

SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee

7th Meeting: Final Report

Paris, 11 – 12 November 2019



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Joint Statement of the Steering Committee to the General Conference

The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee's Statement to Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education, on the occasion of the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference

13 November 2019

Four years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we remain convinced that equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning holds the key to achieving this universal and transformative Agenda to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path, socially, environmentally and economically.

Despite sterling efforts of governments and partners to advance this transformative vision of education, progress on SDG 4 is falling far short of what is needed to achieve its targets by 2030.

On current trends, 225 million children between 6 and 17 years of age will be out of school in 2030, representing a mere 14% decrease from 2017ⁱ. Currently, only half of youth complete secondary school, and 6 out of 10 children and adolescents worldwide do not achieve minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics. Over 750 million adults still cannot read and write.

Participation at tertiary level remains vastly unequal within and across countries: 20% of the world's richest 25 to 29 year olds are completing 4 years of higher education while less than 1% of the poorest can do soⁱⁱ.

It is clear from all these facts that we face a learning crisis that threatens the entire 2030 Agenda.

Accordingly, the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee calls for a bolder policy focus and interventions to address inclusion not least for refugees and displaced people, greater attention to teacher recruitment and training, improving the relevance and quality of learning and accelerating gender equality at all levels of education. This requires stronger capacity to implement reforms, investment in data to inform action, increased mobilization of domestic financing and coordinated international cooperation to fill the financing gap and assurance of commitments to free public education.

The Steering Committee commends the resolve of the higher education community gathered at UNESCO today to enhance inclusion, equity and mobility in higher education, including through leveraging the potential of digital technologies, research and innovation. Higher education is critical for achieving all the SDGs and ensuring environmental sustainability, prosperity and social justice and inclusion. Furthermore, higher education is fundamental for improving teacher training and promoting lifelong learning. We call for the adoption and implementation of the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, which marks a milestone in international cooperation to facilitate the fair and transparent recognition of qualifications and the mobility of students, faculty, and researchers. We also encourage commitment to a culture of quality assurance and respect for academic freedom, professional and institutional autonomy, and other principles and standards related to higher educationⁱⁱⁱ.

The Steering Committee, as a unique platform for universal cooperation and coordination on SDG 4, today calls for political engagement at the highest level, stronger collective action and reinforced partnerships to realize our shared commitments and responsibility.

ⁱ UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Global Education Monitoring Report Team. (2019). *Meeting commitments: are countries on track to achieve SDG 4?*. Paris: UNESCO.

ⁱⁱ UNESCO. (2016). *Global Education Monitoring Report. Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all*. Paris: UNESCO.

ⁱⁱⁱ In particular, the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) and the UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2017).

Meeting highlights

At its 7th meeting, the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee:

- Took stock of the key messages and outcomes of major 2019 events, notably the High-level Political Forum, and reflected on how to position the Steering Committee in light of the emergence of new actors and initiatives, to further strengthen collective action, joint leadership and contribute to the shaping of agendas, as well as to the overall shaping of the global education architecture.
- Discussed opportunities for engagement, positioning and joint advocacy in 2020 and beyond based on a calendar of events, to have a shared overview of opportunities for building synergies with and influencing international initiatives and processes.
- Engaged in an exchange on how regions are adapting and implementing SDG 4, to highlight both challenges, as well as achievements of each regional coordination mechanism.
- Presented the draft outline of the first policy papers of the Steering Committee's four thematic working groups on 1) equity and inclusion; 2) teachers; 3) skills; 4) higher education), which will focus respectively on the following (tentative) themes:
 - Every learner matters and matters equally: moving from discrimination to inclusion
 - Ensuring continuous professional development for all teachers: a key to quality education
 - Making education and training flexible and responsive to new demands for skills in society and the economy
 - Strengthening inclusion in higher education
- Agreed to set up an ad hoc working group to engage with the Futures of Education initiative.
- Was briefed on the orientations of the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report and the launch of country profiles for better data evidence, as well as on the status of implementation of the Thematic Indicator Framework to monitor SDG 4.
- Discussed the status of affiliate members and the possibility of granting the latter regular membership status, as well as the process for the selection and rotation of specific constituencies and agreed to expand the category of affiliate members to four members, to include a student representative in the Steering Committee, in addition to the youth representative.
- Had the honor of welcoming high-level representatives from 18 countries in the context of a ministerial panel in which 16 Ministers participated to share challenges and priority actions to accelerate progress towards SDG 4.
- Had the privilege to exchange with the President of the UN General Assembly who delivered a special address.
- Agreed upon and delivered a joint statement to the Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education, on the occasion of the 40th UNESCO General Conference.

Introduction

The 7th meeting of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC) took place on the eve of the last SDG decade and followed an in-depth review of SDG 4 at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2019. To maintain the momentum, the SC met at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 11 and 12 November 2019, coinciding with the opening of the 40th Session of the UNESCO General Conference. The meeting notably included two special sessions, a Ministerial Panel, in which 16 Ministers and Vice Ministers of Education participated and an address by the President of the UN General Assembly.

Over the past months, while the SC has made concerted efforts to raise its visibility and influence through a joint contribution to the 2019 HLPF and the co-chairs' prominent speaking roles at various HLPF events, several new initiatives have been established or strengthened their visibility, including the Global Education Forum initiated by the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, the GPE's launch of the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange, UNICEF's Generation Unlimited partnership on education and skills, and increased support for Education Cannot Wait. Therefore, the SC needs to enhance its role as a politically oriented platform in line with its mandate to provide strategic guidance or the coordinated implementation of SDG 4. As such, the key objectives of the 7th SC meeting were the following:

Objectives

- Take stock of recent key UN events and gain a shared understanding of new initiatives with a view to ensuring articulation with the SC and strengthening the latter's political engagement around key priorities
- Share regional coordination developments with a view to improving linkages and communications between national, regional and global dimensions of SDG 4 coordination
- Acquire a shared vision of opportunities for engagement and advocacy in 2020
- Review and guide the directions proposed by the four working groups
- Agree on the Terms of Reference for affiliate members and a renewal process for constituencies (youth, private sector, foundations)
- Strategy to engage with the Futures of Education initiative

Expected outcomes

- Agreement on how to enhance the role of the SC as a politically oriented platform to support SDG 4 coordination and implementation through common positioning, advocacy and improved regional action
- Agreement on the Joint Statement to the General Conference's Ministerial meeting on higher education
- Agreement on priority joint engagement actions and messaging in 2020

This report summarizes the highlight of the two-day SC meeting and outlines next steps to be taken by the SC as a whole. It is organized in line with the main themes of the meeting's agenda. Discussions were guided by a series of background papers which may be accessed on the SC website (<https://www.sdg4education2030.org/>). The Meeting Agenda and List of Members are annexed to this report (Annex I and II respectively).

Opening session

The 7th SC meeting was opened by Ms Stefania Giannini, the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee. She recalled the outcomes and the significance of key events in 2019 and emphasized that the world is off track to achieve the SDG education targets and thus needs urgent and concerted efforts to accelerate progress. This was followed by welcome remarks by Mr Kazuhiro Yoshida, Co-Chair of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and representative of Japan, and the adoption of the meeting agenda.

Acting on key 2019 events and strengthening connections with new initiatives

Session objective

The objective of this session was to take stock of recent key UN events and gain a shared understanding of new initiatives with a view to ensuring articulation with the SC and strengthening the latter's political engagement around key priorities.

Speakers

Colombia - Mr Santiago Fernández de Soto, Head of Cooperation and International Relations of the Minister of Education of Colombia; **Youth representative** - Ms Victoria Ibiwoye, Director of the OneAfricaChild Foundation for Creative Learning; **Norway** - Ms Gerd-Hanne Fosen, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation; **Education International** - Mr Dennis Sinyolo, Senior Coordinator, Education, Employment and Research; Global Campaign for Education - Ms Madeleine Zuniga, Vice-President; **UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education** and Co-Chair – Ms Stefania Giannini; **Co-Chair** of the Steering Committee and representative of **Japan** – Mr Kaz Yoshida.

Moderator

Mr Jordan Naidoo, Director, Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination, UNESCO

Highlights

Opening the discussion, Mr Jordan Naidoo, Director, UNESCO Education 2030 Support and Coordination highlighted that the key events of 2019 sent a clear, unanimous message: despite the progress achieved to date, the international community will on current trends fail to meet its joint commitments in the field of education by 2030. In this vein, he stressed the need to advocate for the actual recognition that the world is facing an acute learning crisis, calling for concrete responses, and underscored the key role the Steering Committee has to play in supporting countries and partners in taking action and making change happen.

In the context of the subsequent panel discussion, Mr Santiago Fernández de Soto, Head of Cooperation and International Relations of the Minister of Education of Colombia shared valuable key messages and takeaways from the International Forum on inclusion and equity in education, which took place from 11 to 13 September 2019 in Cali, Colombia. In this regard he informed that the Cali

Forum highlighted that stronger political will is needed to move towards inclusion. Furthermore, lack of data remains a critical challenge. To elaborate and effectively implement policies at the national level, countries have to be able to identify who is excluded and when (i.e. in which phase of the education process). As such, developing the capacities of national bureaus of statistics remains essential. The Cali Forum also called for the inclusion of all stakeholders, notably teachers, the young, as well as civil society in both planning, as well as policy implementation.

Ms Victoria Ibiwoye, Director of the OneAfricaChild Foundation for Creative Learning, Youth representative on the Steering Committee shared key takeaways of the ECOSOC Youth Forum, informing that great emphasis was put on the need to move beyond access to education to also take into account inclusion and equity, as well interlinkages between SDG 4 and other goals. The recommendations of the Youth Forum call on the international community to safeguard the right to inclusive quality education for all and empower learners to become actors of change. Moreover, the Forum highlighted the need to provide additional training and internship opportunities for youth and underscored that opportunities for the meaningful engagement of youth have to be further expanded.

Ms Gerd-Hanne Fosen from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation recalled that the Steering Committee has a broad mandate, calling for a set of clear priorities. Ms Fosen stressed that the learning crisis is the first aspect the Steering Committee has to focus on, together with equity and inclusion to reach the most vulnerable. She underscored that nothing can be achieved without collective action and that the Steering Committee works as hub and can even to a greater extent bring initiatives together. Ms Fosen stated that the emergence of new initiatives has to be welcomed, as it reflects an increasing interest in education. The Steering Committee can contribute to the development of a sense of joint ownership and ensure that the momentum of 2019 is kept. Further, UNESCO as the lead agency for education has to continue to play a key role in bringing all actors together.

Mr Dennis Sinyolo, representative of Education International on the Steering Committee, informed that Education International has conducted an assessment on progress made towards the achievement of SDG 4, which identified the following key challenges:

- Inadequate investment in education, both domestic, as well as external
- Inadequate investment in teachers

In light of the above, six concrete recommendations should be considered at the national level:

1. Governments need to finance and implement effective teacher policies.
2. Teacher qualifications have to be expanded and in-service training further encouraged.
3. Countries have to engage with each other to organize cross border recruitment.
4. The building of learning communities and teacher networks has to be supported.
5. Mechanisms for social policy dialogue have to be strengthened to involve teachers in the development and implementation of policies and to ensure adequate salaries and working conditions.
6. Professional teaching standards have to be further strengthened.

Ms Madeleine Zuniga, Vice-President of the Global Campaign for Education shared the concern that the budget allocated to education is being reduced in many countries. Civil society is also concerned about the stagnation of progress related to target 4.7 in light of its considerable relevance for the promotion of a culture of peace, non-discrimination and respect for the planet. Ms Zuniga further underscored that we need a deeper understanding of what inclusion in education means and to acknowledge that the concept of inclusion is closely linked to the principle of lifelong learning. She further emphasised the lack of data continues to be a serious problem and provided additional information on the GCE's efforts to present a series of spotlight reports, seeking to complement the voluntary national reports of countries by adding qualitative data.

Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee further stressed the need for well-informed policies and quality data and underscored that Africa has to be maintained as a priority. Ms Giannini also reiterated that ensuring the right to education for all remains the responsibility of governments, adding that improving learning outcomes, as well as the quality and quantity of teachers at country level has to be prioritized. Finally, the Assistant Director-General reiterated the need for up-scaled joint advocacy to mobilize domestic, as well as external funding for education and warned that the cost of inaction is considerable.

Lastly, Mr Kaz Yoshida, co-Chair of the Steering Committee and representative of Japan, talked about how the Steering Committee can engage with new initiatives and ensure that the momentum is kept and education continues to be recognized at the highest level as being at the heart of sustainable development. In this regard, Mr Yoshida highlighted the need to ensure adequate coordination to avoid duplication and to foster complementarity. Moreover, the Co-Chair also reiterated the need to scale up joint advocacy to mobilize domestic, as well as external funding for education.

How are regions adapting and implementing the SDG4 agenda?

Session objective

The objective of this session was to share regional coordination developments, with a view to improving linkages and communications between national, regional and global dimensions of SDG 4 coordination.

Speakers

ABEG – Mr Abdusalam Aljoufi, Advisor; Republic of Korea – Mr Kwangho Kim, Secretary-General, Korean National Commission for UNESCO; Burkina Faso – Mr Yerbkou, Bienvenu Bonaventure Méda, Inspector for Secondary Education , completed by the UNESCO Harare Office – Ms Carolyn, Medel-Anonuevo, Senior Programme Specialist; Colombia - Mr Santiago Fernández de Soto, Head of Cooperation and International Relations of the Minister of Education of Colombia and Ms Claudia Uribe, Director of the UNESCO Office in Santiago/Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Moderator

Ms Cynthia Guttman, Chief, Section for SDG 4 Leadership, Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination, UNESCO

Highlights

1. Arab States

The Arab region is facing highly complex demographic and socio-economic situations, with several countries experiencing protracted crisis and fragility. The region completed three two-year regional roadmaps to guide the integration of the global SDG 4 agenda into national education policies, the current one being the Dead Sea Roadmap for 2019-2020. The Arab Regional Support Group for ED2030 was established in 2016 as the region's coordination mechanism and solid technical group to support Member States in the implementation of regional roadmaps with three policy priorities: education in emergencies, quality and relevance of education, and the financing of education. In a region which is affected by multiple crises, the Education 2030 Agenda provides an opportunity to rebuild national education systems towards long-term goals and thus create a critical nexus between development and humanitarian endeavours. On the other hand, the comprehensive nature of the Education 2030 Agenda poses challenges for the region, especially in terms of resource and capacity needs at the country level, as well as in terms of insufficient vertical and horizontal linkages (global-regional-country levels; and within the Education 2030 Agenda) and human resources to manage coordination and partnership.

2. Asia and the Pacific

The region of Asia and the Pacific has huge geographical coverage and immense diversities in terms of cultures, languages, levels of development and educational situations. The region adopted a five-phased regional roadmap to support SDG 4-Education 2030 planning, implementation and monitoring, and at this moment, it is at the end of the second phase. For an efficient regional coordination, the region has several mechanisms, such as the Regional Thematic Working Group on Education 2030+, the Asia-Pacific Meeting on SDG 4-Education 2030 (APMED2030) and a regional network of national SDG 4-Education 2030 coordinators. In order to support countries effectively, the region needs additional resources to reach out, expand and sustain the engagement of countries, partners as well as other sectors in the SDG 4 implementation. Priority actions of the region for the next 2-3 years are the removal of barriers to equity, inclusion and quality; the eradication of illiteracy; increasing the quantity and quality of teaching force; the up scaling of investment in education; the strengthening monitoring of inclusion, equity and quality; and the mapping of existing national education plans, policies, strategies, programmes and capacity in light of SDG 4.

3. Africa

The political and social instability and structural obstacles are the main constraints that slow down the countries' improvement in the quality and equity of education for the achievement of SDG 4. The continent is facing a major learning crisis but countries lack sufficient resources to produce data and evidence for policy making, programme development and monitoring of the education sector. As regards the regional coordination mechanism, the region adopted in 2015 two agendas, the SDG 4-Education 2030 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25) led by the African Union (AU). In addition, a joint CESA-SDG4 Education 2030 coordination mechanisms was called for at the Pan-African High-level Conference on Education (PACE) in April 2018 to bridge and articulate these global and continental education agendas in coordination and collaboration among

AU, UN Regional Coordination Mechanisms as well as the pan-African institutions including the African Development Bank (AfDB). While UNESCO and the AU are exploring ways to strengthen synergies, they have been carrying out joint capacity development activities for the SDG4-CESA implementation and monitoring. Moreover, in Western and Central Africa, the Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-ED2030 has been mobilizing and coordinating partners to support the countries' SDG 4-Education 2030 implementation in alignment with CESA. In Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) published the 'SADC industrialization strategy and roadmap 2015-2063', which includes inter-ministerial cooperation, efficient data generation and its effective utilization, capacity development, etc. with teachers, TVET and ESD identified as priority needs.

4. Latin America and the Caribbean

Equity and inclusion, the provision of lifelong learning opportunities, the quality of education, and teachers are mentioned as common challenges among countries of the region. The Regional Steering Committee (RSC) aims to ensure regional coherence, coordination and communication within the region and between regional and global levels, as well as to promote collaboration and collective action among countries for the achievement of the Education 2030 Agenda. The coordination mechanism and the roadmap that were adopted at the 2nd Meeting of Ministers of Education in July 2019 promote a stronger commitment and ownership of the process by the countries. On the other hand, the region is facing challenges related to limited resources, insufficient alignment of agendas of different regional and international organizations. As preparation for the third ministerial meeting in 2021, the RSC will develop a set of recommendations of policy commitments to act upon key priority issues of the regional education agenda. The region is also strengthening the intersectoral, multi-sectoral partnerships in the regional SDG 4-Education 2030 implementation roadmap, especially, on issues related Target 4.7.

Report from the Working Groups

Session objective

In this session, the four thematic working groups of the Steering Committee presented the scope of their work and expected output over the next year. In this regard, each working group presented the draft outline of its first policy paper.

Speakers

UNICEF – Mr Sherif Yunus Hydara; **Burkina Faso** – Mr Yerbkou Bienvenu Bonaventure Méda, Inspector for Secondary Education; **United Arab Emirates** – Ms Mahra Hilal Al Mutaiwei, Director, Regional Center for Educational Planning; and **ILO** – Mr Oliver Liang, Education Specialist, sectorial Policies Department

Highlights

In the context of the session, the Co-Chairs of the four working groups on 1) equity and inclusion; 2) teachers; 3) skills; and 4) higher education presented the overall theme covered in the respective working group's first policy paper and provided additional information on the angle to be adopted.

The working group on **inclusion** explained that its paper will aim to shed light on the fact that the roots of discrimination range from prejudices and cultural norms to socio-economic inequalities and unsafe learning environments. The paper will examine who is particularly at risk of being left behind and analyze associated factors in an attempt to propose concrete solutions for dismantling discriminatory practices to move from discrimination to inclusion. It will argue for an integrated approach, putting emphasis both on challenges related to guaranteeing equal *access* to quality education, as well as ensuring actual *completion*.

The working group on **teachers** emphasized that guaranteeing quality teaching in every classroom requires initial training and continuous professional development (CPD). The working group highlighted the wide regional variations in the proportion of trained teachers. Its paper will examine: the lack of internationally comparable data and metrics; effective approaches and models; accreditation, certification and recognition of upgrading programs for unqualified/underqualified teachers; challenges related to the funding of CPD.

The **skills** working group paper will look at how education and training can become more flexible and responsive to new demands for skills. It will present elements that facilitate school-to-work and work-to-work transition as well as describe impact of upskilling and lifelong learning on the productivity of the labor market and introduce several examples of countries that have launched and implemented evidence-based skills development policies.

The **higher education** working group paper will explain that despite the rapid expansion of higher education in the past two decades, there are significant disparities in gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education amongst regions and within countries. It will review the existing challenges and current policies. The paper will argue that further refinement and expansion of corrective measures together with structural public policies, including building strong links between secondary and tertiary level, are necessary to ensure that no one is left behind in higher education.

Next steps

- The working groups will submit the policy papers for endorsement by the Steering Committee at its first meeting in 2020.

Working modalities and Terms of Reference

Session objective

The purpose of the session was to discuss and decide on Terms of Reference (ToRs) for affiliate members, as well as on the process for renewal, rotation and selection of specific constituencies.

Highlights

The discussions and exchanges which took place in the context of this session, resulted in the following decisions as to next steps:

1. Since some Steering Committee members expressed reservation to accord regular membership status to the affiliate members of the Steering Committee until it is so decided at a ministerial-level meeting, this decision was postponed to the next Global Education Meeting.
2. The Steering Committee agreed that the youth constituency will have two representatives, one representing the youth constituency broadly, and the other the student category of this constituency.
3. The criteria and selection process of the new Steering Committee members for these constituencies will be drafted by the Secretariat in consultation with the Bureau for the approval of the Steering Committee prior to its next meeting in 2020, for the next term of the Steering Committee beginning in 2021.
4. In the interim, the current representatives of these three constituencies will complete this term of the Steering Committee to the end of 2020.

i) Global Education Monitoring Report 2020 on inclusion and beyond ii) Global and thematic indicators: Status of implementation and future perspectives

Session objective

i) This session provided an opportunity for the Steering Committee to be briefed by the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) team on the orientations of the 2020 GEM Report on inclusion, including the launch of country profiles and possibilities for the Steering Committee to engage in launches and national, as well as regional outreach.

ii) The session further included a presentation of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) on key decisions from the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) Meeting and the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML), held in Yerevan, Armenia in August 2019 and the role of the Steering Committee in supporting the plans and actions for better data.

Highlights

i) Global Education Monitoring Report

The presentation of the Director highlighted that the 2030 GEM Report will be covering six areas of inclusion, namely 1) laws and policies; 2) governance and finance; 3) curricula, learning materials and assessment; 4) teachers and support personnel; 5) schools and learning environments and 6) communities, parents and students. In addition, throughout the 2020 Report, greater emphasis will be put on disabilities. In order to collect information on all countries on the six areas outlined above, country profiles are being prepared by the GEM Report team. Country profiles are developed in house, validated by experts and in the final stage validated by the respective governments. The full set of profiles will be unloaded in March 2020 at the time of the launch of the Report

In addition to the inclusive education profiles, the GEM Report is in the process of collecting information on financing policies targeting the most vulnerable groups. The elaboration of these financing country profiles will include the systematic mapping of regulatory frameworks related to non-state actors in education, as well as of gender equality in education laws and policies.

ii) UNESCO Institute for Statistics

In the context of her presentation, the UIS Director presented the status of the implementation of the SDG 4 monitoring framework. She informed that the 10th meeting of the IAEG-SDGs, which took place in Addis Ababa from 21 to 25 October 2019, resulted in the upgrading to tier I of indicator 4.1.1 on learning in primary and secondary education, as well as in the adding of a new global indicator for Target 4.1: completion rate (submit to UNSC).

The Director further provided an overview of the methodological developments that took place in the context of the 6th meeting of TCG and GAML, notably highlighting the significant progress achieved in resolving issues and building consensus on Target 4.1.1. Further, she informed that UIS has proposed the development of a Global Coalition for Education Data as a way to improve the institutional organization of TCG. In this regard, UIS would serve as a broker between countries and development partners to improve the production and use of high-quality data. This proposal was endorsed by the Multilateral Education Partners at their September 2019 meeting.

Finally, the members of the Steering Committee were briefed on recent UIS SDG 4 database developments and UIS support to countries for SDG 4 indicators, notably through the 2019 SDG 4 Data Digest, the objective of which is to guide data collection on SDG 4 indicators.

Ministerial Panel

Highlights

During this session, 16 ministers and 2 high-level representatives from **18 countries (Andorra, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Cuba, Grenada, Guatemala, Iraq, Kenya, Mexico, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe)** presented the development of an impressive array of constitutional and legal reforms, plans, frameworks and activities recently established to strengthen access and completion of quality education opportunities for all at all levels,.

Substantial emphasis was put by all represented countries on the importance of providing today's children and youth, as well as future generations with the necessary skills to adapt to complex 21st century challenges, from the digital revolution to the imperatives of climate change, and to become actors in building inclusive, democratic and sustainable knowledge societies.

In this vein, all represented countries testified to investments and new initiatives developed to improve the provision of quality education. The recruitment and training of qualified teachers, reforms in TVET, improved science and technology programs, better adaptation of curriculum to the changing world of work and investment in infrastructure were among priority areas cited. Many countries also highlighted efforts to integrate the comprehensive and lifelong vision of SDG4, in particular through expanded early childhood education, and adult education programs.

They stressed the overarching priority to leave no one behind through programs tailored to vulnerable groups, and introducing or strengthening school feeding programs, supporting minorities and refugees, or increasing the number of scholarships for those most disadvantaged.

Furthermore, many countries reported on the recent development of programs promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation for the environment and cultural diversity, essential concepts all learners must acquire to contribute to the advancement of all 17 SDGs

Recalling that the world is no on track to achieve SDG4, Ministers highlighted insufficient financing, access to adequate and safe schools in crisis or conflict areas, lack of qualified, trained and motivated teachers, inadequate data provision and analysis, and schools dropout as major persisting challenges.

In closing, represented countries recalled the collective responsibility of responding to the urgency of the education crisis. The ADG also reiterated the necessity to maintain and reinforce the shared financial and political investment by all countries and to upscale the work and impact of the Steering Committee as the leading mechanism for the realization of SDG 4 with the full support of UNESCO.

Opportunities for engagement in 2020 and beyond

Session objective

This session was dedicated to a discussion on opportunities for reinforcing the position of the Steering Committee within an increasingly complex global education architecture, as well as on strategies for strengthening joint advocacy. As such, the overall key objective was to have a shared overview of opportunities for building synergies with and influencing key international initiatives and processes.

Highlights

The representative of the Secretariat recalled the main communication and outreach highlights of 2019, notably by referring to global advocacy on the key messages of the Steering Committee's submission to HLPF, the HLPF brochure "Education Transforms Lives", the special exhibition organized at UN Headquarters on the occasion of HLPF, as well as the digital campaigns #ActingTogether4Education and #CommitToEducation, which were conceived in cooperation with the GEM Report and UIS.

On a forward-looking note, the Secretariat presented the advocacy and communication objectives plan for 2020, suggesting the following main lines of action:

1. Dissemination and promotion of the work produced by the Steering Committee (key recommendations of the Steering Committee's submission to HLPF, policy papers of the working groups, good practices)
2. Community building and dialogue (increased communication with regional Steering Committees, establishment of the Steering Committee's youth advocacy group)

3. Enhance the Committee's online presence

4. Participation in strategic events in 2020 (based on the calendar of events prepared by the Secretariat)

The session also included a presentation by Ms Annina Mattson from Dubai Cares on "RewirEd", a major global summit on education, to be organized in the context of the Expo 2020 in Dubai from 17 to 19 March 2021. RewirEd will be focusing on three main pillars 1) education financing; 2) innovation in education and 3) youth, skills and the future of work. As such, the summit seeks to provide a platform for key stakeholders to agree on a shared vision and concrete action for getting back on track to meet the international community's education commitments by 2030. Finally, Ms Mattson invited the Steering Committee to engage with the RewirEd, possibly through the organization of a side event or exhibition.

Steering Committee members did in general welcome the opportunity to hear from non-Steering Committee partners about their initiatives and activities in the field of education. Regarding the Steering Committee's overall engagement and interaction with new initiatives, several members underscored the importance of being more proactive rather than reactive, to not simply concentrate on the dissemination of key messages but engage in a more strategic manner with other key actors of the global education architecture.

In addition, several representatives expressed their concern that these new actors may constitute a serious threat to the leadership of UNESCO, as well as to that of the Steering Committee in the field of education. In this regard, Steering Committee members appeared to agree on the need to increase the relevance of its activities to consolidate and maintain its mandated role as the global consultation and coordination mechanism for education in the 2030 Agenda.

The discussions highlighted that the Steering Committee's engagement with new initiatives is a topic requiring additional attention, notably in light of the recent establishment of the Global Education Forum and Multilateral Education Partners platform. In this regard, it was emphasized that the Steering Committee has to take an active role in shaping both of the latter to further assert its leadership and play an active role in responding to the changes in the global education architecture.

Special Address by the President of the UN General Assembly

Highlights

Addressing the Steering Committee, UN General Assembly President Mr Tijjani Muhammad-Bande affirmed that he had made quality education a key priority of his mandate. While recognizing the "remarkable efforts into ensuring quality education in your constituencies," he urged for more to be done to remove all barriers in order to guarantee access and quality education for all. "Education is

enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and as such it is our responsibility to guarantee that it is upheld in all contexts.” He underlined that “it is the responsibility of governments to include everyone”.

He stressed the importance of holistic, cross-cutting approaches, highlighting key areas of investment and action to achieve SDG4: infrastructure including ICT, strong curriculum, learning assessment, teachers’ qualifications and skills development. He underscored the importance of education policies and programs focusing on disadvantaged children, including girls’ education especially in STEM, mother tongue-based instruction, targeted education for learners affected by conflict and crisis and children with disabilities.

He called on countries to allocate 4% of GDP and 15% of public expenditure to education and urged donors to meet the UN target of 0.7% of gross national income to foreign aid and to direct 10% of the latter to primary and secondary education to bridge the funding gap.

President Muhammad-Bande will convene a high-level event to mark International Education Day on 24 January 2020 in full partnership with UNESCO and encouraged countries’ participation. He moreover called on countries to forge new partnerships and deepen existing ones: “Consider me as your partner in all of your endeavors in the area education”.

Futures of Education exchange

Session objective

The main objective of this session was to give Steering Committee members an opportunity to engage with the Futures of Education team and discuss modalities for continued engagement in the Futures of Education initiative

Highlights

Mr Sobhi Tawil, head of the Futures of Education team, recalled that the overall aim of the Futures of Education initiative is to generate an agenda for global debate and action on the futures of education, learning and knowledge in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty and precarity. Mr Tawil further explained that to steer this reflection process over the next two years, an International Commission of eminent personalities, chaired by the President of Ethiopia has been established, which will present its analysis and recommendations at the 41st session of UNESCO’s General Conference, at the end of 2021. The report elaborated by the Commission is expected to serve as an agenda for policy debate and action at multiple levels.

In view of the International Commission’s first meeting in January 2020, the session provided a valuable opportunity for the Steering Committee to engage with the Futures of Education team, notably by jointly reflecting on both hopes and fears about the future. In addition, the session allowed to exchange on the modalities for continued engagement of the Steering Committee throughout the initiative.

Steering Committee members agreed that the Futures of Education discussion is truly critical and welcomed the possibility to contribute to the latter. Several members mentioned in particular that it is important for both the international community, as well as the Steering Committee to already engage in a reflection process on what comes after 2030.

Next steps/recommendations

- Recognizing the critical relevance of the Futures of Education initiative to the work and activities of the Steering Committee, it was agreed to create an ad-hoc group of Steering Committee members working together on the topic in close cooperation with the Futures of Education team.
- The specific modalities of participation will be further clarified by the Secretariat in due course.

Meeting closure

In her summary comments and closing remarks, Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO, thanked the members of the Steering Committee for their contribution to the success of the meeting. She emphasized that both, the ministerial panel, as well as the special address of the President of the UN General Assembly highlighted once more the Steering Committee's convening power and added value in bringing key stakeholders together for a joint reflection on the advancement of the Education 2030 Agenda. The Assistant Director-General for Education further invited the members of the Steering Committee to see the emergence of new initiatives such as the Global Education Forum and the Multilateral Education Partners platform as opportunities to join forces and shape the global education architecture. Finally, she highlighted that the Steering Committee has a key role to play in supporting countries in getting back on track and making the last decade of the SDGs that of implementation and actual delivery.

Annex I: Meeting Agenda

Monday, 11 November 2019	
09:30 - 10:00	Welcome, refreshments
10:00 - 10:15	Welcome by co-chairs and adoption of the agenda
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening statements by ADG/ED Ms Stefania Giannini and Mr Kaz Yoshida, co-chairs of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee • Adoption of the Agenda <p>Ref 1: Concept note and agenda</p>
10:15 – 11:15	Acting on key 2019 events and strengthening connections with new initiatives
	<p>The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit concluded on an urgent call for action and delivery in the next decade, with the role of quality education and lifelong learning for shaping more resilient and sustainable societies emphasized. The Steering Committee (SC), the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) provided ample evidence to take stock of where the world stands and future prospects. New initiatives to accelerate support to countries most in need such as the Global Education Forum have been established. In this context, strengthening coordination around shared priorities, actions and advocacy is more crucial than ever for advancing implementation and building momentum around the investment case for education as the driver of sustainable development.</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> The panel session aims to build on key outcomes from major recent events to evaluate how the SC can increase strategic pressure and support to SDG4 implementation, and strengthen connections with emerging initiatives to work and act together.</p> <p>Ref 2: Synthesis of recent events, initiatives and outcomes</p>
11:15 – 13:00	How are regions adapting and implementing the SDG4 agenda?
	<p>UNESCO has established regional coordination mechanisms to take forward and translate global commitments to the realities and educational priorities of each region, defined through regional commitments and roadmaps. How do these mechanisms facilitate communication with Ministries of Education and other relevant regional actors?</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> This session should highlight the achievements of each coordination mechanism, challenges it faces and facilitate peer learning between regions.</p> <p>Ref 3: How regions are adapting and implementing the SDG4 agenda</p>
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch break
14:30 – 15:30	Report from the Working Groups
	<p>Following the March 2019 SC meeting, Working Groups have been set up on inclusion and equity; teachers; skills and higher education, in order to make strategic policy recommendations and facilitate peer learning.</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> The 4 Working Groups are expected to present the scope of their work and expected output over the next year.</p>

	Ref 4: Updates on the Working Groups
15:30 – 16:15	Working modalities and Terms of Reference
	Discussion and agreement on Terms of Reference for affiliate members and process for renewal of specific constituencies. Ref 5: Steering Committee Terms of Reference
16:15 – 16:30	Coffee break
16:30 – 17:30	Review of 4' minute joint statement of the Steering Committee to the General Conference
	Review of Joint Statement to the Ministerial meeting on higher education Ref: to be shared separately
18:00 – 19:00	Cocktail hosted by UNESCO
Tuesday, 12 November 2019	
10:00 – 10:45	i) Global Education Monitoring Report 2020 on inclusion and beyond, and ii) Global and thematic indicators: status of implementation and future perspectives
	i) Orientations of GEM 2020 on inclusion, including launch of country profiles, and possibilities for SC engagement in launches and national/regional outreach. Ref 6: Global Education Monitoring Report: Launch of country profiles for better evidence ii) The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators is leading an intensive review process of the global SDG indicator framework. Moreover, Members States, regional and international stakeholders have continued the implementation of the thematic indicator framework for SDG4 within the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) and with the coordination of UIS. What are the stakes for SDG4 monitoring? Where do we stand with country specific targets and agreed benchmarks at regional and global levels? How can the SC better support the production of better quality data? <i>Objective:</i> This session will report back on key decisions from the Technical Cooperation Group Meeting (TCG) and the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML) held in Yerevan, Armenia, in August 2019 and the role of the SC in supporting the plans and actions for better quality data. Ref 7: UIS report: Status of implementation of the Thematic Indicator Framework to monitor SDG4
10:45 - 11:00	Coffee/tea break
11:00– 12:30	Ministerial panel
	Ministers from each region share challenges and priority actions to accelerate progress towards SDG4.
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 - 14:45	Opportunities for engagement in 2020 and beyond (part 1)
	This session will discuss opportunities for positioning and joint advocacy, supported by a calendar of events and key messages to take forward from the HLPF and SDG summit (International Education Day, Expo 2020, G20, UN General Assembly events on education, regional forums).

	<p>The session will include a presentation of Dubai Cares on the Expo 2020.</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To have a shared overview of opportunities for building synergies with and influencing key international initiatives and processes</p> <p>Ref 8: Advocacy and communication highlights 2019 and plan 2020</p>
14:45 – 15:00	Special Address by the President of the UN General Assembly
	<p>Special Address to be delivered by the President of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Mr Tijjani Muhammad-Bande.</p>
15:00 – 15:15	Opportunities for engagement in 2020 and beyond (part 2)
	<p>This session will discuss opportunities for positioning and joint advocacy, supported by a calendar of events and key messages to take forward from the HLPF and SDG summit (International Education Day, Expo 2020, G20, UN General Assembly events on education, regional forums).</p> <p>The session will include a presentation of Dubai Cares on the Expo 2020.</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> To have a shared overview of opportunities for building synergies with and influencing key international initiatives and processes</p> <p>Ref 8: Advocacy and communication highlights 2019 and plan 2020</p>
15:15 - 16:15	Futures of Education exchange
	<p>Officially launched during UNGA 2019, the Futures of Education initiative will cast the net widely over the next two years to prepare a report on “Learning to Become”.</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> This session provides an opportunity for SC to engage with the Futures of Education team and discuss modalities for continued engagement.</p> <p>Ref 9: Background on the Futures of Education initiative</p>
16:15 – 16:45	Conclusion and way forward
	<p>Agreement on the joint statement to the General Conference, summary of key actions and concluding remarks</p>

Annex II: List of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee Members

CO-CHAIRS: UNESCO and Japan

BUREAU MEMBERS: Group I (Norway), Group II (Slovak Republic), Group III (Colombia), Group IV (China), Group V (a) (Kenya), Group V (b) (Saudi Arabia), Civil Society (Education International)

Members States

Group I – Europe and North America

Belgium: *Ms Marie-Anne Persoons*, Advisor International Policy, Department of Education and Training, Strategic Policy Unit, Flemish Community

Mr François Tricarico, Director, International Relations Directorate, Ministry of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation

Germany: *Mr Walter Hirche*, Chair of Education Committee, German Commission for UNESCO

Ms Barbara Malina, Head of the Division of Education, German Commission for UNESCO

Norway: *Mr Joakim Bakke*, Director, Ministry of Education and Research

Ms Grethe Sofie Bratlie, Deputy Permanent Delegate, Permanent Delegation of Norway to UNESCO

Turkey: *Mr Adnan Boyaci*, Director General for Teacher Training and Improvement, Ministry of National Education, Member of the Executive Board of the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO, Chair of the Education Committee of the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO

Mr Mustafa Sever, Assistant Professor, Ankara University, Faculty of Education

Regional organization: European Commission

Mr Jan Pakulski, Head of Unit at the DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

Ms Annica Floren, Deputy Head of Unit, DEVCO B 4 - Culture, Education, Health

Group II – Eastern Europe

Bulgaria: *Ms Densita Sacheva*, Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Ministry of Education and Science

Czech Republic: *Mr Stanislav Štech*, Professor, Charles University

Slovak Republic: *Ms Katarina Deakova*, Head of Department of Cross-Cutting Issues in Education, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport

Russian Federation: *Prof. Vladimir Filippov*, Rector, Head of the Chair of Policy in Higher Education, RUDN University

Mr Sergey Kovalenko, Director, Centre for Comparative and International Education RUDN University

Regional organization: Council of Europe

Mr Villano Qiriaz, Special Adviser to the Director General

Mr Sjur Bergan, Head of the Education Department

Group III – GRULAC

Argentina: *Ms Mercedes Miguel, Secretary for Innovation and Quality Education, Ministry of Education*

Mr Francisco Miguens Campos, Secretary, Argentina National Commission to UNESCO

Colombia: *Ms Maria Victoria Angulo Gonzalez, Minister of National Education*

Mr Camilo Gutierrez, Head of Financing and Planning, Ministry of National Education

Peru: *Ms Odette Herbozo, Head of Cooperation and International Affairs, Ministry of Education of Peru*

Ms Katherine Bravo, Specialist at the General Office of Cooperation and International Affairs, Ministry of Education of Peru

Venezuela: *Ms Rosángela Orozco, Vice Minister of Education*

Mr Carlos Luis Uztáriz Pérez, Secretary-General, Venezuelan National Commission for UNESCO

Regional organization: Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI)

Mr Andres Delich, Deputy Secretary General

Group IV – ASPAC:

China: *Mr Changwei Qin, Secretary-General, Chinese National Commission for UNESCO*

Ms Xiaoping Yu, Division of Education, Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

Japan: *Mr Kazuhiro Yoshida, Director/Professor, Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education, Hiroshima University*

Mr Kenji Inoue, Deputy Permanent Delegate, Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO

Republic of Korea: *Mr Kwangho Kim, Secretary-General, Korean National Commission for UNESCO*

Ms Hyunsook Seo, Director, Division of Education, Korean National Commission for UNESCO

Philippines: *Mr Nepomuceno Malaluan, Undersecretary, Department of Education*

Mr Jesus Enrique Garcia II, Deputy Permanent Delegate, Permanent Delegation of the Philippines to UNESCO

Regional organization: Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat

Ms Ethel Agnes P Valenzuela, Director, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat

Regional Group V(a), African States:

Angola: *Mr Isaac Pedro Vieira Paxe, Director General, National Institute for Training of Teachers (INFQE), Ministry of Education*

Burkina Faso : *Mr Yerbkoun Bienvenu Bonaventure Méda, Inspector for Secondary Education*

Kenya: *Ms Emis Njeru, Deputy Director of Education, Directorate of Policy Partnerships*

and Eastern Africa Community Affairs,
Ministry of Education

Mr Victor Soo, Senior Research Assistant,
Permanent Delegation of Kenya to UNESCO

South Africa: *Mr Yousuf Gabru*, Minister
Counsellor, Permanent Delegate to UNESCO,
South African Embassy in Paris

Regional organization: African Union
Mr Lukman Jaji, Policy Officer, AU Education
Observatory

GROUP V(b), Arab States:

Egypt: *Ms Deena Boraie*, Senior Advisor to the
Minister of Education and Technical Education

Saudi Arabia: *Dr Ali Almalki*, Counsellor for
General Education, Permanent Delegation of
the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to UNESCO

Tunisia: *Mr Bouzid Nsiri*, Director General of
Studies, Planning, and Information Systems,
Ministry of Education

United Arab Emirates: *Ms Mahra Hilal Al
Mutaiwei*, Director, Regional Center for
Educational Planning

Regional organization: Arab Bureau of
Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS)
Mr Abdusalam Aljoufi, Advisor

E9 Initiative

Bangladesh: *Mr Md Sohorab Hossain*, Senior
Secretary, Secondary and Higher Education
Division, Ministry of Education

Mr Md Monjur Hossain, Deputy Secretary
General (Additional Secretary to the
Government), Bangladesh National
Commission for UNESCO

Civil Society

ACEA: *Mr Refat Sabbah*, General Secretary,
President, Arab Campaign for Education for All

Education International: *Mr Dennis Sinyolo*,
Senior Coordinator, Education, Employment
and Research

GCE: *Ms Camilla Croso*, immediate past
president of the Global Campaign for
Education

Co-Convening Agencies and other partners

UNESCO: *Ms Stefania Giannini*, Assistant
Director-General for Education

UNICEF: *Mr Robert Jenkins*, Associate Director
of Education

World Bank: *Mr Jaime Saavedra*, Senior
Director, Education

UNDP: *Ms Nergis Gülasan*, Policy Specialist,
Strategic Policy Unit

UNHCR: *Ms Rebecca Telford*, Senior Education
Adviser

Mr Matthew Byrne, Senior Education Officer

UNFPA: *Mr Luis Mora*, Chief, Gender, Human
Rights and Culture Branch, Technical Division

UN Women: *Ms Anna Falth*, Policy Advisor,
Education and Women's Economic
Empowerment

ILO: *Mr Oliver Liang*, Education Specialist,
Sectoral Policies Department

Mr Paul Comyn, Skills and Employability
Specialist, Employment Policy Department

Global Partnership for Education: *Ms Sarah Beardmore*, Senior Strategy and Policy Specialist

Ms Raphaëlle Martinez, Senior Education Specialist

OECD: *Mr Andreas Schleicher*, Director for Education and Special Advisor on Education Policy to the Secretary-General
Mr Michael Ward, Senior Policy Analyst, Directorate for Education and Skills

Affiliated Members

Youth Representative: *Ms Victoria Ibiwoye*, Director, OneAfricanChild Foundation for Creative Learning

EAA: *Ms Leena Al Derham*, Senior Education Specialist, Education Above All Foundation

Ms Mary Joy Pigozzi, Executive Director

Private Sector: United Nations Global Compact
Ms. Florencia Librizzi, Senior Manager, PRME

Mr Nikolay Ivanov, Coordinator, PRME