



**12<sup>TH</sup> FORUM EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING**

**ICT Video Conference Room 1, University of the South Pacific, Laucala Campus, Fiji**

**13 - 14 April 2021**

**SESSION FIVE: Portability of Qualifications - the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education**

*(PacREF(21) FEdMM.08)*

*(The paper has been prepared by UNESCO, Apia Office)*

<b>Title/Topic</b>	Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education – Pacific Context
<b>Presenting Agency/Unit</b>	UNESCO Office for the Pacific States
<b>Purpose of the Brief</b>	The purpose of the paper is to highlight important elements of the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education to Ministers and seeking to their commitment to meeting its requirements.

**Background**

- Today over 5,3 million students are pursuing their higher education abroad globally. In November 2019, the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education was adopted by the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference, making it the first United Nations treaty on higher education with a global scope.
- Building on and enhancing the coordination and achievements of the regional recognition conventions, the Global Convention is designed to facilitate international academic mobility and promote the right of individuals to have their higher education qualifications evaluated through fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manners.
- It aims to expand access to higher education around the world by facilitating international exchanges of students, teachers, researchers and job-seekers. The Global Convention will also strengthen international cooperation in higher education and contribute to raising its quality worldwide.
- UNESCO is calling on Member States to ratify the Global Convention on Higher Education and help make international academic mobility and the recognition of qualifications a reality for millions around the world, in pursuit of the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

**Summary**

- The Global Convention ensures the right of individuals to have their higher education and skills qualifications assessed for the purpose of further education or employment, in a fair, transparent, timely and affordable manner.
- Qualification recognition decisions are to be based on reliable up-to-date information on higher-education systems by competent recognition authorities and quality assurance mechanism is in place.
- The Global Convention will provide a platform for national authorities to collaborate across borders and regions to develop better tools and practices for the recognition of higher education qualifications, and it is not to adhere to a set standard.
- It aims to support inter-regional initiatives, policies and innovations for cooperation in higher education through faculty and student exchanges, international joint research, and greater inclusion and access to higher education by ALL.

- The objectives and principles of the Convention support academic and labour mobility needs in the Pacific states and would leverage the Pacific Regional Education Framework 2018-2030, Moving Towards Education 2030 (PacREF) implementation.

**Ministers are invited to note:**

- a) the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, 2019;
- b) the growing need for portability of qualifications in view of increasing mobility of students, faculty, and scholars in higher education within the Pacific and outside the Pacific;
- c) the growing need to verify and recognize qualifications in view of increasing labour mobility within the Pacific and in and out of the Pacific;
- d) the need for using international student and academic mobility data for better planning for higher education and labour market;
- e) continued efforts to reinforce global and regional coordination, reporting and monitoring, including South-South cooperation;

For Ministers' decision:

**Ministers are invited to:**

- a) **agree** to build better understanding on the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, 2019, through taking part in regional virtual sessions and other means with universities, the Pacific Heads of Education System, and other important partners from across the Pacific;
- b) **agree** as UNESCO Member States in the Pacific to upscale support in achieving the objectives and principles addressed in Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, 2019 through its ratification; and
- c) collectively **commit** to providing quality Higher Education accessible by all, regardless of gender, physical, geographical, social, or economic discrepancies

Minister's Position