Credential recognition agreements, quality assurance frameworks, and accreditation mechanisms

Presentation to High-level Expert Group Meeting on online university or equivalent platform for STEM education for the least developed countries (LDCs)

3 June 2025

Noah W. Sobe
Chief of Section, Higher Education
UNESCO

Three key trends in the recognition of qualifications

Regional and global conventions on the recognition of higher education qualifications

Development of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF)

Expansion of digital representation tools (portfolios, passports, passes, etc.)

A global ecosystem of qualifications recognition

Promoting **inclusion**, **access** and **trust** in higher education by supporting:

- ❑ Academic mobility

- ❑ Quality assurance

- ❑ Fair and transparent procedures for qualifications recognition

- ❑ Provisions for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and partial qualifications

Arab States Convention (3)

Tokyo Convention (12)

Lisbon Convention (57)

Global Convention (38)

Buenos Aires Convention (6)

Addis Convention (14)

UNESCO's Global Recognition Convention

38 States Parties
have ratified the Global Recognition Convention.

1.6+ million (30%)
of the world's 6.4 million mobile students are hosted by the States Parties

Andorra	Armenia	Australia

Andorra · Armenia · Australia · Bosnia & Herzegovina · Cabo Verde · Côte d'Ivoire · Croatia · Cuba · Djibouti · Ecuador · Estonia · Finland · France

Georgia · Guinea · Holy See · Hungary · Iceland · Japan · Lithuania · Luxembourg · Mongolia · New Zealand · Nicaragua · Norway · Rep. of Korea

Rep. of Moldova · Romania · Palestine · San Marino · Senegal · Slovakia · South Africa · Sweden · Tunisia · UK · Uruguay · Yemen
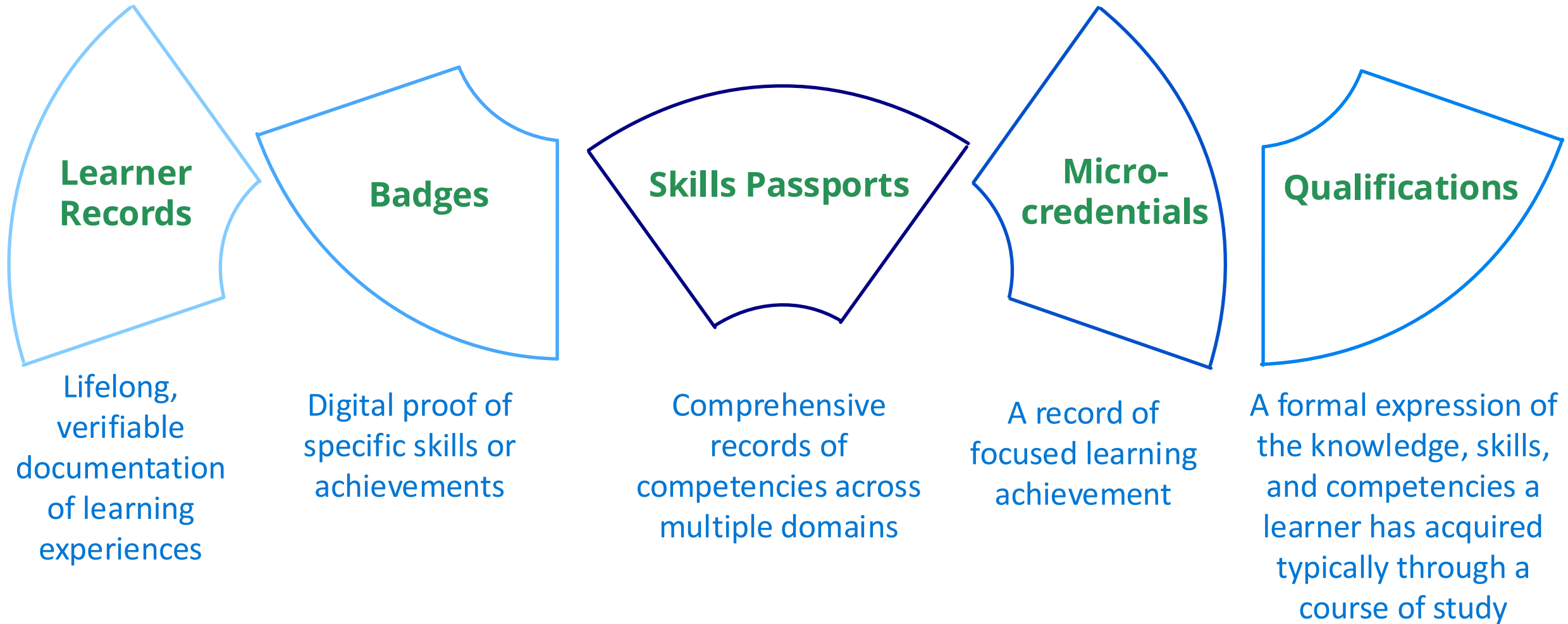
A global ecosystem of qualifications frameworks

UNESCO encourages the development of **National Qualification Frameworks**

❑ Currently over 100 countries have NQFs, many of which are regionally benchmarked

❑ NQFs typically orient around learning outcomes and specify learning levels and qualifications

ACQF
African Continental
Qualifications Framework

A rapidly evolving credentials landscape

Learner Records

Lifelong, verifiable documentation of learning experiences

Badges

Digital proof of specific skills or achievements

Skills Passports

Comprehensive records of competencies across multiple domains

Micro-credentials

A record of focused learning achievement

Qualifications

A formal expression of the knowledge, skills, and competencies a learner has acquired typically through a course of study

Thank you

Learn more: www.unesco.org/education

@UNESCO