



**CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE ON  
HIGHER EDUCATION**

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PARAMARIBO, SURINAME



Ministry of Education and  
Community Development  
of the Republic of  
Suriname

**CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS**



United Nations

IESALC

International Institute of UNESCO  
for Higher Education in  
Latin America and the Caribbean



**Caribbean Conference on Higher Education**

**Evaluation and Accreditation in Latin  
America: from national to regional  
experiences**



*Guillermo Vargas Salazar  
President of RIACES*

# OUR TIME

**Whirlwind transformation**

**Overwhelming technological revolution.**

**Emerging new society.**

**Knowledge and communication**

# Transformations and Higher Education

## Challenge for University Higher Education

Respond comprehensively to the transformation

Visualize the future with its challenges.

Raise new and effective options

Become decisive stages in facing the challenge

Transforming uncertainty and fear into hope

# New social situation

**New forms of social organization: economic and political**

**Structural crisis**

**Institutions responsible for social cohesion**

**Relations between economy, society and  
formation of individual and collective identities**

**Emergence of a new social organization**

**Knowledge and information as key variables in the  
generation and distribution of power**

# Changes in Higher Education

**Growing demand and insufficient supply**

**Rapid quantitative growth of universities**

**Some of enviable quality and academic rigor**

**Others with its academic nature partially crippled**

**Others oriented only by a desire for profit**

**Massive ranks of dubious professional training**

# New Attitude

**Growing concern about how societies ensure the quality of Higher Education, an active interest in the construction and experience of a culture of quality and assessment and the active incorporation of multiple stakeholders.**

# CLOSELY RELATED FACTORS

**Globalization**

**Emergence of  
the knowledge  
society**

**Transformation  
of the Higher  
Education  
Systems**



# Main effort

*The setting of “... A scenario that would facilitate the articulation – in a creative and sustainable way – of policies to strengthen the social commitment of Higher Education, its quality, relevance and the autonomy of the institutions”*

*Regional Higher Education Conference  
for Latin America and the Caribbean - 2008,*



# Some reasons for the social concern

Conviction that our countries can only successfully face globalization by consolidating and strengthen Higher Education of proven quality that entitle its graduates to take advantage of the wealth of possibilities and circumvent the highly competitive and asymmetric elements of globalization.

***“Given the complexity of global challenges, present and future, Higher Education has a social responsibility to advance our understanding of multifaceted problems with social economic, scientific and cultural as well as our ability to cope. Higher Education must lead the office in terms of creating global knowledge to address global challenges”***

***Regional Higher Education Conference 2008***

## How to face the challenge?

This challenge could be achieved through appropriate educational provision, contextualized and based on solid principles of transparency, accountability and excellence; nurtured with the participation of evaluation and accreditation systems of quality and international networks of accrediting agencies

**“Globalization has highlighted the need to establish national systems of accreditation and quality assurance of Higher Education programs and to promote networking among them”**

**World Higher Education Conference  
Paris 2009**

# The emerging knowledge society

Knowledge has become the most important production factor.

While today's knowledge increases with unusual speed, the knowledge of what we don't know increases with a speed even more steeply.

The need for assessment tools, accountability, accreditation and recognition as stimulus to excellence and quality assurance

**At no other time in history has been far more important than ensuring the quality of Higher Education, for being a primary force for building inclusive and diverse knowledge societies and to promote research, innovations, creativity and development.**

**World Higher Education Conference  
Paris 2009**

**Not that the quality has not been stranger to the life and work of the Higher Education Institutions. It is far from being a new field in the development of Universities**

**The pursuit of academic excellence – because of its nature – has always been an inherent task of the Universities.**





# NEW CONCEPTION OF QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**Before**

- Abstract concept focused on tradition, prestige and merit.
- Hardly operationalized

**Now**

- Concret concept, based on the measurement of performance indicators and efficiency of processes, whose procedures are characterized by methodological rigor, from both a quantitative or qualitative perspective

**The quality of education concept - as desire of perfectibility - is more a desideratum, an aspiration, a longing perhaps always unfinished and endless, an ideal to which we aspire, which only by successive approximations it is possible to asymptotically approach**

**Expanded access is a challenge to the quality of Higher Education. Quality assurance is an essential function in contemporary Higher Education and should involve all stakeholders. It is a task that requires both the implementation of systems to ensure quality and standards of evaluation as well as the promotion of a culture of quality in the institutions.**

**World Higher Education Conference  
Paris 2009**

<b>Inability of states to finance the expansion of enrollment</b>	<b>Emergence of the market</b>	<b>Sudden and sharp increase in private Higher Education</b>	<b>Suppliers oriented almost only by a desire for profit</b>
Diversification of institutions and educational offerings	Diversification of forms of access and financing	Highly competitive situations with a detriment of University's relevance	Higher value given to the knowledge needed by the production market
"Diploma mills"	Extreme specialization of the institutions in specific areas of knowledge	Internationalization and cross-border Higher Education	Importance of accreditation as quality guarantee.

**“Should be implemented through the Higher Education sector, regulatory and quality assurance mechanisms to promote excellence, equitable access and to create conditions for students to quality completion of their studies”**

**World Higher Education Conference  
Paris 2009**

**“... both the public and private sectors must provide Higher Education characterized by its quality and its relevance, so governments must strengthen the national accreditation agencies as mechanisms to ensure transparency, accountability and excellence”**

**Conferencia Mundial de Educación Superior, París 2009**

## OBJECTIVE

This effort should not be understood as a call to fight the supply of quality private educations, or the diversification of Institutions, nor the multiplicity of types of academic offerings, or the internationalizacion and the cross-border education provision

## OBJECTIVE

The objective is to promote evaluation and accreditation as social tools to promote and guarantee the quality of Higher Education that we need in order to successfully face the challenges of the present as well as those of the future.



*“...” dishonest borrowers and poor quality Higher Education providers must be countered, as well as the serious problem of the spurious providers and the "diploma mills".... the fight against these "diploma mills" requires urgent multifaceted efforts both national and international*

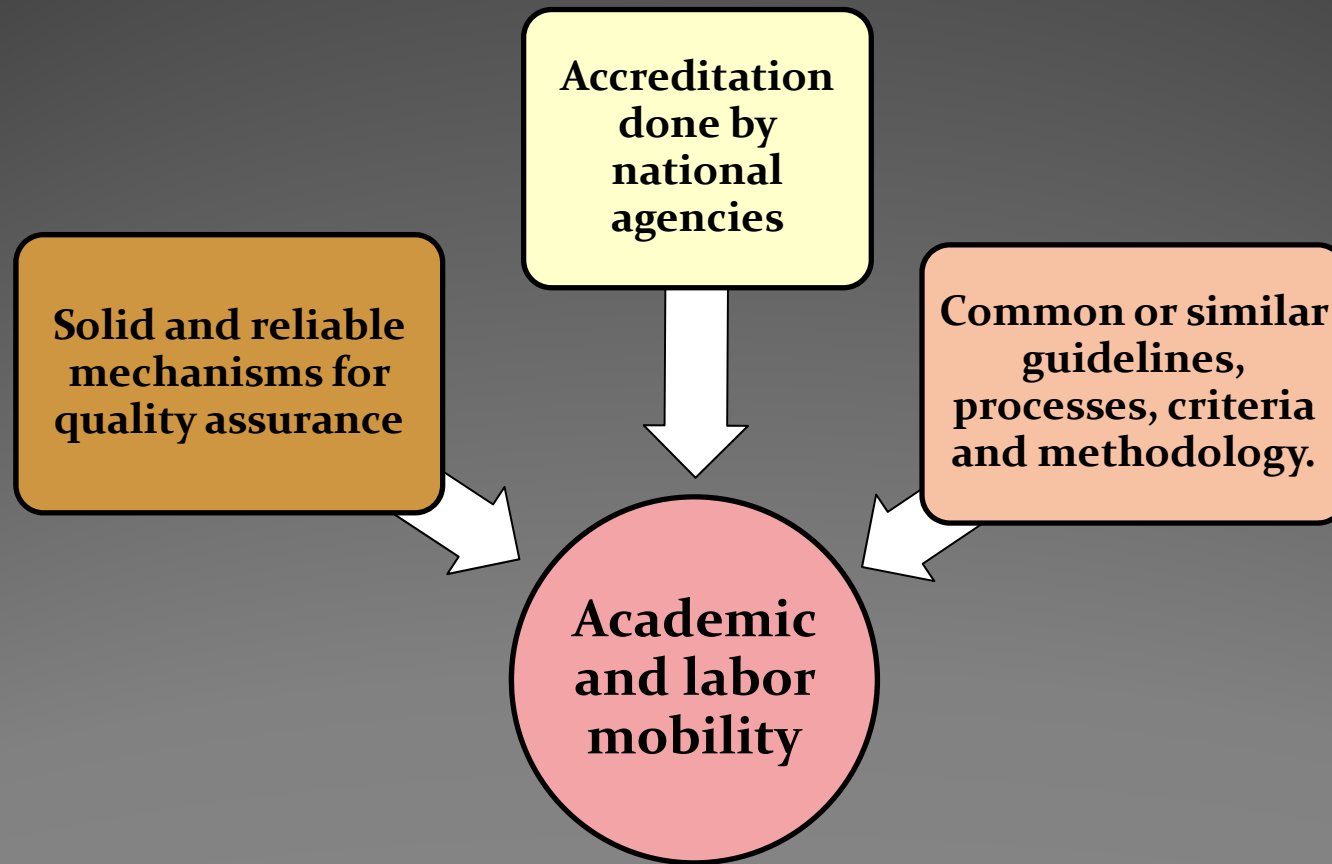
**World Higher Education Conference  
Paris 2009**

# Iberoamerican and Caribbean challenge

**Launch joint initiatives and concerted action at national, regional and international levels to ensure quality and sustainability of Higher Education Systems**

**Creation and strengthening of national accreditation agencies of Higher Education and its integration into international networks such as RIACES, for mutual cooperation and fruitful exchange of experiences, tools and specialists**

# Academic and labor mobilities



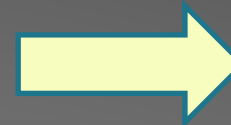
## **Regional weakness in terms of the competitive emerging knowledge society**

**The sole accreditation or quality assurance of an institution  
or a Higher Education program, conducted by the  
responsible agency in a given country is very limited and  
limiting if not enjoy the credibility and international  
recognition, a fact which requires the construction of a  
regional system of mutual recognition of accreditation  
between agencies**

*Establish  
consolidated  
national quality  
assurance agencies*

*Create a quality  
assurance regional  
community*

*Regional strategy  
for evaluation and  
accreditation of the  
quality of higher  
education*

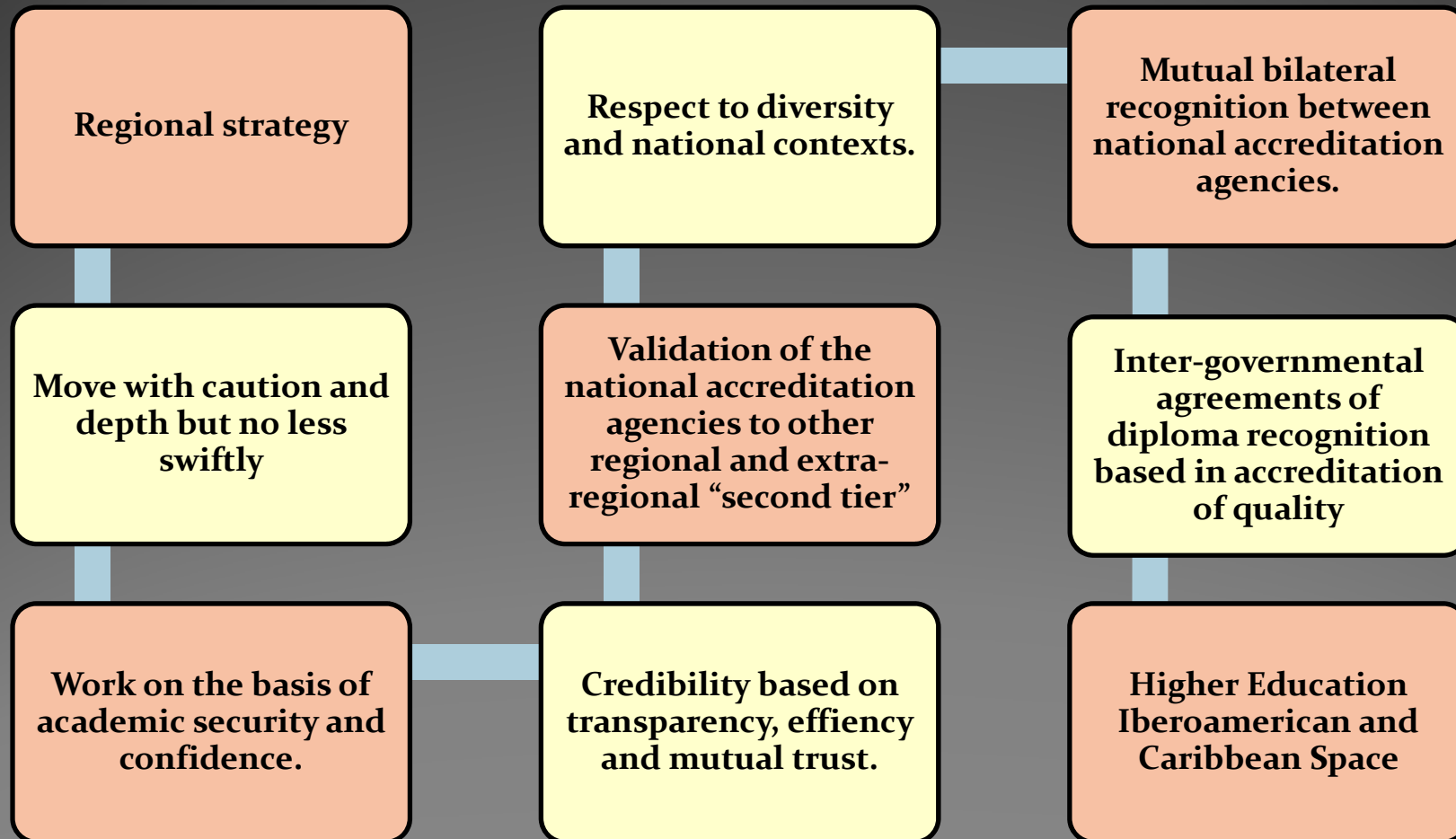


## Regional strategy for evaluation and accreditation

The criteria and guidelines for quality to be proposed as support for a regional strategy for evaluation and accreditation of the quality of Higher Education must be consistent with the regional diversity, opt for generic principles instead of specific requirements and focus on what should be done rather than the procedure for trouble figuring thereby respects diversity and safeguarding the autonomy of agencies



# The way to go

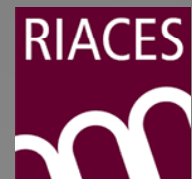


# Capacity to operate internationally

National accreditation agencies are confronting the need for accreditation themselves internationally through various international mechanisms for external evaluation by “second tier agencies”

Decisions taken by national official agencies are increasingly required to be valid and internationally accepted.

As part of the process of globalization there are strong initiatives of creating “Regional and Inter-regional knowledge spaces” consistent with the “Global Knowledge Networks





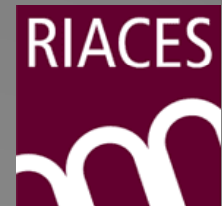
# International Accreditation

It is important to distinguish between the concept of "*international or regional accreditation*" as a process that is based on joint collaboration between official national accreditation agencies towards a mutual recognition and the very different concept of accreditation by a foreign agency (agency of another country) which is sometimes confused with international accreditation.

On this we must be clear, the alien is not international.

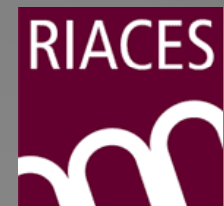
## A word about RIACES

The Ibero-American network for the Accreditation of Quality in Higher Education aims “to promote cooperation and exchange among Ibero-American countries on issues related to the assessment and accreditation of higher education, thus contributing to quality assurance of higher education in the region”



# A word about RIACES

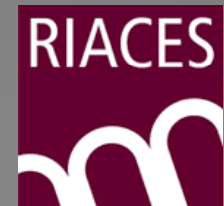
Established in 2003, the network is now composed of 30 full members and 5 associate members and gathers most of the countries belonging to its geographic and cultural area.



# RIACES main objectives

To promote cooperation and exchange of information and experience among Ibero-American organizations and entities involved in the assessment and accreditation of higher education.

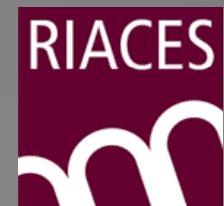
To support the transfer of knowledge and information on QA in order to promote the development, in each country, of activities aiming to strengthen or qualify the assessment and accreditation of degrees and study programs, as well as the development of the bodies – QA agencies and others – carrying out these processes and of governmental entities involved in them



# RIACES main objectives

To play a significant role in the development of accreditation schemes which contribute to the recognition of degrees and programs of study, to the mobility of students, academic staff and professionals, and to the educational integration of the countries represented in RIACES.

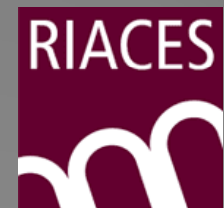
To promote quality assurance in higher education in Ibero-American countries through specific activities and with the support of national or international cooperation agencies



# RIACES main objectives

To support the formation of assessment and accreditation systems and agencies in the countries which have not set up such schemes and express their interest in doing so.

To move forward the analysis of future developments of higher education in Ibero-America, with a special focus on quality assurance as an instrument for the continuing improvement of higher education institutions and their programs



# RIACES membership

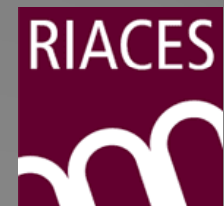
## Full members, which can be:

The national QA agencies officially recognized by the competent authorities in their countries.

The governmental department of each country or the competent institution for the establishment of higher education policies related to QA.

The sub-regional QA agencies officially recognized by the competent authorities.

Associate members, such as international organizations focused on higher education and operating in Ibero-America.



# Some RIACES outcomes

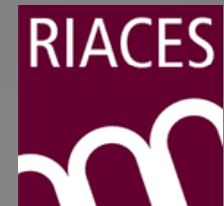
It has formed a broad Ibero-American Quality Assurance community

It has gained regional and global legitimacy, in the area of Quality Assurance as well as in the academic and political arenas

It has contributed to strengthen QA arrangements in the region, through many capacity-building activities

It has initiated progress towards regional integration, by promoting the harmonization of standards and procedures.

It is steadily increasing its strategic approach.





Accreditation, in all cases, is a highly participatory process, it's a critical internal and external evaluation and, most importantly, a joint construction of larger and higher quality conditions for Higher Education.

Its greatest value lies in its findings of weaknesses and strengths and the joint commitment to improve quality as a permanent and continuous process

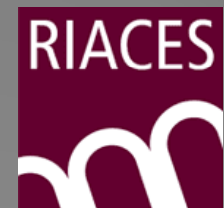
The accreditation process includes a self-evaluation with the participation of professors, researchers, students, employers, administration and other stakeholders, an external evaluation by committees of peers and a final resolution of accreditation given by the Accreditation Agency

**All our efforts are aimed at continuous improvement of training of people with quality standards required for promotion of economic, social, political and cultural life of our peoples.. Also, focuses on building a knowledge society and a regional scientific community, aimed at the establishment of an egalitarian and peaceful world, where prevails the responsibility of defending human rights, environment and partnership**



Working for quality of Higher Education is seeking for a “*sine qua non*” condition for successfully confront the great challenges of our time. To neglect that essential duty would be free with mediocrity and leave our children and young people defenseless against a world that will not forgive those persons or countries that deny quality of education as the best way for reaching human plenitude.

That is our task and that is the shared commitment of which we are all responsible.





Thanks for your attention