



Global Partners in Higher Education Quality Assurance during adoption of Bengaluru Statement 2016 on Next - Generation Quality Assurance of Higher Education at Global Summit organised by NAAC at Bengaluru in presence of Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey, Hon'ble Minister of State (HE), MHRD, Govt. of India.

## Bengaluru Statement 2016 on Next-Generation Quality Assurance of Higher Education:

A shared vision and commitment for fostering partnership beyond borders

1. We the participants, organisers, partners and supporters of the “Global Summit on Quality Higher Education: Sharing Values and Fostering Trust Beyond Borders” organised by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India and co-organised by Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) in partnership with 16 leading Quality Assurance organisations including networks and QA agencies from Asia Pacific, Europe, America, Africa and Arab regions on 16-17 September 2016 at Bengaluru, India, re-affirming previous relevant commitments such as Nagoya Declaration on Higher Education for Sustainable Development-2014, Incheon Declaration-2015 *“Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all”*

2. Taking note of various global initiatives such as Bologna Declaration, CHIBA Principles, **International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)** Guidelines for Good Practices, **Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)** International Quality Principles, Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher education (QACHE) project etc., express the shared vision and aspirations and support for actions by higher education quality assurance community.

3. We acknowledge that global higher education scenario is witnessing rapid transformation in past few decades and there has been a huge expansion in tertiary education. A major share of the countries have moved from elite stage to massification stage and further to universalization stage in higher education development. This massive expansion is also accompanied by emergence and expansion of private sector, increase in globalization of higher education especially technology driven learning platforms such as MOOCs.

We refer to the emphasis in Incheon Declaration facilitated by UNESCO which states that “*We reaffirm that education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights. It is essential for peace, tolerance, human fulfilment and sustainable development. We recognize education as key to achieving full employment and poverty eradication. We will focus our efforts on access, equity and inclusion, quality and learning outcomes, within a lifelong learning approach.*”

We note that, universities, quality assurance bodies, governments, inter-governmental agencies and international networks are under increased pressure from students and other stakeholders to play a proactive role in safeguarding the interests of the student community while promoting international student mobility.

**While acknowledging this, we express our intent and aspirations for:**

**4.1 Cooperation among quality assurance networks and organizations to dissolve boundaries for quality higher education:**

We believe that appropriate future of networking in quality assurance of higher education is in networking of networks and QA bodies. Global higher education and quality assurance community is witnessing rapid transformation in theory and practices due to huge expansion of higher education and emergence of different forms of higher education delivery within and across the borders. We acknowledge the efforts by INQAAHE over the years to bring together all regional networks and building on this goodwill, express further need for quality assurance networks to come together and develop a common agenda to ensure co-operation.

#### **4.2 Endeavour to Foster Trust Beyond Borders in higher education quality assurance:**

Our aim is to contribute in fostering trust beyond borders in higher education quality assurance to facilitate student mobility. There is urgent need to enhance actions on issues of mutual recognition of qualification and also mutual recognition of accreditation decisions. The issue of National Qualification framework, regional alignment and inter operability of qualifications framework need to be given attention.

There is felt need to co-ordinate various initiatives including that of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), other inter-governmental organisations and quality networks which are active in this area, so as to explore synergy in the efforts.

#### **4.3 Sharing global information resources:**

While some regions like Europe have well established information and recognition systems like ENIC-NARIC, many other regions lack such resources. To address this issue, Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) has initiated a global project on Quality Information Portal, with the help of UNESCO. We need to promote development of regional and global databases of recognized accreditation bodies and accredited higher education institutions. We express need to enhance link among all existing Quality Registers such as that of Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), European Quality Assurance Registers and databases for Higher Education (EQAR) and Asia Pacific Quality Register (APQR) for accreditation agencies. Similarly existing databases and information portals of accredited higher education institutions need to be strengthened and linked.

#### **4.4 Promoting values and ethical practices in quality assurance:**

There is a need to enhance academic integrity, transparency, accountability and participation among all stakeholders in quality assurance for addressing the challenges posed by degree and accreditation mills, and corruption and malpractices in higher education. Quality assurance bodies and higher education institutions should maintain code of conduct for strengthening value orientation and ethical practices in quality assurance.

#### **4.5 Sharing and promoting good practices:**

We agree to share and promote good practices by using multiple platforms such as conferences, virtual and communication technologies, workshops, publications and staff exchanges among QA agencies and networks.

#### **4.6 Strengthening of capacity building:**

Taking note that QA is relatively new phenomenon in many countries, we express need to undertake capacity building initiatives by sharing resources and expertise to emerging QA bodies.

#### **4.7 Developing strategies and resources for next generation quality assurance in age of technology:**

We need to focus on developing strategies and resources for next generation quality assurance which is characterised by disruptive innovations and ground breaking technologies in higher education. The quality assurance of flexible forms of higher education and other new avenues need to be explored by sharing good practices, developing resources and capacity building.

#### **4.8 Resource mobilisation for quality assurance:**

We note and appreciate the contributions made by UNESCO, World Bank, European Union and other international organisations in capacity enhancement for quality assurance in higher education, especially in developing countries, and call upon them to continue to support the strengthening of QA mechanisms at global, regional and national levels.

#### **4.9 Strengthening professionalism in quality assurance:**

Taking cognizance of rapid expansion in terms of activity and people involved, quality assurance is evolving in many parts of the world. We express need to strengthen professional and ethical standards among higher education QA practitioners.

### **5. With this Bengaluru Statement we call upon quality assurance networks, organizations and stakeholders of higher education to join hands and commit to work together to enhance quality in higher education in service of students and society.**

Note:

The Bengaluru Statement on higher education quality assurance: A shared vision and commitment for partnerships Beyond Borders is proposed to be adopted by the organisers, partners and participants of the **Global Summit on Quality Higher Education: Sharing Values and Fostering Trust Beyond Borders** during 16-17 September 2016.

It re-affirms the vision and commitment of quality assurance networks and agencies in promoting cause of quality higher education for sustainable development. It represents intent among key global stakeholders of quality higher education to work together for common cause and explore untapped potential of networking among quality networks and quality assurance organisations.