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TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET): REPORT ON THE FULL MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR TVET

Summary

Pursuant to 190 EX/Dec.8 (II), the Director-General reports to the Executive Board on the full mid-term review of the implementation of the Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (approved by 181 EX/Decision 8 and revised in 182 EX/INF.5), including implications for programming for the period of 2013-2015; as well as on the status of documentation of best practices for wider dissemination by electronic means. Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 13.

Any financial and administrative implications related to the present document will be borne within the framework of document 36 C/5 Approved and the proposed 37 C/5.

Action to be taken by the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 30.

I. Introduction

1. UNESCO's Strategy for TVET (2010-2015), approved by 181 EX/Decision 8 and revised in 182 EX/INF.5, contributes to the strategic objective of the Organization's 34 C/4, "attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning". The Strategy contributes to the achievement of this objective by focusing on three core areas: (i) the provision of upstream policy advice and related capacity development; (ii) the conceptual clarification of skills development and improvement of monitoring; and (iii) acting as a clearinghouse and informing the global TVET debate.

2. Building on the preliminary report of the review of the implementation of the Strategy presented to the 190th session of the Executive Board, this mid-term review covers the implementation period of 2010-2012 and assesses: (i) the progress in the implementation against its stated overall objective and expected results, (ii) the currency and relevance of the Strategy in view of recent developments, and (iii) the necessity for modifications to the Strategy and implications for programming and resources, in particular for 2013-2015.

II. Progress in the implementation of the Strategy

Core Area 1: Provision of upstream policy advice and related capacity development¹

3. To date, 20 Member States have benefited from UNESCO policy advice. They are developing policies to make TVET more relevant to labour market needs, and contribute to inclusive and sustainable development. Seven countries benefited from capacity development programmes covering inter-ministerial coordination, curricula reform, entrepreneurship, qualifications frameworks and quality assurance, information systems; and monitoring and evaluation of TVET.

Core Area 2: Conceptual clarification of skills development and improvement of monitoring²

4. At the national level, national capacities were strengthened in three countries to enhance their TVET information systems and the publication of TVET statistics and indicators. At regional level, UNESCO conducted regional reviews of TVET information systems in Africa and Latin America, as well as an analysis of the transition from school to work in selected countries of the Asia and Pacific region.

5. The conceptual clarification and joint definition of skills have progressed through the work of the Inter-Agency Group on TVET (IAG-TVET) on TVET glossary and key indicators, and UNESCO's work on global TVET trends and issues. The conceptual clarification is also informed by the Human Resources Development Pillar of the G20 Multi-Year Action Plan on Development and EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2012.

6. UNESCO conducted an independent study of the implementation of the two normative instruments concerning TVET. The participants and TVET experts at the Third International Congress on TVET (Shanghai, 14-16 May 2012) confirmed that the normative instruments would benefit from updating, concurring with the analysis of the independent study. The Organization has prepared a preliminary study on the technical and legal aspects of the desirability of revising the 2001 Revised Recommendation concerning TVET (191 EX/20 III).

¹ This core area contributes to one expected result, "15 to 20 countries received upstream policy advice".

² This core area contributes to three expected results, "Member States capacity for monitoring progress in TVET improved"; "Joint definition of skills and TVET indicators"; and "Assess and monitor the normative Instruments".

Core Area 3: Acting as a clearinghouse and informing the global TVET debate³

7. UNESCO is also progressively strengthening its capacities to act as a clearing house. This is evidenced in the successful organization of the Third International Congress, and the review of global TVET trends and issues.

8. The UNEVOC Network is contributing to the effectiveness of UNESCO in acting as a clearing house and facilitating international cooperation in TVET. The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre has enhanced and expanded its online services, which include the development of an Online World TVET Database and an online collection of promising practices.⁴

9. UNESCO is progressively strengthening its capacities to inform global debate and provide leadership to the international community in the field of TVET. The IAG-TVET has contributed to the effectiveness of implementation by enhancing the engagement of partners in improving TVET, thereby extending the reach and impact of the Strategy. Evidence of this includes the joint work on key indicators for monitoring and evaluating TVET progress, and the organization of the Third International Congress, which collectively identified key challenges and future directions. Other evidence is the global e-forum organized by UNESCO-UNEVOC on current issues in TVET such as gender mainstreaming, TVET teachers' training and greening TVET.

Lessons from implementation experience

10. Overall, UNESCO has implemented the core areas of the strategy with effectiveness, efficiency and enhanced management. UNESCO has promoted partnerships for implementing activities and cost-sharing, as evidenced by: (i) joint TVET policy reviews with International Labour Organization (ILO) in Benin and Malawi, (ii) a regional review of TVET systems in South African Development Community (SADC) countries with the SADC Secretariat, and (iii) partnerships for the organization of the Third International Congress with IAG-TVET members, World Health Organization and other partners. From a management perspective, the Strategy significantly strengthened coherence across the Organization and the outcomes of UNESCO's work in the field of TVET. UNESCO TVET experts are increasingly acting as a "TVET community".

11. Providing upstream policy advice is a resource-intensive intervention requiring long-term engagement with national stakeholders. Furthermore, moving from policy recommendations to implementation requires leveraging resources and support. Consequently, scaling up these interventions to respond to demands for support from Member States necessitates careful prioritization and strong partnerships for joint interventions and resource mobilization. As experiences in SADC and other regions have shown, regional efforts can generate economies of scale and reinforce UNESCO's impact through knowledge sharing and peer learning.

12. Work on the conceptual clarification of TVET and the monitoring of skills development is progressing. The 'Shanghai Consensus', adopted by the Third International Congress, provides new ground for conceptualization, including the articulation between education, training and the world of work in a lifelong learning framework. However, coordination of different agendas (IAG-TVET work on indicators, G20 indicators, GMR) is challenging.

13. The progress made regarding the reorientation of the UNEVOC Network deserves to be sustained. The major challenges are to effectively operationalize the thematic and geographic clustering mechanisms, and a cost-effective assessment of the capacities of the Network itself.

14. The Strategy has triggered additional funding from diverse sources including Member States, private sector and International funds. However, scaling-up extrabudgetary funds requires planning to avoid overstretch of internal human resources. Furthermore, care is needed to ensure that

³ This core area contributes to three expected results, "Revamp the UNEVOC Network"; "Stimulate and commission thematic reviews on TVET"; and "Organize the Third International Congress on TVET".

⁴ <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=Resources%20-%20Promising%20Practices#4>

smaller-scale operational and “downstream” projects do not hinder progress towards the Strategy’s core objectives.

III. Review of the currency and relevance of the Strategy

15. **The changing international landscape:** The Strategy has a clear development agenda and continuing currency and relevance. Nevertheless in view of significant global developments such as rising youth unemployment, persisting and widening inequalities, and new sustainable development concerns, some modifications are required. Whilst Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) remain vulnerable, Middle Income Countries (MICs) are experiencing new development concerns and many countries are in transition. Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are increasingly prominent and the development landscape has changed. This review therefore suggests that the Strategy should be updated to focus more on addressing the critical situation of youth and women in the labour markets. It should also stimulate further work on the definition of skills and competencies for sustainable development and greening economies. In addition, it could give more attention to the ways countries organize and harmonize their TVET systems and facilitate fair cross-border recognition of skills and qualifications in the context of regional integration and the concomitant opening up of labour markets and mobility.

16. **Congress follow-up:** The Third International Congress on TVET adopted the directions and priorities for transforming TVET policies and systems. Transforming TVET suggests that its policies should be examined and developed, going beyond the traditional dichotomy between economic and equity lenses. A third transformative lens is required in order to put TVET in a lifelong learning perspective. This review therefore suggests that the Strategy should give more attention to not only expanding TVET but also to transforming it. This will require a conceptualization of TVET that supports and monitors TVET policies’ transformation and goes beyond the traditional divides (academic/vocational; formal/non-formal learning; public/private; school-based/work-place learning). The question of quality assurance and recognition of certification is a major issue for overcoming these divides; the Strategy should therefore stimulate further work in this area.

IV. Modifications to the Strategy and implications for programming

17. Eight principal findings of this mid-term review guides the revision of the Strategy: (i) it is being implemented effectively and is meeting expected results and targets, despite limited internal human resources; (ii) it has continuing currency and relevance; (iii) the three core areas of the Strategy have proved valuable and flexible to accommodate diverse needs and evolving agendas, and they should be maintained; (iv) the renewed conceptualization of TVET and the resultant transformation as emerging from the ‘Shanghai Consensus’ should guide UNESCO’s policy advice to Member States and inform global TVET debate; (v) within the Strategy’s core areas, relevance needs to be enhanced by focusing on areas including youth employment, gender mainstreaming, and skills for sustainable development; (vi) while all Member States should benefit from UNESCO’s actions, direct policy support will be provided as priority to Africa, LDCs, SIDS, MICs and countries in transition; (vii) sufficient internal resources are required for effective implementation of the Strategy; and (viii) innovative ways of expanding the Secretariat’s capacity are expected from the reorientation of UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre and UNEVOC Network.

18. Based on the review, revisions within the three core areas are proposed as follows:

Core area 1: Provision of upstream policy advice and related capacity development

Supporting TVET transformation and addressing youth unemployment

19. UNESCO will provide policy advice for transforming TVET policies and systems and addressing key challenges such as youth unemployment, gender mainstreaming and supporting lifelong learning opportunities for all. The guidelines for the policy reviews as well as strategic

planning tools will be revised accordingly to advance the policy domains indicated in the “Shanghai Consensus”. 15 new countries will benefit from UNESCO support.

Provide support to regional integration processes and Middle Income Countries (MICs)

20. To increase outreach and respond to the changing development landscape, UNESCO will support regional and sub-regional strategies for TVET as well as countries facing similar development challenges such as MICs. UNESCO will draw upon countries’ own capacity, connecting such capabilities through peer learning, knowledge sharing and collective advocacy.

Further skills conceptualization and measurement

21. Transforming TVET provides new ground for conceptualization, including the articulation between education, training and the world of work within a lifelong learning framework. UNESCO will examine the complete landscape of skills while emphasizing the pivotal role of skills development through TVET in bridging education with the world of work. TVET and skills conceptualizations will be also informed by the post-2015 education and development agendas.

Enhance the work engaged on statistics and indicators on TVET

22. UNESCO will set up a task force to work on developing cross-national statistical frameworks and data platforms for regional and global monitoring. This work will build on the work already undertaken on indicators.

Promote recognition of qualifications and quality assurance

23. Closely linked to the conceptualization of skills is the current interest in developing national and regional qualifications frameworks with a focus on learning outcomes. The modalities of implementation for these areas were set through the “Shanghai Consensus”. A task force on the recognition of qualifications and quality assurance will be established.

Review UNESCO’s normative instruments on TVET

24. A preliminary study on the technical and legal aspects relating to the desirability of revising the 2001 Revised Recommendation concerning TVET is presented to the Executive Board.

Core area 3: Acting as a clearing house and informing the global TVET debate

Reinforce UNEVOC global networking and facilitate knowledge sharing

25. UNESCO will collect and disseminate evidence demonstrating the multiple and diverse policy approaches for transforming and expanding TVET, using the revitalized UNEVOC Network and, when relevant, UNESCO Chairs active in the field. UNESCO will disseminate the conclusions of its review of global trends and issues in TVET.

26. The Organization will further enhance the capacities of the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre and reorient its function to coordinate the newly-established clusters, which play a key role in capacity development of TVET stakeholders, and further strengthen the Network.

27. UNESCO will stimulate and commission thematic reviews and research on specific TVET issues with focus on development challenges. Two reviews, focusing on TVET for green societies and economies and TVET for agriculture and rural development, will be conducted.

Promote regional and global advocacy for TVET and skills development

28. The Organization will seek to organize with key partners a follow-up to the Third International Congress on TVET, and introduce regular reviews of regional and global developments. Together

with partners such as ILO, UNICEF as well as international and regional research networks, UNESCO will facilitate the debate on the place of TVET and skills development in post-2015. The UNEVOC e-forum will also continue to facilitate and promote global dialogue on TVET.

V. Resource implications

29. The implementation of the UNESCO Strategy for TVET would be further strengthened by reinforced internal human and financial resources through different modalities, such as secondments of experts and extra-budgetary funding. Support from Member States in this regard would be highly appreciated.

VI. Proposed decision

30. The Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision worded as follows:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling document 190 EX/8 (II) presenting the preliminary report of the review of the implementation of the Strategy for TVET,
2. Having examined document 191 EX/7,
3. Expresses its satisfaction with the mid-term review of the Strategy for TVET and acknowledges the progress and achievements, lessons learned and implications for the implementation of the Strategy in 2013-2015;
4. Takes note of the revised focus and priorities defined as a result of the mid-term review of the Strategy and welcomes the incorporation of follow-up activities to the Third International Congress on TVET in the Strategy;
5. Invites the Member States and development partners to reinforce UNESCO's endeavours in TVET through extrabudgetary funding, the secondment of experts, and knowledge sharing;
6. Invites the Director-General to present to it at its 196th session (Spring 2015) a proposal regarding the follow-up to the Strategy, drawing on progress in implementing the Strategy, the Organization's priorities and the post-2015 education and development agendas.