Evaluation of UNESCO's Regional Conventions on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education

Evaluation Office

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ABSTRACT

UNESCO has established a number of regional recognition conventions in higher education. The conventions constitute a unique legal framework for allowing the recognition of qualifications in higher education between States Parties. This evaluation is timely given the ongoing efforts made by UNESCO and its Member States to develop and implement a new generation of regional conventions, and the discussions and consultations underway for the potential development of a global convention on the recognition of qualifications in higher education.

The evaluation focuses on the importance and role of the higher education recognition conventions in the various regional contexts; the relevance of and contribution of the conventions to UNESCO's broader higher education programme; the effectiveness of the governing and management mechanisms of the regional conventions; and the effectiveness of UNESCO's support for the development, ratification, and implementation of the regional conventions. It also identifies key lessons to be learned from the development, ratification and implementation of the regional conventions so far, as well as from the implementation of other standard-setting instruments in UNESCO. The report contains eight key recommendations and several proposed action points to strengthen and take the work forward in the future.

Table of Contents

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Overall Management Response</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">

The Section for Higher Education (HED) would like to thank the IOS for an extremely comprehensive and thorough diagnosis constituting both a useful institutional memory of the Conventions and valuable road-map. The report comes at a timely moment when HED is purposefully pursuing the implementation and ratification of the revised Conventions, as well as the revision of the remaining Regional Conventions and embarking on the next intensive stage of drafting a Global Recognition Convention.

We especially welcome the recommendations for enhancing advocacy of the Conventions both in terms of awareness raising together with enlarging the States Parties. Other recommendations will also support our current initiatives and provide useful benchmarks as we continue to move forward.

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Recommendation	Management response
Recommendation 1: Ensure continued and increased relevance of the conventions to all stakeholders	HED will continue to involve and consult with key stakeholder groups including student associations, institutional leaders, QA bodies and credential evaluators and other UNESCO entities to ensure the effective implementation of the Conventions.
Recommendation 2: Sustain momentum through continuity of actions	The Sector will seek to ensure that adequate resources are made available to support the ratification of the Conventions and the effective functioning of the respective Convention Committees and Bureaux to oversee the implementation of the Convention texts.
Recommendation 3: Approach the standard-setting work related to the regional recognition conventions in a more strategic manner	Activities dedicated to supporting the implementation (and ratification) of the Conventions including, national and regional information meetings, capacity building workshops, and tools for recognition training will continue in partnership with strategic partners.
Recommendation 4: Improve the management and coordination of UNESCO's support activities	Engagement and leadership by the field offices in the implementation and ratification processes of the regional Conventions will be scaled up with target indicators for ratification.
Recommendation 5: Engage stakeholders beyond the education sector	Further engagement of non-education sector stakeholders, including employers, professional bodies and Ministries of Labour and Development via international and national for a will be explored.

Overall Management Response	
Recommendation 6: Strengthen the governance of the conventions	In consultation with the Convention Committees the respective Convention Secretariats will expand their assistance in monitoring and reporting of the implementation activities and progress towards ratification, and to disseminating good practices.
Recommendation 7: Consider alternative modalities of capacity building and evidence-based advocacy	The Convention Secretariats will seek to make further use of alternative communication avenues to build trust and information sharing. Expanding access to current web platforms and the development of advocacy materials will be pursed.
Recommendation 8: Apply a gender lens to the work on the recognition conventions	Data-mining exercises by the Convention Committees on sex-disaggregated recognition practices will be encouraged by the respective Secretariats to provide a clearer picture of any gender equity issues to be addressed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

1.   With a globalised economy that depends on technical innovations and competitive use of knowledge by highly skilled individuals, higher education is seen as increasingly necessary for a country's economic growth and standard of living. The Sustainable Development Goals established in 2015 acknowledge this through the inclusion of a target on ensuring equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. However, those seeking to pursue further higher education, or highly skilled work in a different country from that in which they obtained their higher education qualifications, may find that their existing qualifications are not appropriately recognised.

2.   As the only United Nations agency with a mandate in higher education, and recognizing the challenge that recognition poses for mobility, UNESCO has a long history of engagement with this issue. Efforts to create a global convention on recognition eventually resulted in six regional recognition conventions (for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, the Arab States, Europe, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific regions) in the 1970s and 1980s, which established a unique legal framework for allowing the recognition of qualifications in higher education between States Parties at a regional level. In 1993 a UNESCO Recommendation on the topic was adopted after further attempts for a global convention did not succeed. More recent revised regional conventions now exist for Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, and for Africa, although the latter two do not yet have sufficient States Parties to enter into force. UNESCO's Member States recently agreed to also revise the convention for Latin America and the Caribbean, and to develop a possible global convention on recognition. Initial steps have begun on both of these.

3.   These revised conventions incorporate significant new principles such as granting recognition unless substantial differences are identified, placing the burden of proof on the recognition authority, fairly assessing qualifications from non-traditional modes of education, making parties responsible for providing information about their education and quality assurance system (particularly through establishing a national information centre), and providing special provisions for recognising the qualifications of refugees. The main objectives of the conventions are to promote international cooperation in higher education, and to reduce obstacles to the mobility of highly skilled workers, students, and graduates. In Europe, the 1997 Lisbon Convention has a well-functioning network of national information centres and an active Convention Committee and Bureau that take the implementation of the Convention forward on an ongoing basis.

Evaluation Purpose

4.   The main purpose of the evaluation was to generate findings and recommendations that will inform the development, management and implementation of the new generation of regional recognition conventions, and that will potentially also feed into the development and implementation of a future global convention. The evaluation focused on the importance and role of the higher education recognition conventions in the various regional contexts; the effectiveness of their governing and management mechanisms, and of UNESCO's support for the development, ratification, and implementation of the regional conventions. It also identified key lessons to be learned from the development, ratification and implementation of the regional conventions so far, as well as from the implementation of other standard-setting instruments in UNESCO. This is the first comprehensive evaluation ever undertaken of the recognition conventions.

Findings and Conclusions

Importance and role of the higher education recognition conventions

5.   With significant improvements in access to basic and secondary education, an increase in students crossing borders to pursue higher education, a desire for more mobility within economic regions, the changing nature of the global economy, and the increase in trade agreements that incorporate provisions on recognition, the issue of recognition has become increasingly important. The special consideration given by the revised conventions to the recognition of qualifications of refugees also increases their relevance given large and increasing flows of refugees between countries.

6.   Highly inconsistent (and often outdated) recognition practices within and between countries and regions suggest a need for standard-setting tools such as the UNESCO regional recognition conventions. While they are not the only tool available to address recognition, the conventions are unique in their scope and scale, and the only legal instruments on recognition available at regional levels.

7.   While the 2014-2017 Approved Programme and Budget document (37 C/5) provides some visibility to the recognition conventions, the document is inconsistent in discussing standard-setting work in education. There is only one specific indicator related to the regional recognition conventions and two corresponding benchmarks that look rather modest given the huge task at hand with regards to the new generation of regional conventions, and with a global convention in the pipeline. This is somewhat counter-balanced by UNESCO's more recent Education Sector Strategy on Standard-Setting Instruments that proposes that standard-setting instruments form the central element of the sector's work, foreseeing a number of concrete interventions to take the work on recognition forward. The next C/5 should contain a more complete set of performance indicators for the recognition work that correspond to the interventions foreseen in the Strategy.

Effectiveness of the governance and management mechanisms of the conventions

8.   With the exception of the 1997 Lisbon Convention, and to some extent the 1983 Bangkok Convention, none of the governance mechanisms for the regional recognition conventions are currently functional (and therefore also not effective). Some of the other regional conventions, such as the Mediterranean Convention, might have had effective mechanisms when they were first established many years ago. But today, none of the Committees of the first generation of the Latin American, Arab, or Mediterranean Conventions are meeting, or actively facilitating the implementation of these conventions. The 1997 Lisbon Convention, however, has a strong governance mechanism and provides an example of a number of good practices, such as creating supplementary texts to guide convention implementation.

9.   Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the first generation of conventions has been largely insufficient and one of the main challenges encountered in the standard-setting work on recognition. With the exception of the 1983 Bangkok Convention, no systematic follow up on implementation was undertaken in any of the regions, and monitoring data is therefore hardly available at regional levels. There is limited follow-up through the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations. This makes it difficult to determine to what extent the first generation of conventions has been implemented, what the challenges were, and what lessons could be drawn for the new generation of conventions. However, a recent monitoring initiative by the Lisbon Convention Committee provides an example of the type of monitoring that could be undertaken at the regional level on a regular basis.

10.   Several other challenges and opportunities exist regarding the governance and management of the regional conventions. These include the need to sustain efforts between convention Committee meetings to ensure that the decisions taken by the Committees are followed up. The involvement of key stakeholders in Committee meetings and other relevant events has also been identified as an important way to increase the effectiveness of the governance and management of the conventions. Last but not least, there is a need to better ensure that the conventions remain relevant in their specific regional contexts. One way to ensure continued relevance would be for the Committees to develop operational guidelines / directives for the conventions that reflect new concepts, knowledge and experiences as the contexts evolve, and that are continuously updated in line with Committee decisions. So far, supplementary texts only exist for the 1997 Lisbon Convention. These are, however, not combined in one single guidance document.

Effectiveness of UNESCO's support activities

11.   Although it is ultimately the responsibility of Member States to ratify and implement the conventions, UNESCO's advocacy and support to this end are essential at this point in time. Making significant progress towards these ambitious goals will also require overcoming challenges within UNESCO.

12.   A significant challenge is that the Secretariats of the Conventions suffer from lack of capacities to various degrees, especially since significant budget cuts affected UNESCO in 2011, and were unable to sustain the momentum with Member States. With this in mind, and expecting that the workload of the Secretariats will increase as remaining conventions are revised and more signatories join, and as implementation is pushed forward, future work needs to be considered with a more strategic lens. The emphasis should be on activities that help multiply UNESCO's reach and engage other stakeholders so that these can also undertake the work of informing and advocating for the conventions. Clear goals and indicators for supporting ratification and implementation should be developed, and supported by adequate human and financial resources both in HQ and in Convention Secretariats. Developing a long-term fundraising strategy to achieve these goals will be needed to enable long-term planning.

13.   Experiences gained over time suggest a number of key lessons for the future:

Lessons Learned

14.   First of all, there is a need for UNESCO to communicate a more compelling narrative about the importance of the regional conventions. The incentives and reasons for Members to ratify (or not to ratify) and to subsequently implement the conventions vary according the specific (sub-)regional context. Misconceptions concerning the implications of ratifying or implementing the conventions, as well as competing priorities, exist in many countries, but they are not necessarily the same everywhere, nor are the potential benefits of engaging in the work on recognition necessarily all identical. UNESCO needs to be able to respond to and engage with each one of these regional contexts, and to tailor its narratives accordingly. These efforts need to be evidence-based, i.e. supported by reliable data on the problems to be addressed by the conventions, and on the results achieved and the benefits derived from recognition so far.

15.   Sustaining momentum over time through continuity of UNESCO's support activities is key for achieving progress with the ratification and implementation of the regional conventions. These activities include facilitating Committee and other types of stakeholder meetings, conducting advocacy and raising awareness, strengthening capacities, and generating and exchanging knowledge. In the past it could be observed that when UNESCO's level of activity had faltered due to the loss of human and financial resources, progress in ratification has often also slowed down, while in times of increased focus, significant progress has been made.

16.   The importance of engaging diverse stakeholders is another persistent theme. UNESCO has made efforts to involve key stakeholder groups representing universities, students, and others in meetings and consultations around the regional conventions. In order to increase the speed of ratification and implementation of the conventions, wider engagement of stakeholder groups appears necessary. These include Government institutions outside the education sector, such as Foreign Affairs and Labour, who are important stakeholders in the process of ratification; as well as public and private higher education institutions, who are key players in the process of recognition; and others who have an interest in the topic, such as regional economic organizations. Working with stakeholder groups can also provide entryways into extensive existing networks that could help raise awareness of the conventions and encourage ratification and implementation.

17.   Generating and sharing knowledge and experiences on recognition within and between regions has also been an extremely important element in the work on the conventions, including in revision processes. However, as confirmed by this evaluation (and previously noted by experts involved in the preparatory work for a global convention), these efforts suffer from a lack of an evidence base to support the work on the recognition conventions. For instance, data around the scope of the need to be addressed, and on progress made with regards to implementation at regional levels, as well as on the positive or negative effects of recognition is lacking in most of the regions.

18.   Information on the gender dimensions of recognition, for instance on the differences in the level of recognition applied to women's and men's qualifications, and analytical data on any potential gender-based discrimination related to recognition is also scarce. This makes it difficult to even establish whether such discrimination exists and how it could be addressed. Overall, the evaluation observed that gender equality has not been systematically mainstreamed in the work on recognition, neither by UNESCO nor by most other stakeholders interviewed who seem to lack awareness or concern regarding the potential gender dimensions of the standard-setting activities. This is another area where more data and awareness raising are needed.

19.   The Higher Education Section (HES) at UNESCO Headquarters carries out overall coordination of the recognition conventions, but there has been a lack of clarity about the responsibilities of Field Offices. This is further exacerbated by the fact that although specific regional Field Offices are officially designated as convention Secretariats, most of them do not have the human resource capacity to carry out this role. Thus, as well as acting as Secretariat for the 1997 Lisbon Convention, HES has been taking the newly revised African Convention and preparatory activities for a potential global convention forward. Additionally, HES has been involved in recent activities related to the revision of the Latin American Convention. HES has, however, also not been adequately staffed since the 2011 restructuring of the Higher Education Division to really fulfil this role.

20.   Overall, both in headquarters and in the field, the evaluation observed a significant discrepancy between UNESCO's standard-setting mandate on one hand, and its capacity to support ratification and implementation at regional and global levels on the other. A fundraising strategy is needed to ensure availability of resources in the long run. The current reality of fiscal restraint, combined with an increasing workload regarding the new and revised recognition conventions, also calls for creative solutions and different ways of working. Reaching ambitious near-term goals for convention ratification and mid- to long-term goals for implementation, require a more strategic approach. This might entail the exploration of new types of partnerships, increased engagement with existing networks, identification of and cooperation with champion countries, and the increased use of information and communications technology.

Recommendations

21.   The evaluation offers eight key recommendations and suggests a number of related action points for convention secretariats, committees, and Member States, aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the work on the regional recognition conventions in the future:

   I.   **Ensure continued and increased relevance of the conventions to all stakeholders.** This will involve exploring the relevance of the recognition conventions to regional and global trade agreements; involving regional economic organizations in awareness raising and other events; and collecting data on mobility and recognition that helps to demonstrate the importance of the conventions and to monitor progress over time.

   II.   **Sustain momentum through continuity of actions**, both between committee meetings through working groups and other mechanisms, and in terms of UNESCO's support to the standard-setting work on recognition.

   III.   **Approach the standard-setting work related to the regional recognition conventions in a more strategic manner**, including by identifying key strategic region-specific entry points to advance ratification and implementation; by working with regional champion countries; and developing a long-term fund-raising strategy. Member States need to support this work financially, and strengthen efforts for ratification and implementation at national and regional levels.

   IV.   **Improve the management and coordination of UNESCO's support activities**. This will involve clarifying cooperation modalities between headquarters and UNESCO's (sub-) regional offices, especially in Africa; and strengthening experience sharing between the convention secretariats.

   V.   **Engage stakeholders beyond the education sector.** As a first step, this will include identifying key stakeholders to be involved in the standard-setting work at regional levels, as well as existing networks and important events that provide entry points for awareness raising and cooperation.

   VI.   **Strengthen the governance of the conventions** through a number of measures such as the development of supplementary texts (guidelines / directives) for the conventions; improving monitoring of implementation of the conventions; supporting Member States in developing regional networks of national information centres etc.

   VII.   **Consider alternative modalities of capacity building and evidence-based advocacy**, by using webinars, developing resource material, training trainers and other activities, and by researching and documenting evidence that supports the rationale for the ratification and implementation of the conventions in different regions.

   VIII. **Apply a gender lens to the work on the recognition conventions.** This will involve conducting research and collecting data on the potential gender dimensions of the recognition work, and considering these in policy and implementation.

22.   A list of suggested action points for the implementation of each recommendation is included in the chapter on of this report.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND TERMS

1974 LAC Convention	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
1976 Mediterranean Convention	Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab and European States Bordering on the Mediterranean
1978 Arab States Convention	Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab States
1979 Paris Convention	Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region
1981 Arusha Convention	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States
1983 Bangkok Convention	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific
1997 Lisbon Convention	Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region
2011 Tokyo Convention	Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education
2014 Addis Convention	Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States
AArU	Association of Arab Universities
ADG/ED	Assistant Director General of Education
AHERS	African Higher Education and Research Area
ALECSO	Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association for Southeast Asian Nations
AUC	African Union Commission
BREDA	UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Senegal
CAMES	Conseil africain et malgache pour l'enseignement supérieur
CEPES	Centre Européen pour l'Enseignement Supérieur
CoE	Council of Europe
CR	Committee on Conventions and Recommendations
CTEF	Commonwealth Tertiary Educational Facility
DG	Director General
EAC	East African Community
EAHEA	East Asian Higher Education Area
ECTS	European Credit Point Transfer System

EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENIC-NARIC	European Network of Information Centres - National Academic Recognition Information Centres
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EU	European Union
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GIQAC	Global Initiative on Quality Assurance Capacity
GWI	Graduate Women International
HQ	Headquarters
IAU	International Association of Universities
IESALC	International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
IICBA	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
IIEP	International Institute for Education Planning
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOS	Internal Oversight Service
IUCEA	Inter-University Council for East Africa
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur
MERIC	Mediterranean Recognition Information Centres Network
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
REC	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
SMART indicators	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely indicators
ToR	Terms of Reference
UEMOA	L'Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UK	United Kingdom
UMAP	University Mobility in Asia and Pacific
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States
WTO	World Trade Organization

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

I.1   Introduction to the Evaluation

1.   UNESCO has been concerned with mobility since the adoption of its Constitution in 1945. The issue has become even more pressing with the changing global context. In recent decades, there has been a massive increase in participation in higher education, an expansion which is particularly strong in emerging economies. At the same time, the number of students crossing borders to pursue higher education has risen significantly, with an estimated 4 million students enrolled in tertiary education outside their country of citizenship in 2013.[1] Demographic changes and the shift towards reliance on technical innovations and the competitive use of knowledge for economic growth has created a large international labour market for those who are highly skilled. However, their educational qualifications may not be recognised outside the country from which they were obtained, potentially posing a barrier to working in their field.

I.1.1   Purpose

2.   As the only United Nations agency with a mandate in higher education, UNESCO has established a number of regional recognition conventions in higher education. The conventions constitute a unique legal framework for allowing the recognition of qualifications in higher education between States Parties, subject to national legislation, for academic and professional purposes. The main objectives of the conventions are to promote international cooperation in higher education and to reduce obstacles to the mobility of teachers and other skilled workers, students and graduates.

3.   While several evaluations of other standard-setting areas of the organization have taken place in recent years, such as the evaluations of the standard-setting work for four of UNESCO's Culture Conventions, no comprehensive evaluation of the regional Higher Education conventions has ever taken place. This evaluation is timely given the ongoing efforts made by UNESCO and its Member States to develop and implement a new generation of regional conventions, and the discussions and consultations underway for the potential development of a global convention on the recognition of qualifications in higher education. UNESCO furthermore has a new Education Sector Strategy on Standard Setting Instruments (2015-2021).

4.   The main purpose of the evaluation is therefore to generate findings and recommendations that will inform the development, management and implementation of the new generation of regional recognition conventions, and potentially also feed into the development and implementation of a future global convention.

5.   The evaluation focuses on:

    a.   the importance and role of the higher education recognition conventions in the various regional contexts,

    b.   the relevance of and contribution of the higher education recognition conventions to UNESCO's broader higher education programme,

    c.   the effectiveness of the governing and management mechanisms of the regional conventions, and on

    d.   the effectiveness of UNESCO's support for the development, ratification, and implementation of the regional conventions, including consideration of internal

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[1] OECD (2015). *Education At a Glance: OECD Indicators*.

UNESCO work organization (HQ, regional bureaus, IESALC), resources, staff and budget allocated.

It also identifies key lessons to be learned from the development, ratification and implementation of the regional conventions so far, as well as from the implementation of other standard-setting instruments in UNESCO.

6. Emphasis is put on the new generation of higher education conventions and the education sector's standard-setting work related to these. Revised conventions currently exist for Europe, Asia-Pacific, and Africa. These conventions underwent a revision process at different points in time and thus represent different levels of maturity as well as different governing models. Latin American and Caribbean Member States recently decided to work towards a revised convention.

7. The aim was to examine the role of these conventions in their specific regional contexts, and to identify any good practices with regards to the support that UNESCO has provided to the development, ratification and implementation of these three conventions, as well as to the process that is currently unfolding in the Latin American and Caribbean Region. The evaluation also draws lessons from the effectiveness of the governing mechanisms of the regional recognition conventions. To the extent possible, the governing mechanisms of the first generation of regional recognition conventions were also considered.

8. The evaluation covers the standard-setting work undertaken within the framework of both the regular and extra-budgetary programmes during the 36C/5 (2012-2013) biennium and the 37C/5 (2014-2017) up to the time of the evaluation.

I.1.2 Methodology

9. This evaluation was conducted using primarily a qualitative approach, including a desk study, virtual and in-person interviews, and field missions to two countries. More specifically:

- A desk review was conducted of documents relevant to the regional recognition conventions, including:
  - The original and revised regional recognition conventions for Europe, the Arab States, Africa, Latin America, the Mediterranean, and the Asia and Pacific;
  - Executive Board and General Conference documents pertaining to the conventions; including reports from the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations and the Legal Committee; expert group reports, and other materials;
  - Surveys conducted by IESALC and the Lisbon Convention Committee;
  - Strategic plans, reports, communications materials, and other related documents from international, regional, and national organizations working in areas related to recognition from regions around the world;
  - Presentation materials from convention committee meetings (where available);
  - Academic literature and other materials related to the recognition conventions, and the global context for higher education and recognition in general.

- Interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders from all regions, including government representatives such as Ministries of (Higher) Education, regional and international organizations active in higher education, regional economic organizations, representatives of delegations and UNESCO National Commissions, convention committee members, higher education experts, universities and university associations, student associations, UNESCO staff at HQ and in Field Offices (including some UNESCO Institutes). Approximately 100 individuals were interviewed (a full list is included in Annex VI).

- Observation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Capacity Building Workshop on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand, in October, 2015; observation of the first meeting of the Informal Working Group for the 2014 Addis Convention in January, 2016, in Paris, France; and observation of the 1997 Lisbon Convention Committee meeting in February, 2016, in Paris, France.

- Field missions to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and to Nairobi, Kenya.

I.1.3   Limitations

10.   The evaluation faced the following limitations:

- As State Parties to the conventions have not reported regularly nor in detail on the implementation of the conventions at national levels, very limited information was available on the extent to which countries have implemented either the original or revised conventions (in legislation or in practice). Although the evaluation was not tasked with assessing effectiveness of implementation at national levels, this information would have further informed and enriched the discussion of the larger context. The evaluation team tried to compensate for this to some extent by collecting data through interviews and during the field missions.

- Statistics on recognition are not widely available, particularly outside Europe. For example, data on recognition practices or statistics from higher education institutions on the number of recognition requests received by them, and on the decisions taken concerning recognition decisions, is scarce or unavailable. The evaluation team has presented data where it could be obtained.

- Certain stakeholders, while seen to be relevant to the recognition conventions, did not make themselves available for an interview, despite repeated invitations. The evaluation team tried to compensate for this by interviewing additional stakeholders, and by collecting data through a review of related documents, where available.

I.2 Background of the Regional Recognition Conventions

11.   This background section provides the context for UNESCO's past and future higher education recognition conventions, which are the focus of this evaluation. It starts with a brief introduction to UNESCO's standard-setting role, and to the challenge of recognition, which may be unfamiliar to non-specialized readers. Following this, a brief history of the original and revised conventions, and their status in terms of ratification by Member States, is described. Finally, the work on the conventions is situated within UNESCO's current overall strategic planning documents.

I.2.1   UNESCO's standard-setting role

12.   As defined in UNESCO's Constitution (Article I), one of UNESCO's key activities towards achieving the overall goals of the organization[2] is the preparation of standard-setting instruments, which normally take the form of conventions or recommendations. While recommendations are non-binding, conventions are legally binding international agreements.[3] The adoption of such standard-setting instruments "is to give Member States the opportunity to establish the standards of behaviour they consider necessary or useful to impose on themselves".[4] Over the lifetime of the organization, UNESCO has established 37 conventions and 34 recommendations on a variety of topics of global interest, from archaeological excavations to doping in sport. Of these standard-setting instruments, 19 are specific to education, and the recognition conventions (including the original and revised conventions) represent 9 of these (described in the Background chapter).

I.2.2   The issue of recognition

13.   Since the Second World War, the number of individuals participating in higher education, and particularly cross-border higher education, has been rising steadily. In 2013 (the most recent year for which data is available), over 4 million students were enrolled in tertiary education[5] outside their country of citizenship.[6] Yet others will search for work in a different country from that in which they received their higher education qualifications, perhaps returning to or leaving their country of origin.

14.   National education systems, however, vary from country to country, reflecting their diverse history and traditions. Countries following the British system of higher education, for example, use a 'three cycle' Bachelor-Master-Doctorate model, while many countries have traditionally used a 'two cycle' system. The number of years to complete these levels can differ between countries (such as 3 years to complete a Bachelor degree in France compared to 4 years in the Ukraine), which has made it difficult to compare qualifications of different durations

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[2] The overall goal of UNESCO, as described in the Constitution, is "to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations." (UNESCO Constitution, 1945).

[3] The term 'convention' is synonymous with the term 'treaty', but 'convention' is now mainly used for formal multilateral treaties with a broad number of parties (United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, *Intergovernmental Negotiations and Decision Making at the United Nations: A Guide Second Updated Edition*, 2007).

[4] Yusuf, A. (2007). *Standard-setting in UNESCO.*

[5] In UNESCO's definition, higher education includes 'all types of studies, training or training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent State authorities' (UNESCO: World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action, 1988).

[6] OECD (2015). *Education At a Glance: OECD Indicators*.

and levels. Further, a qualification may exist in one country but not in another. Or, a qualification with the same name may exist, but have a different meaning within different national higher education systems. To further add to the complexity, different institutions may have different practices in curriculum content, methods of assessment (examinations, essays, class attendance), or in other aspects of the learning and teaching process.

15.   This diversity creates a challenge for students crossing borders to pursue higher education, for those seeking to work in a different country from that in which they obtained their higher education qualifications, and higher education institutions and employers receiving them. For example, higher education institutions need to understand the academic preparation and achievement of students with foreign degrees to determine their admissibility and their eligibility for scholarships. Employers may also wish to assess qualifications received outside the country.

16.   'Recognition' in this context is a **formal acknowledgment by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to accessing educational and/or employment activities**.[7] It results from a comparison of the conditions, requirements, and practices related to the qualification in question, compared to the requirements of the host country. Recognition is seen as a more open and flexible evaluation of individual qualifications which takes into account the whole scope and diversity of factors involved,[8] compared to the traditional and outdated process of determining 'equivalence', which is now seen to reflect a more mechanical comparison of the length and content of studies.

17.   If an individual's qualifications are inappropriately assessed, they may have to invest in repeating years of education which they have essentially already completed, with significant personal and societal costs. Others choose to avoid this situation by remaining in the country in which their qualifications were obtained, although their skills may be more needed, or their opportunities greater, elsewhere.

18.   Not only are education systems enormously diverse, and qualifications not universally understood, but recognition practices around the world are also not consistent. In some countries, higher education institutions have autonomy in deciding questions of recognition. They make their own assessment of how qualifications will be recognised, possibly following guidance from their country or from international quality assurance organizations to which their institution may belong. They may follow bilateral agreements made with other countries or other institutions, or they may accept a degree based on the status of the university in international rankings. In some countries, recognition decisions must be referred to a central authority, usually within the Ministry of Higher Education, for a more formal, and binding, decision. A prospective employee (or an employer) may also bring their foreign qualification to such an authority for a recognition decision which may bolster their prospects for employment.

19.   Nationally regulated professions, such as accountancy, architecture, engineering, legal services, and nursing, typically have their own recognition procedures and agreements established between professional or industry associations, which may or may not be associated with regional economic integration agreements. These recognition procedures usually provide international standards for education and professional skills, as well as guidelines for assessing professional capabilities unique to the field in question. Access to these regulated professions is not governed by any of the UNESCO regional recognition conventions; rather, individual governments and the relevant professional and industry associations continue to be responsible.

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[7] UNESCO (1997). *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region 1997*.

[8] UNESCO (1988). 130 EX/9 1988: *Preliminary Study on the Advisability of Preparing an International Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Diplomas in Higher Education*.

20.   While the depth of assessment within recognition processes varies, modern recognition practices assess the higher education system and institution from which it came, the requirements of the qualification (such as teaching hours, duration, major assignments such as thesis, and learning outcomes, amongst others), and what the qualification entitles the person to do (for example, pursue a certain type of program such as a PhD) in the country in which it was received.[9] Key to enabling this is access to good quality information about the qualification and the institution and education system from which it came. This information is normally provided by some designated entity which maintains up to date information about qualifications and institutions offered by their country, and answers requests for this type of information.

21.   The last decade has seen a rise in the discussion and practice of quality assurance and related practices which ultimately form the basis of a functional recognition system by enabling access to good quality information. Quality assurance is the systematic review of educational programmes to ensure that acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being maintained. Quality assurance is often part of a broader governance structure including accreditation, credit transfer systems, and other instruments of transparency. One important instrument of transparency has been developed in collaboration with UNESCO, the European Commission, and the Council of Europe: the Diploma Supplement, which explains the contents of the qualifications delivered by higher education institutions in an internationally consistent format, thus facilitating an assessment of recognition.

22.   National qualifications frameworks (a formal system of describing qualifications) are another complementary development to recognition practices, as they help increase transparency and confidence in the quality of an education system or programme. These have been increasingly linked to regional qualifications frameworks establishing common standards for classification levels of education to improve the portability of skills across borders, such as the European Qualifications Framework, described in section II.3.2.1.[10]

23.   This confidence in quality is critical for recognizing qualifications produced in a particular system. It is on the basis of good quality assurance processes that recognition ultimately depends, both for traditional education and education that uses new technologies. The Higher Education section in UNESCO also supports Member States in capacity building for quality assurance. While this is separate from the recognition conventions, quality assurance work is highly complementary to recognition issues and a key element for any successful implementation of the recognition conventions.

I.2.3   Recognition debate emerges at UNESCO

24.   The issue of mobility is one that has concerned UNESCO since the adoption of its Constitution in 1945. The Constitution states that UNESCO will encourage "cooperation among the nations in all branches of intellectual activity, including the international exchange of persons active in the fields of education, science and culture" (Article I.2.). Accordingly, the "problem of the difference in university degrees across the world" was discussed for the first time within UNESCO at the General Conference in 1947.

25.   While some activities had been carried out to examine the structure and content of higher education in some countries, as well as requirements for university admission, the path of the recognition conventions can be traced to the 1963 Executive Board meetings of UNESCO, where studies were initiated on how UNESCO might contribute to "improving the comparability

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[9] ENIC-NARIC (2014). Educational systems (country profiles and other tools).

[10] Hartmann, E. (2008). *The Role of Qualifications in the Global Migration Regime*.

and equivalence of matriculation certificates, diplomas, and academic degrees" (item 9.3).[11] One of the possible actions identified to address the situation was the drafting of an international standard-setting instrument.[12] The advisability of drawing up an international convention or recommendation was examined in another report presented to the Executive Board in 1965.[13] This document concludes that more work needed to be done for the study of the technical and legal aspects of establishing internal and external equivalences, and "that therefore the time is not yet ripe for the General Conference to examine… the question of the advisability of drawing up an International Convention or Recommendation", but that a meeting of experts to plan for future action should go ahead.

26.   Despite the recent suggestion that it may be premature, the 1968 General Conference requested the Director-General to study the possibility of preparing an international convention.[14] However, within the next few years the focus appeared to shift away from an international instrument. UNESCO documents state that the governing bodies of UNESCO concluded that the issue could be addressed more successfully at the regional level in this initial phase, while still maintaining the ultimate objective of a universal standard-setting instrument. In any case, by 1971, activities were being pursued related to recognition of studies in Latin America, which would become the first regional recognition convention. To this day, the recognition conventions are the only UNESCO conventions with a regional, rather than global, scope.

I.2.4   The first generation of regional recognition conventions

27.   After years of preparatory work, including the potential criteria for international equivalences, a regional convention for Latin America and the Caribbean was approved in 1974. Subsequently, five more regional conventions were developed between 1976 and 1983, as shown in the table below. While it was found more feasible to proceed with regional conventions, the conventions note in their preambles that the ultimate objective is to prepare an international convention.

Original regional conventions		
Adoption	**Region**	**Official name**
Mexico City, 19 July 1974	Latin America and the Caribbean	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
Nice, 17 December 1976	Mediterranean	Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab and European States Bordering on the Mediterranean
Paris, 22 December 1978	The Arab States	Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab States
Paris, 21 December 1979	Europe	Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region

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[11] UNESCO (1963). 65 EX/Decisions: *Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at its Sixty-fifth Session*.

[12] UNESCO (1963). 66 EX/Decisions: *Executive Board, Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at its Sixty-sixth Session*.

[13] UNESCO (1965) 71 EX/3: *Comparability and Equivalence of Matriculation Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees: a preliminary study on the technical and legal aspects of the question*.

[14] UNESCO (1968). *Records of the General Conference Fifteenth Session, Resolutions* (15C/Resolution 1.262).

Original regional conventions		
Adoption	**Region**	**Official name**
Arusha, 5 December 1981	Africa	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States
Bangkok, 16 December 1983	Asia and the Pacific	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific

I.2.4.1   Objectives, content, and governance

28.   While the convention texts are not identical, the general structure and main features are similar, and in all cases provide a framework for allowing the recognition of qualifications in higher education between States Parties, subject to national legislation, for academic and professional purposes. The main objectives of the conventions are to **promote international cooperation in higher education and to reduce obstacles to the mobility of teachers and other highly skilled workers, students and graduates**. The preamble text to each convention also reflects broad goals to which the conventions aspire, such as: alleviating the difficulties encountered on return to the home country by persons who have been trained abroad (1974 LAC, 1976 Mediterranean, 1978 Arab States, 1979 Paris, 1981 Arusha, 1983 Bangkok)[15]; accelerating regional development (1974 LAC, 1981 Arusha); fully utilizing the services of trained scientists, technologists, technicians and specialists (1974 LAC, 1981 Arusha); enabling educational facilities to be used as effectively as possible (1974 LAC, 1976 Mediterranean, 1979 Paris, 1981 Arusha); and democratizing education (1974 LAC, Mediterranean, 1979 Paris, 1981 Arusha).

29.   This first generation of conventions attempted to establish a conceptual framework as the context for intellectual and administrative work on recognition. To effect these goals, they include key requirements and principles that:

- **Recognition can be for the purpose of pursuing studies, or for the practice of a profession** (without exempting the holder from any other conditions required for the practice of the profession) (Article 1; all conventions);

- Parties will **adopt criteria which will ensure the comparability** of credits, subjects of study, and certificates, diplomas and degrees, adopt flexible **criteria for the evaluation of partial studies** (Article 2; all), and (all except 1976 Mediterranean) improve the system for the **exchange of information** regarding recognition (Article 2). Parties should also take steps to contribute to these goals through **bilateral, sub-regional, regional, or university level agreements** (Article 2; all).

- Parties **agree to either grant recognition, or to take steps to do so,** of higher education degrees obtained in the territory of another Contracting State (various Articles), or encourage the competent authorities concerned to do so (Article 3, 1979 Paris), and to **define/adopt procedures** applicable to recognition (Article 4 or 6; all).

- A few of the conventions highlight the role of the Contracting State to **transmit the text of the convention to educational institutions** when admission to these institutions is outside the control of the State, and use its best efforts to obtain acceptance of the principles of the convention (Article 6 1979 Paris, 1983 Bangkok).

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[15] In the following section we refer to the conventions in shortened form. For the regions that do not have a revised convention, we use the year and region name (eg. 1978 Arab States). To differentiate between the original and revised conventions in the same region, we use the year and the name of the place where the convention agreement was reached (eg. 1983 Bangkok).

30.   The conventions set out that a Convention Committee be established composed of a representative of each Party, which will meet at specified intervals. The Convention text also notes other responsibilities and authorities of the Committee, such as adopting recommendations, protocols and models of good practice (1983 Bangkok), assisting and monitoring the implementation of the convention, and establishing subsidiary bodies and technical committees as necessary (1981 Arusha). All the conventions state that the Secretariat of the Convention Committee will be provided by the Director-General of UNESCO, which in practice means that a selected UNESCO office in either HQ or the field will take up this role. Governance and management of the conventions are explored further in Chapter 3.

I.2.4.2   Ratifications by Member States

31.   After a convention text has been adopted by an International Conference of Member States, individual Member States must undergo an internal process to ratify[16] the convention in order to become State Parties to the convention, or in other words, officially bind their country to the convention requirements. [17] The provisions of the convention must then be translated into national law for full implementation. Most of the ratifications for each of the regional recognition conventions occurred during the first 10 or 15 years after adoption, except for the 1976 Mediterranean Convention, which received periodic ratifications from 1978 to 1997. Other than the new countries of the former Yugoslavia, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro, there were very few new ratifications of any of the first generation of conventions after 1998. As summarized in the table below, the number of Member States which ratified the convention pertaining to their region was less than 50% except in Europe and the Arab States. A full list of Member States who have signed or ratified the conventions is provided in Annex III.

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[16] Depending on the legal system of the country and on the terms of the conventions, other terms may be used, such as acceptance, accession, or approval.

[17] Some Member States choose to 'sign' the new convention at the International Conference of States. However, this normally represents an intention to pursue ratification of the convention, and does not legally bind a country to the convention, until necessary procedures have taken place in the country (in many countries, conventions must pass through Parliament).

States Parties ratifying the first generation of regional conventions

Convention	No. of Member States in geographical region (not including Associate Members)[18]	No. of States Parties[19] (counting only Member States located in the region)	Proportion of Member States in the region having ratified	Additional States Parties from outside geographical region (plus Holy See)	Total States Parties to Convention
Europe (1979) (superseded by the Lisbon Convention)	51 (varied over time)	43	84%	3 (Holy See, Canada, US)	**46**
Africa (1981)	54	21	38%	1 (Holy See)	**22**
Asia and Pacific (1983)	48	20	42%	1 (Holy See)	**21**
Arab States (1978)	22	14	63%	-	**14**
Latin America and the Caribbean (1974)	33	13	39%	5 (Holy See, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Serbia)	**19**
Mediterranean (1976)	Not a UNESCO region	12	N/A	N/A	**12**

I.2.5   Continued efforts for a global instrument: the 1993 Recommendation

32.   In the mid-1980's, the topic of a global convention on recognition again emerged in Executive Board and General Conference deliberations (see Annex IV for details). A feasibility study for an international convention was prepared and presented to the Executive Board in 1988. Subsequently, the 1989 General Conference decided that "(a) the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas be regulated at the international level; (b) the method adopted should be an international convention" and stated that "a final draft of a convention can be submitted to it at its twenty–sixth session (1991)" (resolution 1.2.4).[20]

33.   At the 1991 General Conference, a resolution was passed that both encouraged Member States to ratify and implement the existing regional conventions, and also to pursue the work being done in the preparation of an international instrument for which a revised draft of a

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[18] Obtained from http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/worldwide/europe-and-north-america/.

[19] These numbers also include countries which may fall into more than one region, such as Kazakhstan, which appears in the list of UNESCO's Asia Pacific and European regions, and is a signatory to both of those conventions. It should be noted that the Holy See is not a Member State of UNESCO, although it is a State Party to a number of UNESCO conventions. It is associated with higher education institutions in many regions of the world.

[20] UNESCO (1989). *Records of the General Conference Twenty-fifth Session, Resolutions*.

universal convention was to be submitted at its 27th (1993) session. A small group of governmental experts was subsequently convened to further examine the draft instruments (resolution 1.15).[21] However, in 1993, the General Conference adopted the draft text of the convention as a Recommendation (the "Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education")[22] rather than in its original intended form of a legally binding convention.[23] For the remainder of the 1990's, as well as the following decade, there was no further debate on a global convention, until it emerged again in 2011.

I.2.6   A second generation of regional conventions

34.   In the meantime, initiatives had begun to revise the original recognition conventions. UNESCO documents suggest that this was prompted by the rapid changes and new dynamics in higher education which were not addressed by the original conventions, such as "massification"; diversification of provision and providers; employability; quality assurance; and the introduction of qualifications frameworks. Fraudulent qualifications, such as those from 'degree mills', have been a growing and troublesome issue for Member States.

35.   In a partnership with the Council of Europe, the European recognition convention was the first to be revised, starting in 1993.[24] In 1997, the resulting Lisbon Convention of the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region was adopted as a joint convention between UNESCO and the Council of Europe. It came into force in 1999, once five ratifications had taken place. It now has 53 States Parties, including almost all European countries and a number of countries outside the region. Unlike the first generation convention, any country can, in theory, become a party to the 1997 Lisbon Convention provided they first sign the Council of Europe European Cultural Convention, which is a prerequisite to join the 1997 Lisbon Convention.

36.   Initiatives also began amongst other regions to similarly revise their recognition conventions. To date, two other regional conventions have been revised and adopted, as shown in the table below. These are not identical to, but are based very closely on the 1997 Lisbon Convention text.

Number of ratifications of revised regional conventions (as of May 2016)

Adoption	Region	Official name	No. of ratifications
Lisbon, 11 April 1997	Europe	Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region	53
Tokyo, 26 November 2011 (not in force)	Asia and the Pacific	Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education	3
Addis Ababa, 12 December 2014 (not in force)	Africa	Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States	0

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[21] UNESCO (1991). *Records of the General Conference Twenty-sixth Session, Resolutions.*
[22] UNESCO (1993). *Records of the General Conference Twenty-seventh Session, Resolutions*.
[23] A recommendation is one type of standard-setting instrument, but, as the name implies, it is simply a recommendation to Member States, and is not legally binding or formally ratified by them. However, as explained in Chapter 3, like other standard-setting instruments, UNESCO does monitor its implementation.
[24] UNESCO (1993). Item 8.6 of the agenda, 27 C/KOM.II/3: *Draft Report of Commission II*.

37.   This 'new generation' of recognition conventions incorporates some principles that were not included in the original conventions, and elaborates further on others. UNESCO documents argue that the key effect of these changes is a shift in favour of the rights of applicants (including the concept of grating recognition except in the case of substantial differences) and a strengthened legal framework. Using the revised 2011 Tokyo Convention as an example, a summary of key principles includes:

- **Granting recognition unless substantial differences are identified**: Recognition of a qualification that meets the general requirements for access to respective higher education programmes should take place unless a substantial difference can be shown between those requirements (V.1, VI.1).

- **Responsibilities of the applicant and the recognition authority**: While the responsibility for providing adequate information rests with the holder of the qualifications (III.3), the responsibility to demonstrate that an application does not fulfil requirements lies with the recognition authority (III.3).

- **Recognition for qualifications of refugees**: The revised conventions incorporate a provision for the recognition of the qualifications of refugees, specifically that procedures be designed to assess qualifications when those cannot be proven through documentary evidence (VII).

- **Timeliness and fairness:** That the assessment of qualifications should be provided to an applicant in a timely manner (Article III.1), and within a reasonable time limit specified beforehand by the competent recognition authority (Article III.5); that the procedures and criteria used should be transparent, coherent, reliable, fair, and non-discriminatory (III.2); and that the applicant is entitled to make an appeal if recognition is withheld (III.5).

- **Assessment based on knowledge and skills:** Assessment for recognition of qualifications should focus on knowledge and skills achieved (III.1).

- **Admission to higher education institutions**: Additional specific requirements for admission to an institution, beyond the general requirements, may be imposed on applicants (IV.3), including demonstration of sufficient competence in the languages required to undertake the studies in question (IV.6). This may also pertain to school leaving certificates that require additional qualifying examinations as prerequisite for access to higher education (IV.4).

- **Non-traditional modes**: Qualifications obtained through non-traditional modes should be assessed in a fair manner (IV.7).

- **Partial studies**: Partial studies completed within a framework of a higher education programme should be recognised, or at least assessed, for purposes of completion of a higher education programme (V.1).

- **Information sharing**: Parties are responsible to provide specific information about its education and quality assurance system (outlined in Article VIII); and Parties are to develop and maintain a national information centre (VIII.3). Parties should promote use of the UNESCO Diploma Supplement and the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education or similar (VIII.4).

- **Ratification:** Unlike all of the original conventions, one of the new conventions (Asia and the Pacific) is open for ratification by all UNESCO Member States instead of those only in the region (X.1).

38.   It should also be noted that, as part of the ratification process, signatories can declare the right not to apply certain articles of the convention (a 'reservation'), unless the convention text indicates otherwise.[25] This is meant to allow for circumstances where national practices

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[25] According to the practice of the United Nations Secretary-General as depositary of multilateral treaties, which is followed by UNESCO, when treaties are silent as to reservations, reservations can be made (source: correspondence with UNESCO Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs, March 8, 2016).

(such as legislation) would prevent ratification of the convention. Otherwise, Member States are expected to accept all articles. Two of the second generation conventions so far (the 1997 and 2011 Conventions) have introduced some restrictions on which articles signatories can 'opt out' of. For the 2011 Tokyo Convention, of three States Parties, only China has declared a reservation. Four countries have declared reservations against the 1997 Lisbon Convention. In the first generation conventions, which did not restrict reservations, only the 1974 LAC and 1979 Paris Conventions have reservations noted against them.

39.   Unlike the 1997 Lisbon Convention, which in the space of two years had received 15 ratifications by Member States, the 2011 Tokyo Convention has not yet been able to achieve the five ratifications necessary to come into force (as of early 2016, Australia, China, and New Zealand were the only Member States which had ratified). The 2011 Tokyo Convention is, unlike the others, open for ratification by all Member States, even outside the region. Recently adopted, the 2014 Addis Convention had not been ratified by any Member States at the time of writing, although 17 countries signed the Convention (indicating their intent to ratify) at the adoption meeting in Addis Ababa in December 2014. Member States have set themselves a particularly high threshold of ratifications before the Convention can come into force (10 State Parties).

40.   In the last few years, discussions and activities have also been underway concerning the revision of the 1974 Latin America and Caribbean recognition Convention (these activities are described in Chapter 3: Effectiveness). In a Ministerial-level meeting in October 2015, Member States agreed to facilitate and support the revision process of the Convention, and have since established a Working Group to revise and update the Convention by 2018. So far, no comprehensive consultations or decisions have been made regarding revision of the recognition conventions for the Arab and Mediterranean regional conventions.

I.2.7   Renewed efforts towards a global convention

41.   As described earlier in this section, debates at the General Conference on a global convention had ended in 1993, when the proposed text of a global convention became a Recommendation rather than a legally binding convention. The issue re-emerged at the 2011 International Conference of States to adopt amendments to the 1983 Bangkok regional recognition convention in Tokyo, Japan. The Final Report from this meeting indicates that the Assistant Director General of Education (ADG/ED) "opened a discussion on the opportunity of elaborating a Global Convention, based on the momentum gained through the 'new generation' of conventions…The debate supported the idea of a global convention…ADG/ED concluded the discussion by proposing that a feasibility study be carried out to inform the elaboration of a possible Global Convention." This feasibility study went forward and was presented to the Executive Board in March 2013, and subsequently to the General Conference later that year.

42.   At its 2013 meeting, the General Conference invited the Director-General to initiate the process of elaborating a global convention (resolution 15). A group of international experts were convened in Paris in July 2014 and April 2015, identifying both opportunities and concerns around a possible global convention. Having reviewed the Preliminary Report Concerning the Preparation of a Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications, the 2015 General Conference resolved that the process of preparing a global convention continue, including the preparation of a preliminary draft of the global convention to be presented at the 39th session of the General Conference in 2017 for consideration (resolution 12).[26]

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[26] The General Conference made a resolution (resolution 12) that the Director-General continue assisting Member States with the revision of the regional conventions, continue the process of preparing a global convention, and convene a drafting committee to prepare a preliminary draft of the global convention and carry

I.3 Higher Education within UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy and Programme and Budget

43. UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy 2014-2021 (Document 37 C/4) and the 2014-2017 Approved Programme and Budget (Document 37 C/5) define the strategic vision for the organization as well as its expected results. Plans for education, including higher education, are further elaborated in the 2014 UNESCO Education Strategy.

44. As depicted in the table below, within the overall Medium Term Strategy (37 C/4) and Approved Programme and Budget (37 C/5) the higher education conventions fall within UNESCO's Education Programme, Strategic Objective 1/Main Line of Action 1: *Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all*. Within the thematic area of higher education, the regional conventions are most closely related to the priority area of 'Internationalization of higher education', one of three areas contributing to an expected result for strengthening national capacities in higher education policies.

Higher Education Conventions within UNESCO's 37 C/4 and 37 C/5 Documents

Major Programme:	Education		
Strategic Objective/ Main Line of Action:	#1. Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all		
Thematic Areas of Expected Results	#4. Higher Education		
Priority Areas:	Internationalization of higher education	Technology and delivery of higher education	Policy support
Expected result:	#4. Higher Education: National capacities strengthened to develop evidence-based higher education policies to address the challenges of equity, quality, inclusion, expansion, mobility and accountability		

45. These strategic documents note that within the priority area of 'Internationalization of higher education', UNESCO provides technical support on regulation issues through the implementation and continued monitoring of the application of normative instruments on the recognition of higher education qualifications and by supporting Member States to improve their quality assurance mechanisms. UNESCO also supports the sharing of experiences regarding the international exchange of faculty and research, and its implications for policy design and implementation. The possible development of a global convention is also noted, which has since been confirmed by the November 2015 General Conference.

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out regional consultations, and to submit a progress report, accompanied by a preliminary draft of a convention, at the 39th session of the General Conference for consideration and decision as to further action (UNESCO, *Records of the General Conference, 38th Session: Volume I: Resolutions,* 2015).

II. ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE CONVENTIONS

47.   This chapter discusses the role and importance of UNESCO's regional recognition conventions. First, it considers the alignment of the regional recognition conventions with UNESCO's priorities, as articulated in organizational strategy documents. Next, it examines the relevance of the recognition conventions to a changing global context for higher education. The role of the recognition conventions in terms of mobility of students and workers are also discussed, including trade agreements. Finally, it describes the context for recognition in five of the global regions to which the recognition conventions pertain, and considers the extent to which the recognition conventions are aligned with the priorities of Member States.

II.1   Alignment with UNESCO's Priorities

48.   UNESCO is one amongst a number of UN agencies, including the International Labour Organization, World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, and the International Civil Aviation Organization, which undertake standard-setting. However, UNESCO is the only UN agency with a mandate specific to higher education. Thus the work of adopting standard-setting instruments on higher education policy is in line with the key activities and mandate of UNESCO, and at the same time not duplicating the expected work of any other UN agency.

II.1.1   Medium-Term Strategy 37 C/4 and Programme and Budget 37 C/5

49.   Standard-setting work is reflected in UNESCO's Medium-term Strategy 2014-2021 (37 C/4) as one of the "five functions" of UNESCO,[27] which implies it is amongst the centre of the organization's activities. However, standard-setting work does not otherwise feature prominently in this document, and the recognition conventions are never mentioned, although other conventions are. In the section on the evolving landscape in which UNESCO works, there is a brief mention that "UNESCO's role and support for the implementation of existing standard setting instruments, especially in the field of culture, require strengthening", though the reasons for this are not described.

50.   The 2014-2017 Approved Programme and Budget document (37 C/5), which operationalizes the Medium-term Strategy for this four-year period,[28] provides more visibility to the recognition conventions, but is inconsistent in discussing standard-setting work in education. The recognition conventions are specifically mentioned (in the Education section, within Global Priority Africa, and the section on the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC)). However, the emphasis in the text overall is on the 'monitoring' of the conventions rather than supporting implementation or advocacy activities. The only specific indicator (ER4) refers to UNESCO's support to the implementation of the regional conventions. The corresponding benchmarks (15 new countries adhering to the instruments; and 5 countries supported in the implementation of these legal instruments) look rather modest, however, given the huge task at hand with regards to the new generation of revised conventions and an upcoming global convention.

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[27] The five functions are 1) serving as a laboratory of ideas and generating innovative proposals and policy advice in its fields of competence; 2) developing and reinforcing the global agenda in its fields of competence through policy analysis, monitoring and benchmarking; 3) setting norms and standards in its fields of competence and supporting and monitoring their implementation; 4) strengthening international and regional cooperation in its fields of competence, and fostering alliances, intellectual cooperation, knowledge-sharing and operational partnerships; and 5) providing advice for policy development and implementation, and developing institutional and human capacities (p 14).

[28] The Approved Programme covers a four-year period while each Budget covers a two-year period.

51.   The section "Monitoring the right to education and global education development", "b) Monitoring instruments", on page 44 which states that UNESCO "will continue to monitor the compliance with these instruments and provide technical assistance to their implementation and translation into national legislation and practices…and will place emphasis on the role that normative instruments play in promoting inclusion and lifelong learning - at the core of UNESCO's work in this period. UNESCO will further pursue its standard setting role and serve as a central forum for coordinating ethical, normative and intellectual issues, multidisciplinary exchange and mutual understanding, defining benchmarks and mobilizing international opinion." This language suggests a more proactive role vis-à-vis standard-setting instruments, but this is not reflected elsewhere in the document for the recognition conventions.

52.   As the key documents for communicating UNESCO's focus and priorities, it would be useful if future Medium-Term Strategies (C/4) and Programme and Budget (C/5) documents were more consistent in their description of standard-setting work in general and the recognition conventions in particular. Specifically, the documents should 1) consistently reflect standard-setting work as one of the priorities of the organization; and 2) state that the expectations for UNESCO's work on the conventions encompasses technical assistance, as well as advocacy for ratification and support for implementation, and monitoring, and 3) include a few more SMART performance indicators and benchmarks for the work on recognition. Further, these two documents should be coherent with the Education Sector Strategies described below.

II.1.2   Education Strategy 2014-2021 and Strategy on Standard-setting Instruments

53.   The UNESCO Education Strategy 2014-2021 is intended to elaborate on UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for the field of education. The issue of recognition and the recognition conventions are noted in a number of places in the document: as part of the context of demographic trends, lifelong learning, supporting equitable access to higher education, and monitoring global education development through normative instruments. However, no specific activities and strategies are articulated related to the recognition conventions, and the document does not provide any further details on this work compared to the overall UNESCO strategy.

54.   In comparison to these documents, the new Education Sector Strategy on Standard Setting Instruments (2015) makes a strong statement that standard-setting work should play a much more central role in the work of the Education sector, and about the importance of standard-setting work to focus and advance UNESCO's overall work. Noting that UNESCO's "work on normative instruments is not sufficiently integrated in the design and implementation of programme activities or sufficiently applied in national legal and policy frameworks", the strategy proposes that standard-setting instruments form the central element of education programme work across all the functions and activities conducted.

55.   This strategy was developed in response to a request from the Executive Board in November 2014 to submit a proposal for a strategy to "improve visibility, ratification, implementation, monitoring and cooperation in the context of standard-setting instruments in the field of education".[29] However, the strategy does not appear to be yet serving as an orienting principle for the work of the sector (noting that some Education staff do already work primarily on standard-setting instruments, including the recognition conventions). A road-map was recently developed for the actions to be undertaken to implement the strategy,[30] which includes activities such as linking the sector-wide policy review exercise to the strategy, organizing ratification plans with Regional and Field Offices, organizing special sessions during

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[29] UNESCO (2014). 195 EX/Decisions: *Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at its 195th Session* (Decision 15).
[30] UNESCO (2016). 199EX/14.INF: *The Implementation of the Strategy on UNESCO's Standard-Setting Instruments in the Field of Education*.

the session of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations, and developing the Right to Education database. Implementation of activities began in early 2016. At this time, the work on the core activities of the strategy is supported by regular programme funds devoted to normative work. In the future additional resources will be required.

II.1.3   Human rights principles

56.   Also embedded in UNESCO's Constitution, as well as its strategic documents, is the importance of furthering human rights.[31] The right to education is also specifically high-lighted in several documents, as well as in the new Education Sector Strategy on Standard Setting Instruments (2015), which stresses that the right to education is at the heart of UNESCO's mission. UNESCO documents related to the recognition conventions do not normally make an explicit connection between human rights and these instruments, but the relevance of human rights principles is clear. Their requirement for fair and consistent recognition procedures reflects, and provides a way to operationalize the principle that education should be equally accessible to all. It also strongly reflects the Universal Declaration of Human Rights principle that equal access to education should be "on the basis of merit" (Article 26.1).[32]

57.   The new generation of recognition conventions have strengthened their relevance to these human rights principles even further, by adding articles requiring a fair assessment of knowledge and skills, prior learning, and non-traditional modes of learning. The new conventions explicitly note that procedures and criteria for recognition should be non-discriminatory. Finally, the new conventions implicitly strengthen the position of 'rights-bearers' (in this context, individuals seeking recognition) compared to 'duty-holders' (recognition authorities) through the addition of articles on timeliness and the right to appeal, granting recognition unless substantial differences are identified, special consideration for refugees, and placing the responsibility for demonstrating that an application does not fulfil requirements with the recognition authorities, rather than the applicant.

58.   As a fundamental human right, gender equality is also promoted by UNESCO. Obviously the right to education in general, and the requirement for non-discriminatory recognition procedures and criteria in particular, equally apply to women and men, girls and boys. UNESCO's Priority Gender Equality Action Plan (2014-2021) calls for gender mainstreaming in all programmes and activities (assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes in all areas and at all levels). UNESCO's Global Priority Gender Equality further sets out the goal that "Education policies, processes and practices in Member States [be] developed, implemented and evaluated through the lens of gender equality and empowerment".

II.2   Alignment with Global Development Priorities

II.2.1   Higher Education as a global development priority

59.   Basic (especially primary) education has long been an important focus of global development efforts. Widely understood as a powerful means of fighting disease and poverty amongst those who are most disadvantaged, yet severely lacking in many regions, access to "universal primary education" was prioritized as one of the Millennium Development Goals in the year 2000. To this end, funders, governments, and other development actors in the international development community, have made large and ongoing investments in this goal through programs such as Education For All.

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[31] For example, UNESCO's Medium-term Strategy 2014-2021 states that strategic objectives will be "guided by the principles of a…human rights-based approach…Efforts will be deployed to further mainstream human rights principles and standards across the work of the Organization" (p 17).

[32] UN (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

60.   In previous years, higher education has not experienced the same prioritization amongst donors, development actors, or national governments in developing countries; perceptions (and in many cases, realities) of higher education contributed to this. Higher education was sometimes seen as being largely accessible to, and benefitting, those few wealthy or privileged who already had the financial resources or social connections to pursue it - extending rather than reducing the inequalities of society. It has suffered further in some cases from the perception of being expensive and inefficient.[33]

61.   While critical needs still remain for providing basic education access for all,[34] the global context has evolved. The last 15 years have shown significant progress on access to primary education, with the number of children of primary school-age out of school dropping by 42% (and for girls, by 47%), despite rapid population growth.[35] The resulting increase in youth who have completed primary and secondary schooling has created a larger demographic cohort who seek to continue their studies through tertiary education.

62.   Indeed, there has been a massive increase in participation in higher education over the years. Global tertiary enrolments increased by 160% from 1990 to 2009, or about 5% per year. This represents an increase of 65 million students to 170 million. This expansion is particularly strong in emerging economies: for example, the British Council reports that between 2002 and 2009, China and India accounted for 44% of the overall increase in global tertiary enrolments. They forecast that growth will continue across most countries to 2020, although at a slower rate globally (approximately 1.4% growth per year).[36]

63.   Driving this increased investment and interest in higher education is the changing nature of the global economy to a knowledge-based economy that relies increasingly on technical innovations and the competitive use of knowledge rather than natural resources or cheap labour.[37] Higher education is now seen as a necessity for countries that wish to take advantage of these opportunities, with knowledge and advanced skills seen to be "critical determinants of a country's economic growth and standard of living".[38] The demographic change in high-income countries and resulting skills shortage is also of concern to many countries. A few key examples demonstrate the increasing emphasis of the role of higher education in the policies of global development actors.

64.   In 2015, after a long global consultation process, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were introduced by the United Nations as reference goals guiding international development for the period 2015-2030. Unlike their predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals, the SDGs include a goal that highlights the importance of higher education. Goal 4, to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", includes a target to "ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university" (Target 4.3).[39] The SDGs also make reference to "full and productive employment" for all (Goal 8).

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[33] Bloom et al (2006). *Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa*; also Psacharopoulos, G. et al (1986). *Financing Education in Developing Countries: an Exploration of Policy Options*.

[34] The *2015 Education For All Global Monitoring Report* noted that nearly 58 million children were still out of school in 2012.

[35] UNESCO-UIS (2015). *Fixing the Broken Promise of Education For All*.

[36] British Council (2012). *The shape of things to come: higher education global trends and emerging opportunities to 2020*, p 15.

[37] World Bank (2002). *Constructing Knowledge Societies.*

38 World Bank (2016). *Tertiary Education*.

[39] UN (2016). *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform*.

65.   The changing approach of the World Bank towards education is a key example of this evolving context. Although the World Bank formerly advised that countries prioritize basic education, more recent World Bank studies have emphasized the importance of knowledge-based competition within a globalizing economy.[40] The World Bank now takes the position that funding tertiary education is a strategic priority. For example, its website notes that, in Sub-Saharan Africa, "improving tertiary education systems should be high" on the development agenda, as skills for the knowledge economy remain scarce in the region, undermining the foundation for sustainable development.[41] However, funding for the higher education system still remains scarce in many countries.

II.2.2   Recognition and mobility

66.   Along with increasing rates of participation in tertiary education globally, there has been an increase in students crossing borders to pursue that education. These numbers have grown from an estimated 800,000 in the mid-1970s, to 3.5 million in 2009,[42] to over 4 million students enrolled in tertiary education outside their country of citizenship in 2013.[43] As a proportion of total tertiary enrolments, mobile tertiary students globally have been increasing at a consistent rate of about 2% per year since the early 1990s. Overall this represents about 1.8% of all global tertiary enrolments.[44]

Mobile students: Top 10 origin and destination countries[45]

Top 10 countries of origin of mobile students:	Top 10 destination countries:
China (712,157 students studying abroad)	United States (19% of total mobile students)
India (181,872)	United Kingdom (10%)
Germany (119,123)	Australia (6%)
Republic of Korea (116,942)	France (6)
France (84,059)	Germany (5%)
Saudi Arabia (73,548)	Russian Federation (3%)
United States (60,292)	Japan (3%)
Malaysia (56,260)	Canada (3%)
Viet Nam (53,546)	China (2%)
Nigeria (52,066)	Italy (2%)

67.   In addition to the pursuit of further education, the movement of academic staff and other individuals across borders for the purpose of work has implications for the demand for recognition. The UN Population Division reports that of the 232 million international migrants

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[40] Bloom et al (2006) *Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa;* also World Bank (1994) *Higher Education: Lessons of Experience*; and World Bank (2002) *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*.

41 World Bank (2016). *Tertiary Education in Africa.*

[42] British Council (2012). *The shape of things to come: higher education global trends and emerging opportunities to 2020.*

[43] OECD (2015). *Education At a Glance: OECD Indicators.*

[44] UNESCO Institute for Statistics http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx#sthash.P5QxRINY.dpuf (May 31, 2016).

[45] *ibid*

in 2013, 48% were female.[46] Information is not available on how many of these migrants held higher education qualifications (and therefore might seek or require recognition).[47] The International Organization for Migration suggests that migration remains predominantly low-skilled,[48] but such a large pool of migrants still represents a substantial incoming skilled labour force, for whom recognition could help make optimal use of their skills. International data on migration and mobility of teachers in higher education, scholars, academics, and researchers is weak.[49]

68.   This growth in cross-border mobility results in an increasing need for recognition of foreign qualifications to be carried out by higher education institutions and responsible national authorities, whether for studies or employment. However, few statistics on the actual scope or scale of the demand for recognition could be obtained for this evaluation, and none that could document global trends over time. Neither universities nor recognition authorities typically make their statistics on recognition public. Some data was obtained on the demand for recognition (mostly from Europe), and that is presented, where available, in the relevant regional background sections in this chapter. What is clear is that the number of requests related to recognition of foreign qualifications varies wildly between countries, depending on their national context, but can be as much as tens of thousands per year.

69.   This evaluation does not attempt to analyse the relevance of each of the articles of the regional conventions. However, it should be noted that, as with overall demand for recognition, data is in any case not readily available to quantify the extent of the need for specific provisions included within the conventions, such as the extent to which individuals are discriminated against in recognition processes (including gender or other factors), how long they wait to be assessed, or what procedures are used for assessment. The 1997 Lisbon Convention Committee has obtained some of this data for States Parties in a recent survey, which is discussed in the regional section on Europe (II.3.2.1) below.

II.2.3   Recognition for refugees

70.   Refugees are at a particular disadvantage in having their qualifications recognised, particularly when they have been forced to leave their home community without any documentation providing evidence of their education. While not addressed in the original conventions, the revised recognition conventions acknowledge this issue with the inclusion of a requirement to establish procedures to assess the qualifications of refugees and internally displaced persons (see textbox). This is stated most strongly in the 2011 Tokyo and 1997 Lisbon Conventions, which both note that these procedures should be fair and expeditious, "even in cases in which the qualifications obtained in one of the Parties cannot be proven through documentary evidence".

71.   While individuals fleeing persecution or war is not a new occurrence, recognition of refugee qualifications is an increasingly pressing issue. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) reports that the global number of refugees has increased significantly and

> 1997 Lisbon Convention text on the **Recognition of Qualifications Held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation**
>
> **Article VII**
> Each Party shall take all feasible and reasonable steps within the framework of its education system and in conformity with its constitutional, legal, and regulatory provisions to develop procedures designed to assess fairly and expeditiously whether refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education, to further higher education programmes or to employment activities, even in cases in which the qualifications obtained in one of the Parties cannot be proven through documentary evidence.

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[46] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division (2013). *International Migration Report.*

[47] It should also be noted that many migrants would hold qualifications giving *access* to higher education (i.e. school-leaving qualifications), which are also covered under the recognition conventions.

[48] The IOM World Migration Report 2013 suggests that approximately 33% of migrants have intermediate skills and 22% are highly skilled (*World Migration Report 2013: Migrant Well-being and Development*).

[49] Teichler, Ulrich (2015). *Academic Mobility and Migration: What We Know and What We Do Not Know*.

consistently over the past four years. By mid-2015, this consisted of 15 million people and was at its highest level in 20 years, with much of the increase due to the war in Syria.

72.   A recent publication from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) highlights the assessment of humanitarian migrants' foreign qualifications, work experience and skills as one of ten main policy lessons for achieving the successful integration of refugees. It notes that humanitarian migrants are often more highly skilled than the general population in their home country, but that local employers "broadly discount qualifications from non-OECD countries and dismiss work experience almost completely".[50] As called for in the revised recognition conventions (most clearly in the 1997 Lisbon Convention and the 2011 Tokyo Convention), this report suggests that it is important that countries systematically, swiftly, and effectively assess qualifications and skills, using alternative assessment methods when there is no documentary proof of qualifications. Otherwise, refugees with foreign credentials will continue to experience higher rates of unemployment or be considered 'overqualified' more often than other groups of migrants, with negative consequences for integration within a new home country.

73.   Many of the stakeholders interviewed from the European, Asia-Pacific and Arab regions mentioned the importance of the issue of refugee qualifications in their region at this time. However, the level of implementation of this article of the Convention for the European countries (which is the only region for which information is available) suggests that this perception of relevance is not matched equally with actions towards implementation. A recent survey carried out in mid-2015 by the Lisbon Convention Committee found that of the 53 European countries in the survey, only 14 have national regulations for procedures on recognition of refugees' qualifications, with Norway having the most comprehensive system for recognising refugees' qualifications.[51] While 6 countries did not answer this question, 33 countries (or 70%) indicated they have no such procedures. In the Asia-Pacific region no such data exists, given that the 2011 Tokyo Convention is not in force yet. However, the evaluation observed that a number of countries had informally expressed reluctance regarding this article.

II.2.4   Recognition in a global policy context

74.   The importance of recognition has been highlighted in key education forums and by global actors outside of UNESCO:

a.   The OECD has highlighted the importance of recognition processes in ensuring quality education through their collaboration with UNESCO to create non-binding joint Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education. These guidelines are intended to protect students and other stakeholders from low-quality education providers, and encourage the development of quality cross-border higher education. The guidelines discuss the importance of recognition in this context, and they urge countries to join the regional conventions.

b.   The International Labour Organization's (ILO) 2004 Human Resource Development Recommendation calls upon ILO members to promote recognition and portability of skills, competencies and qualifications at the national and international level, recognising that education, training and lifelong learning "should form an integral part of… economic,

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[50] OECD (2016). *Making Integration Work: Refugees and others in need of protection*, p 30.
[51] In 2012, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, in cooperation with Norwegian higher education institutions, developed a recognition model in which it takes responsibility for the entire recognition process, including obtaining the necessary expertise by appointing expert committees. Norway is also developing a fast-track recognition procedure which would be applicable to refugees settled in reception centres in Norway as well as refugee camps. For more information, see http://www.eaie.org/blog/the-norwegian-response-to-the-refugee-crisis/.

fiscal, social and labour market policies and programmes that are important for sustainable economic growth and employment creation and social development". [52]

c. The Incheon Declaration from UNESCO's World Education Forum 2015 held in Incheon, South Korea, notes the importance of "the recognition, validation and accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal education".[53] The final communiqué from the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education called for greater regional cooperation in the recognition of qualifications and quality assurance, implementation of the 1981 Arusha Convention, better recognition of prior learning and work experience, and for UNESCO to continue to help governments and institutions to implement the new generation of regional recognition conventions.[54]

d. Numerous regional and global trade agreements have included an article on the need for recognition processes (as described in more detail below), with a view to facilitating cross-border provision of services through the movement of natural persons.

II.2.5   Trade agreements, economic integration, and recognition

75.   Another global development which is highlighting the importance of recognition and the role that the recognition conventions can play is the movement towards regional and global economic integration. The intergovernmental trade agreements which are facilitating this integration typically address wide-ranging aspects of both trade and services, including the movement of skilled people between countries. Broadly speaking, these agreements intend to increase mobility between countries in skilled professions. Of course, increased mobility of skilled individuals, who will usually have some form of tertiary education, immediately raises the issue of the recognition of their qualifications between countries whose education systems may be very different.

76.   Acknowledgement of the importance of this issue is also evident within many other trade agreements which have included a specific article on the recognition of qualifications. Some examples of these include the North American Free Trade Agreement (1994), the General Agreement on Trade in Services (1995), ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement on Trade in Services (2007), the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Community Common Market (2009), the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (2010), the Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement, and the United States-Singapore Free Trade Agreement. These agreements do not create a specific recognition regime, but usually call for mutual recognition to take place and also that applicants from all other signatory countries should be treated alike.

77.   The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) provides one important example of the potential role of UNESCO recognition conventions. This 1995 agreement, under the auspices of the World Trade Organization, has 140 participating countries.[55] It contains specific articles addressing recognition of qualifications with a view to facilitating the provision of cross-border services through natural persons (Articles VII and VI). However, the GATS provisions do not specify the substance of recognition, nor the specific way in which recognition is to be achieved. It rather outlines general provisions on how the recognition process should be organised. The agreement encourages Members to base recognition practices on multilaterally agreed criteria, and requests that members cooperate "with relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations towards the establishment and adoption of common

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[52] ILO (2004). *Human Resources Development Recommendation* (No. 195).

[53] World Education Forum (2015). *Incheon Declaration*.

[54] UNESCO (2009). *2009 World Conference on Higher Education: The New Dynamics of Higher Education and Research For Societal Change and Development: Communique*.

[55] World Trade Organization (2016). The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS): objectives, coverage and disciplines.

international standards and criteria for recognition".[56] Later the governing body of GATS clarified that these "relevant organizations" should be open to membership of all WTO members, which is of particular relevance for low-income countries.[57] UNESCO is one such organization, and the only one with established generic international standards for recognition. In this regard its recognition regime could be vital for complementing substantial recognition standards established by international professional associations, for instance in the field of engineering or accountancy. Thus the GATS, and other trade agreements with similar provisions, increase the relevance of UNESCO's regional and (future) global recognition conventions.

78. The UNESCO recognition conventions and GATS both promote the removal of barriers to the mobility of students, teachers, and other highly skilled workers, but there has been apprehension in UNESCO around the liberalization of trade in higher education which GATS promotes. In the 2000's, UNESCO undertook activities[58] and publications[59] addressing the issue of GATS, highlighting concerns around the inclusion of education as a commodity and emphasizing the importance of maintaining access and respect for diversity and quality of higher education. Ideas were raised about the recognition conventions providing a kind of alternative to the liberalization of trade in higher education.[60]

79. Another line of thinking emphasized that the recognition conventions should be applied within GATS, to make sure that higher education policies within GATS conform to those of the higher education community at large.[61] The complementarity of the recognition conventions to GATS was also often pointed out as an issue for further exploration.[62]

80. However, discussion of the relevance of the recognition conventions to trade agreements is not mentioned in any recent UNESCO documents, and no longer seems to be an area of active discussion or focus. This appears to be a lost opportunity to demonstrate the relevance and importance of the conventions in this context, which may in turn support efforts towards convention development, revision, ratification, and implementation.

II.3 Alignment with Member States' Priorities

81. This section addresses the general alignment of the conventions with Member States' priorities; first, through examining levels of ratification; and second, through a regional lens.

II.3.1 Level of convention ratification

82. Ratifications of the conventions by Member States (and the subsequent coming into force) represent a key goal for UNESCO and one of the key steps on the path towards achieving the goals of any convention. If ratifications of the conventions are considered as a proxy for the extent to which they are relevant to Member States, the result would look mixed

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[56] GATS Article VII.5, quoted in Hartmann (2008). *The Role of Qualifications in the Global Migration Regime*.

[57] Hartmann (2008). *The Role of Qualifications in the Global Migration Regime*.

[58] Such as the Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in 2002, the creation of the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge, and an Expert Meeting convened in UNESCO Headquarters, Paris (September 2001) on the 'Impact of Globalization on Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications'.

[59] Example of publications include the proceedings from the 2002 Global Forum; *Higher Education in a Globalized Society: UNESCO Education Position Paper*; Knight, J. (2006) *Higher Education Crossing Borders: A Guide to the Implications of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) for Cross-border Education*.

[60] UNESCO (2002). *First Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education UNESCO, Paris 17-18 October 2002: Proceedings*.

[61] *ibid*

[62] *ibid*

to poor (with the exception of Europe). Only Europe and the Arab States region achieved over 50% ratification of Member States in the region. For the other regions, this figure was approximately 40%. This is lower than most other UNESCO conventions, which are typically in the 65-85% ratification range (two reach over 90%). The other two Education conventions have also struggled: 9% of Member States have ratified the 1989 Convention on Technical and Vocational Education, and 52% for the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education.[63]

> **Regions that host the largest number of mobile students (as of May 2016)**
>
> - North America and Western Europe (57% of total mobile students)
>
> - East Asia and the Pacific (19%)
>
> - Central and Eastern Europe (10%)
>
> Source: UIS website Global Flow of Tertiary Students at http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx#sthash.P5QxRINY.dpuf

83. Many national-level stakeholders indicated that ratification is complicated by several factors. In many countries, conventions must be approved by the national Parliament, and can involve a long process with multiple government ministries, who may have particular questions or concerns. The road to ratification can become stalled if it is not seen as a priority (as in countries facing crises), or if the content is not well understood. Turnover in government staff, and in governments themselves was also noted as a factor by government representatives.

84. Although few country-level stakeholders acknowledged this as an issue for their country, interviewees frequently suggested that concerns about labour market implications are preventing some countries from ratifying their regional convention, particularly in the Asia-Pacific and LAC regions. Specifically, they refer to the fear that a country could experience a large influx of skilled workers with foreign qualifications. This seems to be intertwined with the perception that recognition might enable individuals in regulated professions (such as doctors) to be eligible to work in a foreign country. In fact, the first and second generation conventions state that recognition does not exempt the holder from the legal and professional rules or procedures in force in a receiving country. Some interviewed stakeholders also had the impression that the conventions entail 'automatic' recognition (that countries would have to automatically accept qualifications from other States Parties without any assessment). This is not accurate, but if a country is to sign on to the principle of recognizing qualifications unless a 'significant difference' can be shown, they will need an assessment system capable of determining 'significant differences'. The article on refugee qualifications has also been identified as a barrier to ratification for some countries.

II.3.2 The regions

85. As explained in the Background section of this report, the existing recognition conventions are unlike all other UNESCO conventions in that they have a regional rather than global basis. While affected by all the global trends described above, each of these regions has developed differently in terms of their education systems, trends in mobility, recognition practices, extent of university autonomy, level of quality assurance, and other factors. The following sections, while not comprehensive, describe some of the key elements of context in each region, which pertain to the role and importance of the conventions. This context also informs subsequent chapters related to lessons learned, and UNESCO support for the conventions going forward.

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[63] Based on data provided on UNESCO's Conventions webpages as of May 2016 (http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=12025&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=-471.html), and calculated based on 195 Member States.

86. Given the advanced state of the 1997 Lisbon Convention compared to the other regional conventions, additional detail is provided on the implementation of this convention, which is not addressed in other regional sections.

II.3.2.1 Europe

87. UNESCO's Europe and North America region contains 52 Member States (plus Associate Member Faroe Islands), including some of the most developed and wealthiest countries in the world.[64] This section focuses on Member States located in Europe.[65] At the present time, Europe has a reputation for high quality education, and contains three of the four most popular destinations for international students in the world: the United Kingdom, France, and Germany.[66]

88. Prior to European integration processes, Europe was separated by ideological barriers and social and economic divisions. Likewise, the higher education sector was inconsistent in structure and quality across Europe. However, Europe's higher education systems have undergone considerable change. Along with greater political and monetary integration through the European Union, countries sought to improve the comparability, compatibility, and coherence of European higher education systems through a process of reform (the 'Bologna Process'). The Bologna Process, initiated in 1999, has been a voluntary intergovernmental process working towards the goal of creating a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It is intended to strengthen the competitiveness and attractiveness of the European higher education and to foster student mobility and employability. Through an ongoing series of biannual ministerial meetings starting in 1999, 47 participating countries have agreed to make key reforms such as the use of a three-cycle Bachelor-Master-Doctorate degree structure, qualifications frameworks with an emphasis on learning outcomes, and recognition of qualifications based on the 1997 Lisbon Convention.[67] The EHEA was officially launched in March 2010, but implementation is uneven across the region and work is ongoing to strengthen the implementation of education reforms.[68]

89. There is widespread agreement that the 1997 Lisbon Convention has been important to the higher education reforms taking place in Europe. Specifically, it has a unique role as the only legal instrument or framework within the entire Bologna Process. At its inception, the principles introduced by the 1997 Lisbon Convention were seen to be very forward-looking and progressive, such as shifting the burden of proof to recognition authorities, and this is still the case today. The ENIC-NARIC Network,[69] a European network of national information centres

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[64] See http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/worldwide/europe-and-north-america/.

[65] Australia and New Zealand are also States Parties to the 1997 Lisbon Convention, as well as the 1983 Bangkok and 2011 Tokyo Conventions. The United States and Canada have also signed (indicating an intent to ratify), but not ratified, the Lisbon Convention, and are therefore not States Parties to the convention. Representatives of the United States and Canada normally attend meetings of the Lisbon Convention Committee as Observers.

[66] The United States is the single most popular destination country in the world, attracting 19% of total mobile students (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Global Flow of Tertiary Level Students.

[67] The Lisbon Convention is only open to signatories of the 1954 European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe.

[68] European Higher Education Area website Bologna Process http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=3 (May 2016).

[69] These are technically two different networks which originated at different times. The NARIC network (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) predated the Bologna Process and was initiated by the European Commission in 1984 to improve academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study. Those countries that had not already created a national information centre as part of the NARIC network by the time of the development of the Lisbon Convention, created a National Information Centre in order to implement the Lisbon Recognition Convention requirements, which became the ENIC network (European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility) under the auspices of the Council of Europe and

(discussed below, and again in Chapter 3), has played a particularly key role in the success and functioning of the 1997 Lisbon Convention.

90.   As the first of the new generation of recognition conventions, the 1997 Lisbon Convention has set the precedent for the other revised conventions, which have closely followed the 1997 Lisbon Convention content. The 1997 Lisbon Convention is also universally recognised as the most successful and functional of all the regional conventions, with the most advanced implementation. However, the development and success of the 1997 Lisbon Convention must be understood in the context of larger European integration just described. These integration processes and structures set the stage for, and enabled the success of the revised regional recognition Convention, supported with resources from the European Union. The Bologna Process became an important trigger of national reforms aiming to ensure the compatibility of different higher education systems, which has served to strengthen recognition processes.

91.   Other key developments related to recognition in the European context is the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The EQF establishes common standards for classification of levels of education in different countries by describing a set of eight reference levels relating to learning outcomes, and describing what a learner knows, understands, and is able to do. The ECTS was established through the Bologna Process and awards credit points for completed courses, linked to workload, learning outcomes, and contact hours, which can be accumulated towards a qualification.[70] These help to facilitate comparisons and therefore recognition.

ENIC-NARIC Network

As required by the 1997 Lisbon Convention, all State Parties have established a national information centre. These Centres are set up by the national authorities, and serve as the main information source about their country's education system, the recognition of foreign diplomats, degrees and other qualifications, and information on studying abroad. They are most commonly housed within the Ministry of Higher Education, and in practice are the key day-to-day implementation mechanism of the convention.

As the centres rely on obtaining good quality information from other countries to make an assessment of a foreign credential, they collaborate through a network of national information centres in the European region called the 'ENIC-NARIC network', established in 1994. This network is widely seen to be the principal factor of success for the 1997 Lisbon Convention, providing a professional, collaborative network of recognition practitioners. As the network has only one in-person meeting per year, an active list-serve is the key tool used to share questions and information with colleagues. The importance of in-person meetings was also repeatedly mentioned as a crucial element in building the trusting relationships that are ultimately the foundation of a functioning recognition system.

Every two years, members of the ENIC-NARIC Network elect a President and two Vice-Presidents, who together make up the virtual 'Bureau' of the Network. The Bureau meets three times a year to identify issues of interest (such as enhancing collaboration with higher education institutions) and integrate them into a network work-plan. These elected officials, as well as members of the network who participate in working groups, carry out this work on a voluntary basis, in addition to their regular work responsibilities. Through their participation in the management of the 1997 Lisbon Convention, the network brings a valuable practitioner's viewpoint to the management of the 1997 Lisbon Convention.

The involvement of the ENIC-NARIC Network in the governance of the 1997 Lisbon Convention is discussed in section III.2.1.1.

UNESCO. In most countries, which are members of the European Union, the NARIC is also an ENIC, while some are only an ENIC. However, all of these national information centres provide similar functions, and work closely together.
[70] Hartmann, (2008). *The Role of Qualifications in the Global Migration Regime*.

92.   The EU has also undertaken large investments to encourage mobility, such as the Erasmus+ programme, which has a budget of €14.7 billion to provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, and volunteer abroad.[71] The mobility strategy   for the European Higher Education Area has set a mobility target that at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA should have had a study or training period abroad by 2020.[72]

93.   It should also be noted that the European Union (EU) has established a Directive on Professional Qualifications which regulates recognition for professional purposes. It aims at facilitating mobility within the EU and defines a set of rules allowing professionals qualified in one Member Sate to exercise their profession in another Member State.
[73]

Data from European National Information Centres

94.   A recent survey by the Lisbon Convention Committee Bureau (further described in Chapter 3: Effectiveness) provided the first comprehensive set of data on applications received by the ENIC-NARIC Network for 2013, including assessments of qualifications and other enquiries. The applications per centre varied enormously, from less than 100 to over 11,000. Of the 46 countries responding, a large majority received less than 10,000 assessments and enquiries per year, while about one-quarter of countries received more than 10,000 (see the graph for more detail). Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom received over 10,000 requests for assessments of qualifications alone.[74]
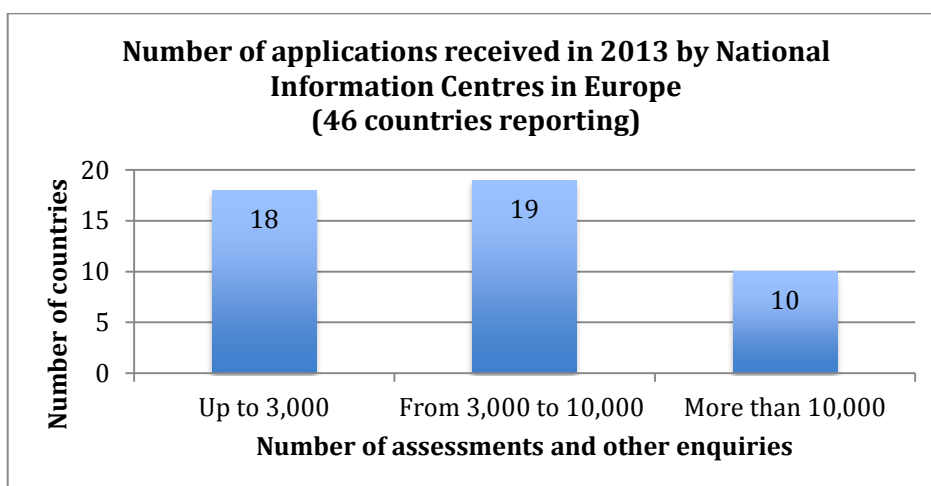
95.   While these statistics give an indication of the level of demand for the services of the national information centres (the ENIC-NARIC Centres), the survey report indicates that challenges remain, and that Convention implementation is uneven. While all countries have established a national information centre, not all components of the Convention are being successfully implemented, and no country has implemented the Convention in full. The report notes that most countries are failing to provide a translation of key information in a widely-spoken language such as English, and that information on education systems and institutions is not consistent between countries. Survey results also suggests that most countries are not using learning outcomes as an important criterion, but continue to rely on quantifiable criteria such as credits earned and the duration of a programme. As well, Article VII regarding refugees' qualifications has not been implemented in 70% of countries responding. The report

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[71] See http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en.

[72] EHEA (2012). *Mobility for Better Learning: Mobility strategy 2020 for the European Higher Education Area*.

[73] Source: European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/services/free-movement-professionals/.

[74] It is also important to note that actual demand will be much larger than these numbers reflect, as in many countries higher education institutions make recognition decisions, which do not pass through these centres.

(which is not publicly available at this time) makes comprehensive recommendations to address these issues.

II.3.2.2   Asia and the Pacific

96.   There are 48 Member States[75] in the UNESCO Asia and Pacific region, which encompasses states from the small Pacific islands to Central Asia. A growing population, and the growing wealth in the region, has resulted in an explosion in the number of international students from this region. The most recent figures available suggest that students from Asia represent 53% of international students enrolled worldwide. Of all countries in the world, China has the largest number of students studying internationally, followed by India. The region attracts students as well; Australia is the third most popular destination in the world for international students, and there is a large flow of Asian students studying in other countries within the region.[76] The Central Asian sub-region, in contrast, is home to the most mobile student population in the world, with a doubling of the outbound mobility ratio (to 7.6%) from 2003 to 2013.[77]

97.   As in Europe, developments in higher education in the Asia and Pacific region are strongly influenced by broader political and economic regionalization processes. This is particularly the case in East Asia, where higher education regionalization processes have been focused on at least five different, but overlapping, sub-regions. These are being driven by sub-regional cooperative organizations, particularly the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and related organizations such as the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). Another significant forum active in higher education issues is the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), a forum for 21 Pacific Rim member economies promoting free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Countries in the Central Asia sub-region are not members of these organizations, and for historical and linguistic reasons, have a much stronger association with the Russian Federation.

98.   Like the regionalization activities in the spheres of trade and security, there has been some movement toward the development of an East Asian Higher Education Area (EAHEA) following the model of the European Higher Education Area. Under the auspices of APEC, 27 member countries agreed in 2006 to collaborate on a number of initiatives to encourage and facilitate regional student and academic mobility and exchange and to address barriers to these activities, with the goal of having a common higher education space (the 'Brisbane Communique'). These initiatives include the pilot project University Mobility in Asia and Pacific (UMAP) to develop a credit transfer system similar to the European model, and the development of the Asia Pacific Academic Recognition Network (a counterpart to the ENIC-NARIC Network).[78] The Communiqué highlights, amongst other things, the importance of mutual recognition of higher education qualifications and degrees towards this goal. There are many different components which must be in place to build an EAHEA, such as harmonization of higher education systems, regional quality assurance, and mutual recognition. As these are still in their early stages, an EAHEA is unlikely to manifest in the near future. However, some authors suggest that UNESCO's regional conventions for the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education in Asia and the Pacific have been the starting point of East Asian higher education regionalization.[79]

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[75] As well as two associate Members, Macao (China) and Tokelau. See
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/worldwide/asia-and-the-pacific/.

[76] OECD (2015). *Education At a Glance: OECD Indicators*.

[77] UNESCO Institute for Statistics: Global Flow of Tertiary Level Students (as of May 2016).

[78] Australian Government (2008). *Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications across the Brisbane Communiqué Region, Scoping study and report*.

[79] Chao, R. Y. (2014). *Pathways to an East Asian Higher Education Area: A comparative analysis of East Asian and European regionalization processes*.

99.   Other significant developments in higher education related to recognition in the Asia and Pacific region are the development of regional quality assurance (through the Asia Pacific Quality Network and the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network), the development of qualifications frameworks, credit transfer systems, and the growing number of mutual recognition agreements within the region.

100.   A number of other agreements pertaining to recognition can be found as part of regional trade agreements which include requirements for recognition. ASEAN has adopted a number of mutual recognition agreements in engineering, nursing, architecture, surveying, medical practitioners, dental practitioners, accountancy, and tourism during the period 2005 to 2012. These agreements have not been fully implemented. In another development, the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (2010), discusses recognition of education or experience obtained for the purpose of fulfilling criteria for authorization, licensing or certification of service suppliers. Similarly, the 2007 ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement on Trade in Services incorporated a section on recognition (Article 6) for the same purpose.

101.   All stakeholders interviewed, representing either regional organizations or governments, noted that they found the regional Convention to have an important role in the recognition landscape in the region. However, some concerns exist around labour market implications and recognizing refugee qualifications. This issue is exacerbated by the large economic disparity in the Asia and the Pacific region, with some countries experiencing much more rapid economic growth than others.

II.3.2.3 Africa

102.   UNESCO's Africa region encompasses the entire continent of Africa, and includes 54 Member States in total.[80] The higher education sector in African states has undergone considerable change over time. Having inherited disparate higher education systems from a colonial past (including Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone systems), but without the intensity of regional integration as in the EU, mobility of students and academic staff has been hindered. Chronic underfunding of higher education systems in many countries led to a lack of investment and maintenance in infrastructure, even while enrolment was increasing. This resulted in a decline in quality, such as high teacher/student ratios and inadequate facilities and textbooks.[81] These challenging conditions are reflected in the large number of students leaving the continent to pursue higher education. Indeed, the UIS reports that the proportion of mobile students from sub-Saharan Africa is second only to that of Central Asia. [82]

103.   However, recent data suggests that the proportion of African students leaving their own countries to study is slowing. Although the total number of African students enrolled abroad in 2013 rose from 204,900 in 2003 to 264,774 in 2013, the outbound mobility ratio in the region dropped from 6% in to 4%, suggesting that domestic higher education systems are expanding.[83] There are various initiatives at the national, regional, and continental levels related to improving quality, including the development of quality assurance agencies (at least 21 countries with governmentally established quality assurance agencies), the harmonization of higher education, and steps towards an African Higher Education and Research Space. Many of these initiatives are interlinked with, and ultimately will help to enable, mutual recognition of qualifications. While different countries have different capacities, representatives of countries interviewed expressed the challenge they experience conducting recognition assessments, including a lack of data, not being sufficiently linked with recognition structures

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[80] See http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/worldwide/africa/.

[81] Shabani et al (2014). *Quality Assurance in Africa: Towards a Continental Higher Education and Research Space*.

[82] UNESCO Institute for Statistics: Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students (as of May 2016).

[83] *ibid*

in other countries, and having to assess fraudulent qualifications, for which they sometimes did not have the capacity. Some countries have used assistance or guidance from more experienced countries like South Africa to build their capacity.

104. For both the revision of the original 1981 Arusha Convention, and the ratification and implementation of the 2014 Addis Convention, UNESCO has partnered with the African Union. African countries have prioritized higher education through the African Union Agenda 2063 strategy (2015), which refers to the need for "harmonization of education standards, and mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications" (p 15). The regional recognition Convention could also facilitate implementation of the African Union Charter on regional cooperation and training of human resources and improve the quality of higher education, as

> **Kenya's Elections Act and recognition requests**
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> Kenya's Election Act of 2011 brought in a new requirement for electoral candidates to hold a certificate, diploma or other post-secondary school qualification acquired after a period of at least three months study, and recognised in Kenya (Section 22.1). The Commission for University Education, the government entity tasked with carrying out recognition of qualifications, now receives between 3,000 - 5,000 recognition requests per month, which is likely to surge as the 2017 national election approaches.

for instance suggested by the Rolling Strategic Plan of the Inter-University Council of East Africa.[84]

105. Recognition of qualifications has been recognised as an important challenge at the sub-regional level as well, mainly through the Regional Economic Communities (REC). A number of regional agreements articulate the intention to improve mutual recognition, and some initiatives are underway towards that goal. This includes a 1972 sub-regional convention on the mutual recognition of higher education degrees for the 19 Francophone member states[85] of the Conseil africain et malgache pour l'enseignement supérieur (CAMES). Experts from CAMES member states meet periodically, currently once per year, to evaluate applications for recognition of degrees. As of 2013, CAMES had recognised 918 degrees out of 1,242 applications.[86] CAMES also has significant quality assurance initiatives and is working on other educational reforms in member states.

106. The East African sub-region has also established a provision through their 2009 East African Common Market Protocol for the mutual recognition of qualifications and harmonization of curricula (Article II). The implementation of this article requires the establishment of a regional qualifications framework (completed in 2015) and a credit transfer and accumulation system. This work is the responsibility of the Inter-University Council for East Africa, which is now an official body of the East African Community (EAC), and is responsible for ensuring internationally comparable standards in the five partner states of the East African Community.[87] A regional quality assurance system has been developed and is reportedly operational.

107. Finally, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), with 15 member states, identifies the importance of facilitating the movement of staff and students across borders, and mutual recognition of qualifications, through the Protocol on Education and Training (1997). Article 7 states that "Member States agree that in order to prevent costly repetition of courses taken at universities within the Region and in order to contribute towards the mutual recognition

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[84] IUCEA (2011). *Rolling Strategic Plan 2011-2016*.

[85] Bénin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, Centrafrique, République du Congo, République démocratique du Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinée, Guinée-Bissau, Guinée Équatoriale, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Sénégal, Tchad, and Togo.

[86] Shabani et al (2014). *Quality Assurance in Africa: Towards a Continental Higher Education and Research Space*.

[87] *Ibid*. Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

of qualifications throughout the Region, universities shall be encouraged to devise mechanisms to facilitate credit transfer from one University to another within the Region".[88]

108. The idea of developing an African Higher Education and Research Area (AHERS) has also emerged, for which the regional recognition Convention would be highly relevant. Based on experiences in Europe, these would be mutually beneficial. The recognition Convention could support the development of AHERS, and would also be supported by the existence of AHERS. However, the realization of AHERS is a long way off.

II.3.2.4 Latin America and the Caribbean

109. The UNESCO region of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is also very diverse from both an educational and socioeconomic perspective, consisting of 33 Member States (plus seven Associate Members)[89] from the southern border of the United States to the southern tip of South America. Higher education in this region has been influenced by a varied colonial history, with Caribbean countries following a more Anglo-European system. As a result of these contextual differences, the time it takes to complete degrees across LAC is inconsistent, contributing to large challenges in recognition of qualifications between countries and sub-regions. Inter-regional mobility is low, and the use of bi-lateral agreements (between higher education institutions or countries) continues to be the primary mechanism for recognition of qualifications in the region.

110. As a result of large socioeconomic differences between countries and sub-regions, some countries have a stronger higher education presence both in terms of numbers of higher education institutions and perceived quality compared to other countries in the region, such as Brazil. Brazil has also made large investments to increase the international mobility of its students.[90] However, in general, the region suffers from low and unequal access to higher education across socio-economic groups, and quality is perceived to be a serious challenge.[91]

111. Despite these challenges, higher education has greatly expanded, with average gross enrolment ratios almost doubling between 20% in 2000 to 40% in 2010. Much of this expansion has taken place through a large increase in private universities, such that Latin America has the higher percentage of private enrolment in the world (49%).[92] University autonomy in the region is generally perceived to be very high, which poses challenges for implementation of the recognition Convention articles.

112. Like other regions, LAC has sub-regions made up of regional blocks, which primarily focus on trade. MERCOSUR (Mercado Común del Sur), has proposed the regionalization of higher education ('MERCOSUR-Educativo'), somewhat akin to the Bologna Process in Europe, which in theory could improve mutual recognition of qualifications; however, it does not yet exist.

II.3.2.5 Arab States

113. UNESCO's Arab States region contains 22 Member States,[93] less than any other region. It is a diverse region as well, spanning countries from northern Africa and the Middle East, and

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[88] Southern African Development Community (1997). *Protocol on Education and Training*.

[89] See http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/worldwide/latin-america-and-the-caribbean/.

[90] For example, the Brazil Scientific Mobility Program, which sends Brazilian undergraduate and graduate students majoring in a STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) field to study in the United States for up to one year.

[91] OECD (2015). *Higher education in Latin America: Challenges and opportunities*.

[92] *ibid*

[93] See http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/worldwide/arab-states/.

encompassing Francophone, Anglophone (either U.,K. or U.S.), and North American education systems. Different parts of this region have very different practices and capacities in higher education. Higher education institutions in the Gulf States often follow the model of the education system of the United States, and are perceived to offer high quality education. Indeed, they attract students from across the Arab States, and from outside the region: the share of mobile students studying within the region increased from 12% to 30% between 1999 and 2013.[94] Some countries in the Maghreb (as well as Syria) follow the Francophone system, and are much closer to and interested in integrating with developments in the European higher education system.

114. Quality assurance is inconsistent in the region, with not all countries having a quality assurance or accreditation agency, and others having invested extensive efforts in creating these, such as Saudi Arabia. Concerns around quality are persistent, which has partly to do with the proliferation of private higher education institutions (Lebanon, for example has 40 higher education institutions, of which only one is public), which may not easily be held accountable for their practices. Not all countries have a National Information Centre to provide information on national qualifications, although virtually all have some entity (most often within the Ministry of Education) to recognize qualifications. However, the autonomy of higher education institutions in the region, public or private, is generally high, including for recognition practices.

115. Bilateral agreements are reported to be the main mechanism by which recognition takes place; through this mechanism, mutual recognition of degrees within the region is reported to be high. Several of the stakeholders interviewed therefore wondered what added value a regional convention could bring. At the same time, others noted that bilateral agreements are limited in scope and a large number of them would be required to cover the same number of countries that one convention could (particularly in the case of a global convention). The recognition conventions could provide a framework of reference for specific challenges in the region, such as the common practice of not recognizing online higher education, and the acute challenges of Syrian refugees hoping to seek recognition from countries like Jordan and Lebanon. Given the competitive nature of higher education in the Gulf States, and their interest in attracting international students, some key informants suggested that a revised convention that could offer a competitive advantage would be likely to be ratified by these countries.

116. Given the distinctive sub-regions of UNESCO's Arab States, there is no one regional integration initiative with specific relevance to higher education and recognition. However, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), a regional economic organization specific to the northern African states of Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia, does state amongst its objectives "The progressive realization of free movement of persons, services, goods and capital between member states".[95] The Council of Maghreb Ministers of Higher Education and Science have created a technical committee of diploma equivalence (which has met periodically from 2008-2015), and a working group for academic qualifications. It has established the official name of national diplomas in the five countries of the AMU; the list of institutions authorized to issue national diplomas; the educational standards applied; the duration of training; and the conditions of access to engineering education institutions.[96]

II.3.2.6 Mediterranean

117. The Mediterranean region refers to those countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, including southern Europe, northern Africa, and countries such as Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and

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[94] UNESCO Institute for Statistics: Global Flow of Tertiary Level Students (as of May 2016).

[95] Arab Maghreb Union website: Objectives and Missions http://www.maghrebarabe.org/en/obj.cfm

[96] Source: Email correspondence with l'Agence Nationale d'Evaluation et d'Assurance Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique of Morocco, May 13, 2016.

Israel. Although a Mediterranean Convention was established in 1976, the region is not a formal grouping within UNESCO. Countries in the Mediterranean belong to UNESCO groupings such as Europe, the Arab States, or Africa. As the context of these regions has already been described, this information is not repeated here. Rather, this section suggests some issues for consideration regarding a future revised Mediterranean convention.

118. As with the overlap in regional groupings, the 1976 Mediterranean Convention intersects with three other recognition conventions: Europe, the Arab States, and Africa. Indeed, of the 10 countries that ratified the 1976 Mediterranean Convention, all have ratified at least one other UNESCO recognition convention (in 8 out of 10 cases, the Lisbon Convention). This explains perhaps to some extent why the Mediterranean Convention Committee has not been active for many years, and why the Convention is, in practice, dormant.

119. At present, UNESCO is working towards the goal of creating revised regional conventions for the remaining regions. This is partly in light of a potential global convention, which is likely to require a foundation of effective and modern regional conventions. As a formal consultation process for the Mediterranean region has not yet begun, it is not clear whether country representatives think that having a revised Mediterranean Convention is relevant for their needs, above and beyond their membership in one or more other conventions.

120. A number of factors suggest that the relevance of this Convention should not be automatically assumed. First, the fact that 8 of the 10 countries who ratified the 1976 Mediterranean Convention were based in Europe, suggests that it likely never effectively served its intended purpose of acting as a bridge between southern Europe and other Mediterranean countries, even if stakeholders from non-States Parties were involved in some of the Committee meetings. If a global convention does manifest, this will provide a mechanism for linking regions. Recognising the extensive work that revising and actively maintaining a convention entails, the added value of a new Mediterranean Convention should be carefully considered and justified before being undertaken. However, stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation expressed interest in reviving the network of Mediterranean information centres (MERIC) (further described in Chapter 3: Effectiveness), which would emulate the ENIC-NARIC network and create a platform for representatives of Member States to meet. This could make a valuable contribution to increasing inter-regional cooperation, on which any future global convention would depend.

II.3.3   Conclusions

121. With a significant improvement in access to basic and secondary education, an increase in students crossing borders to pursue higher education, a desire for more mobility within economic regions, the changing nature of the global economy, and the increase in trade agreements that incorporate provisions on recognition, the issue of recognition has become increasingly important. Each of the UNESCO regions has a unique context for higher education, but all have challenges with recognition. Highly inconsistent (and often outdated) recognition practices within and between countries and regions suggest a need for standard-setting tools such as the UNESCO regional recognition conventions. The large increase in refugees moving between countries also points to a growing need for recognition practices for refugees. While they are not the only tool available to address recognition, the conventions are unique in their scope and scale, and the only legal instruments on recognition available at regional levels.

III. EFFECTIVENESS

122. This chapter examines the effectiveness of the governance and management mechanisms of the conventions established at regional levels, for which UNESCO provides the Secretariats (Section III.1), and the effectiveness of UNESCO's support activities for the conventions (Section III.2).

III.1 Effectiveness of Regional Governance and Management Mechanisms

123. All the regional recognition conventions establish an intergovernmental Convention Committee when they come into force, as set out in the convention text. The Committees normally consist of one representative from each of the States Parties, who meet on a periodic basis. The responsibility and authority of the Committees are described in the convention texts and further elaborated in the Rules of Procedure adopted by them. All Committees are responsible for promoting the application of their convention and overseeing its implementation, and for reporting to UNESCO on progress. Additional responsibilities that vary by convention are described for each of the regions in Annex I of this report.

124. This section first looks at the monitoring and reporting arrangements in place in the regions, as a central element of governing and managing the conventions. This is followed by an examination of the effectiveness of the mechanisms around several cross-cutting themes (continuity, process, and remaining relevant) that are essential ingredients of effective governance and management. These themes emerged during the evaluation process. Lessons learned from other UNESCO conventions, particularly those of the culture sector, that have been documented in other evaluation reports and publications, are also reflected.

III.1.1 Monitoring and reporting

125. A key task of any convention committee is to monitor the implementation of a convention through periodic reports from States Parties. While the first generation of conventions stipulates that the convention committees shall receive periodic implementation reports from Parties, the second generation of conventions does not describe any reporting requirements. However, some monitoring and reporting initiatives have taken place in relation to some of the conventions. These are described below, along with another UNESCO structure for monitoring conventions that do not have their own formal governing mechanism.

126. In the Asia-Pacific region, the reporting mechanism established under the 1983 Bangkok Convention still remains in force today, requiring States Parties and non-States Parties to submit information on steps taken towards ratification and implementation for Committee meetings. Although no written narrative periodic report is requested, during these meetings States Parties (and even non-States Parties attending as observers) present PowerPoint slides on the progress of implementation in their country. Over 20 such presentations were made at the 12th and 13th sessions of the Committee. The information contained in them is limited, however; rarely do they contain any detailed analysis of challenges and lessons learned. The presentations are subsequently posted on the UNESCO Bangkok Bureau website.

127. In Europe, the 1997 Lisbon Convention does not establish any reporting requirements for Parties, and no comprehensive monitoring had been carried out by the Committee until recently (however, some stock-taking exercises have been carried out under the auspices of

the Bologna Follow-Up Group).[97] In 2015, the Committee, for the first time, initiated a survey to collect data on the implementation of the Convention by Parties. The exercise is also understood to contribute to the commitment made by Ministers gathering during the EHEA ministerial conference held in 2015,[98] to review national legislation with a view to fully complying with the Convention. Questionnaires distributed to Parties focused on the regulation of the Convention requirements at national level and the implementation of the Convention in national legislation. In cases where some or all of the provisions are not regulated at national level, and where the higher education institutions have total autonomy in establishing the principles of the Convention, the aim was to discover how national authorities oversee the implementation of the principles of the Convention at institutional level. The results of the survey informed the decisions taken at the last Committee meeting in February 2016.

128. As the other Conventions Committees (of the 1976 Mediterranean, 1974 LAC, 1981 Arusha Conventions) are not functioning, no systematic ongoing monitoring, or reporting by any Parties has been carried out during the last two biennia. However, some information on implementation has been collected by the Higher Education Sector in HQ from the respective Secretariats, to fulfil reporting requirements to the UNESCO Committee on Conventions and Recommendations (CR). The CR is one of the permanent subsidiary bodies of the Executive Board of UNESCO, composed of 30 members (five from each of the regional groups).

129. The CR monitors all active UNESCO recommendations as well as those conventions that do not have their own governing mechanism. Implementation reports are discussed twice a year during sessions of the Executive Board, and a summary transmitted to the General Conference, in particular to its Legal Committee.[99] The CR's responsibility includes the 1993 Recommendation mentioned in the background chapter of this report. Given that the Recommendation is implemented through the regional recognition conventions, reporting on the Recommendation requires inputs on the implementation of the regional conventions.

130. However, information provided to the Committee has remained limited due to the absence of regular follow-up and data collection on progress made at the regional level. Typically, the monitoring reports related to the 1993 Recommendation are very brief, and have been criticised by Committee members for not providing sufficient information. Every four years a more detailed report is to be prepared by the Education sector, which, based on the multi-stage procedure for the monitoring of the implementation of UNESCO conventions and recommendations for which no specific institutional mechanism is provided (adopted in 2007 and amended in 2015), will have to involve consultations with Member States. This is expected to help improve the quality of reporting. So far, it has often been difficult to get Member States to provide the information that is being sought, as some find reporting requirements onerous. It should be noted that UNESCO's Constitution (Article VIII) sets out legal obligations to submit periodic reports on the action taken to give effect to the conventions and recommendations. However, although this requirement exists, there are no sanctions from UNESCO for not fulfilling it.

131. Members of the CR further find themselves in an unusual situation of commenting on implementation of a group of conventions for which they may not be a signatory and may thus not be well informed about, and this may also lessen the impact of any views expressed by the Committee. Interestingly, those Education conventions with the lowest ratification rates are

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[97] These provide some analysis of the progress of States Parties in meeting the requirements of the Lisbon Convention. See, for example, Rauhvargers, A. & Rusakova, A. (2007) *Report to the Bologna Follow Up Group on the Analysis of the 2007 National Action Plans for Recognition*.

[98] European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference EHEA ministerial meeting (2015). *Yerevan Communiqué.*

[99] According to Rule 37, paragraph 2, of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, the Legal Committee shall consider the reports on conventions and recommendations transmitted to it by the General Conference.

also those without their own monitoring mechanism (the 1989 Convention on Technical and Vocational Education, and the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education). This may suggest that conventions that have their own monitoring mechanism are also more likely to experience higher rates of ratification.

132.   Experience from other conventions, such as the UNESCO culture conventions, shows that in-depth implementation reports by Parties constitute essential sources of information for monitoring implementation at global and regional levels. By providing insights into progress made and challenges faced in implementation, these reports inform the policy decisions taken by the convention committees, and feed into the design of technical assistance and capacity building initiatives. They are also used to identify and share good practices in implementation, which contributes to learning across countries and regions.[100]

133. As systematic monitoring has not been taking place for the regional recognition conventions, these insights are, in most cases, not being obtained. It is unclear on what basis the second generation convention committees, if they do not establish their own monitoring mechanism, will fulfil their role of providing guidance on best practices and making recommendations on the implementation of the conventions (e.g. 2014 Addis Convention; Article IV.9.3.). The recent initiative of the Lisbon Convention Committee to undertake a monitoring survey provides a good example of collecting data on implementation, which might in turn inform Committee and Secretariat efforts.

134.   The Asia-Pacific Convention Committee meetings described above provide an example of how information and experience might be exchanged on a face-to-face basis. However, some alterations to this model may improve efficiency and effectiveness of information-sharing, such as those practiced by some of the UNESCO conventions in culture. In that case, individual country reports and a meta-analysis of these reports are shared by the Secretariat with States Parties before the committee meetings, and only the meta-analysis is discussed during the meetings. This procedure requires that States Parties submit their reports a couple of months before the meeting of the concerned committee so that the Secretariat has enough time to analyse them. Either way, the important issue is to ensure that lessons drawn from the reports feed into the decision making of the committees and inform the technical assistance and capacity building activities undertaken by the convention secretariats.

135.   Previous evaluations of UNESCO's standard-setting work in culture[101] also showed that assessing progress in implementation in the absence of any clearly defined shared objectives, indicators, bench-marks and time-lines for implementation is not possible either. The governing bodies of several of the culture conventions have therefore decided that comprehensive results frameworks, including SMART[102] indicators, would be established for the conventions in order to improve tracking of progress over time and to better tailor support activities to Member States' needs. Ultimately, this will also contribute to learning by all stakeholders involved, increase transparency and trust in each other's recognition systems, and encourage Parties to pay increased attention to monitoring implementation at the national level, and to establish the required data collection and cooperation mechanisms.

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[100] The *IOS Audit of the Working Methods of Cultural Conventions* (2013) discussed some of the challenges convention secretariats face in other parts of the organization; see http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002232/223256e.pdf Further information on the monitoring mechanisms of UNESCO's culture conventions is contained in the Evaluations of UNESCO's Standard-Setting work in culture, Parts I and II on the 2003 and 1970 Conventions, respectively. The reports are accessible on IOS' website: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/about-us/how-we-work/accountability/internal-oversight-service/evaluation/evaluation-reports/

[101] See parts I – IV of the evaluations of UNESCO's standard-setting work in culture including the 1970, 1972, 2003 and 2005 Conventions.

[102] Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.

136. It would furthermore be worth considering whether additional mechanisms for learning and follow up could be introduced at regional levels. Member States could, for instance, be encouraged to engage in peer review exercises to provide each other with feedback on implementation and to share experiences and lessons learned. New Zealand and Australia once engaged in such an exercise to jointly review implementation of the 1983 Bangkok Convention. Another idea would be to encourage academic institutions to report on recognition procedures and decisions to the respective Committee on a voluntary basis, as suggested in the 1978 Arab States Convention.

> **Involving student associations**
>
> While student groups may find themselves side-lined in many international processes, European student representatives participate as observers in the Lisbon Convention Committee meetings, with whom they have shared results from their own original research about students' experiences with recognition (see

III.1.2 Continuity

137. Ensuring continuity in governance and management of the conventions has been challenging in many ways. One has to do with the way the bureaux of the convention committees operate. Experience from the 1997 Lisbon Convention and also from other UNESCO conventions (such as those in culture) shows that real progress in implementation happens when efforts are sustained by the Committee between Committee sessions. In the case of the 1997 Lisbon Convention, for instance, the Committee's Bureau meets on a regular basis to follow up on decisions taken by the Committee and to discuss the implementation of its work-plan. Each Bureau member has been assigned clear responsibilities, which are described in terms of reference. The Bureau of the ENIC/NARIC network also meets regularly between network meetings, and receives financial support from the European Union to do so. These two mechanisms interact with each other and together they provide strong and ongoing support to the implementation of the Convention at the regional and national level.

138. In other regions similar arrangements currently do not exist, although working groups have been active in between Committee meetings in the Asia-Pacific Region, particularly to work on the revision of the Convention and on the development of guidance material. Of course, Europe is unique in that it has a functional regional network of information centres, which is not the case in any of the other regions. However, in the absence of such networks it would be even more important that convention committees, through their respective Bureaux, provide some continuity by following up on committee decisions and on implementation. It should also be noted that committee meetings, together with the preparatory activities undertaken before them and the capacity development initiatives undertaken adjacent to the meetings, tend to generate a certain momentum and motivation by participants to move forward. This creates an opening for action and an opportunity that should not be lost.

III.1.3 Process

139. The effectiveness of governing mechanisms is often judged by the degree to which these are able to create spaces for interaction and learning, and help to increase trust between the various stakeholders. For this reason, it is important to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the committee meetings and in other relevant events, and that experiences are shared across regions.

140. Good practices in this regard were observed in the Asia-Pacific region, where both State Parties and non-States Parties to the Convention are invited to attend and to present on the efforts made by their respective countries to advance ratification or implementation. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, the first meeting of the working group on the revision of the regional Convention involved university associations and regional organizations together with Government stakeholders. Some interviewees also pointed out that the meetings of the Committee of the Mediterranean Convention and of the MERIC network used to create an

important space for exchange between Parties and other stakeholders. In Europe, the involvement of the ENIC-NARIC network, as well as of Committee observers such as the European Student's Union, the International Association of Universities, and the European Universities Association fulfil that function, supported in their participation by European Union funds.

141. These good practices should also include those on the front line of the changing environment for higher education, such as representatives of private education providers, the International Council for Open and Distance Education, and perhaps organizations that focus on women's participation in higher education. Professional associations for the internationalised professions (such as accountancy, architecture, engineering, and nursing), who are also active in mutual recognition arrangements and agreements, could also be considered as part of information-sharing, even though the recognition conventions do not govern recognition for regulated professions.

142. UNESCO has made efforts to involve stakeholders from other regions in governance-related events, including both Government stakeholders, experts and members of convention secretariats from other regions. For instance, stakeholders from the Asia-Pacific and Europe regions were involved in some of the meetings leading up to the adoption of the 2014 Addis Convention, and in events in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

143. Likewise, UNESCO has made some efforts to enhance experience-sharing between Secretariats, such as having staff attend meetings in other regions. However, this has been limited to the active Secretariats. Encouraging more interaction between all designated Secretariats would help to bring a sense of teamwork, engagement, learning, and consistent approaches to their work.

144. Part of UNESCO's role is facilitating partnerships to support the conventions, and UNESCO has two key convention partnerships in place. The advantages of the partnership with the Council of Europe are difficult to overestimate. As a joint convention, the 1997 Lisbon Convention has benefitted from being embedded in a larger regional process (the Bologna Process) through its partner organization, as well as from cost-sharing for Convention Committee meetings. Interviews with stakeholders suggest that in recent years, the 1997 Lisbon Convention has been more strongly driven by the Council of Europe, while UNESCO's active participation has lessened. While the Council of Europe would value a more proactive role from UNESCO, the Convention Committee and Bureau of the 1997 Lisbon Convention have nonetheless carried on to create the most functional, active, and successful convention of all the regional recognition conventions. UNESCO's partnership with the African Union Commission for the 2014 Addis Convention has a different nature, because the Convention is not a formal joint Convention. However, the African Union Commission has expressed its commitment to the Convention and to providing leadership together with UNESCO, and UNESCO would welcome the AU to take a more active role in ratification and implementation. In any case, the AU provides an important connection to a continental body with a unique mandate for Africa.

145. These or any other partnerships, of course, also require investments from UNESCO in terms of time, effort, and money. While UNESCO has fulfilled its obligations for the organization in terms of hosting Committee and other meetings, interviews with key informants suggest that the partnerships would benefit from stronger, and more timely, efforts on UNESCO's part. Some partners, for instance, expect UNESCO to engage more actively in working groups and meetings related to the 1997 Lisbon Convention or the Bologna Follow Up Group, while others would wish for UNESCO to be faster in responding to or initiating communications and sharing documentation. Overall, while cooperation with the Council of Europe and the Bologna Follow Up Group has been generally positive, these and other partners would be happy to see UNESCO play a more active role.

III.1.4 Remaining relevant

146. Much of the rationale given for a revised generation of conventions is related to the changing higher education landscape in most regions, including the involvement of new technologies, new stakeholders, and new priorities. At the same time, given the rapid evolution of the context in which the recognition work happens, convention texts can become out of the date quickly as the context continues to change.

147. This is why many of UNESCO's conventions have operational guidelines that are continuously revised by the respective Committees to reflect new concepts, knowledge and experiences. The Operational Guidelines of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, for instance, have continuously been updated since their adoption by the World Heritage Committee at its first session in 1977 in order to reflect the decisions taken by the Committee over the years. This is how this Convention, which is older than all the regional recognition conventions, has managed to remain relevant up to date.

148. Decisions taken by the Committee of the 1997 Lisbon Convention also constitute an important evolving body of guiding material that provides direction for Parties and other stakeholders, although they have not been combined in one single document (see textbox). This is lacking, however, for the other recognition conventions, which may have contributed to them becoming out of date.

> Supplementary texts to the 1997 Lisbon Convention:
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> Recommendation on the Use of Qualifications Frameworks in the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, June 2013
>
> Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees and Explanatory Memorandum, June 2004, (revised February 2016)
>
> Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications and Explanatory Memorandum, 2001, (revised 2010)
>
> Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education, 2001 (revised 2007)
>
> Recommendation on International Access Qualifications, 1999

149. Governing bodies of the conventions should also ensure that the mechanisms in place to manage the conventions remain relevant to all Parties. In other words, Parties need to be able to trust that their interests and concerns are taken into consideration by the governing bodies, no matter the national affiliation of the President / Chair or of the other members of the Bureau. Bureau members should be elected in a truly democratic way and be committed to representing all Parties in the fairest and most transparent manner possible. If this is not the case, some of the stakeholders might lose trust in the governance system and ultimately even interest in the convention.

III.1.5 Conclusion

150. With the exception of the 1997 Lisbon Convention, and to some extent the 1983 Bangkok Convention, none of the governance mechanisms for the regional recognition conventions are currently functional. Some of the other regional conventions, such as the Mediterranean Convention, might have had effective mechanisms when they were first established many years ago. But today, none of the Committees of the first generation of the Latin American, Arab, or Mediterranean Conventions are meeting or actively facilitating the implementation of these conventions any more. The 1997 Lisbon Convention, however, has a strong governance mechanism and provides an example of a number of good practices, such as creating supplementary texts to guide implementation.

151. Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the first generation of conventions has been largely insufficient and one of the main challenges encountered in the standard-setting work on recognition. With the exception of the 1983 Bangkok Convention, no systematic follow up on implementation was undertaken in any of the regions, except what takes place through the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations, and monitoring data is therefore hardly

available at regional levels. This makes it difficult to determine to what extent the first generation of conventions has been implemented, what the challenges were, and what lessons could be drawn for the new generation of conventions. However, a recent monitoring initiative by the Lisbon Convention Committee provides an example of the type of monitoring that could be undertaken at the regional level on a regular basis.

152. Several other challenges and opportunities exist regarding the governance and management of the regional conventions. These include the need to sustain efforts between convention Committee meetings to ensure that the decisions taken by the Committees are followed up and progress is made with the implementation of the agreed work-plans.

153. The involvement of key stakeholders in Committee meetings and other relevant events has also been identified as an important way to increase the effectiveness of the governance and management of the conventions. Engaging stakeholders is critical for many reasons, including to enhance 'ownership' of the conventions by concerned parties, to strengthen collaboration to advocate for ratification and implementation, and to facilitate information exchange and learning, and to strengthen trust between different types of stakeholders.

154. Last but not least, there is a need to ensure that the conventions remain relevant in their specific regional contexts. Together with other measures, one way to ensure continued relevance would be for the Committees to develop operational guidelines / directives for the conventions that reflect new concepts, knowledge and experiences as the contexts evolve, and that are continuously updated in line with Committee decisions.

III.2 Effectiveness of UNESCO's Support to Member States

155. While many UNESCO activities are primarily related to updating the first generation of conventions, and to serving the convention governing bodies, UNESCO also engages in capacity building and advocacy activities to support the ratification and implementation of the conventions. These are carried out by HQ and field offices designated as Convention Secretariats. The Higher Education Section at HQ also has an overall coordination role.

156. Despite many challenges with human and financial resources, there have been a number of significant achievements related to the regional recognition conventions over the last two biennia, and a number of initiatives continuing or beginning. Not only but also, this is thanks to the support provided by UNESCO. For instance, following on from the approval of the Addis Convention in December 2014, meetings of an Informal Working Group have taken place to help advance work on the ratification and implementation of this Convention. An October 2015 capacity-building workshop held for the 2011 Tokyo Convention in Bangkok received strong praise from attendees. In the Latin America and Caribbean region (LAC), Member States also recently agreed to revise their recognition convention, and have engaged key stakeholders in an initial meeting. In Europe, the 1997 Lisbon Convention includes almost all European countries, and has a well-functioning network of national information centres and an active Convention Bureau to implement and monitor the Convention. Last but not least, after an Experts Meeting and other consultations took place, the General Conference agreed to move forward with drafting the text of a possible global convention on recognition, and the creation of an expert Drafting Committee has been established to draft a preliminary text.

157. This sub-chapter reflects on the challenges and successes of UNESCO's activities to support the recognition conventions, with the intention of identifying lessons learned to help guide future interventions. It's first part is structured according to the main types of support activities, i.e. capacity building, advocacy, as well as knowledge management. A summary list of activities undertaken per region is included in Annex II of this report. Then, overall factors contributing to the effectiveness of support activities are addressed, such as coordination and

communication, human and financial resources, convening meetings, and engaging stakeholders.

III.2.1 Goals for the conventions

158. Looking to the future, UNESCO and its Member States have set a number of goals for convention revision and ratification, as shown in the table below. These include also the development of a global convention, for which revised regional conventions are expected to form an essential foundation. Increased implementation of the conventions is also amongst UNESCO's goals, although no specific targets have been articulated.

Convention	Goal
Asia-Pacific (Tokyo)	**Mid 2016**: Achieve two additional ratifications; 2011 Tokyo Convention comes into force[103]
Africa (Addis)	**End 2017**: Achieve 10 ratifications; 2014 Addis Convention comes into force
Latin America and the Caribbean (revised)	**2017**: Present draft convention text at General Conference **2018**: Approve convention at International Conference of States[104]
Arab States	TBD
Mediterranean	TBD
Global convention	**2017**: Present draft convention text at General Conference **2019**: Final draft submitted to General Conference for approval[105]

159. The timelines of these goals are quite ambitious, considering that previous convention revisions took place over a much longer period, achieving ratifications has been a much slower than anticipated process, and that previous attempts at a global convention have been defeated at the General Conference. UNESCO staff suggest that changes in the global context of higher education are providing a better enabling environment for the conventions, including the increased prioritization of higher education in many countries, and advances in quality assurance and national structures for accreditation.

160. While there may be improvements in context, making significant progress towards these ambitious goals will require overcoming other challenges experienced within UNESCO, as well as supporting Member States as needed. The following sections reflect on the support recently provided by UNESCO to Member States, and identifies challenges and good practices that could inform future activities. It focuses on capacity building, advocacy, and on the generation and exchange of knowledge.

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[103] UNESCO (2015). *Regional Capacity Building Workshop on the Tokyo Convention.*
[104] UNESCO (2016). *Report of the first meeting of the Working Group on the Revision of the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean 1974.*
[105] UNESCO (2016). 199 EX/14.INF: *The Implementation of the Strategy on UNESCO's Standard-Setting Instruments in the Field of Education.*

III.2.2 Capacity building

161. Capacity building is essential for enabling countries to participate more effectively in convention ratification or implementation.[106] The technical nature of recognition makes it a challenge to address on a policy and technical level. Many countries are not practicing modern forms of recognition, and face many difficulties in understanding and implementing the requirements of the conventions. Government representatives interviewed, as well as those present at meetings such as the 2014 Addis Convention Informal Working Group, frequently noted their need for assistance from UNESCO for capacity building on these issues, and their appreciation for the support received so far.

162. UNESCO takes a broad view of capacity building, seeing all convention activities and events as contributing to strengthening the capacity of Member States. Often these are conducted in the form of workshops. In the last two biennia these included a 2014 workshop on quality assurance held in conjunction with the Asia-Pacific Convention Committee Meeting in Sri Lanka, a Regional Capacity Building Workshop in Bangkok in October 2015, and a workshop on quality assurance held in conjunction with the December 2014 meeting to approve the text of the Addis Convention. Organizers find it sometimes difficult to balance the participation of technical-level participants (for example, someone who works in recognition) with political-level participants (who may not be interested in technical details but whose buy-in for ratification and implementation is critical).

163. There is little information available to assess the effectiveness of UNESCO's capacity building workshops over the last two biennia. UNESCO has usually not carried out end-of or post workshop surveys or other methods of assessment, with the exception of the October 2015 meeting in Bangkok, for which a participant survey was carried out. Feedback for that workshop was very positive, and it was also, as described below, facilitated with a new, interactive approach.

164. Tools for capacity building are another important element. UNESCO sees the ENIC-NARIC website as the key tool for building the capacity of individuals and institutions to better understand how to implement the conventions. This website has been supported by UNESCO through its role as co-Secretariat of the relevant ENIC-NARIC Working Group. UNESCO has also developed a few other tools; these include the Toolkit for the Recognition of Foreign Credentials (2013) and Guidelines for National Information Centres (2014), produced in collaboration with the Bangkok Bureau. In past years, UNESCO has also developed guidance for quality assurance, such as the UNESCO/APQN Toolkit: Regulating the Quality of Cross-border Education (2006), and the Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education (2005).[107]

165. The demand for capacity building for understanding, ratifying, and implementing the recognition conventions is extensive. Member States have also expressed interest in having technical support from more experienced countries in their region (for example, South Africa) or from other regions, for specific topics such as developing policy, learning how to assess potentially fraudulent qualifications, or setting up their national information centre. Certainly, the initiative to set up a sub-group within the 2014 Addis Convention Informal Working Group to help identify capacity building needs and potential sources of funding for African countries is a positive initiative to engage Member States in this important topic. Although UNESCO has

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[106] It should also be noted that, outside of UNESCO, there are other entities providing capacity building related to the recognition conventions. This section focuses on the activities directly carried out by UNESCO.

[107] Another related tool for capacity building, although it was directed specifically at quality assurance, was the joint World Bank-UNESCO scheme Global Initiative for QA Capacity Building (GIQAC). This was a key source of funding for capacity building for quality assurance agencies such as the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) from 2008-2010.

kept to a narrow range of modalities for delivering capacity building, primarily related to in-person meetings targeting individual stakeholders, there are other, more cost-efficient possibilities that could be explored in the future. These include training of trainers; working through regional training institutions, webinars (live or recorded), online trainings, study visits, and more extensive written resource documents.

III.2.3 Advocacy and raising awareness

166. Numerous stakeholders interviewed commented on the need for assistance in advocating within their own country to achieve ratification, particularly outside the Ministry of Education. While Ministries of Education tend to be supportive of the conventions, other institutions, such as Ministries of Foreign Affairs, or higher education institutions who rely on bilateral arrangements for recognition, might not see their relevance. Not only did stakeholders find the conventions difficult to explain, a number of misunderstandings and fears about the conventions also exist, usually associated with labour issues or losing control over recognition processes. However, there are few materials or resources available from UNESCO to specifically address these types of concerns. One exception is the Informal Note on the 2011 Revised Convention created by UNESCO Bangkok, which is updated regularly.

167. Likewise, countries do not necessarily have good resources or information to document the overall case for ratification: why it would be beneficial to their country, how it has benefitted other countries, or what need it would be serving. Unlike many other areas of UNESCO's work, there is a lack of a compelling story about the conventions, i.e. why they exist, why they are important, and how they could help creating a better future. Tools and materials developed by UNESCO to address this gap could be highly beneficial for achieving further ratifications in a timely manner. These can, of course, be presented in a variety of ways, including printed materials, information on a dedicated website, or video, depending on the audience and purpose, and on the context of different regions and countries. Even something as simple as having the conventions printed out in a professional format can be essential for presentation of a convention for ratification to concerned authorities.

168. Other country-level stakeholders mentioned the importance of having senior management (particularly the Director-General and the Assistant Director-General) from UNESCO advocate with the political level in their country to promote ratification of the conventions. A number of these activities have taken place, including letters sent on behalf of the Director-General to African countries, and meetings of the Assistant Director-General with political stakeholders, which included discussions of the recognition conventions. The Bangkok Bureau is also pursuing advocacy activities through the Director and key education staff. In recent months they have, for instance, included meetings with the Ministry of Education in Cambodia following a national workshop on the Convention, and sharing the UNESCO Bangkok Informal Note on the 2011 Revised Convention and an accompanying letter from the Bangkok Director with selected Member States. Focusing on specific countries who demonstrate interest in the conventions and are advanced in their ratification processes, or are influential in their region, could help to create 'champion' countries who, through demonstration and sharing their experience, encourage others to follow.

169. Engaging in advocacy with representatives of higher education institutions is particularly critical. Although universities are the most common location for recognition decisions in many countries, awareness of the conventions amongst university administration is poor, and governments have little recourse to enforce the conventions at university level. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that higher education institutions see the same relevance of the conventions. It would be highly beneficial to convention implementation if there was widespread awareness and buy-in to the conventions amongst higher education institutions, both public and private. The stronger the autonomy of higher education institutions in a

particular country, the more important it becomes for them to be engaged in and understand the convention principles.

170. Working with Parliamentarians has also been highlighted as important to increase convention ratification. UNESCO is currently collaborating with the European Commission and the Africa Union Commission to arrange five regional meetings with Parliamentarians to advocate for ratification of the 2014 Addis Convention (as well as related quality assurance measures). Regional economic and educational organizations are another key stakeholder group to collaborate and advocate with, as they typically share goals for increasing mobility, are sometimes engaged in their own recognition activities, and also provide a regional platform with which to collaborate. Some, like CAMES in francophone Africa, have played a key role in regional recognition processes. The involvement of Education Ministers in the European Bologna Process has been seen as an important success factor.

171. There is a wide array of organizations, some of who were interviewed for this evaluation, which could offer strategic access to important networks of stakeholders. Many organizations have annual or periodic meetings that bring together members who also happen to be the same type of individuals or organizations that UNESCO needs to reach to spread awareness of the conventions. While participating in such meetings requires resources, it would appear to be a potentially efficient and low-cost method to reach various dispersed audiences. Some examples of such meetings include the biannual meeting of Rectors and the quadrennial General Conference held by the Association of African Universities, the General Conference of the International Association of Universities, meetings of regional university associations, and the annual Education World Forum and Going Global conference of the British Council.

172. Other organizations that should be kept engaged and aware of UNESCO's activities in this area are the OECD and the World Bank, who also address higher education through their work, and who might be interested in collaborating with UNESCO in the future. Indeed, in previous years there have been specific collaborations with both (with the OECD for the for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education, and with the World Bank for the Global Initiative on Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC)).[108] In more recent years there appears to be little engagement or information exchange with these organizations who are also key participants in the international higher education landscape, and could potentially be advocates for the conventions. Of course, there must be interest for engagement on both sides.

III.2.4 Generating and exchanging knowledge

173. The need for advocacy and information materials points to the lack of an evidence base to support the work on the recognition conventions. For instance, data around the scope of the need to be addressed, and the extent to which past activities have achieved the intended goals, does not currently exist. Interviews with Ministry of Education representatives, who must make the case for ratifying a convention, suggest that such data would be very useful to them. Further, a good understanding of how the conventions are or not having their desired effect so far, would provide the basis for guiding and adjusting future convention development and any technical assistance provided.

174. The importance of building an evidence base for the convention work, especially for a potential global convention, is highlighted in the report of an experts panel regarding a global

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[108] In 2007 UNESCO and the World Bank launched GIQAC, which consolidated a set of World Bank grants to establish a mechanism for strengthening the capacity of regional quality assurance networks, particularly in developing and transition countries. UNESCO provided in-kind support and acted as the Secretariat for the initiative until its completion in 2010. For more information, see http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTEDUCATION/0,,contentMDK:21723791~isCURL:Y~menuPK:617592~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:282386,00.html.

convention, commissioned by UNESCO.[109] The report notes that there is limited information about why some regional conventions are functional and others are not, and what differences there are in implementation. It states that "clarity on these matters is seen as an essential prerequisite for development of a global convention", particularly as a global convention may lack the support of regions where the regional conventions are ineffective. The report recommends that UNESCO "pursue a comparative analysis of regional conventions in terms of similarities, differences, strengths, weaknesses, ratification and implementation", and undertake a survey on the impact and value of the regional conventions. Currently, there are no plans to implement this recommendation and no resources to do so.

175. UNESCO has undertaken knowledge exchange for the conventions primarily through the participation of experts in various convention-related meetings (as noted in the previous section), which is widely appreciated by stakeholders. This includes also the participation of UNESCO staff, some of whom hold valuable institutional knowledge about the history of the conventions and the lessons learned from those experiences. Another form of knowledge exchange outside the last two biennia was the hosting of the World Conference on Higher Education (1998 and 2009), (but for which there are insufficient resources at this time to organize a similar conference).

176. Many government stakeholders interviewed also mentioned that they were lacking information about education systems in other countries to assist them in recognition assessments. In fact, UNESCO has been providing this information on a website, the UNESCO Portal to Recognised Higher Education Institutions, for many years. However, lacking resources to be updated, it had become considerably out of date. In August of 2015, UNESCO agreed with the International Association of Universities (IAU) to co-sponsor the IAU's World Higher Education Database Portal, which provides a nearly identical service.

III.2.5 Mainstreaming gender

177. UNESCO's Gender Equality Action Plan (2014 – 2021) calls for gender mainstreaming in all programmes and activities, and the application of a lens of gender equality and empowerment to the organization's work. These requirements suggest that UNESCO should assess whether women and men have different concerns and experiences regarding recognition, whether there are any differing implications for women and men of the recognition conventions, and whether and in what ways the standard-setting work on recognition contributes to gender equality.

178. At this time, there is no evidence for UNESCO having systematically been applying a gender equality lens in this work, or encouraging Member States to do so. This is due to various reasons, including the lack of awareness or concern by some of the stakeholders regarding the potential gender dimensions of the standard-setting activities on recognition. Few stakeholders interviewed identified gender equality as a concern for consideration or an objective of this work. Another significant factor is the scarcity of both sex-disaggregated data on recognition, such as on the differences in the level of recognition applied to women's and men's qualifications, and of any analytical data on gender-based discrimination related to recognition. This makes it difficult to even establish whether such discrimination exists and how it could be addressed.

179. The generation of data is a significant challenge, as information on recognition is held by recognition authorities as well as private and public higher education institutions. A first step could be to determine whether recognition authorities are tracking the sex of applicants or not, and to identify what other data source exists. UNESCO's Institute for Statistics has sex-

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[109] UNESCO (2014). *Towards a Global Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education: Final Experts' Meeting Report*.

disaggregated data on higher education mobility, which may provide some broader context for the recognition work.

180. However, it is clear that the basis of the recognition conventions, that recognition be conducted on the basis of merit and without discrimination, could contribute to reducing any discrimination in recognition processes that might exist, whether gender or otherwise. The 1997 Lisbon Convention adopts specific reference to gender, stating that "No discrimination shall be made in this respect on any ground such as the applicant's gender, race, colour, disability, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status….". The 2011 Tokyo and 2014 Addis Conventions are not as explicit; noting that "Each Party shall ensure that the procedures and criteria used in the assessment and recognition of qualifications are transparent, coherent, reliable, fair and non-discriminatory" (Article III.2).

III.2.6 Giving priority to Africa

181. Along with gender equality, UNESCO has called for a focus on Africa as an overarching priority under the 2014-2017 Approved Programme and Budget (37 C/5). A large part of recent convention activities has indeed related to Africa. Thanks to the provision of extra-budgetary funds from Norway and China, the Secretariat has been able to give priority to the 2014 Addis Convention with a number of activities described in the section on the effectiveness of UNESCO's support to Member States of this report. Overall, however, as with the other regional conventions, efforts to move the Arusha/Addis Conventions forward have suffered from lack of funds and human resources to dedicate to this work both within UNESCO HQ and in Field Offices (also discussed in more detail below).

III.2.7 Management and coordination within UNESCO

182. The Higher Education Section at UNESCO HQ in Paris currently has responsibility for overall coordination of the recognition conventions. As a series of regional conventions with Secretariats in multiple locations, regular follow-up with the various Secretariats as well as coordination of activities between the various actors is challenging. Multi-year pauses in convention activities over past years in some offices suggest that follow-up and coordination have been inconsistent over time. The unfortunate result of suspensions in activities has been the loss of some of the progress previously made since the first generation of conventions had been adopted.

183. In addition to the follow-up and coordination between Headquarters and the Convention Secretariats, coordination and communication would also be expected between the offices responsible for work on the conventions, and other Field Offices within the relevant region. Coordination with other Field Offices has taken place for meeting logistics, such as the October 2015 Ministerial-level meeting in Brasilia (organised with help of the UNESCO Brasilia office). The Bangkok Bureau has circulated information to Field Offices in the region that a Convention Committee Meeting has taken place, including a link to meeting materials posted on the Bangkok Bureau website.

184. However, outside the organization of regional meetings, there appears to have been insufficient communication with those Field Offices not hosting any convention secretariats to enable them to play any significant role. Not all education staff of these offices are familiar with the content of the conventions, and therefore also not in a position to advise on the implications of ratifying them, or to provide technical support for implementation. It would be unreasonable to expect that all Field Offices would become heavily engaged in activities for the recognition conventions. However, they could play a more active role than they are currently playing, including by providing useful contacts as well as information on the priorities and developments in higher education in their respective countries to the convention Secretariats. Opportunities

may also arise for staff to act as informal advocates for the conventions, particularly those working on other higher education projects.

185. This also applies to UNESCO's Education-related Institutes (particularly the International Institute for Educational Planning (Paris), the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (Ethiopia), and the Institute for Lifelong Learning (Germany)), whose work may touch on the issue of recognition. For example, the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning has been active in National Qualifications Frameworks, and Recognition of Prior Learning. The International Institute for Educational Planning is involved in quality assurance work. In recent times linkages with these institutes and the convention work have not been made.

186. Coordination of work for the recognition Convention in the Africa region has become more complex since the Africa Field Reform, and the dissolution of BREDA (described in a previous section). Subsequently, the Dakar, Harare, Nairobi, Abuja and Yaoundé offices became Multi-Sectoral Regional Offices, with equal responsibility for all sectors in their sub-region. None of the Field Offices in Africa were re-assigned as the Secretariat, or given any other special responsibility for the Convention. Interviews with UNESCO staff indicate that the removal of the Secretariat to Headquarters (in practice if not officially), and the absence of communication around the plans or progress on Convention work after the approval of the Convention, resulted in a lack of clarity about the role of the Field Offices in Africa in relation to the Convention. This did not encourage or enable Field Offices to contribute to moving the Convention forward.

187. The recent participation of Multi-Sectoral Regional Office Directors in a January 2016 Paris meeting of the Informal Working Group for the 2014 Addis Convention (organized by Headquarters) is a first step in improving this situation. However, the role of these offices remains to be fully developed. This highlights the need for strong coordination from HQ combined with a clear assignment of responsibilities at the regional level.

III.2.8 Human resources

188. The level of human resources available for the conventions has changed significantly over time, most notably during a re-structuring of the Higher Education Division in 2011 into the Section for Higher Education. This entailed a change from approximately 11 ongoing positions (including professional and administrative staff) for the subject areas of the conventions, quality assurance, and the UNITWIN Chairs programme to four ongoing positions, plus a Chief of Section and an administrative staff person.

189. It is clear from interviews with staff, as well as external parties who work with UNESCO, that UNESCO's capacities to carry out convention work decreased significantly after the loss of the Higher Education Division, due to the overall reduction in human resources, as well as changeovers in the position of Chief of Section. After the original Chief of Section for Higher Education departed UNESCO in late 2011, the position was twice vacant for an extended period of time, and held by several other individuals until February 2016 (when a new Section Chief came into the position). It is unclear why there were long vacancies in the position, but this resulted in an absence of leadership dedicated specifically to the Section, and a perception of many stakeholders, partners, and staff, that UNESCO did not see Higher Education as a priority.

190. The large reduction in human resources was made more acute by combining responsibilities for the UNITWIN Chairs programme and all of the conventions into one staff position, which continues today, and is by all accounts, not a tenable situation. This ongoing staff person is supported by one administrative assistant and intermittent temporary staff. Human resources for convention work were bolstered in 2013-2014 by a one-year secondee offered by the Norwegian government (working largely on the global convention), and in 2015-

2016 by another secondee from the Norwegian government. At the time of writing, the convention work is supported by additional short-term resources, including the secondee position, one part-time consultant, and an administrative assistant dedicated to the convention work.

191. The reduced staffing in Headquarters since the re-structuring coincided with the loss of Higher Education specialist positions in the Regional Education Bureaux (Beirut, Dakar, Santiago, and Bangkok) due to UNESCO's financial crisis. At the moment, none of the regional offices have the required capacity. While the Bangkok Bureau has the strongest capacity outside of HQ, human resources are still minimal, especially when compared to other UNESCO conventions such as the culture conventions. For the last biennium, there have been no Higher Education specialist positions in any Field Offices outside of Bangkok. Within the Bangkok Bureau at present, the Higher Education Specialist who leads the convention work is supported by a consultant, both of whom also have other responsibilities. The current staffing levels for IESALC, the Secretariat for the 1974 LAC Convention, were reduced in 2015 (to the Director, one national staff person, and two administrative staff), and are not enough to effectively support the 1974 LAC Convention and the process of its revision, which has recently started, in addition to IESALC's other responsibilities. However, in a recent turn of events, a new Higher Education Specialist position will soon be re-instated in the Beirut office, which could contribute to Convention activities in that region.

192. With the additional short-term/temporary support recently available in Headquarters, convention support activities have been boosted, and activities related to the 1997 Lisbon, 2014 Addis, potential revised LAC, and potential global conventions are underway. However, there are two areas of concern for this work regarding the lack of ongoing funds available for these additional positions, and the increasing convention workload over the next several years. Without additional positions or responsibilities taken on by Field Offices in these respective regions, Headquarters will continue to be tasked with acting as Secretariat for multiple existing conventions, as well as carrying the workload for potential new revised conventions, and the potentially much larger and more complex global convention. This makes the need for increasingly relying on networks and for engaging partners even more acute.

193. Further, while there are some efficiencies to concentrating convention work in Headquarters, the lack of an active Convention Secretariat or dedicated higher education staff in most of the regions is hampering UNESCO's efforts to develop important regional relationships, and to raise the low levels of awareness amongst UNESCO staff and stakeholders about the conventions.

III.2.9 Financial resources

194. It is evident that successfully working with Member States on the conventions requires sustained efforts from UNESCO. In the past, at times when UNESCO has not prioritized this area of work through the allocation of human resources, or has not had funds to support project activities, ratification and implementation has stalled in most regions, particularly those with lower capacity. UNESCO staff noted that after these lulls in activity, significant progress was often lost and in some cases work had to 'start over again'. At other times, when higher profile was given to convention-related activities, significant progress has been made, at least in terms of ratification. This suggests that sustained attention and focus from UNESCO is necessary to achieve ongoing progress. This requires sustained financing and adequate human resources.

195. With UNESCO's current financial restraints, regular programme funds available to support convention activities are not sufficient. In the 2014-2015 biennium, the regular programme activity budget for the conventions amounted to approximately US$ 100,000. For the 2016-2017 biennium this amount was increased to US$ 250,000. However, at this time

expenses for most activities all over the world must still be met through extra-budgetary funds, provided by willing Member States at their discretion.

196. As the funds spent on convention-related activities cannot be fully separated from those spent on other activities related to the Higher Education Section, nor from other activities of the Higher Education Division prior to 2011, a meaningful analysis cannot be made on the overall pattern of spending on convention activities over time. However, as noted in earlier sections, extra-budgetary funds have been raised over the recent biennium from several Member States. These include US$ 900,000 in 2014-2015 from the governments of China and Norway, which were used to support the International Conference of States meeting in Addis Ababa in December 2014 and two follow-up meetings in July 2015 and January 2016. Additional Chinese funds for 2016-2019 (US$ 1.5 million) will be used for a related project in Quality Assurance capacity building in Africa.

197. The Bangkok Regional Bureau has also obtained extra-budgetary funds to support Convention activities from the governments of Australia (US$ 80,000) and Sri Lanka (US$ 80,000 to cover local meeting costs), and funds from the government of Korea for a separate higher education project, which allows a consultant to spend part of his time on the regional Convention.

198. While these funds have been critical to covering the costs of convention-related activities, a lack of a more permanent funding structure makes it difficult for the Higher Education Sector to plan activities into the future. The development of long-term fundraising strategies, with Member States committing adequate funds to support the work going forward, would be necessary to support the level of activity anticipated in the future.

III.2.10 Convening meetings

199. Face-to-face meetings are one of the key modalities for carrying out convention-related activities, whether for capacity building, committee meetings, or planning. Key informants who have participated in convention-related meetings convened by UNESCO consistently noted the importance of meetings to make connections with counterparts and resource people working on similar issues in other countries.

200. Stakeholders also suggested some aspects can be improved. For instance, some indicated that they had experienced challenges such as not receiving meeting materials far enough in advance to prepare and consult with their colleagues, and in some cases, arriving at meetings without sufficient information about the goals of the meeting, and what was expected from their participation. In other cases, meeting dates were announced with fairly short notice, which also inhibited participation and preparation. In other cases, a lack of contact information (such as email addresses) for invitees meant that invitations sent via paper mail were not received in time.

Conducting interactive and dynamic workshops

The Regional Capacity Building Workshop facilitated by the UNESCO Bangkok office in October 2015 introduced a dynamic meeting style, including elements from a World Café, which was highly appreciated by participants. During the two-day meeting, attendees participated in plenary sessions with invited resource persons, as well as being engaged in small break-out groups. The latter were used to discuss country experiences on specific topics, as well as developing individual action plans towards ratification. At times participants assisted with facilitation, and were called on to present their small-group work.

201. International gatherings are expensive to hold, and take considerable work to organize. To get the best value out of these efforts, UNESCO may wish to consider alternate styles for different types of meetings, or for portions thereof. While the typical arrangement of meeting rooms at UNESCO (as in other UN agencies) encourages a very formal style, a more interactive approach can be more appropriate and effective for reporting, information sharing,

and planning activities. Interviews with meeting participants, as well as observation of several meetings, suggest that these approaches are more likely to result in capturing and sustaining the interest of participants, involve significant learning, and ready participants for follow-up activities. The accompanying textbox describes a widely praised October 2015 meeting held by the Bangkok Bureau, which participants said they found to be the most useful and successful convention-related meeting that they have attended so far.

III.2.11 Conclusion

202. UNESCO has set ambitious goals for the recognition conventions for the next several years, both at the regional and global levels. Making significant progress towards these goals will require overcoming a number of challenges both within and outside UNESCO, and providing increased and sustained support to Member States in the areas UNESCO is already engaged in, such as capacity building, advocacy, and exchanging knowledge. Effective partnerships will be key in all these areas. UNESCO is already applying some good practices and approaches, but there are also opportunities such as broadening capacity building resources, developing specific materials to support Member States with advocacy, making meetings more interactive etc. Furthermore, there is a need to clearly define the responsibilities of the regional Convention Secretariats and of other (sub)regional UNESCO offices, especially in Africa.

203. A significant challenge is that the Secretariats of the Conventions suffer from lack of capacities to various degrees, especially since significant budget cuts affected UNESCO in 2011, and were unable to sustain the momentum with Member States. With this in mind, and expecting that the workload of the Secretariats will increase as remaining conventions are revised and more signatories join, and as implementation is pushed forward, future work needs to be considered with a more strategic lens. The emphasis should be on activities that help multiply UNESCO's reach and engage other stakeholders so that these can also carry the work of informing and advocating for the conventions. Clear goals and indicators for supporting ratification and implementation should be developed, and supported by adequate human and financial resources both in HQ and in Convention Secretariats. Developing a long-term fundraising strategy to achieve these goals will be needed to enable long-term planning.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

204. Following the findings and conclusions presented in earlier parts of this report, this chapter includes a list of recommendations to UNESCO HQ and to UNESCO's offices providing Secretariats for the regional conventions. Several of the recommendations and action points are also relevant for Convention Committees and Member States, who are invited to consider them as suggestions that could guide their efforts with regards to recognition.

Ensuring continued and increased relevance of the conventions

205. With its particular mandate and with Member States throughout the globe, UNESCO is appropriately positioned to lead work on standard-setting for recognition. Linking the experiences of different regions is a key element that UNESCO brings to the process, its convening power at global and regional levels, as well as being a 'neutral player' in this field. In carrying out this work, UNESCO and its Member States may wish to consider the following:

Recommendation 1: Ensure continued and increased relevance of the conventions to all stakeholders	Secretariat	Convention Committees	Member States
Activity 1: Pursue further thinking around the relevance of the recognition conventions to regional and global trade agreements, and use this information, as appropriate, to inform advocacy materials and activities for ratification and implementation.	X	X	
Activity 2: Seize opportunities of involving regional economic organizations that share the goals of increasing mobility in UNESCO's work.	X	X	
Activity 3: Work with the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, or other qualified providers, to define and collect relevant sex-disaggregated data on mobility and recognition that helps to demonstrate the importance of the conventions, and can potentially be used as a baseline to monitor progress over time.	X		

Sustaining momentum through continuity of activities

206. Sustaining momentum over time is one of the key factors to achieving progress with the recognition conventions, relating both to governance and support activities. Indeed, Convention Committee activities between Committee meetings have been shown to be one of the key success factors of the 1997 Lisbon Convention, which works through a Bureau and Working Groups on an ongoing basis. Ensuring continuity in UNESCO's support to the Conventions is also extremely important, although UNESCO's capacities to engage in higher education have been reduced significantly since 2011.

207. Although it is ultimately the responsibility of Member States to ratify and implement the conventions, this evaluation shows that UNESCO's role in terms of supporting ratification and implementation through advocacy, policy advice, and capacity building is crucial. The momentum generated through the process of developing and adopting a new convention can be lost soon after if UNESCO activities wane. With more conventions being adopted and more

Member States becoming Parties to the conventions, the workload of the convention secretariats is likely to further increase in the future.

Recommendation 2: Sustain momentum through continuity of actions	Secretariat	Convention Committees	Member States
Activity 1: Ensure structures, human resources, and financial resources are provided to sustain convention support activities for regions with a revised recognition convention, as well as for those that are foreseeing revision or are in the process of it. Focused support should ideally be continued until such time as significant progress has been made in ratification and implementation within a region, and a functional Convention Committee has been established. This will require long-term fundraising strategies, and the exploration of new types relationships with donors and partners.	X		
Activity 2: Establish ongoing activities between Committee meetings, through Bureau members, Working Groups or other mechanisms. Terms of Reference should be developed to define the roles and responsibilities for Committee members and others.		X	

Working more strategically

208. This evaluation highlights the discrepancy between UNESCO's standard-setting mandate and the inadequacy of resources available to fulfil its support role at regional and global levels. The current reality of fiscal restraint, combined with an increasing workload regarding the new and revised recognition conventions, calls for creative solutions and different ways of working. Reaching ambitious near-term goals for convention ratification and mid- to long-term goals for implementation, require a strategic approach. This might entail the exploration of new types of partnerships, increased engagement with existing networks, identification of and cooperation with champion countries, increased use of information and communications technology, and the development of long-term fundraising strategies.

Recommendation 3: Approach the standard-setting work related to the regional recognition conventions in a more strategic manner	Secretariat	Convention Committee	Member States
Activity 1: Identify key strategic region-specific entry points for activities to advance ratification and implementation, and related time-bound objectives and indicators.	X		
Activity 2: Work with regional champion countries to advance ratifications in the Asia-Pacific and Africa regions.	X		

Recommendation 3: Approach the standard-setting work related to the regional recognition conventions in a more strategic manner	Secretariat	Convention Committee	Member States
Activity 3: Collaborate with key partners to access their extensive networks to reach stakeholders.	X		
Activity 4: Develop a long-term fundraising strategy.	X		
Activity 5: Support UNESCO's work on the regional conventions and on the future global convention with adequate financial resources. If resources do not suffice, clear direction must be provided regarding which areas of the work to prioritize.			X
Activity 6: Pursue further steps towards convention ratification and implementation in countries. This includes enhancing efforts for ratification, the development of a strong national information centre, sharing information with other countries, putting in place legislation to enact the articles of the convention, and related activities such as strengthening quality assurance of the education system.			X

Managing and coordinating within UNESCO

209. The standard-setting work related to the recognition conventions requires strong coordination from the Higher Education Section in HQ, combined with a clear delegation of management responsibilities to key regional and sub-regional offices. This relationship needs to be further clarified, especially for the Africa Region. The involvement of Field Offices not hosting convention secretariats and UNESCO's education institutes in convention-related work has been limited so far, and should also be strengthened. It would be unreasonable to expect that all offices and institutes become heavily engaged in activities for the recognition conventions. They could, however, play a more active role by contributing to advocacy activities and by supporting liaison with stakeholders in their respective countries.

210. It would also be important to establish closer links between the convention secretariats and to facilitate the development of team spirit among them. Opportunities for exchange of experiences and joint learning could also be supported between secretariats, such as the conduct of regular team meetings via Skype, and the sharing of good practices in serving the conventions. This would especially benefit new or inexperienced secretariats, as they could learn from and build on the experiences of others.

211. Last but not least, there is a need for the standard-setting work on recognition in Higher Education to be properly reflected in UNESCO's Programme and Budget C/5, together with a few SMART indicators and ambitious and realistic benchmarks that will allow for proper monitoring and follow up on progress made. These should relate to the interventions foreseen in UNESCO's more recent Education Sector Strategy on Standard-setting Instruments.

Recommendation 4: Improve the management and coordination of UNESCO's support activities	Secretariat	Convention Committee	Member States
Activity 1: Strengthen coordination of the standard-setting work related to the regional recognition conventions by HQ, and clarify management responsibilities and cooperation modalities of concerned (sub-)regional offices, especially in Africa.	X		
Activity 2: Engage Field Offices and other UNESCO structures, such as relevant Category 1 Institutes in convention-related activities, as feasible, in order to both strengthen their capacities and to allow them to contribute to the work.	X		
Activity 3: Explore opportunities for sharing experiences and coordinating between Secretariats.	X		
Activity 4: Integrate a few SMART performance indicators and corresponding benchmarks for the work on recognition in the next C/5 Programme and Budget document.	X		

Engaging stakeholders

212.   A persistent theme throughout this evaluation was the need to engage stakeholders at all levels, particularly those directly implicated in the ratification or implementation of the conventions. It is apparent that achieving ratification does not only depend on the political will and capacity of government institutions concerned with higher education (with whom UNESCO normally works), but also on other Ministries such as Foreign Affairs and Labour. National Parliaments, regional parliaments such as the African Parliament, and the Regional Economic Communities are also important key players in the process of ratification of the conventions. It is equally clear that implementation of the conventions requires the cooperation of academic institutions. Students' associations, quality assurance agencies, regional economic organizations, professional organizations, new types of education providers, and the private sector also play an important role.

213.   It is therefore important to engage these diverse groups of stakeholders and to take their perspectives into account so that they can take ownership of the conventions. The degree to which UNESCO is willing to engage with a variety of stakeholders at regional and global levels, will also set an example for how consultation and cooperation could be organized at national levels. Finally, working with stakeholder groups can provide an entryway into extensive networks that can help raise critically needed awareness of the conventions, and support UNESCO's efforts to advance ratification and implementation. This is particularly important at a time of reduced human and financial resources within UNESCO.

Recommendation 5: Engage stakeholders beyond the education sector	Secretariat	Convention Committee	Member States
Activity 1: Identify, through mapping exercises or other methodologies at regional level, the range of key	X	X	X

Recommendation 5: Engage stakeholders beyond the education sector	Secretariat	Convention Committee	Member States
stakeholder representatives that should be engaged in some form with the recognition conventions. Use this information to further expand the range of key stakeholders involved in convention development and governance at global and national levels.			
Activity 2: Identify the range of existing networks and important events that could provide entry points (e. g. conferences or other periodic meetings) to reach key stakeholders such as higher education institutions; and engage with them to raise awareness of the conventions and to encourage cooperation.	X	X	X

Strengthening governance

214. Most of the governance mechanisms of the regional conventions have ceased to function, and have therefore been largely ineffective in recent years. The mechanisms of the 1997 Lisbon Convention, and to some extent of the 1983 Bangkok convention, are exceptions to this. The evaluation has identified a number of good governance practices, such as for instance the practice of involving recognition practitioners (from the national information centres) in governance processes of the 1997 Lisbon Convention. Monitoring of the implementation of the conventions by States Parties should be strengthened for all of them. Although monitoring has an important function in guiding Committee decisions and Secretariat activities, it has not been carried out systematically in the past, and the second generation conventions do not articulate any monitoring mechanism.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen the governance of the conventions	Secretariat	Convention Committee	Member States
Activity 1: Develop supplementary texts (guidelines / directives) for the conventions that reflect the decisions taken by the Committees. This will help maintain relevance of the conventions as the context evolves, and provide guidance for implementation by States Parties.		X	
Activity 2: Provide guidance on best practices and make recommendations on the implementation of the conventions by establishing a periodic monitoring mechanism for States Parties. The information contained in the periodic reports should be analysed, synthesized and used in a meaningful way to inform decisions taken by the Convention Committees, including on strategic priorities for engagement and capacity building.	X	X	
Activity 3: Develop results frameworks for the new generation of regional conventions that include clear objectives, benchmarks and indicators, in order to have a basis to assess progress.		X	

Recommendation 6: Strengthen the governance of the conventions	Secretariat	Convention Committee	Member States
Activity 4: Develop regional networks of national information centres; and to include representatives of these networks into convention governance processes.		X	X
Activity 5: Introduce additional mechanisms for learning and follow up at regional level. This could, for instance, include peer review exercises among Member States, and voluntary reporting by academic institutions on recognition procedures and decisions.		X	X

Supporting Member States in capacity building and advocacy

215. The provision of technical assistance plays a key role in enabling stakeholders in Member States to advocate for the ratification of the conventions and to enhance their implementation. UNESCO has undertaken a number of capacity-building workshops that have helped to address this need. However, the current budget situation limits the organization's ability to engage more extensively, and calls for alternative modalities of capacity building and advocacy, including increased use of information and communication technology.

216. Efforts to strengthen capacities should be complemented with the provision of advocacy and related materials to further support Member States when advocating for ratification and implementation within their own countries. The development of advocacy materials, as well as any other activities to support ratification and implementation of the conventions, should be evidence-based, i.e. informed by data on the need for recognition and the benefits of increased mobility.

Recommendation 7: Consider alternative modalities of capacity building and evidence-based advocacy	Secretariat	Convention Committee	Member States
Activity 1: Explore various modalities of capacity building in addition to in-person workshops, particularly cost-efficient methods such as webinars, written resource material, and a dedicated website for information-sharing. In the future, training of trainers, and working with regional training institutions could also be envisaged in order to further enhance implementation.	X		
Activity 2: Research and document evidence that supports the rationale for the ratification and implementation of the recognition conventions in different regions, and use this data to develop advocacy tools for Member States and UNESCO staff.	X		

Contributing to gender equality

217. UNESCO's strategy and policy documents call for gender equality to be mainstreamed into all of UNESCO's work. However, so far no gender lens has been applied to standard-setting work related to the recognition conventions. Further analysis would be necessary to determine women's and men's concerns and experiences related to recognition; to what extent the conventions may have differing implications for women and men, and whether and how the work contributes to gender equality.

Recommendation 8: Apply a gender lens to the work on the recognition conventions	Secretariat	Convention Committee	Member States
Activity 1: Integrate a gender analysis, including the collection of sex-disaggregated data, into research activities and data collection related to the conventions. This will help determine whether women and men have different needs with regards to recognition, and whether the implications of the conventions differ for women and for men.	X	X	X
Activity 2: Consider any potential gender dimensions of the recognition work at national level, and include specific mention of gender equality considerations in future recognition conventions.			X

ANNEXES:
Annex I: Governance and Management Mechanisms of the Regional Conventions
Annex II: Summary of UNESCO secretariat activities by region
Annex III: List of States Parties to the regional recognition conventions
Annex IV: Towards a Global Recognition Convention: a brief history
Annex V: Evaluation Terms of Reference
Annex VI: List of people interviewed
Annex VII: Bibliography

ANNEX I: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS OF THE REGIONAL CONVENTIONS

1.   This annex describes the governance mechanisms in place for the regional conventions, focusing on the 1997 Lisbon Convention and on the 1983 Bangkok Convention, which have the only governance and management mechanisms that are currently active (the 2011 Tokyo Convention is also addressed, although the Convention is not yet in force).

Europe

2.   The most advanced governance and management mechanisms are certainly those that serve the 1997 Lisbon Convention. The implementation of the Convention is overseen by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee, which meets once every three years. The Committee is responsible for reporting to the Joint Council of Europe-UNESCO Secretariat, who also facilitate the meetings of the Committee. Within UNESCO, the Secretariat is housed at Headquarters in Paris.

3.   At its first meeting in 1999, the Committee approved Rules of Procedure, which have been guiding its operations ever since. In addition, the Committee has the authority to adopt recommendations, declarations, protocols and models of good practice to guide the competent authorities of the Parties in their implementation of the Convention and in their consideration of applications for the recognition of higher education qualifications (Article X.2.5 of the Convention). While these texts are not binding, Parties are encouraged to implement them. Over the years the Committee has issued a large number of such guidance materials that have been giving direction to the work of Parties (listed in section III.2.6).

4.   In between the Committee sessions, it is the task of the Committee's Bureau to follow up on the decisions taken by the Committee. The Bureau, which is elected by the Committee, is composed of a President, a first and second Vice President and a Rapporteur. Its term of office runs from the end of one session of the Committee to the end of the subsequent session. The Bureau is responsible for coordinating the work of the Committee and for assisting the President in his or her duties. The Bureau may be entrusted by the Committee to take certain decisions on its behalf.   It usually meets twice a year to discuss progress made with regards to the implementation of its agreed work-plan.

5.   Together with the Committee, the European Network of national information centres on academic mobility and recognition (the ENIC Network) also has an oversight and facilitating role for the implementation of the Convention (Article X.1.). The President of the ENIC Network has observer status during the meetings of the Committee, which is expected to seek the opinion of the ENIC Network before making its decisions (Article X.5.5.). The ENIC Network, combined with its sister NARIC Network, form the ENIC-NARIC Network, which is a key player in terms of the day-to-day implementation of the provisions of the Lisbon Convention. It has also been identified as one of the key success factors of the Lisbon Convention. The tasks of the network and of the ENIC-NARIC centres are also described in detail in their combined Charter, adopted by the Lisbon Committee in 2004.

Asia and the Pacific

6.   The Committee of the 1983 Bangkok Convention is expected to meet at least every two years, and to examine the periodic reports to be submitted by States Parties on the progress made and the obstacles encountered in the application of the Convention, as well as any other relevant studies prepared by the Secretariat. The Committee is furthermore expected to make general or specific recommendations to States Parties on implementation as appropriate (Article 10). The Secretariat is provided by the UNESCO Regional Bureau in Bangkok.

7.   To date, the Committee of the 1983 Bangkok Convention has met 13 times since the adoption of the Convention. The meetings normally consist of presentations and discussions, including a report on the previous session of the Committee, actions taken since by the Secretariat and working groups, and future follow-up actions. The latter included, for instance, the agreement to develop a toolkit for the recognition of foreign qualifications at the 11th Committee session, and guidelines for national information centres at its 12th session.

8.   The 1990 Rules of Procedure for the Asia Regional Committee stipulate that at the beginning of each ordinary session, the Committee shall elect a Bureau consisting of four people, who stay in office until the subsequent ordinary session. The role of the Bureau is to coordinate the work of the Committee and to assist its Chairman. The Bureau may meet in the interval between sessions of the Committee.

9.   The 2011 Tokyo Convention, which had not entered into force by the time of this evaluation, foresees Committee meetings every year during the first five years after entry into force, and every three years thereafter. Similar to the 1997 Lisbon Convention, the Committee can develop recommendations, declarations, protocols, and models of good practice for implementation, although these are not legally binding. (Article IX.2.). The Convention also requires Parties to establish national information centres, and that the Centres form a regional network on academic mobility and recognition (Articles VIII.3. and IX.3.).

Africa

10.   The 1981 Arusha Convention does not have any functional governance mechanism at the regional level, and no Committee meetings were held during the past two biennia. Originally, the Secretariat of the Convention was provided by UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Senegal (BREDA), which was also involved in the revision process of the Convention starting from 2009. In practice, HQ took over the Secretariat function of the 1981 Arusha Convention when BREDA lost its responsibility as a regional office for education in Africa, and was turned into a sub-regional Multi-Sectoral office as part of UNESCO's Field Reform in Africa. HQ's capacities being limited, they have to a large extent been taken up by supporting the revision of the Convention and the adoption of the revised Convention in 2014, and by the organization of several events to advocate for ratification and to strengthen capacities of Member States.

11.   The 2014 Addis Convention foresees the establishment of a Committee that shall assist with and monitor the implementation of the Convention. To that end it may adopt guidelines, create guidance on best practices, and make recommendations on implementation. It will have the authority to establish subsidiary bodies and technical committees (Article IV.9.). The Committee may cooperate with the African Union and other relevant bodies in assisting and monitoring the implementation of the Convention by Parties (Article IV.11.). The Convention also foresees the establishment of a network of national implementation structures, which is expected to report to the Committee.

12.   Given that the 2014 Addis Convention has not entered into force yet, these mechanisms are not in place. However, an Informal Working Group was established in July 2015 by African Member States to advance ratification and implementation of the 2014 Addis Convention, and to strengthen Member States' capacities regarding quality assurance, and recognition and qualification frameworks. UNESCO and the AU Commission were tasked with the coordination of its activities. At the first meeting of the Informal Working Group in January 2016, three sub-groups were established to take ratification, implementation and capacity building forward during 2016 until the next meeting of the Informal Working Group later this year. Each one of these groups is expected to develop a work-plan and a set of milestones to be achieved.

13.   No decision has so far been taken regarding the future location of the Secretariat of this Convention. One consideration when deciding where to locate the Secretariat could be the proximity to the AU Commission, UNESCO's main partner organization for this Convention, which is in Addis Ababa. Being physically located in the same city might not be necessary in times of digital communication and internet. However, by hosting the Secretariat in UNESCO's Liaison Office, or even within the AU Commission, a strong signal would be sent in terms of partnership and cooperation. In either case, additional resources would be required to fulfil the functions of the Secretariat, and clear cooperation modalities between the Secretariat and UNESCO's sub-regional offices would have to be established.

The other regions

14.   The 1974 Convention on Latin America and the Caribbean, the 1976 Mediterranean Convention, and the 1978 Arab Convention foresee similar management mechanisms as the ones described above. However, although convention committees have been established in the past for all of them, none is active at the moment.

15.   Secretariats for the three Conventions had been provided by IESALC, UNESCO HQ and the UNESCO Field Office in Beirut, for the 1974 LAC, 1976 Mediterranean, and 1978 Arab Conventions, respectively. Interestingly, the 1978 Arab Convention entrusted the Secretariat to UNESCO in cooperation and coordination with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Association of Arab Universities (Article 9.1.). None of the three Convention Secretariats have been actively pursuing their roles as Secretariats over the past two biennia. The reasons for this are manifold and include competing priorities both on the side of Member States and of UNESCO, as well as severe capacity constraints faced by the three Secretariats (human and financial constraints are discussed in more detail later in this chapter).

16.   The 1978 Arab Convention also foresees that the Regional Committee shall assist the institutions of higher education in the Contracting States in carrying out at their request self-evaluation in regard to this Convention at least once every five years, in accordance with a system to be established by the Committee (Article 9.3.). This provision is interesting in light of the need to involve higher education institutions in the implementation of the conventions, and the challenges related to this, as discussed in other parts of this report. None of the other conventions mention the possibility of facilitating a self-reporting system by higher education institutions. The present evaluation could not establish whether this self-evaluation system was ever introduced as foreseen by the 1978 Arab Convention.

17.   Although not explicitly foreseen in the Convention text, a network of information centres in the Mediterranean (MERIC) had been established in 2006 as a platform for exchange and information sharing. Meetings were conducted until 2010, but the actual implementation seems to have been difficult for political and other reasons. A number of countries are currently discussing the potential revival of this network, and a recent proposal to this end is being considered by the European Commission. If successful, activities could start late 2016.

ANNEX II: SUMMARY OF UNESCO SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES BY REGION

Africa

1. Currently, the Higher Education Section in Headquarters is also the Secretariat for the first generation 1981 Arusha Convention, which is still in force. Until 2012, this function was provided by the former Regional Office for Education in Dakar (BREDA). However, there are no recent activities related to the 1981 Arusha Convention, as all efforts are focused on the revised 2014 Addis Convention, particularly the achievement of the 10 ratifications required to bring the Convention into force. After the initial work done by BREDA, Headquarters played a key role in developing the 2014 Addis Convention text, drawing on their experience from the Conventions in Asia-Pacific and Europe. Headquarters was responsible for organizing the December 2014 meeting (assisted by IICBA and the UNESCO AU Liaison Office in Addis) to approve the text of the Convention, with the Liaison Office also assisting with political negotiations. Headquarters also organized a subsequent July 2015 meeting to plan for an Informal Working Group, and a January 2016 meeting of the Informal Working Group (another meeting is planned for late 2016). At the time of writing, Headquarters was also collaborating with the European Commission to organize sub-regional meetings of Parliamentarians to advocate for ratification of the 2014 Addis Convention, as well as quality assurance frameworks. As well, in partnership with selected Field Offices, a Chinese-funded project to build or strengthen quality assurance agencies in Africa began in 2016.

Arab States

2. Officially, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States based in Beirut provides the Secretariat for the 1978 Arab States Convention. However, in practice, there have been no secretariat-specific activities in the last two biennia, nor any Convention Committee meetings. There are, however, other activities related to higher education being carried out in the office. These are primarily related to quality assurance (including the development of a Regional Higher Education Policy Framework and Resource Pack, and cooperation with the World Bank on a regional workshop on governance and quality assurance). The office also co-organized a June 2014 sub-regional conference in Amman on scaling up access and quality in the context of the Syria crisis, including higher education, and contributed to a study carried out by the Institute for International Education on the situation of Syrian higher education students in Lebanon.

Asia and the Pacific

3. The Regional Bureau for Education in the Asia-Pacific Region in Bangkok (the Bangkok Office) is the Secretariat for the 1983 Bangkok Convention. As in Africa, the first generation convention is still in force, and Convention Committee meetings take place every two years, with the content organized by the Bangkok office (the most recent Committee meeting was in Sri Lanka in 2014). The Bangkok office has also organized capacity building workshops (on quality assurance in Sri Lanka in 2014, and on the 2011 Tokyo Convention in Bangkok in October 2015). Country resources are also being developed, including a Toolkit for the Recognition of Foreign Credentials. The Bangkok office is also pursuing advocacy activities by the Director and key education staff, which have included meetings with the Ministry of Education in Cambodia following a national workshop on the Convention. Currently, the office is planning for the next Convention Committee meeting in Australia in August 2016, and another capacity building workshop.

Europe

4. The Higher Education Section in Headquarters provides the Co-Secretariat for the joint UNESCO-Council of Europe (CoE) 1997 Lisbon Convention. In practice, this involves organizing the Bureau meetings and Bureau working groups, taking turns with the CoE funding representatives to participate in the ENIC-NARIC Network meetings, preparation for the Committee meetings, and occasionally hosting such meetings, for instance the recent February 2016 Lisbon Convention Committee meeting in Paris. Prior to the closing of UNESCO's Centre Européen pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CEPES) in Romania in 2011, it served as Co-Secretariat for the 1997 Lisbon Convention and the ENIC-NARIC Network (for which it hosted the website).

Latin America and the Caribbean

5. Category I Institute IESALC provides the Secretariat for the 1974 LAC Convention. In the last two biennia there have been two main activities related to the Convention: a 2012 survey of Member States about their recognition practices, and the Institute's involvement in the August 2015 Brasilia Ministerial-level meeting (organized in cooperation with HQ and with assistance of UNESCO offices in Brasilia and Santiago) to define the future course of the regional Convention. Prior to these, no Convention Secretariat activities were undertaken, and no LAC Convention Committee meetings have been held in the last two biennia. Headquarters has played the key role in the follow-up to the October 2015 Brasilia meeting of Member States, which included a February 2016 High Level Working Group meeting in Cuba to begin to review updates to the text of the Convention. A further Working Group meeting in August/September 2016, and two further meetings in 2017, are currently being planned.

Mediterranean

6. UNESCO Headquarters in Paris provides the Secretariat for the 1976 Mediterranean Convention by default, as the Convention Committee is essentially dormant and no specific activities have been taking place. No Convention Committee meetings have taken place in the last two biennia, nor are there any specific plans to do so.

1993 Recommendation

7. There is no formal secretariat designated for a Recommendation. In practice the main activity associated with the 1993 Recommendation is periodic reporting to the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations on implementation of the Recommendation. This is carried out by the Higher Education Sector at UNESCO Headquarters, with assistance from the Regional Education Bureaux.

Global

8. Activities to support the development of the potential global convention on recognition are being coordinated and carried out through UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. These activities have included organizing expert panel meetings and subsequent reports, preparing documents for Executive Board meetings and the General Conference, organizing country consultation processes, an expert drafting group, and other related meetings.

ANNEX III: LIST OF STATE PARTIES AND SIGNATORIES TO THE REGIONAL CONVENTIONS *(as of May 2016)*

Africa: Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States
Signed: 5 December 1981, Arusha
Entry into force: 1 January 1983
Ratifications:

1. People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
2. Republic of Benin
3. Burkina Faso
4. Republic of Burundi
5. Central African Republic
6. Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
7. Arab Republic of Egypt
8. Republic of Equatorial Guinea
9. Gabonese Republic
10. Republic of Guinea
11. Holy See
12. Kingdom of Lesotho
13. Republic of the Niger
14. Federal Republic of Nigeria
15. Rwandese Republic
16. Republic of Senegal
17. Republic of Seychelles
18. Republic of the Sudan
19. Kingdom of Swaziland
20. Togolese Republic
21. United Republic of Tanzania
22. Republic of Zambia

Africa: Revised Convention on the Recognition off Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States
Adopted: 12 December 2014, Addis Ababa
Not yet entered into force
Ratifications: None
Signatories: (none have yet formally ratified the convention and are therefore not legally bound to it)

1. Republic of Burundi
2. Central African Republic
3. Union of the Comoros
4. Republic of Djibouti
5. Arab Republic of Egypt
6. Gabonese Republic
7. Holy See
8. Republic of Madagascar
9. Republic of Mali
10. Republic of Mozambique
11. Republic of Namibia
12. Federal Republic of Nigeria
13. Republic of Senegal
14. Republic of South Sudan
15. Republic of the Sudan
16. Togolese Republic
17. Republic of Uganda

Arab Region: Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab States
Adopted: 22 December 1978, Paris
Entry into force: 7 August 1981
Ratifications:

1. People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
2. Kingdom of Bahrain
3. Arab Republic of Egypt
4. Republic of Iraq
5. Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
6. State of Kuwait
7. Libya
8. Kingdom of Morocco
9. Sultanate of Oman
10. State of Qatar
11. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
12. Republic of the Sudan
13. Republic of Tunisia
14. United Arab Emirates

Asia-Pacific: Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific
Adopted: 16 December 1983, Bangkok
Entry into force: 23 October 1985
Ratifications:

1. Republic of Armenia
2. Australia
3. Republic of Azerbaijan
4. People's Republic of China
5. Democratic People's Republic of Korea
6. Holy See
7. Republic of India
8. Kingdom of Morocco
12. Republic of Maldives
13. Mongolia
14. Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal
15. Republic of the Philippines
16. Republic of Korea
17. Russian Federation
18. Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

8. Republic of Indonesia
9. Republic of Kazakhstan
10. Kyrgyz Republic
11. Lao People's Democratic Republic

19. Republic of Tajikistan
20. Republic of Turkey
21. Turkmenistan

Asia-Pacific: Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education
Adopted: 26 November 2011
Not yet entered into force
Ratifications:
1. Australia
2. People's Republic of China

3. New Zealand

   Signatories: (none of the following except China have formally ratified the convention and are therefore not legally bound to it)
1. Republic of Armenia
2. People's Republic of Bangladesh
3. Kingdom of Cambodia
4. People's Republic of China
5. Holy See

6. Lao People's Democratic Republic
7. Republic of Korea
8. Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
9. Republic of Turkey

Europe: **Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region**
Adopted: 21 December 1979, Paris
Entry into force: 19 February, 1982
Ratifications:
1. Republic of Armenia
2. Australia
3. Republic of Austria
4. Republic of Azerbaijan
5. Republic of Belarus
6. Kingdom of Belgium
7. Bosnia and Herzegovina
8. Republic of Bulgaria
9. Canada
10. Republic of Croatia
11. Republic of Cyprus
12. Czech Republic
13. Kingdom of Denmark
14. Republic of Finland
15. French Republic
16. Georgia
17. Federal Republic of Germany
18. Holy See
19. Hungary
20. State of Israel
21. Italian Republic
22. Republic of Kazakhstan
23. Kyrgyz Republic

24. Liechtenstein
25. Republic of Lithuania
26. Republic of Malta
27. Montenegro
28 Kingdom of the Netherlands
29. Kingdom of Norway
30. Republic of Poland
31. Portuguese Republic
32. Romania
33. Russian Federation
34. Republic of San Marino
35. Republic of Serbia
36. Slovak Republic
37. Republic of Slovenia
38. Kingdom of Spain
39. Kingdom of Sweden
40. Swiss Confederation
41. Republic of Tajikistan
42. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
43. Republic of Turkey
44. Turkmenistan
45. Ukraine
46. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Europe: **Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region**
Adopted: 11 April 1997, Lisbon
Entry into force: 1 February 1999
Ratifications:
1. Republic of Albania
2. Principality of Andorra
3. Republic of Armenia
4. Australia
5. Republic of Austria
6. Republic of Azerbaijan
7. Republic of Belarus
8. Kingdom of Belgium

28. Republic of Latvia
29. Liechtenstein
30. Republic of Lithuania
31. Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
32. Republic of Malta
33. Montenegro
34. Kingdom of the Netherlands
35. New Zealand

9. Bosnia and Herzegovina
10. Republic of Bulgaria
11. Republic of Croatia
12. Republic of Cyprus
13. Czech Republic
14. Kingdom of Denmark
15. Republic of Estonia
16. Republic of Finland
17. French Republic
18. Georgia
19. Federal Republic of Germany
20. Holy See
21. Hungary
22. Republic of Iceland
23. Ireland
24. State of Israel
25. Italian Republic
26. Republic of Kazakhstan

27. Kyrgyz Republic

36. Kingdom of Norway
37. Republic of Poland
38. Portuguese Republic
39. Republic of Moldova
40. Romania
41. Russian Federation
42. Republic of San Marino
43. Republic of Serbia
44. Slovak Republic
45. Republic of Slovenia
46. Kingdom of Spain
47. Kingdom of Sweden
48. Swiss Confederation
49. Republic of Tajikistan
50. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
51. Republic of Turkey
52. Ukraine
53. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Latin America and the Caribbean: **Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean**
Adopted: 19 July 1974, Mexico City
Entry into force: 14 June 1975
Ratifications:
1. Plurinational State of Bolivia
2. Republic of Colombia
3. Republic of Cuba
4. Republic of Ecuador
5. Republic of El Salvador
6. Holy See
7. United Mexican States
8. Montenegro
9. Kingdom of the Netherlands

10. Republic of Nicaragua
11. Republic of Panama
12. Republic of Peru
13. Republic of Serbia
14. Republic of Slovenia
15. Republic of Suriname
16. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
17. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Mediterranean Region: Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab and European States bordering on the Mediterranean
Adopted: 17 December 1976
Entry into force: 6 March 1978
Ratifications:
1. People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
2. Bosnia and Herzegovina
3. Republic of Croatia
4. Arab Republic of Egypt
5. Italian Republic
6. Republic of Malta

7. Montenegro
8. Kingdom of Morocco
9. Republic of Serbia
10. Republic of Slovenia
11. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
12. Republic of Turkey

ANNEX IV: TOWARDS A GLOBAL RECOGNITION CONVENTION: A BRIEF HISTORY

Date/Session	Details
1963 65th Session Executive Board	The Executive Board requested the Director General (DG) to prepare a preliminary note on the main forms of existing practice in different countries on form, contents and awarding of certificates and diplomas, so as to consider whether "a proposal for study on the possibility and advisability of improving the comparability and equivalence of matriculation certificates, diplomas, and academic degrees" should be included in the programme and budget for 1965-66 with "a view to the preparation of an international convention on the subject" (Item 9.3).[110]
1963 66th Session Executive Board	The Executive Board, having reviewed the "Study on the Possibility and Advisability of Improving the Comparability and Equivalence of Matriculation Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees",[111] invited the Director General to include certain activities in the 1965-66 programme and budget related to academic equivalence, including a preliminary study to be submitted to the Executive Board in 1965 on the technical and legal aspects of the question, so that the General Conference could examine the "advisability of drawing up an International Convention or a Recommendation to Member States on the equivalence of secondary school certificates, diplomas and university degrees" (Decision 4.2.5).[112]
1965 71st Session Executive Board	Document 71 EX/3 ("Comparability and Equivalence of Matriculation Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees: a preliminary study on the technical and legal aspects of the question") presented a preliminary study of the technical and legal aspects of the equivalence question. This document concludes with the note that "the Director General believes that more work in depth needs to be done for the study of the technical and legal aspects of establishing internal and external equivalences, and that therefore the time is not yet ripe for the General Conference to examine, in 1966, the question of the advisability of drawing up an International Convention or Recommendation to Member States" on equivalence, but proceed with a meeting of experts to plan for future action. However, the Executive Board requested the Director General place in the 1967-68 programme, "a meeting of specialists to take stock of the present position, to plan for future long-term action in regard to the improvement of the comparability and equivalence of matriculation certificates, higher education diplomas and degrees, and consider the advisability of establishing instruments, international, regional, or as between certain countries" (Decision 3.3).[113]
1968 15th Session General Conference	Following a meeting by a Committee of Experts held in Moscow in June of that year, the 1968 General Conference authorized the DG to study the "expediency and practicability of preparing an international convention on the recognition and the validity of degrees, diplomas and certificates issued by establishments of higher learning and research in all countries" (15C/Resolution 1.262).[114]
1970 16th Session	The 1988 preliminary study indicates there was a resolution by the General Conference to "pursue and intensify activities designed to extend the comparability

[110] UNESCO (1963). 65 EX/Decisions: *Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at its Sixty-fifth Session*.

[111] UNESCO (1963). 66 EX/7: *Comparability and Equivalence of Matriculation Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees: a preliminary study on the technical and legal aspects of the question*.

[112] UNESCO (1963). 66 EX/Decisions: *Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at its Sixty-sixth Session*.

[113] UNESCO (1965). 71 EX/Decisions: *Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at its Seventy-first Session*.

[114] UNESCO (1968). *Records of the General Conference Fifteenth Session, Resolutions*.

Date/Session	Details
General Conference	and equivalence of certificates, diplomas and degrees in higher education" (Resolution 1.241).
1971 Report of Director General	The Report of the Director General for 1971 makes note of a number of activities related to the issue of comparability and equivalence of degrees, including a working group that met in January at HQ related to international recognition of higher education studies and diplomas in Latin America, and that a study on international equivalence for access to higher education was published.[115]
1972 17th Session General Conference	The General Conference authorized the DG, during the 1973-1974 biennium, to extend the activities concerning the comparability and recognition of studies and diplomas of post-secondary education, particularly by contributing to the preparation of bilateral and regional agreements in the field and by establishing a mechanism entrusted with the application of the agreements (Resolution 1.321).[116]
1984 120th Session Executive Board	Executive Board documents indicated that "…preliminary work should be undertaken in 1986-1987 with a view to the subsequent preparation of an international convention on the recognition of the studies, diplomas and degrees concerning higher education" (Decision 4.1, para 40).[117]
1986 125th Session Executive Board	The Executive Board invited the Director-General "to propose, in the Draft Programme and Budget for 1988-1989, activities aimed at reviewing and continuing work on the desirability and possibility of preparing an international convention on the recognition and validity of degrees, diplomas and certificates issued by establishments of higher learning and research in all countries" (Decision 5.2.5).[118]
1987 24th Session General Conference	The General Conference authorised the Director General to submit to the Executive Board at its 130th session (1988) a feasibility study for an international convention (1987, Resolution 5.6).
1988 130th Session Executive Board	A "Preliminary study on the advisability of preparing an international convention on the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas in higher education" was presented to the Executive Board in 1988.[119]
1989 25th Session General Conference	The General Conference made a decision that "(a) the recognition of studies, degrees and diplomas be regulated at the international level; (b) the method adopted should be an international convention; 2. the Director–General [be invited] to follow the procedure set out in Article 10 of the Rules of Procedure concerning Recommendations to Member States and International Conventions, so that a final draft of a convention can be submitted to it at its twenty–sixth session (1991)" (Resolution 1.2.4).[120]
1991 26th Session	At the 1991 General Conference, a resolution was passed that both encouraged Member States to ratify the existing regional conventions and create national mechanisms for their implementation, as well as supporting Member States in building their expertise on recognition, exchange information, elaborate guidelines,

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[115] UNESCO (1972). *Report of the Director General on the Activities of the Organization in 1971*.

[116] UNESCO (1972). *Records of the General Conference Seventeenth Session Paris, Volume 1 Resolutions and Recommendations*.

[117] *ibid*

[118] UNESCO (1986). 125 EX/Decisions: *Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board at its 125th Session*.

[119] UNESCO (1988). 130 EX/9: *Preliminary Study on the Advisability of Preparing an International Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Degrees and Diplomas in Higher Education*.

[120] UNESCO (1989). *Records of the General Conference Twenty-fifth Session, Resolutions*.

Date/Session	Details
General Conference	and training of experts in this field, cooperating more closely with other Regional Committees, and also to "pursue the work being done in the preparation of an international instrument….a revised draft of a universal convention and to prepare a draft recommendation on the subject to be submitted at its 27th session, also to convene a small group of governmental experts to further examine the draft instruments" (Resolution 1.15).[121]
1993 27th Session General Conference	At its 27th Session, the General Conference adopted the Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education.[122]
2007 34th Session General Conference	The Secretariat "suggested that the Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education…should be added to the list of 10 recommendations selected by the Executive Board…a representative of the Education Sector explained, at the Committee's request, the reasons why it should be monitored as a matter of priority. In doing so, she added that the adoption of a convention on the subject was not being currently considered…Several members noted the importance of the issue of the recognition of studies and degrees in higher education, particularly on account of the questionable practices of certain institutions in some Member States regarding the issuing of degrees. They stressed the importance of the above-mentioned recommendation."[123]
2011 International Conference of States to Examine and Adopt Amendments to the 1983 Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific	The issue of a global convention was raised at the 2011 International Conference of States to Examine and Adopt Amendments to the 1983 Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific, held in Tokyo, Japan. The Final Report from this meeting indicates that the Assistant Director General of Education (ADG/ED) "opened a discussion on the opportunity of elaborating a Global Convention, based on the momentum gained through the 'new generation' of conventions…The debate supported the idea of a global convention, it being understood that regional specificities will continue to be respected… There was also a proposal to continue implementing regional conventions in parallel with developing a global one. ADG/ED concluded the discussion by proposing that a feasibility study be carried out to inform the elaboration of a possible Global Convention."[124]
2012	An International Experts' Meeting on the Feasibility of a Global Convention on Higher Education was held in the People's Republic of China, 30-31 October 2012.

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[121] UNESCO (1991). *Records of the General Conference Twenty-sixth Session, Resolutions*.
[122] UNESCO (1993). *Records of the General Conference Twenty-seventh Session, Resolutions*.
[123] UNESCO (2007). *Records of the General Conference Volume I: Resolutions*.
[124] UNESCO (2011). *Final Report International Conference of States to Examine and Adopt Amendments to the 1983 Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific*.

Date/Session	Details
2013 191st Session Executive Board	The Executive Board decided that, having examined the preliminary study,[125] they support the initiative to advance the international regulation of recognition by means of a new global standard-setting instrument, and recommended that the General Conference adopt a resolution to continue action aimed at drawing up a new global standard-setting instrument on recognition (Decision 42).[126]
2013 37th Session General Conference	The General Conference resolved that having examined the Preliminary Study on the Technical and Legal Aspects Relating to the Desirability of a Global Standard-setting Instrument on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (37 C/45),[127] the DG was invited to initiate the process of elaborating a global convention, ensuring that its development will build upon and complement the regional conventions, undertake consultations with Member States and relevant stakeholders, and continue to assist Member States in revising the existing regional conventions (Resolution 15).[128]
2014-2015	A group of international experts were convened twice in Paris in 2014 (10-11 July) and 2015 (23-24 April). Their final report identified opportunities offered by a global convention, such as supporting stakeholders in repositioning their thinking on traditional concepts of students, modes of study, and institutions, and raising the profile of good recognition practices while highlighting the inefficiencies caused by barriers to recognition. The report also identified a number of areas of concern and many challenges. These included, for example, the lack of a mechanism to build trust between regions and the need for more information to be shared about educational systems, the need to increase the number of countries ratifying and implementing the existing regional conventions, the need for clarity on successes and failures in the regional conventions, challenges of resourcing and capacity of Member States, and what value a legal framework would bring that a non-binding instrument could not.[129]
2015 38th Session General Conference	A Preliminary Report Concerning the Preparation of a Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications was presented to the General Conference.[130] The General Conference made a resolution that the Director-General continue assisting Member States with the revision of the regional conventions, continue the process of preparing a global convention, and convene a drafting committee to prepare a preliminary draft of the global convention and carry out regional consultations, and to submit a progress report, accompanied by a preliminary draft of a convention, at the 39th Session of the General Conference for consideration and decision as to further action (Resolution 12).[131]

[125] UNESCO (2013). 191 EX/42: *Preliminary Study on the Technical and Legal Aspects Relating to the Desirability of a Global Standard-Setting Instrument on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications*.

[126] UNESCO (2013). 191 EX/Decisions: *Decision Adopted by the Executive Board at its 191st Session*.

[127] UNESCO (2013). 191 EX/42: *Preliminary Study on the Technical and Legal Aspects Relating to the Desirability of a Global Standard-Setting Instrument on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications*.

[128] UNESCO (2013). *Records of the General Conference, 37th Session*.

[129] UNESCO (2014). Towards a Global Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education Final Experts' Meeting Report.

[130] UNESCO (2015). 38C/26: *Preliminary Report Concerning the Preparation of a Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications*,.

[131] UNESCO (2015). *Records of the General Conference, 38th Session: Volume I: Resolutions*.

ANNEX V: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation of UNESCO's standard-setting work related to the Regional Higher Education Recognition Conventions
November 10th, 2015

BACKGROUND

As one of its main constitutional and strategic functions, UNESCO's standard-setting work provides a central forum for universal agreements on the ethical, normative and intellectual issues of our time. As the only United Nations agency with a mandate in higher education, UNESCO has established a number of regional recognition conventions in higher education. The conventions constitute a unique legal framework for allowing the recognition of qualifications in higher education between States Parties, subject to national legislation, for academic and professional purposes. The main objectives of the conventions are to promote international cooperation in higher education and to reduce obstacles to the mobility of teachers, students and graduates. Over 135 Member States are signatory to at least one regional convention on recognition in higher education.

History

The "problem of the difference in university degrees across the world" was discussed for the first time within UNESCO at the General Conference in 1947. While still maintaining the ultimate objective of a universal standard-setting instrument, the governing bodies of UNESCO later concluded that the issue could be addressed more successfully at the regional level in this initial phase. Consequently, six regional conventions were developed between 1975 and 1983, as shown in the table below. A Recommendation with global scope (but not legally binding) was also adopted by the General Conference in 1993, after further efforts for an international convention were not successful.

Original regional conventions		
Adoption	**Region**	**Official name**
Mexico City, 19 July 1974	Latin America and the Caribbean	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
Nice, 17 December 1976	Mediterranean	Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab and European States Bordering on the Mediterranean
Paris, 22 December 1978	The Arab States	Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in the Arab States
Paris, 21 December 1979	Europe	Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region
Arusha, 5 December 1981	Africa	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States
Bangkok, 16 December 1983	Asia and the Pacific	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific
Paris, 13 November 1993	Global (non-binding)	Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education

Realizing that the regional conventions from the 1970s and 1980s do not adequately address the new dynamics in higher education, UNESCO has collaborated closely with Member States and relevant higher education stakeholders to revise them. To date, three regional conventions have been revised and adopted, namely (i) the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region ("Lisbon Recognition Convention") jointly with the Council of Europe (Lisbon, Portugal, 1997); (ii) the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (Tokyo, Japan, 2011); and (iii) the Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States (Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, 2014). The Lisbon Recognition Convention has already entered into force, while the Asian-Pacific and African States' conventions will come into force once ratified by the required number of States Parties.

This "new generation" of recognition conventions integrates several key principles, namely a shift in favour of applicants; the development of transparent, coherent and reliable procedures; granting recognition unless substantial differences are identified; information-sharing and networking at the expert level; and development of codes of good practice or recommendations and guidelines, in addition to a solid legal framework.

Over the years, UNESCO Member States have continued to express interest in developing a global Higher Education convention, which could address the new realities of higher education such as "massification" and democratization; diversification of provision and providers; academic mobility; employability; quality assurance; and the introduction of qualifications frameworks. In 2013, the General Conference invited the Director-General to initiate the process of elaborating a global convention. The resulting consultations found that a vast majority of Member States and experts generally viewed the proposal as favourable. A number of issues were also raised, including the level of ambitions for a global convention; funding of the implementation process; and the value added of a global convention to the countries which have ratified and implemented well-functioning regional conventions.

In parallel to the development of a global convention, there is a need for UNESCO to continue to support and encourage revisions of those regional conventions which have not yet been modernized. Such revisions will create a better regional balance in the field of intra-regional academic mobility and thus strengthen the foundation for the implementation of a potential global convention.

Activities and budget information

There are three levels of standard-setting work and related activities undertaken by States Parties:
  I.   Ratification (or acceptance / succession) of the Convention;
  II. Integration of the provisions of the Convention into national / regional legislation, policy and strategy; and,
  III. Implementation of the legislation, policies and strategies at the national level.

At all these three levels, UNESCO has a convening, advocacy, and capacity building role. UNESCO HQ, the regional offices, and Secretariats of the Conventions share responsibilities for activities related to the higher education conventions. The primary role of the Secretariats is to serve the Convention Committees. Other activities include convening stakeholder meetings, promoting the exchange of experience between stakeholders, conducting consultations, sharing information, developing resources, guidelines, and providing training, in order to promote dialogue, networking, and the sharing of knowledge and good practices. States Parties bear the primary responsibility for implementing the higher education conventions. UNESCO also monitors and reports on the implementation of the 1993 Recommendation through the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations.

Higher Education activities carried out through UNESCO HQ receive a small amount of regular programme funds (USD$220,000 for 2014-2015), as well as USD$975,000 extra-budgetary funds in recent years to support capacity building (USD$975,995 from Norway, and USD$200,000 from China in 2014-2015 to support the development of the Addis convention). Some regional UNESCO offices have access to extra-budgetary funds to support the ratification and implementation of the conventions. For example, the Asia and Pacific regional office received extra-budgetary support from the governments of Australia (USD$80,000) and Sri Lanka (about US$80,000) for the 13th Regional Committee Session meeting, held in 2014 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Stakeholders

There are an extensive number of entities who have played a role in the higher education conventions, including, but not limited to, regional convention committees, national governments, regional organizations, educational institutions, NGOs, and professional associations. These include regional organizations such as the African Union, Council of Europe, European Commission, networks in Europe; UNESCO HQ and field offices/Secretariats of the conventions (Dakar, Bangkok, Beirut, IESALC etc.); and others such as the International Association of Universities. In their implementation, the higher education conventions touch governmental departments and agencies, higher education institutions/providers, quality assurance and accreditation agencies, recognition and credential evaluation centres, professional bodies, students and professors.

Alignment of Higher Education Conventions with UNESCO's mandate

UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy 2014-2021 (37 C/4) and the 2014-2017 Approved Programme and Budget (37 C/5) define a common strategic vision for the organization and expected results. The 2014 UNESCO Education Strategy further elaborates on these documents.

Within the broader Education Programme, the higher education conventions are most closely related to the priority area of 'internationalization of higher education'. The strategic documents note that within this priority area, UNESCO provides technical support on regulation issues through the implementation and continued monitoring of the application of normative instruments on the recognition of higher education qualifications and by supporting Member States to improve their quality assurance mechanisms. It also supports the sharing of experiences regarding the international exchange of faculty and research, and its implications for policy design and implementation. The possible development of a global convention is also noted.

The Medium-term Strategy also recognizes that UNESCO's role and support for the implementation of existing standard-setting instruments require strengthening. To that end, UNESCO has developed a strategy to improve the visibility, ratification, implementation, monitoring, and cooperation of education-related standard-setting instruments in the field of education. The strategy was adopted by the 197th session of the Executive Board, and reflects the recognition of the importance of standard-setting work to focus and advance UNESCO's overall work. It is aimed at ensuring that the standard-setting instruments form a central element of education programme work across all the functions and activities conducted.

Within **Global Priority Africa**, the higher education conventions relate to Flagship 2 (strengthened education systems for sustainable development in Africa: improving equity, quality and relevance), expected result #7 (Member States develop evidence-based higher education policies to address the challenges of equity, quality, inclusion, expansion, mobility and accountability). The link with **Global Priority Gender Equality** will be determined based on discussions with Education Programme staff.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

While several evaluations of other standard-setting areas of the organization have taken place in recent years (the UNESCO Culture conventions), no comprehensive evaluation of the regional Higher Education conventions has ever taken place. This evaluation will be timely given the discussions and consultations underway for the potential development of a global convention on higher education, as well as the strategy regarding standard-setting instruments in the field of education.

This formative evaluation will be primarily forward-looking, with a focus on learning. The main purpose is to generate findings and recommendations that will inform the development, management and implementation of the new generation of regional recognition conventions, and potentially also feed into the development and implementation of a future global convention.

The evaluation also aims to help the UNESCO Education Sector and Senior Management, the Secretariats of the conventions, and the conventions' committees to strengthen, refocus and better coordinate the implementation of the new strategy for standard-setting instruments.

SCOPE
The evaluation will focus on:

- o *the importance and role of the higher education recognition conventions in the various regional contexts,*
- o *the relevance of and contribution of the higher education recognition conventions to UNESCO's broader higher education programme,*
- o *the effectiveness of the governing and management mechanisms of the regional conventions,*
- o *the effectiveness of UNESCO's support for the development, ratification, and implementation of the regional conventions, including consideration of internal UNESCO work organization (HQ, regional bureaus, IESALC), resources, staff and budget allocated;*
  AND on:
- o *the key lessons to be learned from the development, ratification and implementation of the regional conventions that could inform the potential development of a global convention,*
- o *the key lessons to be learned from other standard-setting instruments (for instance in culture) for the regional recognition conventions and for the potential development of a global convention.*

The evaluation will focus on the new generation of higher education conventions and the education sector's standard-setting work related to these. Revised conventions currently exist for Europe, Asia-Pacific, and Africa. These conventions underwent a revision process at different points in time and thus represent different levels of maturity as well as different governing models. Latin American and Caribbean Member States recently decided to work towards a revised convention by 2018.

The updated conventions that will be the focus of this evaluation are:

Revised regional conventions		
Lisbon, 1997	Europe	Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region
Tokyo, 2011	Asia and the Pacific	Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education
Addis-Ababa, 2014	Africa	Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States

The aim will be to examine the role of these conventions in their specific regional contexts, and to identify any good practices with regards to the support that UNESCO has provided to the development, ratification and implementation of these three conventions, as well as to the process that is currently unfolding in the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

The evaluation will also aim to draw lessons from the effectiveness of the governing mechanisms of the regional recognition conventions. To the extent possible, the governing mechanisms of the first generation of regional recognition conventions will also be considered.

The evaluation will cover the standard-setting work undertaken within the framework of both the regular and extra-budgetary programmes during the 36C/5 (2012-2013) biennium and the 37C/5 (2014-2017) up to the time of the evaluation.

Evaluation questions (to be further deepened in the evaluation matrix)
What is the importance and role of the regional recognition conventions within the specific regional contexts, and to UNESCO's larger higher education programme?

- What role do the regional recognition conventions play within the specific regional contexts?
- To what extent do UNESCO's standard-setting instruments in higher education occupy a niche, i.e. address a clear need among stakeholders?
- To what extent do the higher education conventions complement other international standard-setting instruments?
- What reasons exist for countries not having ratified the conventions? What factors have enabled countries to proceed with ratification?
- What is the relevance of the regional recognition conventions within the context of UNESCO's larger higher education work, and in what ways do the conventions contribute to it?
- How has the Organization reflected its two Global Priorities (Africa and Gender) in its standard-setting work on the higher education recognition conventions?
- *What are the main commonalities and differences between the various regional recognition conventions and what are the key building blocks for a global convention?*
- *What lessons can be learned from the above for future revised regional conventions, and for a global convention?*

How effective have the governing and management mechanisms of the conventions been?

- What are the lessons learned from the governance and management of the original regional recognition conventions?
- What governance structures and processes are in place for the regional conventions, and to what extent have they been effective?
- Is there a clear process for requests for assistance from Member States?
- What mechanisms are in place to monitor and evaluate progress achieved at regional level? How effective are they?
- How effective have UNESCO's support measures to the convention committees and other governance structures been?
- *What are the lessons to be learned from the governance, management and monitoring of UNESCO's other standard-setting instruments? (e.g. in culture)*
- *What are the key issues to be considered in the development and implementation of future revised regional recognition conventions and of a potential global convention?*

How effective have UNESCO's support measures to the development, ratification and implementation of the regional recognition conventions been?

- What are the lessons learned from UNESCO's support to the development, ratification and implementation of the original regional recognition conventions?
- What processes and mechanisms have been used to plan and develop revised regional conventions?
- How inclusive have consultations and processes related to the development of new regional conventions been (did consultations include an appropriate array of stakeholders, such as sector specialists, civil society and the private sector)? To what extent were consultation processes transparent and timely, with adequate time for participation?
- What do stakeholders perceive as UNESCO's most important contribution to developing the new generation of regional recognition conventions, and where are the key gaps?
- Does the current division of labour between HQ, Field Offices, and Institutes, related to work on supporting and promoting the regional conventions, reflect an effective mix?
- Are the human resources and the budget available for supporting the regional recognition conventions adequate compared to the needs of Member States and the activities planned?
- *What next steps are recommended to take the work on the regional recognition conventions forward?*
- *What are the lessons to be learned for a potential global convention?*

METHODOLOGY

The overall methodological design will include:
- A systematic in-depth desk study
- Articulation of a theory of change for the regional higher education conventions
- Multi-site data collection with purposive sampling of cases, including phone/Skype and in-person interviews
- One or two in-depth regional case studies (such as on Asia, and / or Latin America)

RESPONSIBILITIES, DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

The evaluation will be undertaken by UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service, Evaluation Section, in cooperation with two or three external experts who will contribute background papers. IOS (Evaluation Section) will undertake data collection and analysis, write the report, and approve the deliverables from the consultant.

The internal evaluation team is expected to produce the following deliverables:
- Inception Report outlining the overall proposed evaluation approach, including logical framework(s), final evaluation questions, methodology, list of key informants, work-plan, timeline and division of responsibilities
- Overall draft Evaluation Report
- Consultation and debriefing workshop
- Final Evaluation Report

The external consultant/s is/are expected to produce the following deliverables:
- A review and analysis of pertinent research papers, and policy documents, other documentation related to the higher education conventions for selected regions.
- Skype / phone interviews if required.

Timeline

Development of ToRs and consultations	September-October 2015
Recruitment of consultant/s	October-November 2015
Start of work of external consultant/s	November 2015
Data collection	November-December-January 2016
Brainstorming session with key stakeholders and reference group at HQ	November 2015
Draft evaluation report	February 2015
Consultation and debriefing workshop	March 2015
Final evaluation report	Early April 2016

A reference group will accompany the evaluation process and provide feedback on the draft TOR and the draft evaluation report. The group will include members from IOS, the Education Sector, the Bureau of Strategic Planning, and potentially one or two external experts.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE EXTERNAL CONSULTANT/S

The qualifications for the external consultant/s include:

Advanced university degree in the specialized field of higher education, law, public policy, or international relations;

Working experience with a focus on the higher education recognition conventions;
Excellent report writing skills in English or French.

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ANNEX VI: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

UNESCO Headquarters Staff

David Atchoarena	Director	Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems
Matoko Firmin	Assistant Director General	Africa Department
Lene Oftedal	Programme Specialist	Section of Higher Education
Steven Riel Miller	Programme Specialist	Research, Policy and Foresight Section
Irène Rabenoro	(Acting) Chief of Section	Section of Higher Education
Ranwa Safari	Senior Programme Planning Officer (and Focal Point for Education)	Bureau of Strategic Planning
Liliana Simionescu	Programme Specialist	Section of Higher Education
Qian Tang	Assistant Director-General	Education
Hassmik Tortian	Programme Specialist	Section of Higher Education
Guillermo Trasancos	Senior Legal Officer, Chief of Section	Contracts and United Nations Status Section
Zeynep Varoglu	Programme Specialist (formerly in Higher Education)	Communications and Information Sector
Peter Wells	(Incoming) Chief of Section	Section of Higher Education

UNESCO Field Office and Institute Staff

Anwar Alsaid	Programme Specialist	Doha Field Office
Girma Alemayehu	Education Programme Officer	Addis Ababa Field Office
Patience Awopegba	Programme Specialist	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)
Mohamed Djelid	Director	Nairobi Field Office
Temechegn Engida	Education Specialist	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)
Dakmara Georgescu	Programme Specialist	Beirut Field Office and Regional Bureau for Education
Hubert Gijzen	Director	Harare Field Office
Hamed Al Hammami	Director	Beirut Field Office and Regional Bureau for Education
Hervé Huot-Marchand	Programme Specialist	Dakar Field Office
Pedro Hernan Henriquez	(Acting) Director	The International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC); Venezuela
Mr. Saidou Sireh Jallow	Head of Education	Abuja Field Office
Philippe Maalouf	Programme Specialist	Rabat Field Office
Michaela Martin	Programme Specialist	International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP)
Bakhtiyor Namazov	Education Specialist	Tashkent Field Office
Anne Therese Ndong Jatta	Director	Dakar Field Office
Gwang-Jo Kim	Director	Bangkok Field Office and Regional Bureau for Education

Rebeca Otero	Programme Officer, Education	Brazil Field Office
Miki Nozawa	Programme Officer, Education	China Field Office
Jorge Sequeira	Director	Santiago Field Office
Wesley Teter	Senior Consultant	Bangkok Field Office and Regional Bureau for Education
Libing Wang	Chief of Section	Bangkok Field Office and Regional Bureau for Education
Alaphia Wright	(Acting) Director	Addis Ababa Field Office and Liaison Office to African Union Commission
Yumiko Yokozeki	Director	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)

Former UNESCO Staff

Molly Lee	(Former) Higher Education Specialist	Bangkok Field Office and Regional Bureau for Education
Juma Shabani	(Former) Higher Education specialist in Dakar, and (former) Secretary of the Arusha Convention Committee	Dakar Field Office and (former) Regional Bureau for Education
Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić	(Former) Chief of Education	(Former) Division of Higher Education

Regional and International Organizations

Sjur Bergan	Director of Democratic Citizenship and Participation and Head, Education Department Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation	Council of Europe (CoE)
Danièle Castle	Executive Director	Graduate Women International (GWI)
Abigail Lanceta	Assistant Director for ASEAN Secretariat's Education, Youth and Training Division from the Socio-Cultural Community	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
Francisco Marmolejo	Lead, Global Solutions Group on Tertiary Education	World Bank
Mayunga Nkunya	Immediate Past Executive Secretary	Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA)
Dato' Dr. Morshidi Sirat	Director	Commonwealth Tertiary Educational Facility (CTEF)
Brehima Tounkara	Directeur de l'enseignement supérieur et de la formation professionnelle	L'Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine (UEMOA)
Ethel Agnes Pascua Valenzuela	Deputy Director, Programme and Development	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat
Sally Ward	MENA Regional Manager - Higher Education	British Council

Country and Recognition Authority Representatives

El Mokhtar Bakkour	Director	L'agence nationale d'évaluation et d'assurance qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique et de la Formation des Cadres, Morocco
Joakim Bakke	Deputy Director General	Ministry of Education and Research, Norway
Elizabeth Campbell-Dorning	A/g Branch Manager, International Mobility Branch	Department of Education and Training, Australian Government
Mafiana Chiedu	Deputy Executive Secretary	National Universities Commission, Nigeria
Alejandro Funes-Lastra	Counsellor	Permanent Delegation of Argentina to UNESCO
Claudia Gelleni	Current President, ENIC-NARIC Network, and Responsable, Département reconnaissance des diplômes - Centre ENIC-NARIC France	ENIC-NARIC Network
Kevin Guillaume	Immediate Past President	ENIC Network
Mitiku Haile	Deputy Permanent Delegate	Permanent Delegation of Ethiopia to UNESCO
Ahmad Jammal	Director General of Higher Education	Lebanon
Aleksi Kalenius	Counsellor in Education	Permanent Delegation of Finland to UNESCO
Lily Freida Macabangunmilla	Director, International Affairs Service	Republic of the Philippines, Office of the President, Commission of Higher Education
Ghada Omar	Deputy Permanent Delegate	Permanent Delegation of Egypt to UNESCO
Françoise Profit	Head of the Bologna follow-up group Secretariat	Bologna Follow-up Group
Nar B. Raika	Chief Program Officer	Ministry of Education, Government of Bhutan
Christian Tauch	Head Education Department	German Rectors' Conference
Gunnar Vaht	Head, Estonian ENIC/NARIC Academic Recognition Information Centre	Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee

Student and University Representatives

Jonathan Chucks	Director of Research & Academic Planning	Association of African Universities
Etienne Ehouan Ehile	Secretary General	Association of African Universities
Fernando Galan Palomares	Chairperson	European Student's Union
Mazen O. Hasna	Vice President and Chief Academic Officer	Qatar University

Nina Khairina	President	Council for International Students Australia
Stanley Njoroge	Chair	Commonwealth Students Association
Sultan Abu Orabi	Secretary General	Association of Arab Universities, (AArU)
Gard Titlestat	Secretary-General	International Council for Open and Distance Education

Other Key Informants

Hana Addam El-Ghali	Consultant	American University of Beirut and World Bank
Roger Chao Jr.	Researcher	University of Hong Kong
Eva Hartmann	Assistant Professor	Copenhagen Business School, Department of Business and Politics
Melanie Rosenbaum	Responsible for International Affairs	Congregation for Catholic Education, Holy See

People interviewed during the field missions
Kenya

Obiero C. Afullo	Senior Assistant Director, Directorate of Higher Education,	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Nyagate Areba	Senior Deputy Director, Directorate of Higher Education	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Judith Mbula Bahemuka	UNESCO/UNITWIN Chair	University of Nairobi
Michael M. Kahiti	Chief Economist	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Tabitha T. Muita Kamau	Director, Education Programme	Kenya National Commission for UNESCO
Martin Mativo	Personal Assistant to Vice-Chancellor	University of Nairobi
Peter Mwai Muturi	Public Relations Manager	University of Nairobi
Fidelis J. Nakhulo	Deputy Director, Education Standards Quality Assurance Council	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Anne Nangulu	Deputy Commission Secretary	Commission for University Education
Evangeline W. Njoka	Secretary General/CEO	Kenya National Commission for UNESCO
George A. Ombakho	Director, Directorate of Research Management and Development	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
David Kimutai Some	Chief Executive Officer	Commission for University Education

Ethiopia

Yeromnesh Ayele	Director, Accreditation, Equivalence and	Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency

	Authentication of Educational Credentials Directorate,	
Mebratu Berhan Berhe	Secretary-General	Ethiopian National Agency for UNESCO
Zenebe Beyene	Director, Office of External Relations, Partnerships and Communications	Addis Ababa University
Asmared Demilew	Senior Quality Assurance Expert, Accreditation, Equivalence and Authentication of Educational Credentials Directorate	Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency
Kaba Urgessa Dinssa	State Minister for Higher Education	Ministry of Education, Ethiopia
Alemselam Fekadu	Programme Manager, Higher Education	British Council
Aklilu Hailemichael	Director General	Higher Education Strategic Centre
Ron Hendrix	Attaché and Program Manager, Migration, Mobility, Employment and Higher Education	Delegation of the European Union to the African Union, European Union
Kassamin Kebede,	Director, Quality Audit and Enhancement Directorate	Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency
Katrin Mader	Assistant Director, Programmes	British Council
Tamirat Motta	Deputy Director General	Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency
Beatrice Njenga	Head, Education Division	African Union Commission
Yohannes Woldetensaey	Senior Education Specialist	African Union Commission

Other persons consulted include several participants of the Asia-Pacific Regional Capacity Building Workshop on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand, in October, 2015; the first meeting of the Informal Working Group for the Addis Convention in January, 2016, in Paris, France; and the Lisbon Convention Committee meeting in February, 2016, in Paris, France.

ANNEX VII: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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