality Assurance and Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications*

The different issues that globalization, in particular trade in education and ICT assisted learning, raise in relation to quality assurance, accreditation, the recognition of qualifications will be discussed with a view to developing new international frameworks and tools, while strengthening national ones to respond to these new challenges. Different models and tools developed in Europe (Lisbon Recognition Convention, Code on Transnational Education, The Bologna Process) or in other regions e.g. Africa (revision of the Arusha Convention) Latin America and the Caribbean (regional developments within MERCOSUR and NAFTA) will be taken into account.

Moderator: Mr Andrejs Rauhvargers (President of the Lisbon Recognition Convention)

Rapporteur: Mr Wang Yibing (UNESCO, Bangkok)

Speakers:

Mr Sven Caspersen (International Association of University Presidents)

Mr Per Nyborg (Council of Europe)

Ms Judith Eaton (U.S.A)

Mr Abbas Bazargan (Iran)

* Possible changes in speakers, pending confirmation

3. Diversity of Learning and Learners

This debate will focus on the diversity of learning and learners. Not only have new providers of higher education emerged – virtual universities, open universities, corporate universities, franchises, IT academies, to name just a few - but learners are diversified as well. The expectations of the changing employment market and the open courseware initiative will also be discussed.

Moderator: Mr Bernard Loing (International Council for Open and Distance Education)

Rapporteur: Mr Juma Shabani (UNESCO, Dakar)

Speakers:

Ms Sally Johnstone (WCET / USA)

Ms Magdallen Juma (Kenya)

Mr Chun Ming Leung (Hong Kong, China)

4. Public vs. Private Higher Education: Public Good, Equity, Access

Is higher education a public or a private good? How does trade in educational services threaten the notion of public good? Can public good agendas be shared between public and private providers? How can new providers of higher education contribute to promoting access? How does the commercialization of higher education and the emerging market affect issues of equity in particular in developing countries? The focus of the debate will be on policy issues that need to be addressed and best ways national governments and institutions should prepare for these new developments.

Moderator: Ms Suzy Halimi (French National Commission for UNESCO)

Rapporteur: Ms Katri Pohjolainen (UNESCO, HQs)

Speakers:

Mr Marco Antonio Dias (UNU)

Mr Richard Hopper (World Bank)

Mr James Cemmell (ESIB)

ANNEX II PARALLEL WORKING GROUPS (PROPOSING AN ACTION PLAN)

Friday, 18 October 2002

14:30 - 15:30 **Parallel Working Groups (Proposing an Action Plan)**

1. Towards Policy Frameworks on Transborder Higher Education: Guiding Principles

Chair: Ms Robin Middlehurst (University of Surrey)

Rapporteur: Ms Eva Egron-Polak (International Association of Universities)

2. Quality Assurance and Accreditation: Establishing International Frameworks

Chair: Mr Dirk Van Damme (Flemish Inter-University Council)

Rapporteur: Ms Andrée Sursock (European University Association)

3. Recognition of Qualifications and Competencies: Input to the Regional Committees

Chair: Mr Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe)

Rapporteur: Mr Juma Shabani (UNESCO, Dakar)

4. Empowering the Learner: Developing Tools for Students, Parents and Employees

Chair: Ms Andrea Hope (Commonwealth of Learning)

Rapporteur: Mr James Cemmell (National Unions of Students in Europe)

First Global Forum on
International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the
Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education

“GLOBALISATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION”

**AUTOMOBILES, BANANAS, COURSES, DEGREES...
An ABC of Higher Education and Globalisation**

by

John Daniel
Assistant Director-General for Education
UNESCO

UNESCO, Paris
17 October 2002

Welcome to UNESCO for this first major event of our Global Forum on Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education. The interest in this event has exceeded our expectations and I thank you in advance for putting up with this cramped accommodation. Rooms here are at a premium because the Executive Board of UNESCO is now in session.

We warned those who registered late that we could not guarantee a seat but many came anyway. Perhaps the overcrowding will provoke some robust debates, as in the British House of Commons, which does not have enough seats if all its members show up at once.

My task is briefly to set the stage for the programme of the next two days and my title is: **AUTOMOBILES, BANANAS, COURSES, DEGREES...: AN ABC OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND GLOBALISATION**. Duties at UNESCO's Executive Board will take me away from your discussions for most of today, but I shall be with you this evening and tomorrow. I look forward to that and I thank you all for coming and contributing.

Introduction

The context of our meeting is the globalisation of higher education. UNESCO welcomes this trend because it fulfils the Constitution that created UNESCO in 1945. Let me quote from the preamble to that Constitution. We read, first:

“That the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern”.

And later:

“For these reasons, the States Parties to this Constitution, believing in full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, are agreed and determined to develop and increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives”.

My first and fundamental point is that the globalisation of higher education, with its attendant phenomena of borderless education, distance learning and the diversification of providers, contributes powerfully to the achievement of those noble ideals.

My second point is that UNESCO's constitution picks up ideas, like the pursuit of objective truth and the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, which had currency for hundreds of years in universities before UNESCO was created. Some medieval rulers gave universities and their academic staff the kind of international status that the United Nations system enjoys today.

For students and scholars to be mobile is not new. Erasmus, the 16th century Dutch humanist, felt at home in all the universities of Europe. Even earlier English students who were thrown out of the medieval University of Paris for bad behaviour went home to create the University of Oxford.

Despite this long tradition of academic internationalism, however, many people feel that some of its contemporary manifestations are new and different. Some find these developments exciting and encouraging, others consider them to be deplorable and dangerous. But those on all sides – for there are various camps – seem to want a forum to discuss these issues that is both neutral in its political ideology and universal in its global reach.

Many look to UNESCO to provide such a forum. With some trepidation, therefore, my colleagues and I have accepted the challenge and created this Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education. It has two main goals. The first is simply to provide a place where individuals and institutions can debate the issues from a wide range of perspectives. I hope that as you argue your views you will remember the extract from UNESCO's constitution that I just read out and use this forum for *the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's ideas*.

The second goal, having debated the issues, is to decide what to do about them. We are particularly interested in your views on what UNESCO can most helpfully do in this arena. This meeting is particularly timely because UNESCO is now engaged in planning its activities for the next biennium. We therefore have the opportunity to include work on the key issues that you may identify.

Basic principles

I shall devote the rest of these introductory remarks to the risky task of trying to identify some basic principles on which we might agree. It is a risky because there are divergent views in this room. That is one of the virtues of this gathering. If we were all of one mind and simply came here to reinforce our prejudices this meeting would be pointless.

I hope that even if you do not all agree with the basic principles that I shall outline they may at least serve to reveal where your views diverge and to highlight the principles that you contest.

The Stakeholders

To begin with then, whom are we trying to help through these discussions? I suggest that there are three stakeholder groups of particular interest. First, because UNESCO is an intergovernmental body, it has the task of trying to help governments develop good policies in the ever-changing world of education. We already know that different governments have different views on the topics we shall address in this Forum. Our challenge is to propose actions that will help all governments deal with the issues of higher education and globalisation in an effective and collaborative way.

Second, behind governments are their citizens. As democracy spreads, governments are increasingly focused on serving and protecting their citizens. Making it possible for all their citizens to be educated is now a key objective of most governments, even if many of them are having little success in achieving it. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the basic drivers of UNESCO's activity, identifies education as a human right and states that 'higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit'.

That is a pretty meaningless statement in the many countries today where less than 5% of the age group have access to higher education. The demography of our contemporary world means that in numerous countries half the population is less than twenty years old. Universities in those countries will face a tidal wave of hopeful youngsters who know that higher education is the key to a future with choices. I urge you to keep these people the front of your thinking even though they are not really represented here.

It is to highlight the needs of those who are not now being served by higher education that I identify existing academic communities as the third and last group of stakeholders. In this group I include both those who are lucky enough to have obtained access to higher education as students and the academic staff. The academic staff teaches and conducts research. The globalisation of universities and the commercialisation of knowledge have implications for their research work. I spoke about these implications two weeks ago at a colloquium at Laval University in Canada but I shall not revisit them here. Focusing mainly on teaching will keep us busy enough.

This Forum has attracted participants from a diversity of backgrounds. That diversity gives you different relationships with these three stakeholder groups. Some of you represent governments. The rest of you have various relationships with governments. Fewer of you have a relationship to the huge numbers of people who aspire to higher education but cannot get access to it. I suggest that an important criterion for judging our different responses to globalisation should be the opportunities that we can create for this group. Lastly, of course, you have different relationships to the present students and staff of higher education. Some of you represent them, some employ them, and some create the policy environment in which they work.

Higher Education as a Public Good

I turn now to a principle that is at the heart of the debate about the globalisation of higher education, that is the notion of higher education as a public good. Here the issue is not with the principle itself, but with the ancillary assumptions that accrete to it. Again, UNESCO's charter is helpful. Knowledge is a public good. To quote the passage again, the founder member states of UNESCO believed:

in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge.

This notion long predates UNESCO, which reminds us that there is no logical link between the idea of knowledge as a public good and the state financing of universities. The notion of knowledge as the common property of humankind was around long before universities received funding from states.

Another false linkage is to assume that the common public aspiration for wide access to higher education can only be satisfied by the action of government, and in particular by having governments provide higher education free. This assumption is amazingly tenacious although all the research points in the other direction.

For the industrialised countries research has shown pretty consistently that countries with a regime of tuition fees accompanied by bursary schemes enrol more students in higher education – and from a broader socio-economic base – than those where higher education is free. For the developing countries the contrast is often made between South Korea and Ghana. Starting from similar points forty years ago South Korea, with a mixed economy of higher education, has achieved some of the highest participation and graduation rates in the world, whereas Ghana with only state universities and free tuition, has an age participation rate of much less than ten percent.

None of this is to argue that state support to higher education is unimportant. On the contrary, as the statement from UNESCO's 1998 World Conference put it:

Higher education should be considered a public service. While diversified sources of funding, private and public, are necessary; public support for higher education and research remains essential to ensure a balanced achievement of its educational and social missions.

We simply have to avoid the error of treating 'public' and 'state' as synonyms.

New need not be bad

My third basic principle is that new need not be bad. One of the benefits of globalisation is that it promotes competition, and competition creates diversity. The idea that globalisation means homogenisation flies in the face of all the evidence. Globalisation is certainly creating diversity in higher education. However, higher education is a conservative enterprise. What is new is regarded with suspicion. It has to prove itself, which is absolutely right. But we must guard against the mindless rejection of new approaches even when they have proved themselves. I give you three examples.

The first is the International Baccalaureate. This diploma, covering the last two years of high school, was developed over thirty years ago with the support of UNESCO. It is managed by a non-governmental organisation. Greeted with tremendous scepticism at first, it has gradually won converts because of its quality and has now become the gold standard for university entry worldwide.

It is ironic that three of the countries whose nationals were most closely involved in starting the IB, namely France, Germany and the United Kingdom, have, until recently, been the most refractory to its use in their jurisdictions. Today, however, they look at it with envy while various countries in transition are seeking to adopt the International Baccalaureate curriculum as their national curriculum. This is not only because of its academic quality but because, since September 11 last year, people have realised that the IB is most successful example of a curriculum designed for international understanding.

The second example is one of my former institutions, the UK Open University. When this new university was proposed in the late 1960s, the press and most of the academic and educational establishment in Britain ridiculed the idea. When they saw the output they changed their minds and today the Open University ranks 6th out of the 100 UK universities for the quality of its teaching. In various disciplines, from Geology to Music, the majority of UK students studying in programmes with an excellent quality rating are with the Open University.

The third example is the US University of Phoenix. This for-profit university inspired deep hostility among much of US higher education as it began to be successful and to attract large numbers of students. By the sheer thoroughness of its work and its demonstrable success with students, Phoenix has now largely silenced the critics.

These three examples are also examples of new concepts. For the International Baccalaureate, it was the idea of an internationally managed qualification that no government controlled. For the Open University it was the concept of distance learning. For Phoenix it was the concept of higher education conducted for profit. In each case the new institution simply did the job so much better than existing competitors that its quality had to be recognised. It is also worth noting that each of these organisations also operates at scale, with tens of thousands of pupils or students in each case. To that extent they provide hope for the millions who are currently excluded from tertiary education.

I am sure you can think of other basic principles that should guide our discussions, but let me leave it at those three principles. To recap: first, UNESCO's primary stakeholders are the governments that need policy frameworks to enable them to take advantage of globalisation to serve more students. Second, we should not confuse public good with state provision. Third, what is new need not be bad. Sometimes it will prove better than what already exists and create opportunities for more people.

Higher Education and Trade

For the remainder of these remarks I go back to my title: *Automobiles, Bananas, Courses, Degrees: an ABC of Higher Education and Globalisation*. The issues that we shall discuss in this Forum would nearly all be live issues whether the World Trade Organisation and the General Agreement on Trade in Services existed or not. Nevertheless, the proposals for trade in higher

education have given this debate its current acuity, topicality and virulence. Some participants would almost paraphrase Abraham Lincoln:

We are engaged in a great conceptual war, testing whether our university, or any university so conceived and dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war.

I believe that is an overstatement so let me end with a few down to earth comments to put matters in proportion. First, remember that most of the same governments that are member states of the WTO are member states of UNESCO. Governments create and join a multitude of intergovernmental organisations, both within and alongside the UN system. They do so because each body has its own special mandate and purpose. It is true that these bodies often try to expand their remit and trespass on those of others, but that is an issue for the governments who run them to sort out. Basically each agency has its focus. It is, as we say, horses for courses.

The aim is to get the right horse on the right course. It is pointless to pretend that higher education does not exist in a marketplace, nor that there is no trade in higher education.

But having said that it is vital to recognise that, while higher education may be traded in a marketplace, it is a quite different proposition from cars or bananas. The challenge is to come up with an appropriate way of maximising the benefits and minimising the dangers now that higher education is a global phenomenon.

In finding a way forward we should start from where we are. The regional conventions for the recognition of qualifications, which my colleagues will explain to you, represent one place where we are. These conventions have a respectable history. A concerted attempt to update them and bring them together globally could be one way forward.

We are also at the end of a decade during which our understanding of quality assurance and assessment in higher education has become much more sophisticated. This, too, provides a way forward. Some of you here have helped to develop that sophisticated understanding of quality, which trade in higher education requires more than trade in bananas or cars. The slide of quality rankings that I showed for the UK Open University shows how quality assessment can help to reassure people that new approaches can actually enhance quality.

Back in the 1970s the author Jessica Mitford caused a hue and cry by pointing up unethical practices in the correspondence education industry. UNESCO was involved in developing guidelines of good practice in response to this crisis of confidence. That may be another element of the way forward. You will no doubt come up with others.

Conclusions

I shall leave it there, thank you again for coming, and wish you a constructive meeting. I shall be back to join you later but before I go let me introduce two key colleagues in the organisation of this event.

The first is the chairman of this session and Director of the Higher Education Division at UNESCO, Komlavi Francisco Seddoh. Dr Seddoh has the perspective of all three of the stakeholder groups that I identified because he was a minister of education and a university president in his native Togo before joining UNESCO. He is a very wise observer of higher education with a deep commitment to its expansion in the developing countries of the world.

The second is Ms Stamenka Uvalic-Trumbic who has been most directly involved in the organisation of this Forum. I am finding it a pleasure to work with her on this project and you will too.

Thank you.

Annex IV

Reports from Thematic Workshops

Report of Thematic Workshop 1
Global Markets and Shared Responsibilities in Higher Education:
Trade in Higher Education Services

1. Globalization in higher education is associated with a substantial growth of international trade in the global markets of higher education. This growth is driven by political, economic and technological factors and there is no reason to expect in the near future a slow down of the process. Nor is there any chance of formulating a definitive value judgment (good vs. bad) on the development of international trade in higher education, mainly when considering the complexity of various issues and factors at work. However, higher education stakeholders are greatly polarized with regard to trade and markets in higher education. On the one hand there are those who strongly opposed the treatment of higher education as a commodity or tradeable service, since this would negatively affect the long lasting academic values, while on the other hand are those who consider that trade is already there in higher education, that GATS exists and certain countries have already made their commitments, and that it also brings about specific benefits and opportunities. Some others would also consider that the development and implications of trade and markets in higher education will depend largely on national contexts and policy options.
2. The participants in the workshop shared the view that there is a strong need at this stage to build up bridges between education (e.g. academic values and principles) and trade in higher education. Instead of allowing for a wider gap between the world of education with its specific concerns and the world of trade with its specific institutions and developments, there seems to be a better option that of providing for transparency in GATS negotiations for a bottom-up approach (instead of a top-down one), and indeed for the direct participation of academics and other education stakeholders in the discussions and negotiations related to GATS. An important issue here is that of considering not only the commercial side of higher education trading services, but also matters related to cultural values and identities.
3. GATS provides a normative framework for dealing with trade in educational services. However, this framework should be seen as complementary with that provided by the regional recognition conventions, like for instance the Lisbon Recognition Convention of the Europe region, as well as by the quality assurance and accreditation frameworks. There are indeed specific normative standards and practices developed and used in these areas and they should be seen as regulatory mechanisms in the higher education market, thus complementing the GATS provisions. The specific work undertaken by organizations like the International Standards Organizations (ISO) should be also seen in such a context.
4. When exploring the cultural and the commercial sides of trade in higher education, more attention should be paid to both the universal values and to specific academic values. UNESCO is that inter-governmental organization which is specifically focused on the universal intellectual and ethical values. In addition, UNESCO has long lasting experience in dealing with issues related to academic recognition and quality assurance. From this perspective, UNESCO and its concerns with universal values should provide the most appropriate framework for balancing the rather one-sided view of WTO concerned as it is with

trade in higher education. UNESCO, WTO, as well as OECD, may thus act as complementary organizations which should provide for a joint forum of discussing both the cultural and commercial aspects of trade in higher education.

Chair : Ms Jane Knight (OISE, Canada)

Rapporteur : Mr Lazar Vlasceanu (UNESCO, CEPES)

Report of Thematic Workshop 2 Impact of Globalization on Quality Assurance and Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications

Important points and recommendations in the presentations and follow-up debate include:

1. After a briefing about IAUP, Mr. Sven Caspersen elaborated the recommendation made by IAUP to establish a 'Clearinghouse of Clearinghouses' and the 'Worldwide Quality Register'. These initiatives would aim to: bring together relevant and trustworthy agencies; and provide support services via organizations, paying attention to countries with not fully developed quality assurance systems, etc. Such a consortium could be composed of IAUP, INQAAHE and UNESCO.

In the following discussion several participants requested confirmations that these developments oriented to establish a "clearinghouse of clearinghouses" rather than any kind of "international", "global" or "European" accreditation agency making decisions outside national states. Some participants stressed the importance of the institutional quality culture and the risk that one of the impacts of cumbersome accreditation procedures can be freezing in the *status quo*.

2. In his presentation, Mr. Per Nyborg from Council of Europe stated that he believed that the Bologna process could possibly co-exist with GATS. Looking realistically, trade in higher education is already there – with or without GATS, Mr Nyborg stated. A deeper analysis of GATS documents shows that even within the GATS framework it is possible to keep the responsibility of national states as regards state higher education institutions. As of June 2002, WTO received negotiating proposals for GATS from Australia, New Zealand, Japan and U.S.A. The Japanese negotiating proposal focussed on the quality dimension and the protection of the interests of learners. The Lisbon Convention and the documents adopted later (e.g. The Code of Good Practice for Transnational Education), provide a good framework within which to negotiate GATS proposals. It is however important to make the national negotiators (who often come from ministries of economics) aware of the Lisbon Convention.
3. After briefing the group on the missions and mechanisms of the Council for Higher Education for Accreditation (CHEA), Ms Judith Eaton, stressed CHEA's interest in new areas as distance and open learning, import and export of higher education and the international dimension of quality assurance through the International Commission on Accreditation. Ms Eaton also stressed the readiness of CHEA to be a partner in the dialogue on GATS to protect higher education from becoming a commodity.
4. Mr. Abbas Bazargan of the University of Tehran presented an Iranian case study on quality assurance. Mr Bazargan first presented a taxonomy of the quality assurance approaches based on five dimensions. He then elaborated on the characteristics of a self-evaluation mechanism

and its impact on the quality of higher education in Iran. This mechanism was developed in 1996 and first introduced in the medical sciences departments and institutions. According to this case study, the process and results of self-evaluation in the medical sciences departments were so impressive that the other (non-medical) departments volunteered to conduct self-evaluation. The process of quality assurance, in those departments, which have been active to have a sense of "ownership" of self-evaluation mechanism, also motivated faculty members to revitalize the departments to which they are members. Furthermore, Mr Bazargan stated, it developed a positive attitude towards transparency and responsiveness in higher education.

5. In the follow-up discussion, the introduction of a diploma supplement was a subject of great interest. Its usefulness has been widely acknowledged by students, employers, parents and the society as a whole, since qualification alone are not enough to demonstrate the specific objectives, contents and directions of a study programme.
6. Several participants from regions other than the Europe Region stressed the need for establishing regional and even international recognition/information centres that could in part play a role that the ENIC network plays in the European region: information gathering and exchange about contents and status of qualifications. Some of the participants considered that maintaining ENIC-type centres in each country was too expensive while international/regional centres could help implementing the regional conventions.

Chair: Mr Andrejs Rauhvargers (President of the Lisbon Convention)

Rapporteur: Mr Yibing Wang (UNESCO, Bangkok)

Report of Thematic Workshop 3 Diversity Of Learning and Learners

A. The Case Of The African Virtual University (AVU)

by Ms Magdallen Juma

The presentation covered the following issues:

1. Missions, objectives and the three major stages of the development of the AVU. It was indicated that currently AVU is a network of 34 universities located in 17 African countries.
2. The AVU learning model, a learner centered model which is mainly based on satellite transmissions from Australia and USA. In this model, the students interact with the faculty through telephone, fax and e-mail. For those universities which have adequate technological infrastructure, the satellite transmissions are supplemented by the use of Internet, CD-ROMs and DVDs. Currently, the AVU is making the necessary arrangements in order to initiate online learning programmes and degree courses.
3. The major AVU's achievements which include establishment of networks in the 17 member countries and at a global level, organisation of short term courses, enrolment of 23,000 students and 2,500 professionals, establishment of 45,000 e-mail accounts and a virtual library.

B. Higher Education In Hong Kong

by Mr Chun Ming Leung

The presentation covered the following issues

1. Evolution of computer technology from the early 1960s to 2000, including mainframe computers, distributed computers, local networking and Internet and the corresponding paradigms for learning.
2. The four major characteristics of the web, namely the use of hypermedia, connectivity, interactivity and flexibility, the learning matrix and the applications of information technologies to education.
3. The higher education system in Hong Kong, including public/private universities, the Open University of Hong Kong, the local providers, the governance of public universities and the major challenge of higher education in Hong Kong regarding integration of technologies in teaching and learning.

C. The MIT Open Courseware Initiative

by Ms Sally Johnstone

The presentation covered the following issues

1. The MIT challenge with respect to the use of Internet in order to enhance the process of conceiving, shaping and organising knowledge, teaching and learning.
2. OCW policy forum on issues of copyright and their implications for developing countries
3. Information on the following
 - MIT course materials which are currently available on the web
 - Arrangements for the creation of secondary sites that can host translations and variations of original materials
 - Data on MIT open courseware hits by country

D. Discussion

The discussion which took place after the three presentations helped to clarify the following issues:

1. Various initiatives like the national virtual library in Nigeria can access to the materials available on the MIT site
2. AVU is an institution which facilitates implementation of programmes in member universities. AVU uses international bids to identify most appropriate, learner centered quality programmes for its learners. The programmes are reviewed by African experts in order to ensure that they respond to learners needs. The modes of delivery are relevant in the sense that they take into account the existing facilities.

Chair: Ms Robin Middlehurst (University of Surrey, United Kingdom)

Rapporteur: Mr Juma Shabani (UNESCO, Dakar)

Report of Thematic Workshop 4

Public vs. Private Higher Education: Public Good, Equity, Access

The Final Declaration of the World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) 1998 brought to the fore a number of issues such as 1) Higher Education to foster knowledge and to promote research; 2) the need to promote human development for individual as well as society based on merit and knowledge; 3) No financial discrimination; 4) To train citizens of the world; 5) Students are essential partners in higher education; 6) Quality is the key element; and 7) Recognition should be clear.

Since 1998 a rapid development has taken place in higher education, with an upsurge of private and public institutions. In different countries and contexts, the definition of public and private goods and higher education is presented with different meanings. There is a need to explore the impact of profit making institutions and why the upsurge of private for-profit making institutions is taking place. Simultaneously, it is important to note and look into how and with which result public service can be delegated to the private sphere. There is an interface between two worlds education and finance, whilst many believe that education must not be driven by the profit principle. Nevertheless, it is important to note that education cannot be seen in isolation. This is an area to problematise.

A different angle to look at the issues of the public and private higher education is to lift the analysis to a systems level. It is important not to get stuck to technicalities on institutional level but to look at which options there are for different contexts and see which systems of h.e. at the national level can be organized around that. The systems of h.e. are complex, and there is a need to work broadly, exploring all partners in h.e. It is also important to review the concepts and categories we work with and see if they still fit, as the sphere of h.e. is transforming rapidly. Taking a systems approach it is also necessary to look at the GATS negotiation processes.

In the institutions working on a for-profit basis, students are turned into customers. An area of concern raised is the impact of the diversity of institutions for student choice. There is much confusion among students about choices and the quality of the education offered. Quality assurance and assessment is crucial, but how can this be organized in the diversity of institutions and at what level? Quality of higher education remains in all instances the key objective.

The change of the landscape prompts a number of critical areas of debate. There is a lack of data and a need for in-depth research and case studies.

One of the conclusions was that public and private institutions should not be seen as opposed (vs.), but complementary, both aiming at fulfilling the program of action defined in the Final Declaration of the WCHE.

Some of the areas mentioned in the session are here synthesized into a set of questions:

- What is a public good and does the definition vary with context?
- Is education itself a public good, or is the result of education a public good?
- What is the distinction between a national and a global public good?
- In the context of diversity of the public and the private how do we measure quality?
- What is the role of the state in the issue of measuring and ensuring quality?
- How can the role of the state be guaranteed in the face of competition?
- How can higher education as public service be conceptualized in the face of the private and the public common good?

- Who will pay for higher education, shall the cost burden of h.e. be shared among individuals, society and employment?
- How can the dichotomy of the public and private good be nuanced?
- How can the common good issue be lifted from institutional level to a systems level?
- In the context of privatization and the upsurge of new institutions driven by the market logic, how can higher education sustain the production of critical thinkers, of training with research, shaping young citizens?
- Can public and private providers share the same public mission?
- What kind of regulatory framework is needed for regulating international providers in a local setting, as well as on a global level?
- Do we need the same accreditation agencies for private and public institutions?
- In developing countries where transition takes place, private education is in certain context considered as challenge to public education. How can this be negotiated?

Chair: Ms Suzy Halimi (French National Commission for UNESCO)

Rapporteur: Ms Katri. Pohjolainen Yap (UNESCO, HQs)

Reports from Working Groups

Report of Working Group 1 Towards Policy Frameworks on Transborder Higher Education: Guiding Principles
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Starting from a very good background paper, prepared by Carolyn Campbell and chaired expertly by Robin Middlehurst, the Working Group was quickly able to come to the heart of the debate. Our mandate was to examine whether the higher education community ought to develop a set of policy frameworks and guiding principles similar to those that exist increasingly in the business world that spell out corporate social responsibility and/or ethical codes of conduct for business vis à vis society while encouraging them to report on concrete actions taken towards these goals.

The paper asked a number of questions that led the group to reach the following conclusions:

- Yes, the higher education community does need such guiding principles but we are by no means starting from scratch. Such principles need to take as their starting point those that already exist and have been articulated, for example by UNESCO and including those in the WCHE Declaration. They include statements on the right to education, non-discrimination, equity of access, respect for cultural diversity, etc. We must also take note of existing international conventions particularly as they are at present being revised. Such revisions make them more timely and contextually appropriate. UNESCO recommendations also provide a sound starting point.

The Group agreed that these principles needed to be pitched at a high, policy level type statements and they needed to be inclusive and allow, encourage all institutions of the diversified higher education sectors to adhere to them.

Such principles need to be first and foremost inspiring and provide guidance, particularly in the UNESCO context rather than seeking to regulate which maybe too contentious. Yet, since the whole purpose of having such principles or codes of conduct, is to improve quality, the participants were somewhat sympathetic to the need for public reporting.

In this regard, it was pointed out that existing Quality Assessment mechanisms and process may need to include assessment of the societal impact of higher education and some of the related ethical issues, rather than becoming more and more technical in nature.

A final comment was related to the need for regular revisiting of such principles in recognition of the fast pace of change that all of higher education is undergoing.

Chair: Ms Robin Middlehurst (University of Surrey, United Kingdom)

Rapporteur : Ms Eva Egron-Polak (International Association of Universities)

Report of Working Group 2 Quality Assurance and Accreditation: Establishing International Frameworks

After a wide discussion, which cannot be done justice in the time and space available, two points were stressed: desirability and feasibility.

The group agreed on necessity for international mechanisms to facilitate movement of persons and institutions across borders but also realized that the shape of these mechanisms is unknown. In particular still some confusion existed whether international frameworks should deal with measuring standards of the educational quality or the quality of the quality assurance procedures.

The group agreed to a step by step approach that some have already taken within INQAAHE, IAUP, CHEA, CEPES and OECD with a view to increase transparency and information basis through:

- collect existing glossaries,
- mapping exercises.

These will help strengthen the quality assurance community. The need for regional strengthening alongside an international one was equally underlined.

The group agreed that national quality assurance framework should not discriminate against new providers but this was challenging to HE community in raising the question of core academic values.

Another concern was the need to engage the HE community to make sure that it doesn't shift into a managerial culture for quality and that it does not over regulate to allow for creativity.

Article 6-4 of GATS was highlighted in the discussion.

Chair : Mr Dirk Van Damme (Flemish Inter-University Council)

Rapporteur : Ms Andrée Sursock (European University Association)

Report of Working Group 3 Recognition of Qualifications and Competencies: Input to the Regional Committees

Establish the Global Forum as a platform of exchange between the various partners and stakeholders in international and transnational higher education in the first instance for a period of at least four years.

Convene a meeting of the Presidents, secretaries and 1 or 2 experts from each Regional Committee to exchange experience and explore common concerns, especially with a view to revising Regional Conventions and for elaborating subsidiary texts.

Where required, elaborate instruments that can codify or establish good practice for the provision of higher education not linked to national systems.

Urge all members of Regional Convention Committees to establish and maintain close contacts with their GATS negotiations with a view to ensuring that the position and concerns of the higher education community are reflected in these negotiations.

In particular, underline the importance of conditioning all trade in higher education on the adherence to agreed quality standards and to offer the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention and the UNESCO Regional Conventions as international standards in this regard.

Explore the feasibility of establishing a revised international framework for the recognition of qualifications.

Help improve information to further the fair recognition of qualifications in particular through networks of national information centers, through internet postal and transparent instruments for the description of qualifications and of European systems.

Urge member states to sign and ratify the relevant Regional UNESCO Conventions.

Chair: Mr Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe)

Rapporteur: Mr Juma Shabani (UNESCO, Dakar)

<p>Report of Working Group 4 Empowering the Learner: Developing Tools for Students, Parents and Employees</p>

Expand Study Abroad Guide

- *Include courses offered through open and distance learning*

Develop guide for potential learners

- *Multiple entry points*
- *Diversity of learners (e.g.: age, culture, geography, needs...)*
- *Needs to be a collaborative project*

Effective student input

- *Encourage mechanisms for the effective student input through all stages of the learning process (before, during and after formal study).*

Chair: Ms Andrea Hope (Commonwealth of Learning)

Rapporteur: Mr James Cemmell (National Unions of Students in Europe)