



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Sustainable
Development
Goals

3rd Meeting of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee

29 – 30 June 2017, United Nations, New York

Background Documents



Education
2030 



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Sustainable
Development
Goals

Third Meeting of the SDG-Education

Steering Committee

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Draft Agenda

Third Meeting of SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee

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Expected outcomes:

1. Endorsement of a set of key strategic messages/recommendations for both Member States, as well as for national, regional and global development partners on the following key themes:

- Policy lessons learnt and strategies for implementation of SDG4
- Review, monitoring and reporting
- Financing of education
- Regional support for the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030

Deliberations to endorse key recommendations/strategic messages will be based on proposals outlined in the background papers prepared by the SC working groups, as well as by the GEM Report.

2. Decisions on SC actions to take forward/communicate these recommendations/key strategic messages for the implementation, financing and monitoring of SDG4-ED 2030 targets and commitments.

3. Information shared on global processes and identification of linkages with/engagement of SC

4. Decisions on dates, venue and focus of 2018 Steering Committee meeting and 2018 Global Education 2030 Meeting (GEM).

29 June 2017	
08.30 – 9.00	Welcome coffee/tea
09.00 – 9.40	<p>Opening Session</p> <p>Chair: Qian Tang, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO, Co-Chair of the SC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Opening statement by Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO • Special Address by H.E. Peter Thomson, President of the UN General Assembly (tbc) • Introduction and adoption of the Agenda, Dankert Vedeler, Assistant Director-General, Ministry of Education, Norway, Co-Chair of the SC
09.40 – 09.55	<p>Key Note Address</p> <p>Ms Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN (tbc)</p>
09.55 – 10.00	<p>Special remarks</p> <p>Ms Koumba Boly Barry, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education</p>
10.00 – 10.45	<p>National and regional perspectives on implementation of SDG4-Education 2030:</p> <p>Chair: Qian Tang, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO, Co-Chair of the SC</p> <p>Panelists: Bolivia, Kenya, Oman, E-9/Bangladesh, France, Japan</p> <p>The panel will provide critical insights on implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 in a selection of national and regional contexts.</p>
10.45 – 11.00	Coffee/Tea break
11.00 – 12.00	<p>Strengthening regional support for implementing SDG 4-Education 2030</p> <p>Chair: Aaron Benavot, Director, Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report)</p> <p>Panelists: ADEA, European Commission, SAARC, SEAMEO, OEI</p> <p>The session will examine the role of regional organizations as policy peer learning mechanisms to enhance effective implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 targets and commitments, and in some cases, regional monitoring.</p> <p>Working document: Background Paper on role of regional organizations to enhance SDG4 implementation</p>
12.00 – 14.00	Lunch Break
14.00 – 15.30	<p>Policy lessons and implementation strategies</p> <p>Chair: Michael Ward, Senior Policy Analyst, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)</p> <p>Introduction: GCE and Belgium</p> <p>The objective of the session is to endorse a set of proposed recommendations for improved implementation in 2018 and 2019. The recommendations are based on a survey undertaken and identify both successes and challenges/barriers in the implementation of SDG4 targets and commitments since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.</p> <p>Working document: Background Paper on policies and strategies</p>

15.30 – 15.45	Coffee break
15:45 – 17.00	<p>Financing of education : Global and national perspectives</p> <p>Chair: Sobhi Tawil, Chief, Section of Partnerships, Cooperation and Research, UNESCO</p> <p>Panelists: GPE, Education Cannot Wait, Education Commission</p> <p>The Session will provide a general overview of and update on key initiatives and developments in financing education, including GPE replenishment, the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Fund and the Education Commission’s proposal to establish an International Financing Facility for Education.</p> <p>It aims to endorse a set of recommendations on domestic financing, financing data and ODA (bi-lateral and multilateral donors), GPE replenishment and the ECW Fund, and develop action items for each of the recommendations to be taken forward by the SC.</p> <p>Working document: Background paper on financing of education.</p>
30 June 2017	
9.30 – 11.30	<p>Review, Monitoring and Reporting of SDG4-ED 2030</p> <p>Chair: Jordan Naidoo, Director, Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination, UNESCO</p> <p>Presenters: GEMR, UIS, OECD</p> <p>The session aims to endorse a set of recommendations on review, monitoring and reporting. The session will provide an update on: (1) the development of global frameworks to monitor the SDGs and SDG4 (4th Meeting of the IAEG; the UN Statistical Commission; the Technical Cooperation Group; the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning); (2) follow-up to the 2016 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report recommendations; (3) UN reporting through the High-level Political Forum (HLPF).</p> <p>The session will also examine the criteria and issues to be considered for the possible prioritization of indicators and the development of a global lead indicator.</p> <p>In doing so, it will examine the question of benchmarking and thresholds for indicators that may be prioritized. Finally, the session will also consider the role/status of regional monitoring mechanisms based on ones already underway, and consider possible ways of supporting those efforts, and their applicability for other regions.</p> <p>Working document: Background Paper on review, monitoring and reporting</p>
11.30 – 11.45	Coffee/tea break
11.45 – 12.30	<p>Gearing up advocacy activities: maintaining the momentum</p> <p>Chair and Presenter: Maria Lourdes Almazan Khan, Secretary-General, Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)</p> <p>Decisions on SC actions take forward key strategic messages/recommendations for the implementation of SDG4-ED 2030 targets and commitments, including through engagement with key global and regional events.</p> <p>Working document: Background Paper on advocacy and communication</p>
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch break

14.00 – 15.00	<p>SC Working Groups: Way forward and key milestones</p> <p>Co-Chair: Kazuhiro Yoshida, Director, Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education, Hiroshima University, Japan</p> <p>Presenters: Chairs/Co-Chairs of the four SC Working Groups (OECD/GCE; GPE/France; GEM Report/UIS; UNICEF)</p> <p>Endorsement of action plans (for 2nd semester 2017 and 2018/19) proposed by each of the working groups.</p>
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee/tea
15.15 – 16.15	<p>Planning next steps</p> <p>Chair: Margarete Sachs-Israel, Section of Partnerships, Cooperation and Research, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on High-level event on SDG4-Education during the General Conference of UNESCO (Paris, 1 Nov 2017) • Information on 2018 rotation of SC membership and election of new members • 2018 Steering Committee meeting - date, venue and focus • 2018 Global Education 2030 Meeting (GEM) - date, venue, expected outcomes
16.15 – 17.00	<p>Linking with UN processes</p> <p>Chair: Dankert Vedeler, Assistant Director-General, Ministry of Education, Norway, Co-chair of the SC</p> <p>The aim of this session is to share information on UN and other global initiatives and to determine how the SC may link to these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLPF • Possible follow-up of the President of the General Assembly (PGA) event • Information on the group of friends on GCED • Information on Global Education Ecosystem initiative <p>Wrap up of the Meeting</p> <p>Chair: Dankert Vedeler, Assistant Director-General, Ministry of Education, Norway, Co-chair of the SC</p> <p>Summary of main agreements reached and actions items for the SC in the next 6 months and up to 2019</p>
17.00	Closing: Qian Tang, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO, Co-Chair of the SC

Policies and Strategies (PS) Working Group (WG)

This paper from the Policies and Strategies (PS) Working Group (WG) of the SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC) reviews the experience of SDG4 implementation to date and proposes a number of recommendations for adoption by the SC that are aimed at strengthening SDG4 implementation and mainstreaming of the SDG perspective in policy-making at the national level.

I - Background

At its first meeting on 26th April 2017 the PSWG of the SDG4-Education 2030 SC discussed potential recommendations that could be made to the SC meeting in June 2017. The WG agreed that these recommendations should focus on strengthening SDG4 implementation at the national level, while making good use of processes developed in cooperation with regional organizations. The WG considered that these recommendations should be informed by a more thorough understanding of countries' experiences of SDG4 implementation to date. Moreover, they suggested that this understanding could be achieved through a brief survey of the members of the SC: countries representing the Region, regional and other international organizations, civil society organizations, as well as the UNESCO regional bureaus whose replies would build on previous consultations within their regions.

The aim of this survey was to invite responses from the Steering Committee members [member states representatives and regional organizations], UNESCO regional offices and CCNGO regional focal points to three questions that addressed implementation progress to-date, implementation challenges and ways to improve implementation. In answering the questions, respondents were requested to draw on previous consultations within their regions, such as those conducted as part of the national readiness for implementation work, and other pieces of analysis and other surveys that may be relevant. In addition, respondents also consulted with particular countries where they were aware of successes or particular challenges. The responses to these three questions were then reviewed by the WG and consolidated in this paper for presentation to the SC.

II - Responses to the survey

The WG received a total of 27 responses to the survey, with coverage of all the regions. These responses were reviewed by the members of the WG and the findings are summarised in the three sections that follow:

- SDG4 implementation progress to date, important initiatives taken;
- SDG4 implementation challenges; and
- recommendations for improved SDG4 implementation at the national level.

Important measures that have been taken/are being taken in the regions to align education policies and strategies with SDG4 targets and commitments

It is clear that a great deal has been done in all regions to take forward the SDG4 agenda.

In the Arab region, for example, civil society organizations have joined with their governments to draw up *the Arab road map for implementation of SDG4* which is helping to establish a common

agenda for implementation in the region – so far, 9 out of 22 countries in the Arab region have aligned their national plans to the SDG4 agenda.

In Europe, SDG4 has become a key reference for policy development with recent regional strategies. The European Union's answer to the 2030 Agenda will include two work streams. The first work stream, presented in the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions of 22 November 2016 entitled "Next steps for a sustainable European future - European action for sustainability", is to fully integrate the SDGs in the European policy framework and current Commission priorities, assessing where we stand and identifying the most relevant sustainability concerns. A second track will launch reflection work on further developing our longer term vision and the focus of sectoral policies after 2020, preparing for the long term implementation of the SDGs. The new Multiannual Financial Framework beyond 2020 will also reorient the EU budget's contributions towards the achievement of the EU's long-term objectives.

On SDG 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", the EU has set Europe 2020 headline targets on the number of early school leavers and on tertiary educational attainment. Through the Skills Agenda, the Education and Training 2020 strategic framework for peer learning and exchange and the Erasmus+ programme the EU directs its efforts to actively support Member States in improving the quality of education and training to guarantee opportunities for young people.

Additionally, the European Commission's recent Communication of 26 April 2017 on a "European Pillar of Social Rights" has strengthened the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning and acknowledges the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 as a new agenda to address poverty eradication and the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced and integrated manner. The Council of Europe's activities that reflect SDG4, include reviews of its professional development scheme for educators, and its re-direction towards a more sustainable footing (Target 4.c); and the development of the European Reference Framework for Competences for a Democratic Culture (RFCDC) as a new tool for educators and learners to help build young people's democratic competences through formal and non-formal education (Target 4.7).

In Latin America, the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI) has been working with UIS, UNESCO and with all Evaluation Institutes in Iberoamerica with a view to supporting ministries of education in the region to integrate SDG4 within their national strategies and plans. A regional follow up committee has been established in January 2017, during the regional Education Ministerial meeting held in Buenos Aires, that mirrors the composition of the SDG-Education2030 Steering Committee. The latter subsequently met in May of this year, and developed a road map to foster SDG 4 implementation in the region.

In Eastern Africa, national consultations were held in all 13 countries of the region between August 2016 and January 2017 and all countries prepared an SDG4 National Roadmap on policy priorities and gaps from their national plans in order to implement SDG4 at country level. At country level, and with a view to aligning educational policies and strategies with the targets and commitments of the SDG4, the Ministry of National Education and Literacy of Burkina Faso has developed a participatory approach to its Sectoral Plan Education and Training (PSEF) 2017-2030, which aims to "increase the supply and quality of education, higher education and training, in line with the Transformation of the economy ". Also in Africa, Morocco has made SDG4 and its targets and indicators the focus of its education planning.

In Asia and in response to the SDGs and the Education 2030 framework, Japan has taken a whole-of-government approach and formulated the *National Implementation Plan on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) under Global Action Programme (GAP)* in March 2016, at the inter-ministerial meeting on ESD, in order to implement ESD. In Europe, the SDGs have been mainstreamed into Norwegian policy making. The Prime Minister who is co-chairing the UNSG advocacy group for the SDGs has been very clear that Norway will follow up the SDG in a national context as well as in its development aid policies. The Ministry of Finance is the coordinating ministry for the SDGs while responsibilities have been allocated to the different line ministries, Ministry of Education and Research (MOER) being responsible for SDG 4. In Norway's National Budget for 2017 a chapter is being devoted to the SDG implementation and the budget proposal from the MOER includes a separate chapter on SDG4. Norway was among the first batch of countries that submitted an SDG national voluntary review report to the UN (HLPF) last year and Belgium, of which the different Federal entities are in a process of aligning their own policy goals and quantitative targets with the SDG perspective, will do so in 2017.

Many other countries are taking measures to include SDG4 (targets) in their national education strategies and plans, including Belgium, Bolivia, Comoros, Chile, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Latvia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda. In most cases these countries are establishing a clear articulation of national targets and planning processes are involving multi-level engagement with key stakeholders with the aim of producing a guiding coalition. For example, in the case of Uganda, SDG4 has been integrated into education sector work plans, which are approved by the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development. This creates a much needed link between the Education ministry and Finance. Alignment of national education strategies and plans also takes into consideration regional frameworks such as the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) in the case of South Africa.

The main challenges in SDG4 implementation in the regions, both in terms of policy and strategies for implementation

While a great deal has been done in all regions to take forward the SDG4 agenda, we have seen little translation of an SDG4 target or indicator into national legislation in most countries. It is also clear that in most countries there have been no major advances in teacher recruitment or teacher training since 2015, nor has there been a reallocation of resources within a country to address inequality. It is also evident that there have been no major efforts in any country to strengthen national capacity for SDG4 implementation. In all regions and countries there are significant challenges to implementation ranging from inadequate capacity for policy design and implementation and a lack of qualitative insights, information and data on which to base policy decisions to a lack of effective coordination across all of the concerned sectors (both within the Ministry of Education and beyond it). In many countries there is also an absence of focus by the government on education and SDG4 in particular with other interests and issues distracting policy makers' attention.

A common challenge in all countries, but particularly middle income and low income ones is inadequate resources to support implementation combined with institutional constraints (such as the SDG4 sector spreads across several ministries and the Ministry of Education is unable to coordinate effectively) and a lack of synergies across sectors (such as with Health, Employment, Infrastructure). More specifically:

- In the Arab region the main challenge is conflict. Several countries in the region are in a severe humanitarian situation with unprecedented numbers of displaced people and refugee flows. The state of emergency and the humanitarian need is so great that education drops down the priority aid ladder.

- In conflict-affected countries, the education sector is under attack and education facilities and personnel are either targeted directly or affected by displacement and war. Education infrastructure has been destroyed in Yemen, Syria and Iraq in a way that will make it very difficult to rebuild in many years. Schools have been used as military camps or refugee camps and millions of children in the Arab region have dropped out of schooling. The security situation has led several aid and donor agencies in the education sector to withdraw and education funding has dwindled as the flow has prioritized more basic needs such as food, health and shelter.
- Latin American countries too have struggled to coordinate the different agendas of the various organizations responsible for SDG4, although progress has been observed with the setting-up of a regional commission.
- Also in Latin America, worsening relations between government and teachers have constrained progress and it has been a challenge to involve civil society representatives in national policy dialogues, particularly students, who have faced repression during public manifestations. Another challenge being faced in different countries of the region relates to gender equality and identity issues.
- In Senegal, there is disputed leadership of the sector as SDG4 is managed across 3 different ministries in charge of education which do not communicate efficiently and effectively among themselves. In other African countries, such as Nigeria, lack of coordination between the National Government and Regional States is a challenge.
- For Namibia, education funding is not necessarily the biggest challenge, as sufficient public funds have been earmarked for education (8% of the GDP and 26% of the total government expenditure in 2010). The key challenge is the internal inefficiencies, considering the financial inputs vs the quality and quantity of outputs and outcomes.
- Related to the above point, challenges in translating Target 4.7 that refers to some soft skills such as global citizenship, peace building etc. into statistical indicators (Gambia). In some countries, the current policy framework does not address Target 4.7 (Uganda).
- In Mali, education stakeholders have struggled to integrate the core principles of the SDG4-2030 agenda at a time when there is a lack of focus from the Ministry of Education.
- The European Region acknowledges the challenge is to align existing regional education strategy to the SDG agenda and to generate further substantive cooperation between the European Union, Council of Europe, OECD, UNESCO and other organizations; to identify the specific contribution each of these organizations can make to the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda in their existing strategies, action plans, data sets and policy instruments; and to improve communication, cooperation and coherence at regional and national levels.
- In Norway the challenges are i) Completion in post primary education, ii) Quality and improved learning outcomes iii) impact of increased immigration on the education system and iii) young adults who are not in school or work.
- For the majority of Africa countries, the lack of reliable, relevant, timely and quality data is a key challenge to policy implementation including evaluation on programme impact and effectiveness.
- In Japan, it has become increasingly apparent that continuity in the practice of ongoing policy measures and their consistency with the new agenda need to be ensured. This is particularly true in the education sector. Inter-sectoral collaboration is all the more critical in achieving SDG4 targets in the context of SDGs.

Recommendations from the regions to overcome the challenges identified and ensure improved SDG4 implementation at the national level

The recommendations received from the regions included focusing government attention on education and SDG4 in particular, prioritising certain of the SDG4 targets, achieving synergies across sectors, increasing national education budgets to support SDG4 achievement, establishing an effective SDG4 coordination focal point to facilitate the work of several different ministries. Other examples of effective policy and strategy recommendations proposed included:

- establishing a small number of ambitious yet achievable and well-grounded SDG targets, publicly stated;
- taking a positive stance on improving all schools and success for all children and youth; and adults
- placing an emphasis on capacity building and a focus on results in granting equitable access to quality education and framework conditions facilitating the acquisition of results;
- taking forward multi-level engagement with key stakeholders combined with strong leadership;
- emphasizing continuous learning through innovation and effective use of research and data;
- maintaining a focus on key strategies while also managing other interests and issues;
- making effective use of resources;
- strengthening quality assurance mechanisms
- mobilizing a strong implementation effort to support the SDG4 agenda, in particular through multi-level, participative and collaborative engagement with key stakeholders (governments, civil society organizations, educational institutions, teachers, learners and parents) combined with strong leadership;

More specifically:

- The Arab region recommends that we make more effort to build national capacities on SDG4 and make accountability to SDG4 implementation a priority in their work. This includes capacity building of both governments and civil society and establishing mechanisms of implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This includes support to information management systems and transparent and participatory data management on SDG4 indicators.
- The Latin American region recommends focusing in on the highest priority targets for a region or country thus avoiding dispersion, placing an emphasis on capacity building, improved and increased dialogue between civil society and governments, and a focus on improved access and framework conditions facilitating the acquisition of results.
- Another recommendation from Latin America is to ensure that budgetary allocations to public education increase in all countries of the region.
- For the Africa Region, there is need to focus on the capacity building in the development of statistical indicators, data collection and reporting with the aim of accommodating all the SDG4 targets. The need to prioritize certain SDG4 targets, taking into consideration the different contexts and available budget is also underlined. For example, South Africa recommends a stronger focus on foundational learning outcomes as a precondition for learning later in the SDG process and focus on learning outcomes to be done through development of better assessments.

- West Africa recommends that the SC provide tangible/practical materials such as hands-on guidelines to support stakeholders in technical dialogue and integrating SDG4 into education policy and plans effectively and to help countries to prioritise the integration of SDG4 targets according to their national context.
- From Eastern Africa comes the recommendation for UNESCO to increase its regional and national consultations to ensure the SDG4 agenda is owned by national ministries of education.
- The European Region recommends that SDG4-Education 2030 requires a renewed focus on ensuring equity in learning opportunities paying attention to a more equitable social distribution of effective learning outcomes, beyond access alone. Noting the value of education and its broader purposes and aims of education and lifelong learning, there should be a holistic approach that attends to economic, social and environmental sustainability as well as democratic participation imperatives.
- The Council of Europe says that political will is needed if SDG4 implementation is to be genuinely mainstreamed into national level budgetary processes (for example through a cross-government, multi-disciplinary SDG4 task-force). Because of the competition for public finances, and the short-term political decision-making often seen at national level, the Council of Europe recommends investing greater sums into the long-term goals relating to education which requires strong, dynamic, frequent and clear senior-level advocacy.
- The Russian Federation recommends integration of the SDG4-Education agenda into the national education policy and also ensuring the agenda is reflected at regional and sub-national level policies and programmes.
- In order to promote ownership of the agenda at the highest levels, Ukraine recommends that the UNESCO's Director General writes to the heads of state of every country highlighting the importance of SDG4 implementation and providing case studies of countries that are making the most progress in implementing the agenda by way of guidance and advocacy.
- Latvia recommends, on a national level, prioritising certain SDG4 targets and focusing attention towards them.
- From Asia comes the recommendation to strengthen political leadership and coordinating functions at the inter-ministerial level, and to promote collaboration among a broader group of stakeholders.

III - Conclusion and recommendations proposed for SC adoption

The WG's review of the responses from the survey and its consideration of the proposed recommendations were guided by three main criteria: first, what seems to be contributing most to progress; second, what are the biggest challenges; and, third, which of the proposed recommendations fell under the SC's Terms of Reference that are closest to the PSWG's responsibilities. On this basis the WG refers recommendations related to finalising and clarifying the indicator framework to the WG on Review, Monitoring and Reporting and refers recommendations regarding budgetary resources and advocacy to the WGs on Financing and Communication and Advocacy respectively.

Considering the remainder of the proposed recommendations, the WG believes that the following recommendations should be adopted and taken forward by the SC as these are most relevant to achieving SDG4 and most appropriate bearing in mind the SC's ToR:

- (1) Strengthen national ownership of the Framework For Action and the SDG4 targets and commitments:** Support UNESCO and its partners, including regional organizations, to increase and strengthen its regional and national consultations to ensure the Framework for Action and the SDG4 agenda is owned by national ministries of education and, in particular, to take forward the indicative strategies in the Framework for Action, help to strengthen political leadership and coordinating functions at the inter-ministerial level, and to promote collaborative decision-making with the educational community (schools and universities, teachers, students, parents) and a broader group of stakeholders.
- (2) Strengthen education sector coordination:** In order to ensure truly sector-wide coordination of national/local education development as required for the broad SDG4 agenda, education sector coordination should be led by a governmental department or structure that has the capacity and legitimacy to mobilize the range of ministerial departments involved in the delivery of SDG4 targets and commitments. Member States should strengthen/adapt or establish institutional arrangements to ensure truly sector-wide coordination, planning and monitoring that go beyond the Department/Ministry of Education alone and create a sense of ownership at the level of all educational actors. Sector coordination could be led by ministry of planning, development, an inter-sectorial SDG4 task force, or a national observatory of education. National SDG4 focal points need to be institutionally located in such a way that they have the mandate to convene, mobilise and coordinate the contributions of wide range of ministerial departments beyond the Ministry of Education.
- (3) National prioritization of SDG4 targets:** While prioritization among SDG4 targets is necessary to reflect national policy context and needs, it is essential to ensure that the commitments to universal quality education and lifelong learning is pursued, as is the principle of equal educational opportunities at all levels and strands of education and training.
- (4) Develop technical guidance materials:** Development agencies and partners should provide tangible/practical materials such as hands-on guidelines to support stakeholders in technical dialogue and integrating SDG4 into education policy and plans effectively and to help countries to prioritise the integration and mainstreaming of SDG4 targets according to their national contexts, including, where appropriate, helping countries to prioritise the targets for greater focus. The SC could validate such materials in order to ensure coherence of technical guidance.
- (5) Strengthen national capacities in education sector dialogue:** Promote, effectively coordinate and strengthen capacity building for SDG4 implementation of both governments, the educational community (education and training institutions, teachers, students, parents) and civil society, as well as other key actors at country level, and help to establish effective mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- (6) Strengthen capacities in monitoring and evaluation, and the use of data to inform policies and strategies:** Focus should be put on capacity building in the development of statistical indicators, data collection and availability, reporting, as well as to ensure the necessary framework conditions for efficient implementation.

Financing of education: global and national perspectives

I - Introduction

- 1.1 Two years have passed since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Incheon Declaration, and now – with 13 years to go -- it is critical to ensure that sufficient financing is in place to effectively resource Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) implementation strategies. As highlighted in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the effective mobilization of both domestic and external resources is central to the achievement of the SDG Agenda. At the Third International Conference on Financing Development held in Addis Ababa in July 2015, governments committed to strengthening the mobilization and effective use of domestic resources, as well as promoting enabling environments for economic growth, that would then lead to a greater amount of domestic resources. In 2015, governments also committed, in article 105 of the Incheon Framework for Action, to allocate a range of 4 - 6% of their gross domestic product and/or at least 15 - 20% of total public expenditure to education. In the case of the least developed countries, the Incheon Framework for Action also recommended that countries reach or exceed the upper end of these targets to ensure a successful implementation of the agenda.
- 1.2 The Incheon Declaration and Education 2030 Framework for Action also calls for developed countries that committed 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for ODA to developing countries to fulfill their commitments. In the Addis Declaration, the international community reiterated the importance of aid as a catalyst for more and better domestic and public resources, particularly for countries with the greatest needs -- the Addis Ababa Action Agenda recommends that 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI be allocated to least developed countries. The Addis Declaration also highlighted that international finance, including ODA, should catalyze additional resources from other sources, public and private, and develop innovative mechanisms, instruments and modalities to unlock these resources without unduly burdening developing countries.
- 1.3 World leaders have also recognized the importance of delivering quality education for achieving sustainable development and scaling up investments and international cooperation to provide boys and girls with free, equitable, inclusive and quality education. In terms of financing to education, leaders in Addis committed to scaling up financing for the education sector and to the Global Partnership for Education. “We will scale up investments and international cooperation to allow all children to complete free, equitable, inclusive and quality early childhood, primary and secondary education, including through scaling-up and strengthening initiatives, such as the Global Partnership for Education” ([United Nations, 2015](#)).
- 1.4 While the volume of education aid has been relatively stagnant in recent years, another challenge for the sector is the increasing fragmentation. Studies show that donor fragmentation and unpredictability is in the rise in the education sector, resulting in more inefficiencies. There are proliferating numbers of donors working at country level, many of which provide insignificant amounts of funding, and which are delivered through parallel implementation units and outside of government systems. At the same time, multilateral donors that do emphasize alignment and harmonization of aid with strong country-owned sector plans, remain hampered by reporting and bureaucratic requirements which may sometimes lead to high transactions cost for aid recipient countries ([Schäferhoff & Burnett, 2016](#)). Aid effectiveness is therefore key to

strengthening partnerships for development, reducing transaction costs, and increasing transparency and mutual accountability. Governments committed in Addis to align funding to national priorities and strengthen country systems, and more attention is needed in this area, to ensure that funds for education are being spent in an efficient and targeted way ([United Nations, 2015](#)). Bilateral and multilateral donors should therefore endeavor to align their support with national education plans and priorities, strengthen and use country systems where possible, and harmonize processes with governments and other development actors.

- 1.5 In its report, *The Learning Generation*, released in 2016, The International Commission for Financing Education Opportunity calculated that total education spending will need to increase from \$1.2 trillion per year today to \$3 trillion by 2030 across all low- and middle-income countries to secure a learning generation. By scaling to this level of financing for education, the Commission estimates that it is possible to provide free quality primary and secondary education, as well as 2 years of publicly funded pre-primary education. A large majority of this money must come from domestic governments: The Education Commission estimates that low- and middle-income countries will need to increase domestic public expenditures on education at an annual rate of 7 percent to move from an estimated \$1 trillion in 2015 to \$2.7 trillion by 2030 ([Education Commission, 2016](#)).
- 1.6 Domestic resources will not be enough, though, with an estimated remaining financing gap of US\$89 billion needed annually by 2030. International financing will be especially critical in low-income countries, where the Education Commission estimates that US\$45 billion will still be needed by 2030, US\$32 billion of which will need to come from ODA. New estimates from the Commission, accounting for growth dynamics, also highlight that many of these countries will have entered middle income status by 2030 and could potentially access a wider range of financing instruments, requiring only US\$17 billion in ODA by 2030 ([Education Commission, 2016](#)). Variations in the financing gap and country capacities to fill it will therefore need to be factored into financing strategies.
- 1.7 With this context on both the scale of the challenge and the ambition of the global goal for education, the objective of this background paper is to provide an overview of the current context for financing the Education 2030 Agenda, the progress made to date and remaining challenges to fully resourcing the achievement of SDG4. It distills a set of recommendations for strategies to ensure sufficient financing for SDG4 which the SDG Education 2030 Steering Committee may elect to support.

II - Domestic Financing

Increase domestic education spending and allocate it more equitably

- 2.1 The Incheon Framework for Action affirms the international benchmarks for education spending of at least 4% to 6% of GDP and at least 15% of public expenditure. ([UNESCO, 2015](#)). Despite this, among 132 countries with data, 35 spent less than 4% of GDP on education and allocated less than 15% of their total public expenditure on education in 2014. Low-income countries spent 3.9% of GDP on education, nearly reaching the minimum benchmark but still falling at the low end of the range ([UNESCO, 2016](#)).
- 2.2 The availability of domestic resources for the sustainable development goals and SDG4 are closely linked to economic growth and the capacity to increase fiscal revenue and/or increase fiscal space. The magnitude of the increase in resources required can be achieved by capitalizing on the opportunities provided by high rates of economic growth in many countries as well as by benefiting from new sources of revenue. While Asia and Africa are host to a great part of the

out-of-school children worldwide ([UNESCO, 2016](#)), their economies are also some of the fastest growing worldwide ([AFD, OECD & UNDP 2017](#)) which may enable them to substantially increased resources for the education sector (while factoring in the impacts of demographic growth and seizing the opportunities of the demographic dividend).

- 2.3 Special attention is therefore required from governments on issues linked to fiscal reform (as recommended by the Education 2030 Framework for Action and Addis Action Agenda), including widening government tax bases by preventing tax evasion and harmful tax incentives ([UNESCO, 2015](#)). Efforts should be made to tailor public financial management reforms to address the specific context of a given country. For example, strategies may need to account for the role of a large informal sector, or the need to increase societal understanding of tax rules to enable better tax collection. Fiscal reform efforts should also involve more rigorous policy review and strategic planning, outside of the education sector with the Ministry of Finance and Parliaments, in order to better link sector allocations to the policy intentions of education sector plans, as reflected in medium term expenditure frameworks.
- 2.4 Considering the universal nature of the SDG Agenda and the imperative to leave no one behind, national resources for SDG 4 should be allocated equitably, targeted toward those with the greatest need under the guidance of the principle of progressive universalism. When balancing spending across levels of education and population groups, decision makers should prioritize spending for equity and public returns. This includes prioritizing the poor and disadvantaged, prioritizing lower levels of education first where social returns are the highest, and supporting a complementary role for private financing and cost recovery for higher levels of education where appropriate. This is true in low-income as well as middle and high-income countries. Studies have demonstrated that investments in pre-primary and primary education have the highest social returns. However, public spending is often used to finance those in higher levels of education where more advantaged students are likely to be – for example, in low-income countries 46 percent of public education resources is allocated to benefit the top ten percent most educated students. ([Steer, L. & Smith, 2015](#); [The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, 2016](#); [Foko, Tiya, & Husson, 2012](#)). Practices such as ensuring that financing formulas factor in levels of poverty and deprivation in education can help to ensure that sufficient resources are investing in those with greater needs (UNESCO, 2009). Similarly, ensuring sufficient investments are made in basic education where primary and lower secondary completions rates are still low can help to ensure that investments are focused on the bottom of the pyramid and household costs of basic education are minimized.

Recommendation 1: Domestic Financing

- ✓ Governments should increase public revenues, allocate more of these additional revenues to education and prioritize spending on the most marginalized groups. A share of increased revenue derived from economic growth or larger fiscal space should be allocated to the education sector, with a focus on ensuring basic education is sufficiently financed through public spending.
- ✓ Governments should prioritise sensitive allocation and spending of education resources in ways that focus on increasing equity and supporting the most marginalized groups and disadvantaged children.

Improve the collection and use of financing data

- 2.5 The availability of data is essential to help inform decision makers where to allocate resources, reduce wastage and to have a better understanding of how spending is linked to educational outcomes. Despite the shared consensus on the need for strengthening data systems, according to the UNESCO GEMR, no more than 60% of countries have data on total education expenditure as a percentage of GDP for any given year since 2000 and only 45% of countries had reported 2012 data by 2016 ([UNESCO, 2016](#)). Nevertheless, promising tools such as the Equity Index in Nepal, National Education Accounts, public expenditure tracking surveys, and community scorecards all hold potential to fill the financing data gap from national to school level. GPE and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics are also partnering to improve real time data on financing for tracking progress and help support national and global planning efforts, including through capacity building. The objective is to raise the proportion of countries that report at least 10 of the 12 key international indicators to UIS from 30 percent to 66 percent in 2020 ([Mundy, Martinez & Terway, 2016](#)).
- 2.6 The challenge posed by a lack of financial data is not limited to public resources, but also concerns the extent of household education expenditures, which are often the main source for financing education in the poorest countries. Parents will use considerable amounts of their income to pay for school fees, teachers' wages, books, uniforms, transportation and other school-related costs. Given the lack of statistics on household education spending, education expenditure reviews are often limited to public resources. Household expenditures are often at a magnitude comparable to half of public education expenditures, and contribute relatively more to financing primary education than higher education. ([Foko, Tiyab & Husson, 2012](#)). This presents a great challenge for equity and ensuring that the most vulnerable and marginalized are able to access school.

Recommendation 2:
Financial Data

- ✓ Governments should improve the availability, monitoring, transparency and use of financing data - disaggregated by education sub-sectors - including data on the scale and purpose of household costs of education and household surveys. They should do so through greater scrutiny of education expenditures, increased capacity building in the use of data to inform policy and implementation and increased investment in more effective tools to track public spending on education.
- ✓ Governments should also take steps to understand the scale and purpose of household costs of basic education and to reduce the financial burden on families, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable.

III - Global Financing**Bilateral and multilateral aid**

- 3.1 In addition to the globally agreed targets for ODA to increase to 0.7% of GNI, several key actors have called on the international community to increase the share of ODA dedicated to education. Both UNESCO GEMR and the Education Commission have recommended that ODA for education increase at least six times compared with its 2010 levels. This will require not only for bilateral donors to augment their support, but for multilateral and private sector actors to significantly

increase their education support ([UNESCO, 2017](#)). In its latest briefing on donor education aid, the UNESCO GEMR found that while spending grew by \$500 million between 2014 and 2015 to reach US\$12 billion in ODA, it is still 4% below levels in 2010. Despite this modest increase in 2015, aid to education has dropped in priority for a sixth year in a row and is still far below what is needed to meet external financing needs in low- and middle-income countries ([UNESCO, 2017](#)). Aid allocations for the education sector decreased from 13 percent to 10 percent since 2002. In contrast, the health sector saw an increase from 15 percent to 18 percent and ODA for infrastructure risen from 24 percent to 31 percent in the same time period ([The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, 2016](#)). In response, the Education Commission and Global Campaign for Education have both called for a benchmark of 15 percent of ODA to be allocated to education.

3.2 Aid to the education sector is also increasingly coming from multilateral, rather than bilateral sources. The World Bank is currently the largest multilateral donor in the education sector, and accounted for US\$782 million in concessional financing for education in 2015 ([UNESCO, 2017](#)). There is increased potential for increased resourcing from World Bank, given that the Eighteenth Replenishment of IDA (IDA18) was the largest replenishment in IDA's history. The Education Commission recommends that the World Bank, and other multilateral development banks such as the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank and others commit 15% of their financing to the education sector. In addition, the Global Campaign for Education recommends that donors commit at least 30 percent of their education aid to support multilateral efforts, including for the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait.

3.3 Education aid distributions are highly uneven across countries with similar income, with per capita aid per child ranging from a few dollars to over US\$60 per child. However, recent trends indicate that the relationship between aid and need is weakening ([Steer, L. & Smith, 2015](#)). The GEMR recently found that aid to education in low income countries declined sharply in 2015, after holding constant for a decade; total education aid to low income countries fell by 13% and basic education aid dropped by 16% and the share of aid for basic education in Sub-Saharan Africa decreased almost half its share in comparison to 2002 (UNESCO, 2017). This points to a weakening of the link between need and foreign assistance, with those most in need receiving less aid than those with greater means.

3.4 It is estimated that 75 million children aged 3 to 18 years old are currently living in 35 crisis-affected countries – many of these children refugees or internally displaced people. Conflict and violence, in addition to natural disasters and other catastrophes, disrupt education systems and children's and youth opportunities to access a quality education. Allocations to education in emergencies recorded a high point in 2010, accounting for US\$245 million, followed by a steep decrease in the next two years and a recovery in 2016, when it reached US\$303 million. Nevertheless, humanitarian appeals linked to education continue to be underfunded, and humanitarian aid for education currently accounts for 2.7% of the humanitarian aid budget, far from the 4% target recommended ([UNESCO, 2017](#)). Stronger financing commitments are needed to address the needs of education in emergencies.

Recommendation 3: Bilateral and multilateral aid

- ✓ Donor governments and multilateral donors (including multilateral development banks) should increase the share of development assistance dedicated to education up to 15 %, while targeting support to countries most in need.
- ✓ Donors should also explore innovative financing instruments to catalyze new and additional financing for education that can multiply scarce ODA. Donors should therefore closely examine the opportunity to establish a new financing facility for education once further details are available about its operational structure and potential impact on financing for the sector.
- ✓ Bilateral and multilateral donors should also increase the share of their humanitarian aid allocated to education while promoting resilience of education systems and strengthening national capacities, including through support to policies and programs aiming at better connecting humanitarian and development aid. This should include efforts to increase ODA progressively to achieve the 4 % target recommended for education in humanitarian aid.

Global Partnership for Education financing

3.5 The Global Partnership for Education has also increasingly become a major donor, focusing its support on the countries with greatest needs. GPE disbursements have increased overtime from US\$16 million in 2004 to US\$446 million in 2015, becoming the second-largest multilateral donor to basic and secondary education. Through its replenishment campaign, GPE is seeking to raise US\$3.1 billion to implement its Financing and Funding Framework, during 2018 through 2020, aiming to disburse US\$2 billion annually by 2020. This will allow GPE to increase its support to deliver better learning and equity outcomes for 870 million children and youth in 89 countries and scale up knowledge and innovation in global public goods for education as well as social accountability initiatives.

Recommendation 4: Global Partnership for Education

- ✓ Bilateral, philanthropic and private sector donors should increase their funding for the GPE to reach \$2 billion annually by 2020 in order to fully fund grants for its 89 eligible partner countries.

Education Cannot Wait financing

3.6 The Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund is a global fund launched in 2016 to help support the delivery of education in emergencies and protracted crisis. ECW protects development funding by providing rapid emergency support and helps countries get back on track to longer-term planning and finance. ECW support includes an ‘acceleration facility’ to invest in global public goods; a ‘first response window’ to rapidly deploy funds at the onset of a crisis and a ‘multi-year window’ to help bridge the divide between humanitarian and development efforts. It aims to reach 34 million children and youth in the first five years, increasing the number of children and youth benefitting from access to quality education each year from 1.4 million in Year 1 to 13.6 million in Year 5. To

help support these efforts, ECW is seeking to raise US\$3.85 billion by 2020 and is close to meeting its milestone for its first year of US\$153 million (ECW; [UNESCO, 2017](#)).

Recommendation 5: Education Cannot Wait

- ✓ Donors should provide \$3.85 billion to support ECW's acceleration and breakthrough funds by 2020 and promote strong articulation with GPE.

IV - New or non-traditional financing for education

4.1 A series of new mechanisms and innovative financing instruments are currently being brought to the attention of the international education community, with the understanding that a broader development agenda will need to draw from a more diverse set of sources. Proposals range from international solidarity levy on air tickets, to international financial and currency transaction taxes, debt for development swaps, education bonds, disaster insurance, impact investing and other ideas. One source that has grown substantially in recent years is private development assistance—that is, international concessional finance from non-state sources that is given for international development purposes. “Non-state” covers a wide range of actors—including faith-based organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), foundations and corporations. While several innovative financing ideas are promising and some new financiers in education hold real potential, further work needs to be done to fully identify the most appropriate mix of funding resources for education, the principles of engagement, and the necessary regulatory, risk and policy frameworks to ensure positive impact on the SDG4 targets.

Philanthropic and individual contributions

4.2 As highlighted by the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the private sector can have a very important role in financing education. Philanthropic organizations, charitable NGOs, faith based organizations and foundations can play an important role, and provide significant financing for education development. A recent UNESCO study estimated that INGOs raised between US\$1.9 and US\$3.2 billion per annum for education development from non-governmental sources in 2012/2013 ([Naylor & Ndaruhutse, 2015](#)).

Business sector contributions

4.3 Private sector organizations such as businesses can also use their experience, innovative approaches, business expertise and financial resources to strengthen public education. They can be a direct source of capital for educational development, for example using innovative approaches like social impact bonds ([Gustafsson-Wright, E. & Gardiner, S. 2016](#)). In addition, they can mobilize additional resources for public education, including by paying fair taxes, and focus those resources on priority areas. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are also increasingly seen as an innovative approach to scaling up education, especially to provide new educational opportunities to marginalized groups. Many governments, and other education stakeholders view PPPs as an effective, flexible and efficient way to expand education systems. However, research also suggests that not all PPP policy options are equally appropriate to achieve the expected goals of cost effectiveness, equity, innovation etc. in all types of educational settings ([Verger and Moschetti, 2017](#)).

International Financing Facility for Education

4.4 The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity has proposed the establishment of an International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd). IFFEd would mobilize resources through two means to establish a borrowing facility for education. First, IFFEd would secure up to US\$2 billion in donor guarantees and use them as quasi-capital to help expand the lending capacity of development banks. In addition, it would seek US\$2.5 billion in grant funding to blend it with development bank loans (i.e. it would 'buy down' the loans) to increase the concessionality of the loans ([The Education Commission, 2017](#)). IFFEd's target is to leverage US\$10 billion a year in additional concessional financing by 2020 for lower middle-income countries.

Financial Transaction Tax

4.5 The concept of a Financial Transaction Tax was introduced in 1972 by the economist James Tobin. In its role on the Leading Group on Innovative Financing, the French government estimated that up to US\$33 billion a year could be raised from a tax on US, euro, pound, and yen transactions. France was the first country to pledge 15% of the FTT to development to support its contributions to development, including its allocations to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. In theory, some of the proceeds of such a tax could be dedicated to development cooperation, and in turn to education ([Burnett and Bermingham, 2010](#); [Open Society Foundations, 2013](#)).

Debt swaps

4.6 Debt swaps also may offer promising resources for education in some cases. A debt swap involves a creditor country canceling a debt at its nominal value and the debtor, in return, invests part of the cancelled amount in development projects as previously negotiated and agreed between both parties ([Eurodad, 2007](#)). Debt swaps were first conceptualized in the environment sector in the 1980s. They can help debtor countries to increase their fiscal capacity thanks to reduced savings or principal that can then be used for development or social purposes ([Open Society Foundations, 2013](#)). The best known example was the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative promoted by the World Bank, and have been used widely since the 1980s to finance development ([Burnett and Bermingham, 2010](#)).

Next steps

Over the coming months, the Working Group on Financing may elect to further explore some or all of the topics which have been treated briefly in this background document. It has therefore not been possible to provide a comprehensive treatment of all of the issues which will need to be considered, including those related to the implementation of the recommendations suggested herein. The WG may also elect to further explore new or non-traditional financing opportunities, including through additional research to elaborate on the potential role of such approaches in financing the achievement of SDG4. This background paper should therefore be seen as a starting point for the Steering Committee's work on financing, which will inform the workplan of the Working Group on Financing and the Steering Committee agenda on financing going forward.

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Review, Monitoring and Reporting of SDG4-ED 2030

The Review, Monitoring and Reporting (RMR) Working Group makes recommendations on:

- (a) implementation of monitoring and indicator frameworks at global, regional and national levels;*
- (b) coordination/harmonization and consensus around review, monitoring and reporting on SDG4 at global, regional and country level across partners and institutions; and*
- (c) facilitation and communication of endorsement of indicator frameworks elaborated in the TCG*

This background note aims to inform the discussion at the SDG-Education 2030 SC meeting in New York, 29-30 June 2017. It presents existing evidence and analysis and formulates a recommendation by members of the RMR Working Group to the SDG-Education 2030 SC on each one of six issues.

I - Issues around the production of global data to monitor SDG 4

Last December, the Education 2030 Steering Committee endorsed 29 of the global and thematic SDG 4 indicators for reporting in 2017. Based on the advice of the Technical Cooperation Group on SDG4-Education 2030 indicators (TCG) at its second meeting in October 2016 the Steering Committee also confirmed the indicators requiring further methodological development and requested the TCG and GAML to proceed with this. Since then, and especially after the adoption of the resolution by ECOSOC in June 2017 that contains the global indicator framework, the pressure has been on the TCG, GAML, UIS and its partners to move work forward to develop new indicator methodologies and capacity-building tools and guidelines for countries. There is also an urgent need to fill data gaps and increase country coverage for many of the indicators.

The TCG has established a work plan for the development of 15 of the 22 indicators identified by the TCG as requiring further development, overseeing the creation of a framework for capacity-building for countries and developing a set of tools to contribute to the design of an efficient, transparent and quality process on data reporting, validation and dissemination. The remaining 7 indicators all concern learning outcomes and will be developed further by Task Forces of the UIS's Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML).

There are still many issues to resolve yet time and resources are scarce. The first major review of the global indicator framework will be launched in early 2019 by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs). It is vital therefore and the highest priority of the TCG and GAML that all global indicators are fully developed and have had their methodologies approved by the IAEG-SDG no later than the end of 2018. This requires the active involvement of experts in the respective fields of relevance for each indicator. Countries will also need to play a role in the validation of the proposed definitions and methods, before their endorsement and approval by the GAML, TCG and IAEG-SDG.

At the same time as methods are being developed, countries need to be supported in the collection and reporting of data on the many indicators, which are already well-defined. The challenge here is

often to identify and use new data sources stretching beyond the traditional Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) on which most countries rely. The new Education 2030 Agenda proposes indicators on learning outcomes and equity, which require the use of other sources such as national or cross-national learning assessments and household or school-level surveys which are often the responsibility of organizations other than Ministries of Education including but not limited to national statistical offices.

Countries need support not just to develop their capacities to run surveys of different types and to use effectively the data collected but also to identify the most appropriate sources of data and the relevant data collection authorities to meet their national needs for data. At the global level, in order not to impose even greater burdens on countries, we need to ensure that reporting mechanisms are transparent and as efficient as possible. They should include a validation loop to ensure that the most reliable and up-to-date data are available and there should be clear dissemination policies that guarantee consistency between different publication platforms.

With regard to assessment of learning, as described in the TCG ToR in December 2016, the GAML has been leading the development of the methodologies and tools needed by countries to strengthen their learning assessments while reporting on learning outcomes internationally. This is being achieved through the establishment of five Task Forces focusing on the learning outcome-related targets and two additional ones on crosscutting issues, namely national assessments' implementation and capacity development to countries. As part of the GAML's work, many technical guidelines are under development to support countries most notably the Manual of Good Practices in Learning Assessment, the Data Quality Assessment and the Mapping of Availability and Characteristics of Learning Assessments including the mapping of Assessment and Curriculum Frameworks.

Recommendation 1:

Issues around the production of global data to monitor SDG4

The RMR Working group takes note of the work of the TCG and recommends the Education 2030 Steering Committee to:

1. Provide feedback to the TCG on its strategic direction as outlined in the report of the TCG to the Education 2030 Steering Committee
2. Invite the TCG to produce a report by the end of 2017 on the status of development and availability of SDG4 indicators, including: a) plans for, together with an assessment of resources needed to fund the finalization of the conceptual, methodological and operational work on the global indicators by December 2018; and b) potential revisions to current global indicators. This report should include as well the identification of potential additional indicators to be recommended for the major review of indicators in 2019.
3. Strengthen the invitation to member states, regional organizations and development partners to engage in the TCG Working Groups and GAML Task Forces.

II - Steering Committee inputs to the High-level Political Forum

The SC is an officially recognized ‘inter-governmental body and forum’ in the global follow up and review architecture of the SDGs. In that capacity, it is invited each year to submit a brief report addressing the theme of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF).

Following its submission in 2016, the SC submitted an input for the 2017 HLPF, whose theme is "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world" and touches on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14. The original text was prepared by the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) and an additional contribution was provided by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). The text was consolidated by the UNESCO Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination and shared with the Steering Committee for comments before its submission. The input followed the requested structure from the president of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and drew attention to the following two areas:

- the need to support more and better-targeted external finance for education in the poorest countries; and
- a call for more coherence between sectoral policies, including at the level of both domestic and international financing, to ensure progress on sustainable development

It is important to note that in support of the 2017 HLPF theme, UIS and GEMR have dedicated their joint factsheet / policy paper on out-of-school children to the issue of poverty reduction.

The SC will need to submit an input for the 2018 HLPF, whose theme is "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies" and will touch on SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15. However, the main interest is in the 2019 HLPF, whose theme is "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality" and will touch on SDGs 8, 10, 13, 16 and – importantly – SDG 4.

Recommendation 2:

Steering Committee inputs to the High-Level Political Forum

Taking the above into consideration, the following recommendations are made to the SC:

1. Request the SC Secretariat and Bureau to review the experience from the preparation of the inputs for the 2016 and 2017 HLPF in terms of efficiency and effectiveness ahead of the corresponding submission for the 2018 HLPF with the objective to:
 - i. agree on deadlines and procedures for the preparation process of the input; and
 - ii. develop guidelines for the content of the input, with special reference to how areas for political guidance and policy recommendations can have an impact at the level of HLPF.

Assign to the RMR Working Group the preparation of a paper for the next SC meeting that will outline the options for drafting and reviewing the submission of the 2019 HLPF input.

III - Follow-up to the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report recommendations

Among its different tasks, the SDG-Education 2030 SC is called upon to “provide strategic guidance, review progress drawing on the GEM Report, and make recommendations to the education community on key priorities and catalytic actions to achieve the new agenda”. The key findings of the

2016 GEM Report and potential follow-up actions for the Steering Committee to consider based on the 2016 report's recommendations were presented at the meeting of the SC in December 2016. These were:

- a. Reconsider how education features in plans of non-education ministries to assess how they can engage in more integrated and multi-sector interventions;
- b. Open debate on whether education systems are fit for sustainable development, through a review of education aims, policies, curricula, textbooks, teacher preparation and assessment systems
- c. Focus on areas that are key for *national* monitoring of SDG 4, liaising with the Technical Cooperation Group, including strengthen collaboration between education ministries and national statistical agencies on household surveys to monitor equity in education and lifelong learning; and introduce or strengthen national learning assessments.
- d. Mobilize *regional* organizations to introduce or expand platforms for policy dialogue and peer learning (see point IV below).
- e. Address issues relevant to a *global* education monitoring agenda: an education-specific international household survey program; improved coordination in the support to national learning assessments; and a global research hub to support comparative measurement in education.

Of the forthcoming GEM Reports:

- the 2017/8 edition (to be launched on 24 October 2017) will focus on accountability
- the 2019 edition (to be launched in the fall of 2018) will focus on migration and education
- the 2020 edition (to be launched in the fall of 2019) will focus on inclusion in education

Recommendation 3:

Follow-up to the Global Education Monitoring Report recommendations

Taking the above into consideration, the following recommendations are made to the SC:

1. Review and prioritize those recommendations from the 2016 GEM Report that the SC intends to pursue.
2. Discuss how potential findings of the three forthcoming GEM Reports could be utilized to support the cause of SDG 4 in broader UN initiatives, including how education can become integrated in the forthcoming United Nations global compacts on migrants and refugees.

IV - Perspectives on regional monitoring mechanisms

The regional dimension of SDG 4 emerges in at least two respects. First, the Synthesis Report of the UN Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda, released in December 2014, identified four levels for monitoring, each of which has distinct implications for indicator selection and benchmark setting. In addition to the global, thematic and national levels, the Synthesis Report identified a distinct regional level for monitoring, recognizing that some indicators may not be globally relevant but are essential

for regional constituencies to respond to specific contexts and policy priorities. Regional monitoring frameworks often predate the corresponding SDG 4 monitoring framework.

Second, progress on key issues in the new agenda needs to be informed not only through information on inputs and outcomes, but also through comparisons of education and training systems, policies and programmes. While certain aspects of systems and policies can be represented with quantitative indicators, qualitative information based on the use of expertise and judgement are also needed. Consensus is needed on how best to identify, develop and validate system-level indicators. This is more likely to be reached in regional and sub-regional organizations whose members voluntarily exchange information about their national education systems and from their evaluation institutes – and agree about shared purposes, policy priorities and mechanisms. The results of regional peer learning are more likely to be used in policy-making and be sustained over time, not least because countries have an interest in the performance of neighbouring countries. The 2016 GEM Report presented cases of strong coordination mechanisms from regional intergovernmental organizations that include education development among their objectives. Representatives from some of these regional mechanisms will present their experiences at a special panel at the Steering Committee meeting and exchange views on how they can be strengthened.

Recommendation 4: **Perspectives on regional mechanism**

Taking the above into consideration, the following recommendations are made to the SC:

1. Request the RMR Working Group in coordination with the TCG, and in collaboration with UNESCO Regional Offices, and regional organizations, to map existing regional and sub-regional education and training strategies and agendas, their respective monitoring frameworks, and their reporting mechanisms¹ with the objective to:
 - iii. analyze their alignment with the SDG 4 global and thematic monitoring frameworks
 - iv. understand the overlaps and differences of the global and different regional frameworks; and
 - v. improve the efficiency of the process and streamline reporting requirements

V - Prioritization of indicators and the global lead indicator

The Thematic Indicator Framework, which includes the indicators of the SDG Global Indicator Framework, has the potential to provide the necessary information to monitor the Education 2030 Agenda in its great level of complexity, focusing not only in aspects traditionally measured in education but also on new areas that were identified as priority in the new compact.

While comprehensive monitoring should be part of any implementation process, the need for partnership and the commitment of a wide range of stakeholders requires the development of strong advocacy to mobilize actions on education at the national, regional and global levels.

¹ The scale and scope of this mapping activity would be discussed and approved by the RMR WG.

A strategy to advocate for SDG 4 may be to develop appealing messages coming directly from the data or key indicators. In the previous development agenda, that role was played, for example, by the statistics on out-of-school children, which had the capacity to provide a strong message on the need to improve the conditions of school access, which had been the priority on education set by MDG 2.

Initially, when thinking in the priorities of the new agenda, the areas identified are access to education, quality of education and equity. However, those areas are cross-cutting more than one target and more than one indicator.

A possibility that has been under consideration in this area is the development of a composite index that could provide a comprehensiveness, transparent and easy-to-read response to the three priority dimensions of participation, quality and equity. This has become known as the “global lead indicator for education”.

Within this context, it is also relevant to discuss if a process of prioritizing a few indicators of the thematic framework may help to build good messages to position the new education targets and urgencies in that regard, without compromising the richness of themes raised by the SDG 4 agenda. In addition, countries may need advice and guidelines on how to prioritize indicators in their national settings to best reflect their respective priorities and situations. The selection of indicators goes beyond data availability or feasibility and needs to take account of relevance and of local or national educational priorities.

Taking into consideration the information provided here, members of the RMR Working Group are invited to comment on:

1. Possibilities of prioritization of indicators to advocate on education and, if relevant, general criteria to implement this process.
2. Relevance and need of developing and promoting a “global lead indicator”.

Recommendation 5:

Prioritization of indicators and the global lead indicator

The RMR Working Group recommends to the SC to:

1. Invite the RMR WG to produce guidelines and criteria for countries to prioritize SDG4 indicators at the national level.
2. Invite the UNESCO Institute for Statistics to elaborate a study describing the technical possibilities for the production of a sound global lead indicator to support advocacy for the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda.

VI - Benchmarking and thresholds

The Education 2030 Framework for Action commits all countries to establish benchmarks for measuring progress towards the SDG4 targets. Over the coming months, the RMR WG will be discussing benchmarking and the possible setting of thresholds for SDG 4 indicators. There is a need to define concepts as well as to examine the feasibility and utility of setting benchmarks at different

levels of monitoring. Both the technical and political aspects of the process will need to be considered as part of these discussions. A number of examples already exist in other contexts, from which lessons can be learned and different approaches compared including the advantages or disadvantages of setting absolute benchmarks versus comparative ones. The RMR WG invites the SC to note that this work is being undertaken and when a report of these discussions might be submitted to the SC for consideration.

VII - Conclusion

Following the Steering Committee meeting, members of the Review, Monitoring and Reporting Working Group will commit to engage in advancing and facilitating the following priority set of activities, which are derived from the above-mentioned recommendations. Further discussions on roles and division of tasks among members of the RMR WG would need to be agreed upon during the Steering Committee meeting.

1. Providing feedback to the TCG on its strategic direction [from Recommendation I]
2. Providing comments to the report produced by the TCG on the status of development and availability of indicators [from Recommendation I]
3. Developing guidelines for the content of the input, with special reference to how areas for political guidance and policy recommendations can have an impact at the level of HLPF [from Recommendation II]
4. Reviewing and prioritizing the recommendations of the 2016 GEM Report that the SC intends to pursue [from Recommendation III]
5. Mapping existing regional and sub-regional education strategies and agendas, their respective monitoring frameworks, and their reporting mechanisms [from Recommendation IV]
6. Following-up on the special panel session during the 2017 SC meeting on regional peer learning mechanisms [from Recommendation IV]
7. Contributing to the production of guidelines and criteria for countries to prioritize SDG 4 indicators at the national level [from Recommendation V]
8. Contributing to the work to advance the establishment of benchmarks and thresholds [from Section VI]

Gearing up advocacy activities: maintaining the momentum

I - Introduction

The primary objective of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee is to harmonize and strengthen support to Member States and their partners to achieve 2030 education targets and commitments.

This is to be achieved through a range of communication actions.

As the main global governance mechanism for education in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee is a multi-stakeholder platform representing a wide range of education constituencies including Member States, regional organizations, development agencies, civil society, teacher organizations, foundations and youth (representative of the private sector soon to be confirmed). The strength of the Steering Committee in defining collective positions, key strategic recommendations, and advocacy messages lies in the legitimacy of its multi-stakeholder composition.

Moreover, the multi-stakeholder constituency of the Steering Committee represents a range of important channels to communicate strategic positions, recommendations, and advocacy messages to a wide set of key Education 2030 stakeholders. Beyond key education stakeholders represented within the Steering Committee, communication should also target the wider international development community beyond education, in particular around UN SDG processes.

Communication actions of the Steering Committee may be of three broad types:

- i. **global advocacy** around 2030 education targets and commitments,
- ii. **global communication** and information-sharing on SDG4 developments, including on the role of the Steering Committee, and
- iii. **strategic policy guidance** to countries for implementation of education 2030 targets and commitments.

1.1 **Global advocacy** actions undertaken by the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee aim:

- To galvanize global support for education within the broader SDG architecture
- To advocate for improved international financing of education
- To garner support for important areas of the SDG4 agenda which may be receiving inefficient attention, such as adult literacy and skills development of youth and adults, in a lifelong learning perspective

1.2 **Global communication** actions of the Education 2030 Steering Committee aim:

- To raise general awareness of SDG4-Education 2030 and effectively promote the role and achievements of the SC both for specialized and general audiences
- To make available timely information on SDG4 implementation and coordination
- To increase transparency and accountability of SDG4 governance to all stakeholders, including citizens.

1.3 **Strategic guidance** provided by the Steering Committee to Member States and their partners aims:

- To provide broad strategic guidance to Member States and their partners for effective implementation of 2030 education targets and commitments at country level.
- To encourage harmonization and coordination of approaches among partners to the implementation and monitoring of SDG4 targets and commitments at the global, regional and national levels.

II - Objectives/Guiding questions for the session on gearing up advocacy activities

1. Identification and prioritization of key global moments/events in 2017-2019 during which the SC could engage in global advocacy actions

- Looking at the table in the section below, what are the key moments/events in 2017-2019 which the Steering Committee should prioritize for advocacy communications?
- What process should be used to develop key advocacy communications from the SC and to determine what are the best means of communicating (statement, letter, policy brief, press conference, etc) the given message or recommendation?

2. Selection of appropriate strategies for global communication around SDG4-Education 2030 and the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee

- How can the SC better publicly communicate its role, and that of the SDG4 and Education 2030 Agenda? i.e. What information should be shared regularly? Aside from housing information on a web page, and given budget limits, how can these materials be shared more widely with Member States and others?

3. Identification of processes related to broad strategic guidance to Member States and partners for SDG4 implementation

- What processes should be used by the Steering Committee to provide strategic guidance to Members States and partners for effective SDG4 implementation at country level?

III - Global advocacy and communication

This table below outlines key global moments/events (for the 2nd semester 2017 and beyond) at which the Education 2030 Steering Committee may engage in global advocacy and communication actions.

Calendar of key global events/moments for possible SC engagement in 2017 2019

Date	Event	Event focus	Communication strategy	SC Members involved
2017				
7-8 July	G20 (Education side event UNESCO/Argentina)			UNESCO/Argentina, Brazil, France, China Japan, ROK, Russia Saudi Arabia, EC
10-19 July	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017	Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a	Letter to the Heads of State?	

		changing world		
September	BRICs summit			
24 Oct	GEM Report launch	Governance and accountability		
13-15 October	World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings			
1 Nov	UNESCO General Conference : High-Level Ministerial Meeting on SDG4-Education 2030: Two years on	Accountability (tbc)		
28 Oct – 2nd Nov	Global Partnership for Development Effectiveness			
TBC	WDR on Education publication to be published	TBC		
30 Nov	East Africa Heads of State Summit			
2018				
Early 2018	GPE 3rd Replenishment and Pledging Conference	Financing		GPE
24 January 2018	World Economic Forum			
First quarter 2018	4th SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee Meeting			
20-22 February 2018	20th conference of Commonwealth education ministers			
Spring 2018	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)			
April 2018	Global Action Week for Education			
July 2018	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2018	Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies SDG 6, 7, 11, 12, 15		
Oct 2018	GEM Report launch	Migration and education		
End 2018	Global Education Meeting (GEM)			
2019				
April 2019	Global Action Week for Education			
July 2019	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2019	Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality SDG 4, 8, 10, 13, 16		
Oct 2019	World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings			
Oct 2019	GEM Report launch	Inclusion in education		

Synthesis/Compilation of Possible Key messages:

This section contains a compilation of key messages derived essentially from the proposals made by the Steering Committee working groups on Policies & Strategies; Financing; and Review, Monitoring & Reporting; and are supplemented by other sources such as the GEM 2016 report and the Unpacking SDG4 guide.

IV - Key messages on core principles of SDG4

The messages to be communicated by the Steering Committee to various audiences are consistent with the principles laid out in the 2015 Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action. These include:

- ✓ **Education is a fundamental human right and an enabling right:** To guarantee the right to education, countries must ensure universal access to inclusive and equitable quality education and learning, at least nine years of which should be free and compulsory, leaving no one behind.
- ✓ **Education is a public good:** As duty bearers, governments have the primary responsibility to deliver the right to education, and a central role as custodians of efficient, equitable and effective management and financing of public education.
- ✓ **Education is a collective responsibility:** As a collective responsibility, the ambition of SDG4-Education 2030 requires enhanced multi-stakeholder partnerships between state and non-state actors for transparent policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and accountability. Civil society, teachers and educators, the private sector, communities, families, youth and children all have important roles in realizing the right to quality education.

V - Key messages and positions on Education and the Sustainable Development Agenda

The following messages, directed primarily at the wider sustainable development agenda partners, are derived from the Education 2030 Framework for Action and the Unpacking SDG4 Guide:

- ✓ **Education is at the heart of the SDGs:** Education is key for progress towards the achievement of all of the SDGs. Education is central to ensuring sustainable development, that is, economic growth guided by environmental stewardship and a central concern for social justice.
- ✓ **Beyond a silo approach to education:** All SDGs are universal, indivisible and interlinked, so the education sector must become better articulated with other development sectors.
- ✓ **Universal agenda for North and South:** The education 2030 agenda requires sustained effort from all partners – regardless of their level of development - on access, equity and inclusion, quality and learning outcomes, within a lifelong learning approach.

VI - Key messages from the Policies and Strategies WG

The following messages stem from the Policies and Strategies working group of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, and are supplemented by some ideas from the Unpacking SDG4 Guide:

- ✓ **National ownerships of SDG4 needs to be strengthened:** Support UNESCO, its partners – including regional organizations, to increase and strengthen its regional and national consultations to ensure the Framework for Action and the SDG4 agenda is owned by national ministries of education and, in particular, to take forward the indicative strategies in the Framework for Action, help to strengthen political leadership and coordinating functions at the inter-ministerial level, and to promote collaborative decision-making with the educational community (schools and universities, teachers, students, parents...) and a broader group of stakeholders.
- ✓ **No separate SDG4-Education 2030 plan:** The commitments of the agenda should be mainstreamed into national system-wide education policy. National authorities should not establish a separate SDG4 plan.
- ✓ **Strengthen education sector coordination:** In order to ensure truly sector-wide coordination of national/local education development as required for the broad SDG4 agenda, education sector coordination should be led by a governmental department or structure that has the capacity and legitimacy to mobilize the range of ministerial departments involved in the delivery of SDG4 targets and commitments. Member States should strengthen/adapt or establish institutional arrangements to ensure truly sector-wide coordination, planning and monitoring that go beyond the Department/Ministry of Education alone and create a sense of ownership at the level of all educational actors. Sector coordination could be led by ministry of planning, development, an inter-sectorial SDG4 task force, or a national observatory of education. National SDG4 focal points need to be institutionally located in such a way that they have the mandate to convene, mobilise and coordinate the contributions of wide range of ministerial departments beyond the Ministry of Education.
- ✓ **National prioritization of SDG4 targets:** While prioritization among SDG4 targets is necessary to reflect national policy context and needs, it is essential to ensure that the commitments to universal quality education and lifelong learning is pursued, noting the principle of equal educational opportunities at all levels and strands of education and training.
- ✓ **National capacities in education sector dialogue must be strengthened:** Promote, effectively coordinate and strengthen capacity building for SDG4 implementation of governments, the educational community (education and training institutions, teachers, students, parents...) and civil society, as well as other key actors at country level, and help to establish effective mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- ✓ **There is a need to strengthen national capacities in monitoring and evaluation, as well as in the use of data to inform policies and strategies:** Focus should be put on capacity building in the development of statistical indicators, data collection and availability, reporting, as well as to ensure the necessary framework conditions for efficient implementation.
- ✓ **National education legislation must be strengthened to ensure the right to education for all:** Governments should adjust and/or strengthen national legislation to ensure it reflects the commitments to universal youth literacy, at least one-year of pre-primary education, 12 years of public and free primary and secondary education (of which at least nine years are compulsory), and to equal opportunity in access to post-basic education and training.
- ✓ **Systems of recognition, validation and accreditation of learning must be established and/or strengthened:** Governments should establish or strengthen a system of recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of learning and competencies required for lifelong learning. RVA is essential for the establishment and facilitation of pathways between formal and less formal learning opportunities, as well as between education, training and work.
- ✓ **Reviewing curriculum and teacher training:** National education authorities need to ensure a coherent and coordinated curricular approach that leads to alignment between curriculum

content, and assessment, teacher training, as well as school leadership and management. Effective and relevant learning may require review and strengthening of existing curricula frameworks; teaching and learning contents, pedagogy, materials and classroom teaching practice; assessment frameworks; as well as teacher training and professional development.

VII - Key recommendations of the Financing WG

The following five recommendations on domestic financing, financing data, bilateral and multilateral aid, as well as on the Global Partnerships for Education and the Education Cannot Wait fund, have been proposed by the Financing working group of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee:

1. Domestic Financing

- ✓ Governments should increase public revenues, allocate more of these additional revenues to education and prioritize spending on the most marginalized groups. A share of increased revenue derived from economic growth or larger fiscal space should be allocated to the education sector, with a focus on ensuring basic education is sufficiently financed through public spending.
- ✓ Governments should prioritise sensitive allocation and spending of education resources in ways that focus on increasing equity and supporting the most marginalized groups and disadvantaged children.

2. Financial Data

- ✓ Governments should improve the availability, monitoring, transparency and use of financing data - disaggregated by education sub-sectors - including data on the scale and purpose of household costs of education and household surveys. They should do so through greater scrutiny of education expenditures, increased capacity building in the use of data to inform policy and implementation and increased investment in more effective tools to track public spending on education.
- ✓ Governments should also take steps to understand the scale and purpose of household costs of basic education and take steps to reduce the financial burden on families, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable.

3. Bilateral and multilateral aid

- ✓ Donor governments and multilateral donors (including multilateral development banks) should increase the share of development assistance dedicated to education up to 15 %, while targeting support to countries most in need.
- ✓ Donors should also explore innovative financing instruments to catalyze new and additional financing for education that can multiply scarce ODA. Donors should therefore closely examine the opportunity to establish a new financing facility for education once further details are available about its operational structure and potential impact on financing for the sector.
- ✓ Bilateral and multilateral donors should also increase the share of their humanitarian aid allocated to education while promoting resilience of education systems and strengthening national capacities, including through support to policies and programs aiming at better connecting humanitarian and development aid. This should include efforts to increase ODA progressively to achieve the 4 % target recommended for education in humanitarian aid.

4. Global Partnership for Education

- ✓ Bilateral, philanthropic and private sector donors should increase their funding for the GPE to reach \$2 billion annually by 2020 in order to fully fund grants for its 89 eligible partner countries.

5. Education Cannot Wait

- ✓ Donors should provide \$3.85 billion to support ECW's acceleration and breakthrough funds by 2020 and promote strong articulation with GPE.

VIII - Key messages from the Review, Monitoring and Reporting WG

The following messages are derived from the background paper of the Review, Monitoring and Reporting working group of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, and are supplemented by a recommendation from the Policies and Strategies working group, as well as some recommendations from the 2016 GEM Report 2016 Summary:

- ✓ **Strengthening capacities in monitoring and evaluation:** Countries need to build capacities in the development of statistical indicators, data collection and availability and reporting.
- ✓ **Monitoring for greater equity in educational opportunity:** Monitoring progress towards SDG4– Education 2030 commitments from an equity lens will require collaboration between education ministries and national statistical agencies in order to respond to the urgent need for filling data gaps by using a wider variety of data sources to shed light on basic disparities.
- ✓ **Strengthening national learning assessments:** Countries should establish or improve the quality of national learning assessments to monitor progress in a broad range of learning outcomes over time and use the results to improve teaching and learning.
- ✓ **Quality:** The quality of education cannot be seen only through learning outcomes. Countries need to assess how curricula, textbooks and teacher education programs address topics related to respect for cultural diversity, human rights, and sustainability.
- ✓ **Lifelong learning:** Countries should monitor adult education opportunities and participation since lifelong learning is at the heart of the new agenda.
- ✓ **Policy dialogue and peer learning at regional level:** Regional organizations should be mobilized to introduce or expand platforms for policy dialogue and peer learning since consensus is needed on how best to identify, develop and validate system-level indicators. This is more likely to be reached in regional organizations whose members voluntarily exchange information on their education systems and agree about common purpose, policy priorities and mechanisms.
- ✓ **Prioritization of indicators:** When examining possibilities of prioritization of indicators to advocate on education, governments should consider that the selection of indicators goes beyond data availability or feasibility and needs to take account of relevance and of local or national educational priorities.

Planning next steps & linking with UN processes

Each section below contains either a proposal for consideration and decision or for discussion by the Steering Committee.

High-level event on SDG4 - Education 2030 during UNESCO's 39th General Conference (Paris, 1 November 2017)

As stated in the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA), high-level meetings on SDG4-Education 2030 should be held alongside UNESCO's General Conference. The 2nd Steering Committee meeting held in December 2016 reaffirmed the need for organizing such a high-level meeting. UNESCO will therefore hold a half-day ministerial meeting on SDG 4 alongside the 39th General Conference on 1 November 2017. This afternoon event entitled "**SDG4-Education 2030 – two years on**" will consist of two segments with a focus on **Accountability**. The specific themes are still to be determined, but are proposed to include financing for equity, leadership in implementing the SDG 4, and monitoring and review of SDG 4-Education 2030. During the interactive panels, selected Ministers of Education will be invited to discuss achievements and progress, lessons learnt and way forward. Speakers will be selected in consultation with UNESCO's Regional Electoral Groups.

Maintaining ongoing engagement in regional mechanisms and processes

Regional consultations and partnership mechanisms have been initiated on SDG4-Education 2030 since its adoption and have resulted in the setting up of structures whose work will contribute to the implementation of SDG4 and improved regional tracking of progress against SDG4-Education 2030 targets. As recommended in the first SC meeting, and whenever possible, Steering Committee members have participated in these regional consultations. The following mechanisms have been set up and meetings held:

Arab region: A Regional Partners Support Group was established as a follow-up to the 2015 Cairo Roadmap in order to coordinate support to Member States in advocacy, communication and monitoring of the 2030 agenda. Three consultations of the regional partners group (including UN agencies, ABEGS, ALECSO, CSOs, GPE) were organized in March, July and December 2016. A second region-wide SDG4 consultation was undertaken in March 2017.

Asia and the Pacific: Co-chaired by UNESCO and UNICEF, the Asia-Pacific Regional Thematic Working Group on Education 2030+ met three times (March, May and November 2016) to strengthen support to Member States in the implementation of Education 2030 commitments. During the second Asia-Pacific consultation on SDG4-Education 2030 (APMED2030-II, Bangkok November 2016), the regional network of national SDG4 coordinators was inaugurated and a draft Terms of Reference (ToR) shared. The purpose of this network is to serve as a regional platform for national SDG4 coordinators for knowledge and experience sharing and South-South-North cooperation for the effective implementation and progress monitoring of SDG4-Education 2030. The next APMED meeting is planned to take place in Bangkok, 4-7 July 2017.

East and Southern Africa: The Southern African Regional Consultation on SDG4 (Lusaka, Zambia, 28 September 2016) identified action points including the development of a regional implementation

plan and advocacy strategy, and the sharing of resources and expertise. An East African Regional Consultation was held in Dar-es-Salaam on 15 and 16 February 2017 which was preceded by national consultations to determine country readiness for implementing SDG4-Education 2030, identify priorities and needs, existing institutional frameworks and capacity building needs to establish a roadmap for implementation.

Europe and North America: The Europe and North America SDG4-Education 2030 consultation (Paris, 24-25 October 2016) identified priority areas for the region which include monitoring and agreed on actions to be taken to support the regional, national and sub-national implementation of SDG4.

Latin America and Caribbean: Multi-stakeholder high-level technical meetings were organized in April, May, August and November 2016 on a range of themes, in preparation for the Regional meeting of Education Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held in Buenos Aires on 24 and 25 January 2017. The meeting resulted in the Buenos Aires Declaration 'E2030 Education and Skills for the 21st Century'. A regional implementing partners' group, consisting of convening agencies and key regional actors in Education 2030 was established. In a follow-up regional workshop a regional roadmap was developed.

West and Central Africa: The SDG4-Education 2030 Regional Cooperation Group (RCG4-WCA) was established with regional partners in order to coordinate support to countries in the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 in May 2016. Several follow-up meetings were held in 2016 and 2017 (16 June 2016, 15 September 2016, 8 December 2016, 6 April 2017).

Moreover, during 2016, UNESCO also revitalized the E-9 initiative to enable a more coordinated approach to SDG4-Education 2030 implementation in E-9 countries. An E-9 ministerial meeting on Education 2030 was organized in February 2017 which resulted in a strong declaration that not only reaffirmed the endorsement by the nine countries of the vision, principles, and targets laid out in Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, but also "the role of the E-9 partnership in advancing human solidarity, respect for human rights and human dignity." In addition, the meeting also agreed on modalities for strengthened cooperation and partnerships between E-9 countries around common priorities of the SDG4-Education 2030 targets and commitments, including the more detailed deliberations on the roles and responsibilities of respective partners, and the proposal for joint actions by the nine countries for the next two years under the chairmanship of Bangladesh.

Of note is also the development of sub-regional initiatives/mechanisms for SDG 4 such as for example SAARC, which established the SAARC Framework for Action for Education 2030.

Decision point: All SC members reaffirm their commitment to their participation in the regional and sub-regional processes and mechanisms put in place by participating in meetings/consultations when possible and supporting their work.

CCNGO/Education 2030

With respect to partners from civil society, (CCNGO/Education 2030), and as stated in the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 is the key civil society cooperation mechanism of the global education agenda. On 8 and 9 May 2017, UNESCO organized the global CCNGO meeting in Siem Reap, Cambodia. This meeting brought together key civil society actors from all over the world and discussed and reflected on SDG4-Education 2030

action and challenges, the role of civil society in contributing to the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 at national, regional and global levels in light of the 2030 Agenda and in particular SDG 4. The meeting resulted in revised Working Procedures of the CCNGO to reflect the new SDG4-Education 2030 context. Also, the name of the CCNGO changed to now be called “Collective Consultation of NGO for Education 2030” (CCNGO/ED 2030). Moreover, a new CCNGO Coordination Group was elected which includes NGO representatives from all 5 regions, 2 international NGOs and 2 national ones. The meeting produced an Outcome Document, which also contains recommendations of civil society to stakeholders for the implementation of the education agenda, as well as for civil society, the CCNGO and UNESCO with regard to the CCNGO.

Rotation of SC membership and election of new members in 2018

In line with the SC Terms of Reference, SC members are elected for a period of 2 years. Consequently, rotation of the current SC members will take place in 2018. Consequently, UNESCO will approach the Chairs of all Electoral Groups to start the consultations for new nominations in autumn 2017. By the same token, the other constituencies of the SC will also be asked to undertake discussion regarding rotation.

The current SC members were nominated in April 2016. For them to complete the full 2 years cycle, it is proposed that the next SC meeting (early 2018) will still be held with the current members.

It is expected that the new SC members be nominated by the end of 2017. However, they would assume their membership in the SC following the SC meeting in early 2018.

Decision points:

- The next SC meeting in early 2018 will be held with the current membership.
- New members of the SC assume their position subsequent to this meeting

As regards **co-convening agencies**, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank are full members with one permanent seat each. For the other UN convening Agencies (UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UN Women and ILO) one seat is reserved on rotational basis for the seating agency representing all 5 agencies. However, to ensure a fuller engagement of these key Agencies, it is proposed for each of the five Agencies to have a permanent seat at the SC.

Decision point: All co-convening agencies have a permanent seat in the SC.

The FFA stipulates that the composition of the SC “a rotating group of **affiliated members** will be constituted, ensuring regional balance by the Education 2030; it will include representatives of the private sector, foundations, and youth and student organizations. Affiliated members will participate in meetings as observers, upon invitation by the SDG-Education 2030 SC” (para. 94). The possibility to grant permanent status for affiliate members (currently foundations, youth and private sector) is subjected for discussions of the SC.

Decision point: All three affiliated members are granted permanent status in the SC following the regular rotational rules.

2018 Steering Committee Meeting – Date and Objectives

It is proposed to hold the next SC meeting in February 2018 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France. The meeting will focus on: (1) the work undertaken by the Working Groups as outlined in their respective action plans for the second semester of 2017 in order to validate results and endorse proposed recommendations and follow-up actions; and (2) the preparation of the Global Education 2030 Meeting to be held during the last quarter of 2018.

2018 Global Education 2030 Meeting (GEM)

As stated in the Education 2030 Framework for Action, periodic Global Education 2030 Meeting will be organized by UNESCO aligned with the schedule of the HLPF. The main purpose of the GEM will be to **critically assess progress towards SDG4-Education 2030**, share outcomes with the appropriate overall global follow-up and review mechanisms for the SDGs and to **agree on tangible actions for follow-up**. The review of progress will be based on the Global Education Monitoring Report and regional and national reports.

The outcomes of the GEM will inform the HLPF. To ensure substantive discussions, it is proposed that the GEM will last three days and consist of: (1) a technical segment for senior officials; and (2) a ministerial/high-level segment for Ministers, Vice-Ministers and heads of other constituencies.

All members of the SC will participate in the GEM. In addition, each UNESCO regional electoral groups will be invited to select seven additional countries to represent their region at the GEM. It should be underlined that these countries represent not only their countries, but rather their region, and should therefore undertake adequate consultation with all countries within their region before and after the GEM.

In addition, regional organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector, research institutes, foundations, and youth representatives will be invited.

As the 2019 HLPF theme will be “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness”. The set of goals to be reviewed in depth will be the following: 3, 4, 5, 10, 16 and 17. Intergovernmental bodies and forums are expected to provide substantive inputs to HLPFs² to showcase the body’s contribution towards the 2030 Agenda. It is critical to assure solid input, including from the Global Education 2030 Meeting. In order to allow sufficient time for data collection and preparation with the most up-to-date available, it is proposed to hold the GEM during the last quarter of 2018.

The process of the preparation of GEM will require more time, and therefore it is proposed that this will take place online over the coming months. The Secretariat will draft a Concept Note of the GEM by October 2017 and circulate it to SC members for comments. Further, necessary preparatory activities will be proposed and discussed, including how the Working groups could contribute to the preparation of the GEM.

²The General Assembly resolution 70/1, letter of the President of ECOSOC
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/12890Letter_of_ECOSOC_President_to_functional_commissions_and_IG_bodies_thematic_reviews_at_2017_HLPF.pdf

Decision points:

- Proposed dates of the GEM are late 2018.
- Selection of participants: 10 countries per regional electoral group are proposed to participate in the GEM.

Discussion points :

- Possible host country
- Process of elaboration of the Concept note and objectives of the GEM

Linking with UN processes

HLPF

The 2018 HLPF, under the auspices of ECOSOC, has the theme of “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”. In addition to voluntary national reviews (VNR)³, the following subset of SDGs will be reviewed in-depth: SDG6, SDG7, SDG11, SDG12 and SDG15.

Intergovernmental bodies, including the SDG-Education 2030 SC, are expected to provide inputs for the review. The RMR WG proposes supporting SC efforts through reviewing the experience from the preparation of the input for the 2016 and 2017 HLPF ahead of the corresponding submission for the 2018 HLPF with the objective to improve the efficiency of the process and to maximize the effectiveness of the input at the level of the HLPF, with special reference to the areas for political guidance and the policy recommendations. SC RMR WG proposes to prepare a **paper for the next SC meeting that would outline the options for drafting and reviewing the submission** for the 2019 HLPF input.

Discussion points:

- What should be the process for preparing the input to the next HLPF?
- Is it agreeable that the RMR WG prepares a paper for the next SC meeting that would outline the options for drafting and reviewing the submission for the 2019 HLPF input?

³ The following countries are currently part of the 2018 VNR: Bahamas, Bahrain, Bhutan, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Jamaica, Latvia, Niger, Poland, Republic of the Congo, Singapore, Switzerland, Vietnam

ANNEX

Information on the group of friends on GCED

On 1 June, the Permanent Missions of the State of Qatar and the Republic of Korea to the UN in New York launched the United Nations Group of Friends on Education for Global Citizenship with main objective to **create an informal space for Member states to discuss issues of GCED to foster focused and action-oriented dialogues.**

The Group will aim to **explore and advocate the inclusion of a GCED curriculum** in the overall process of empowerment and capacity building of youth and women in the formal, informal and non-formal education sectors. It will also have a focus on how the SDG 4.7 will support and benefit the peace aspects of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, Members of the Group will be encouraged to i) discuss and promote the role of the GCED through the work of the UN as a fundamental approach to tackling rising global challenges, including violent extremism, the refugee/migration crisis and climate change; ii) promote the GCED in current discussions on 'sustaining peace'; iii) to advocate for agreed message on the role of the GCED for the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and iv) to promote coordination with UNESCO, UN Academic Impact and UN Alliance of Civilizations.

The Group will have ad-hoc meetings both at ambassadorial and expert levels in New York and it is expected to hold at least **one high level event in the September High level Summit of the UNGA.**

Information on the Global Education Ecosystem⁴ Initiative

On April 20th, 2017 the Center for Universal Education at Brookings and Teach For All convened a roundtable on "Strengthening the Global Education Ecosystem to Foster Education For All," bringing together a group of stakeholders to discuss how to collectively move forward on the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity report's recommendation for greater investment in global public goods to fuel a global ecosystem for building **local capacity and fostering knowledge-sharing across borders.**

The Ecosystem Initiative puts forward that on one hand, local level implementation is both a potential source of learning for others, and a potential consumer of global knowledge. On the one hand, local institutions benefit tremendously when they can tap into global experience and are empowered to adapt best practices or innovation. Two major barriers have been identified: First, challenges of **translating local innovations that work on the ground into global knowledge** that can adequately be transferred. There are a great number of innovations and experiments going on worldwide, but only a small minority ever surface to the global level. Moreover, there is a lack of mechanisms to identify and capture insights about local innovations. Secondly, challenges that lead to **insufficient and delayed adaptation and adoption of effective best practices.**

Achieving the SDG 4-Education 2030 goals will rest upon **strong local leaders** who are empowered and supported to develop effective solution, **adopt and contextualize best practices from others,** and continuously improve. Local stakeholders can benefit immensely from a stronger and better-coordinated set of global stakeholders, **bringing together a world of knowledge, experience, and deep expertise for local benefit.**

⁴ « ...global education ecosystem, consisting of global actors with the primary intent to make education equitable and universal, as well as their relationships and interactions, flows of information, platforms, and global public goods. », page 4 of the background paper

The roundtable put forward the following actions to strengthen the global education ecosystem and to initiate the discussion around this topic:

1. **Strengthen commitment to support local capacity** through leveraging learning and innovation across borders and acknowledge the importance of an enabling global ecosystem achieving this.
2. **Increase support** for and investments by public and private funders in the development of global public goods, including **an infrastructure for fostering local capacity to adapt, learn, and share.**
3. Provide opportunities for ongoing discussions among diverse actors at global and local levels on how best to strengthen the global education ecosystem to develop deeper sector insights about critical needs, best enabling practices, metrics and impact measurement for the global ecosystem, funding mechanisms, etc.