

2017 APQN Conference and AGM "New Horizons: Dissolving boundaries for a Quality Region"

The 2017 APQN Conference and AGM was held from May 25th – 28th, 2017 in Moscow, Russia. The Conference was hosted by the National Centre for Public Accreditation and RANEPA.

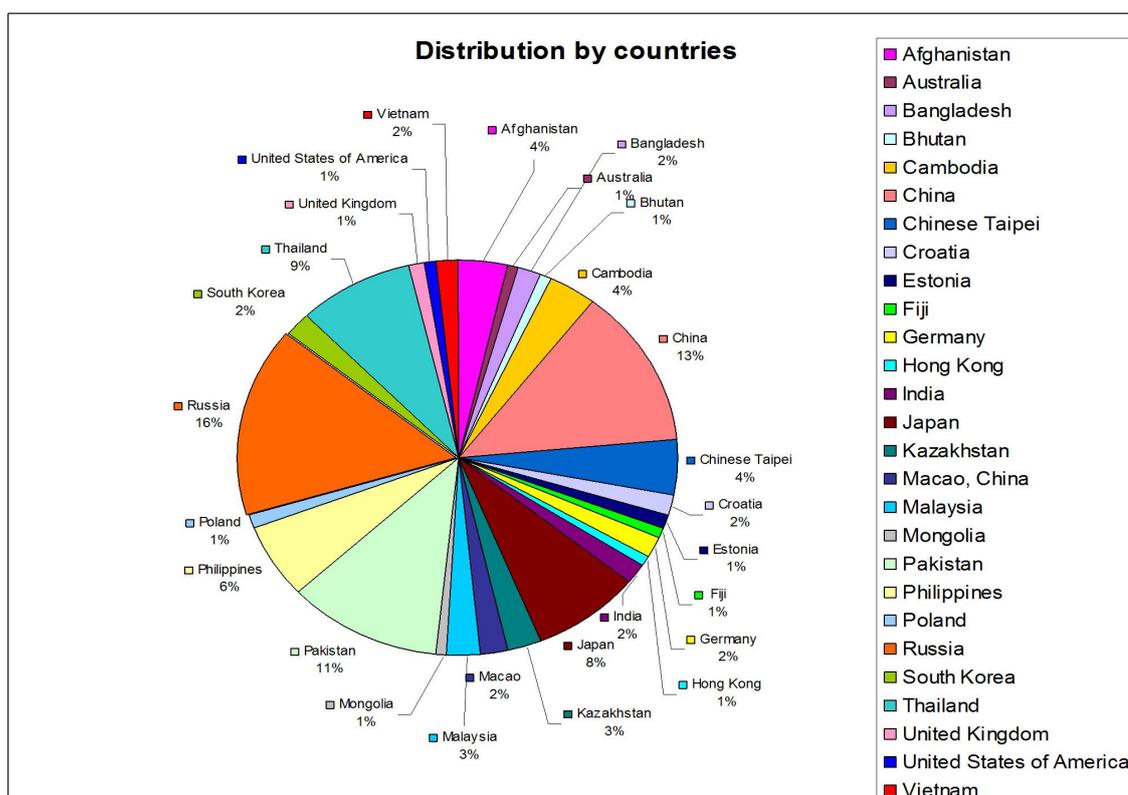


The theme of the Conference "New Horizons: Dissolving boundaries for a Quality Region" covered a wide range of important issues which were distributed under 4 sub-themes:

- Excellence in Quality Assurance
- New Assessment Methodologies in Higher Education
- Internal Quality Assurance in HEIs
- Quality Assurance of Cross-border Education



The conference was attended by 114 participants from 27 countries and territories of Asia-Pacific Region who represented accrediting bodies, educational institutions and educational authorities.



At the official opening ceremony the delegates were welcomed by NCPA's Director Vladimir Navodnov, Vice Rector of RANEPA Maxim Nazarov, Deputy Head of the Federal Service of Supervision in Education and Science Natalia Naumova. Olga Molovtseva a representative of the Ministry of Education and

Science delivered the Keynote Address by the Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation Olga Vasilieva.



The Conference was officially pronounced open by the APQN’s **President Dr. Jianxin Zhang**. In her Welcome Remark Dr. Jianxin Zhang greeted the participants and introduced the key note speakers: Prof. Libing Wang, Chief, Section for Educational Innovation and Skills Development (EISD), UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education; Dr. Judith S. Eaton, President of the



Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA); Waldemar Siwinski, Founder and President of the "Perspektywy" Education Foundation, Vice President of the IREG Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence; H.E. Abdul Tawab Balakarzai, Deputy Minister of Education of Afghanistan.

Dr. Jianxin Zhang addressed the audience with the key note speech “Dissolving Boundaries for a Quality Region” where she emphasized the importance of this Conference for cross-border higher education and quality assurance; identified current issues, key challenges, APQN practices and indicated the way forward through information sharing, capacity building, cooperation and networking. In conclusion Dr. Jianxin Zhang said that APQN is committed to the idea to “Think Globally, Act Locally”, guidelines to CBHE for developing countries in Asia-Pacific Region, to realize the beautiful dream of “Dissolving Boundaries for a Quality Region”.



The theme of quality assurance was the focus of **Dr. Libing Wang’s** key note presentation “Re-conceptualizing the Quality Paradigm for Higher Education in the Context of SDG4/Education 2030”. UNESCO was leading debates in the buildup



to the new education agenda which concluded in the Republic of Korea in 2015 with the adoption of the Incheon Declaration/Education 2030 and Framework for Action. Education 2030 was integrated into the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as SDG4 and adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

As a result of meeting these goals UNESCO is hoping to make headway in tackling such problems as doing away with poverty and inequality, solving global issues connected with the change of climate, providing for socially unprotected groups of population. One of the goals aims at ensuring lifelong education for all,

which has significant implications for education quality assurance: target learning outcomes for quality higher education, differentiation of learning programmes, national qualification frameworks based on learning outcomes, recognition of learning outcomes for student mobility and others.

Dr. Judith Eaton in her presentation “New Horizons for International Quality Assurance” discussed the current situation in the field of education, old and new factors affecting higher education and quality and new challenges which are faced by quality assurance. Accreditation agencies in many countries introduce international and joint procedures which lead to many unsolved issues of aligning standards and criteria, of mutual trust and recognition, involvement of multi-national bodies in decision making. The speaker emphasized that with the appearance of new actors, new practices and new demands innovation in quality assurance becomes imperative and that includes intentional internationalization, permanent accountability and advocacy.



Waldemar Siwinski's presentation “Excellence and Credibility in University Ranking in the Global Era” focused on the current trends in the sphere of international University ranking. It is a very rapidly growing sphere, and it is predicted that in three years rankings will cover 2.000 institutions. Ranking serves different stakeholders. For prospective students rankings it is a tool in making informed choices. Researchers use rankings to compare their standing against their colleagues. For university managers it is a tool to implement the culture of competitiveness and to monitor progress of reforms. The



employers want to know at which universities are best future employees. The politicians look to rankings to limit the risk in their investment decisions. For future rankings to be effective they have to take into consideration opinions of employers, professional associations and accrediting organization. A number of indicators should be considered as well: value for money, value to society, knowledge transfer, mobility between university and industry, quality of graduates, employability of graduates and other. The speaker believes that interaction of ranking and accreditation could contribute to the global quality of education.



One of the Plenary sessions entitled “Changing Face of Russian Higher Education: New Trends and Priorities” was devoted to the development of higher education and quality assurance in Russia. The key speakers **Dr. Irina Arzhanova**, Executive Director of the National Training Foundation, Russia and **Dr. Olga Oleynikova**, Director of National ERASMUS PLUS Office in Russia

discussed key systemic changes which have taken place in Russian higher education in the last 10 years: the introduction of the unified state examination, multilevel HE system, Federal Educational Standards, QA system, stratification of HEIs, internationalization and others. These changes have brought about new challenges and goals for Russian Higher Education, both externally and internally oriented: enhancing international competitiveness, visibility and credibility of Russian HE enhancing quality of HE and relevance for the country's development based on innovations. These goals can be met through systemic cooperation between universities and enterprises, up-to-date curricula based on learning outcomes, up-to-date quality assurance tools based on Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area ESG, up-to-date competences of the teaching staff, innovative learning environment, and competitive sector systems for independent accreditation of curricula.



One of the issues on the Agenda was the release of APQN new website announced by former APQN President **Jagannath Patil** and the release of the publications of 2013-2014 Proceedings by APQN Vice President **Prof. Angela Hou Yung-Chi**.



4 panel discussions were chaired by **Dr. Mohammed Rafiq Baloch** (Director General of Quality Assurance Agency of Higher Education Commission (QAAHEC), Pakistan), **Dr. Erika Soboleva** (Director of Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Career Development (AKKORK), Russia), **Prof. Angela Hou Yung-Chi** (APQN Vice-President & Executive Director of Higher education evaluation & accreditation council of Taiwan (HEEACT), **Prof. Zita Mohd Fahmi** (APQN Board Member & project leader from Secretary of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), Malaysia).



In these discussions the panel speakers **Dr. Jagannath Patil** (former APQN President & advisor from National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India), **H.E. Abdul Tawab Balakarzai** (Deputy Minister for Academic Affairs of Ministry of Higher Education, Afghanistan), **Prof. Syun Tutiya** (National Institution for Academic Degrees & Quality Enhancement of Higher Education (NIAD-QE), Japan), **Prof. Sergey Roshchin** (Vice-Rector of Russia Higher School of Economics, Russia), **Dr.**



Mohammed Rafiq Baloch (Director General of Quality Assurance Agency of Higher Education Commission, Pakistan), **Ms. Karen Treloar** (Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA), Australia), **Prof. Zita Mohd Fahmi** (APQN Board Member, Secretary of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), Malaysia), **Dr. Fabrizio Trifiro** (Manager International / Deputy Head



International of Quality Assurance Agency(QAA), United Kingdom), **Prof. Shingo Ashizawa** (University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) & Toyo University, Japan), **Miss Hongyan LI** (Programme Officer of Evaluation Dept. China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Center (CDGDC), Ministry of Education, China), **Dr. Kerstin Fink** (Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA), Germany) and others shared their ideas and brought discussion on 12 topics in 4 major fields: global dissolving boundaries for a quality region, internal quality assurance in higher education institutions, quality assurance of cross-border education, new assessment methodologies for sustainable education.

3 parallel sessions covered the largest portion of presentations. These sessions were moderated by **Prof. Galina Motova** (Deputy Director of the National Centre for Public Accreditation, Russia), **Ms. Oksana Matveeva** (Deputy Head of Accreditation Office of the National Centre for Public Accreditation, Russia), **Prof. Shaw-Ren Lin** (Dean of QA Office of Higher education evaluation & accreditation council of Taiwan, Chinese Taipei), **Ms. Malini Nair – Prasad** (APQN Board Member, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Fiji), **Dr. Eddy Siong Choy Chong** (Chief



Technical Officer of Finance Accreditation Agency, Malaysia), **Dr. Fabrizio Trifiro** (Manager International / Deputy Head International of Quality Assurance Agency(QAA), United Kingdom), **Prof. Jianyun YU** (Director of Higher Education Research Institute of Kunming Medical University). The sessions brought together those who are concerned about evaluation of higher education,



development of international education, improvement of internal quality assurance, design of educational programmes, higher education management, development of national and transnational qualifications, accreditation of joint programmes, and new opportunities for international cooperation between HEIs.

The chair of workshop “APQN Consultant Database” **Prof. Angela Hou Yung-Chi** (Vice President, APQN) facilitated the discussion among those who are interested in making the Consultant database an effective tool for Quality Assurance.

In the evening of May 26, 2017 a festive APQN Quality Award Ceremony was held in RANEPA. The award ceremony party consisted of dancing, singing and entertaining program and 6 cycles of trophies and certificate awarding.



The party started with the welcome from NCPA staff members dressed in national Russian costumes. The ethnic style was proceeded by the group of young musicians from Gnesins Russian Academy of Music who played Russian folk instruments gusli and bayan, and sang Russian folk songs.

At the award ceremony APQN President Prof. Dr. Jianxin Zhang announced nominators in 5 categories and granted awards to the winning agencies and persons. The following awards were granted: 1) APQN's Best/Model Internal QA Award to Macao Polytechnic Institute (MPI); 2) APQN Award of International Cooperation in QA to both Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) and National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC); 3) APQN Award of International Cooperation in QA outside the APQN Region to Quality Beyond Boundaries Group; 4) APQN Best Benefactor Award to Mr. Zhang Jianping; 5) Successful Hosting the APQN 2017 Conference Award to the National Centre for Public Accreditation (NCPA).



The award ceremony party continued with the APQN Educational games - a serious of quizzes about APQN history and Russian realities prepared by NCPA - which aroused great interest and excitement of the conference participants.

A Russian dance called Moscow quadrille performed by NCPA staff members was one of the most amazing and spectacular moments of the party. The award ceremony ended up in group dancing of lively Russian folk dances.

At the closing ceremony on May 27, APQN President **Prof. Dr. Jianxin Zhang**, former APQN President **Dr. Jagannath Patil**, APQN Vice-President **Prof. Angela Hou Yung-Chi**, Deputy Minister for Academic Affairs of Ministry of Higher Education in Afganistan **H.E. Abdul Tawab Balakarzai**, Local Organizing Committee Chair **Prof. Galina Motova** summarized the results of the conference and expressed gratitude to all those who assisted in holding the 2017 APQN

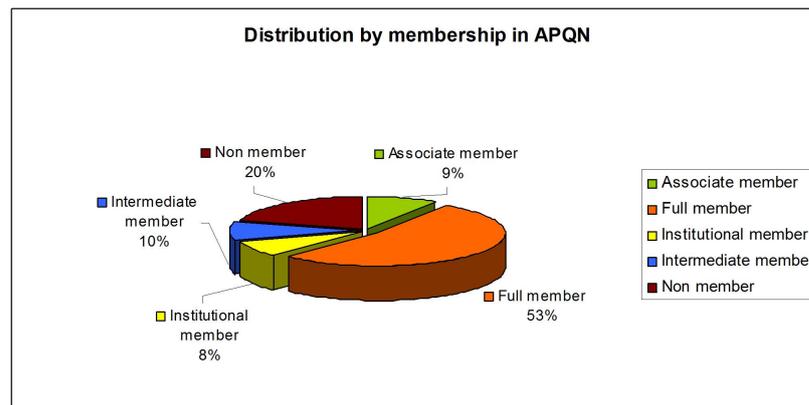
conference, attended this remarkable event and contributed to it by making presentations and submitting research papers. Many participants took the floor and thanked APQN Board and the National Centre for Public Accreditation for their hard work and enthusiasm, organizing and holding the conference at a high level.



On May 27 the Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held for APQN members only. The following issues were on the agenda of AGM: report from APQN President by **Prof. Dr. Jianxin Zhang**, report from APQN Vice-President by **Prof. Angela Hou Yung-Chi**, report from APQN Secretary/Treasurer by **Prof. Dr. Li Yaogang**, brief information on Asia Pacific Quality Register and MoEs or Cooperation among Members by **Dr. Jagannath Patil**.



The 2017 APQN Conference and AGM "New Horizons: Dissolving boundaries for a Quality Region" brought together a great number of participants not only



from Asia but from different regions of the world. All the events: plenary meetings, keynotes, panel discussions, parallel sessions, workshop, APQN Quality Award Ceremony – made a great and lasting impression on the conference participants and inspired them to extend collaboration in the field of quality assurance and cross-border education.

