

Joint Media Release –

South Asia Member States working together to develop a regional qualifications reference framework

18 February 2022, Friday

The first technical meeting on a South Asia regional qualifications reference framework held virtually on 15 – 16 February 2022 with the participation of Member State representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, established the following objectives for the framework:

- ❖ To facilitate regional cooperation and recognition of qualifications.
- ❖ To facilitate worker and learner mobility within and outside the region through transparency and trust in National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs).
- ❖ To promote the strengthening of the quality and effectiveness of Member States' national qualifications systems.¹

The Member State representatives acknowledged the existing bilateral and multilateral agreements between the Member States to mutually recognise qualifications and common occupational/skill standards.

Furthermore, the Member State representatives:

- ❖ **Acknowledged** the need for a common regional qualifications reference framework to support recognition of qualifications and skills to facilitate worker and learner mobility within and outside the region.
- ❖ **Recognised** the need to improve understanding of other Member States' national qualification system and associated quality assurance arrangements.
- ❖ **Affirmed** that the regional qualifications reference framework should be enabling and voluntary and not impinge upon other Member States' qualifications systems or frameworks.
- ❖ **Recognised** that the regional qualifications reference framework will be developed in parallel with processes for strengthening national qualifications frameworks and qualifications systems through dialogue and review processes between the Member States.

The Member State representatives concluded the meeting by committing to participate in forthcoming dialogues and to convene a joint regional qualifications reference framework Task Force to further the development and management of a regional qualifications reference framework.

¹ Including the NQF and quality assurance arrangements.

Participating Departments and Ministries:

| Member State | Department | Ministry |
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| BANGLADESH | Bangladesh Technical Education Board, Technical and Madrasah Education Division | Ministry of Education |
| | Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Technical and Madrasah Education Division | Ministry of Education |
| | Ministry, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh | Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment |
| | National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) | Under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) |
| | Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC) | Ministry of Education |
| BHUTAN | Quality Assurance & Accreditation Division, Department of Adult & Higher Education | Ministry of Education |
| | Quality Assurance Division (QAD) & Department of Occupational Standards (DOS) | The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR) |
| INDIA | University Grants Commission (UGC) | Ministry of Education |
| | National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) | Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship |
| MALDIVES | Maldives Qualification Authority | Ministry of Higher Education |
| | Maldives Polytechnic | Ministry of Higher Education |
| NEPAL | Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training/National Skill Testing Board | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) |
| | University Grant Commission (UGC) | Autonomous and Statuary Institution of Government of Nepal |
| PAKISTAN | Faculty Affairs Division, Higher Education Commission (HEC) | Ministry of Education |
| | National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) | Ministry of Education |
| SRI LANKA | Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission | State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research & Innovations |
| | Strategic Planning and Policy Research Division Higher Education | Ministry of Education |
| | Quality Assurance Council University Grants Commission | Ministry of Education |