



**Fourth Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030 (AR-MED IV)**

# **Education Resilience: Working Towards Progress during the Decade of Action**

**6-8 July 2021, Virtual**

## **Concept Note**

UNESCO, Beirut

# I. Introduction

A new era of sustainable development was ushered in with the launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015. With education being central to the realization of the ‘Leaving no one behind’ Agenda 2030, all Member States and international education community unanimously committed to achieving the SDG4 Goal, ‘Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education for all and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.’ To translate it into action, the Education 2030 Global Framework for Action was elaborated and adopted in November 2015.

The international community entrusted UNESCO to coordinate the monitoring and implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (henceforth referred to as SDG4), i.e. the Education component of the international 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

SDG4 consists of ten targets to guide countries along a transformative path to a sustainable education agenda ranging from early childhood to adult learning. The roadmap to achieve these targets, including the 43 thematic indicators to measure progress towards these targets are laid out in the Education 2030 Framework for Action. The goal addresses educational areas related to educational quality and equity, including quality education for all learners across the education ladder in both formal and non-formal education; skills development for life and work; and education for global citizenship and sustainable development. It emphasizes three major means of implementation, namely:

- a. Safe and inclusive environments;
- b. Scholarships for higher education; and
- c. Teachers’ training and working conditions.

With firm commitments to transforming national education systems in line with Education 2030 Agenda, Arab Member States and partners have gathered at three successive Arab Regional Meetings on Education 2030 (AR-MED) since 2015: Cairo in December 2015; Dubai in March 2017 and most recently, Dead Sea, Jordan, in November 2018. Each AR-MED resulted in concrete action points through a Roadmap, that enabled both countries and partners to generate national movement, unpack and contextualize the Education 2030 Agenda and its ten Targets and Indicators, and promote multi-sectoral and stakeholder partnerships.

# II. Background

Six years on since the onset of the 2030 Agenda, the year 2020 presented an auspicious opportunity as it launched the “Decade of Action: Ten Years to Transform our World”, a call for accelerating sustainable solutions to achieve SDGs, including SDG4 on quality education. The work in 2020 was expected to build on the progress made in the year 2019 starting with the renewed commitments known as ‘Dead Sea Commitments for 2019-2020’ made at Third Regional Meeting on Education 2030 (AR-MED III, Dead Sea, Jordan, November 2018). The Dead Sea AR-Med III meeting launched also the Joint Statement of Arab States on system-wide education alignment, with a focus on harmonizing curriculum, teaching and learning assessment with a view of reaching the SDG4 targets.

Nevertheless, the year 2020 faced new challenges primarily in relation to the COVID-19 global pandemic

that forced school closures and stark decline in both domestic and international economies. The unprecedented global social and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed our world's fragility and interdependence, affecting every country, community and family. Most of the countries in the region have relied on alternative learning modalities, primarily through the use of technology and by switching between online/remote and hybrid learning. However, much of practical training for skills development was interrupted while exposing and deepening existing inequalities, including socioeconomic ones that lead to the exclusion of the poorest, most disadvantaged and marginalized, as well as those under fragile situations in the region.

Building on the outcomes of the previous AR-MED meetings in the Arab Region, the aim of AR-MED IV will be to renew the 'Dead Sea Commitments for 2019-2020' made at AR-MED III, Dead Sea, Jordan, November 2018. Secondly, it will also take into consideration the outcomes of the Arab Regional Ministerial Meeting in October 2020 and the work of the UN community led by ESCWA at the Annual Arab Forum for Sustainable Development in March 2021, focused on empowering people through equality and inclusiveness. Last but not the least, the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report Team launched its 2020 Report on Inclusion and Education. A Regional Arab version was also prepared on the 2019 GEM Report on Migration, Displacement and Education, the theme most relevant and pertinent to the educational crisis confronting many countries in our region.

The year 2020 was a milestone after the completion of the first full five-year cycle of the timeline until 2030 and the development of a Regional progress report. It constituted also a significant moment for Member States and partners to take stock of progress made and accelerate efforts for the upcoming 10-year period. Thus, UNESCO Beirut will share at AR-MED IV the progress in the Arab Region with regard to implementing Agenda 2030 and reaching SDG4 targets during the 2015-2020 period.

In this regard, the Fourth Meeting on Education 2030 (AR-MED IV) will take place in mid-2021, whereby progress made by countries and the region in general so far will be discussed for accelerating progress to achieve SDG4 by 2030.

The Arab regional SDG-Education 2030 Support Group is a key mechanism to strengthen coordinated support for Education 2030 across the region. It aims to enhancing the national-regional-global nexus for effective coordination and implementation of SDG4.

### **III. Objectives**

#### **Objectives of Technical Meeting**

1. Present the SDG4 progress for the Arab Region;
2. Identify challenges affecting progress of SDG4, including lessons learned, promising practices, opportunities emerging due to COVID-19 as well as opportunities through discussing innovative and promising approaches in the region especially related to crisis management and planning;
3. Discuss issues and solutions related to monitoring the targets, data gaps and enhancing reporting;
4. Re-enforce regional commitment on moving forward on achieving Education 2030 Agenda.

## IV. Outcomes

1. Updated status of Arab regional progress of SDG4 and identification of key issues and monitoring challenges in achieving Education 2030 Agenda.
2. Shared best practices on advancing the SDG4 agenda at national, regional and global levels;
3. Shared understanding of progress made and of remaining identified challenges, gaps and priorities for action;
4. Agreement on follow up action plan at regional level to leverage assistance to the Arab States with a view of accelerating progress towards achieving Education 2030 Agenda in the light of the AR-MED IV deliberations and outcomes/commitments.

## V. Output

1. Regional priorities discussed and critical issues identified.
2. Capacities strengthened and pledge renewed to work on accelerating progress towards achieving SDG4 targets for the Arab region for the next three years based on concrete, realistic and purposeful commitments.

## VI. Participants

Arab country teams (maximum four participants from each country: three technical specialists + one national SDG4 coordinator):

- Technical specialists and decision makers from the Ministries of:
  - Education
  - Higher Education
  - Technical and Vocational Education
  - Social Solidarity
  - Finance
  - Planning
  - Telecom/Information & Technology
  - National Statistics Bureau
- The three-day technical meeting will benefit from the contributions of MoE representatives who will attend the meeting. Country teams will comprise responsible specialists for planning (for policy/programmes); monitoring (for data from the national statistical centre); and from one specific area (finance, teachers, assessment, higher education, early childhood education or curriculum) depending on preference (maximum three members in each country team will be supported by UNESCO; additional members should be supported by their respective MoEs).
- National SDG4 coordinators will participate in the three-day technical meeting. UNESCO will support one coordinator for each country. Additional representatives should be supported by their respective MoEs.

SDG4 Arab Regional Support Group:

- International and Regional consultants and support persons. They will contribute to the technical meeting as per Agenda.
- Arab Regional Support Group<sup>1</sup>. They will contribute to the technical meeting.
- UNESCO staff. UNESCO Beirut and UNESCO offices in the Arab Region.

## VII. Methodology

- Interactive approaches: The three-day technical meeting will be based on interactive approach. Plenary presentations (including panels) will alternate with group work; and discussion on follow up action plan/recommendations.
- Working languages: Simultaneous interpretation will be arranged in plenary settings for Arabic/English. Interpretation will be also possible in working groups, as needed.
- Sound information and knowledge sharing: All inputs (i.e. power points presentations; international and national documents on SDG4 and other issues; background papers) will be put at participants' disposal on-line.
- AR-MED IV meeting report will be prepared, which will include follow up (action) plans.

## VIII. Meeting Link

**Meeting link:** <https://unesco-org.zoom.us/j/91649483237>

**Meeting ID:** 916 4948 3237

**Passcode:** 395680

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<sup>1</sup> ARSG: UN development partners, Arab Regional organizations, UNESCO Cat II Centers, NGOs.

## IX. Agenda

Day 1: 6 July 2021		
Timing	Activities	Moderators/Facilitators
11:00-11:30	<p><b>Session 1: Official Opening</b></p> <p><i>Opening Speeches of:</i>  <b>Ms. Costanza Farina</b>            Director of UNESCO Office in Beirut  <b>Ms. Maki Katsuno-Hayashikawa</b>, Director of Division for Education 2030, UNESCO  <b>Dr. Mahra Hilal Al Mutaiwei</b>            Director of RCEP, Chair of SDG4 Arab Regional Support Group</p>	<p><b>Moderator:</b>  <b>Ms. Hana Yoshimoto</b>            Chief of Education/Senior Programme Specialist,            UNESCO Beirut</p>
11:30-11:35	<p><b>Session 2: Introductory Session</b></p> <p><b>Ms. Hana Yoshimoto</b>, UNESCO Beirut: <i>Agenda overview and meeting objectives</i></p>	
11:35-11:45	<b>Break</b>	
11:45–12:30	<p><b>Session 3, Panel (1): SDG4 Progress and Challenges</b></p> <p><b>Ms. Hana Yoshimoto</b>, UNESCO Beirut: <i>Overview of Education 2030 monitoring and reporting process</i>  <b>Dr. S. Venkatraman</b>, UNESCO technical expert:  <i>Highlights of Regional SDG4 Progress</i>  <b>Dr. Abdulsalam Aljoufi</b>, ABEGS:  <i>Reflecting on challenges and building on progress</i></p>	<p><b>Moderator:</b>  <b>Dr. Manos Antoninis</b>, Director, Global Monitoring Team, UNESCO HQ</p>
12:30-13:30	<p><b>Identifying Key Challenges, Opportunities, and Gaps in Achieving the SDG4 2030 Agenda</b></p> <p><b>Discussions by Member States:</b></p>	<p><b>Moderator:</b>  <b>Ms. Ibtisam Aqab Ayoub</b>, DG UNESCO National Commission-SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Jordan</b>  <b>Ms. Amna Blushi</b>, Secretary General of NATCOM-SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Oman</b></p>

	Discussion of key challenges and emerging issues at the regional level, opportunities that have been witnessed, and the ways of accelerating the progress for the remaining years.	<p><b>Mr. Nizar Terzi</b>, President of the office of the MoE-SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Tunisia</b></p> <p><b>Rapporteur:</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Fadi Yarak</b>, Director General of Basic Education - SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Lebanon</b></p> <p><b>Dr. Jihane Kamal</b>, Director of the Center for Educational Research and Development, <b>Egypt</b></p> <p><b>Ms. Nawal Ibrahim Al Khater</b>, Assistant Deputy for Planning and Information - National Coordinator for Education 2030, <b>Bahrain</b></p> <p>(Three group break-out rooms: GCC, North Africa &amp; Levant)</p>
13:30-14:00	Reporting Session by Rapporteurs	<p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Solaiman Mohammed Alhadlaq</b>, SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>KSA</b></p>

*End of Day 1*

### Day 2: 7 July 2021

Timing	Activities	Moderators/Facilitators
11:00-11:40	<p><b>Session 4 Panel (2): Preparedness of the education system at times of crisis in terms of equity and inclusion: A closer look at impact on the education sector and learning loss,</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Gwang Chol Chang</b>, Chief of Section, Section of Education Policy, UNESCO</p> <p><b>Harriet Nannyonjo</b>, Senior Education Specialist, The World Bank (Regional Learning Loss)</p> <p><b>Mr. Moritz Bilagher</b>, Deputy Director of Education, UNRWA</p>	<p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Ms. Maria Tsvetkova</b>, Regional Education Advisor WFP</p>

11:40-12:30	<p><b>Regional Action Plan</b>  <b>Discussions by Member States:</b></p> <p><i>Discussion on Regional Action Plan for accelerating progress towards achieving Education 2030 Agenda</i></p>	<p><b>Moderator:</b>  <b>Dr. Mohammad Salim</b>, Head of planning department, <b>Sudan</b>  <b>Ms. Ruqayh Kareem Jarullah</b>, General Directorate of Educational Planning-SDG4 National coordinator, <b>Iraq</b>  <b>Mr. Hamad AlYahyaei</b>, Deputy Assistant for Curriculum and evaluation / SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>UAE</b></p> <p><b>Rapporteur:</b>  <b>Mr. Awad Abdallah Awad Nabhan</b>, SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Yemen</b>  <b>Ms. Oumou Seleme Bint ElCheikh</b>, Director of Cooperation and Strategies, MOE-SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Mauritania</b>  <b>Mr. Mamoun Jaber</b>, Director of Planning, Ministry of Education-SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Palestine</b></p> <p>(Three group break-out rooms: GCC, North Africa &amp; Levant)</p>
12:30-12:40	<b>Break</b>	
12:40–13:10	<p><b>Session 5 Panel (3):</b>  <b>Critical Issues to focus on in remaining years</b></p> <p><b>Ms. Aferdita Spahiu</b>, Education Specialist (Regional Advisor a.i.), UNICEF Regional Office  <b>Ms. Dakmara Georgescu</b>, UNESCO Beirut: Alignment for Learning Inter-Regional Initiative  <b>Mr. Muhammad Tariq Khan</b>, Senior Education Specialist, GPE Secretariat (FINANCING)</p>	<p><b>Moderator:</b>  <b>Dr. Abdulsalam Aljoufi</b>, ABEGS</p>



13:10-13:40	Reporting Session by Rapporteurs	<b>Moderator:</b> <b>Ms. Hamda Al Sulaiti</b> , Secretary General of Natcom - SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Qatar</b>
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*End of Day 2*

### Day 3: 8 July 2021

Timing	Activities	Moderators/Facilitators
11:00-11:20	<b>Session 6 Panel (4): Benchmarking SDG4</b>  <b>Dr. Silvia Montoya</b> , Director UNESCO UIS <b>Dr. Manos Antoninis</b> , Director GEM Team UNESCO	<b>Moderator:</b> <b>Dr. Abdul Rahman Almedaires</b> , Director, RCQE
11:20-12:00	<b>Discussions by Member States:</b>  <i>Country experiences during times of crisis, with a special focus on marginalized and vulnerable communities in the region to ensure access to quality education and learning never stops?</i>	<b>Moderator:</b> <b>Mr. Aziz Nahya</b> , Director of Cooperation-Basic Education / SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Morocco</b> <b>Mr. Mamoun Jaber</b> , Director of Planning, Ministry of Education-SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Palestine</b> <b>Mr. Ayman AlMahmoodi</b> , Director of Planning Department and Strategies, Ministry of Education / SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Libya</b>  <b>Rapporteur:</b> <b>Mr. AbdelHakim ElHamad</b> , Deputy Minister of Education-SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Syria</b>

		<p><b>Ms. Samia Mzayeb</b>, Director of Cooperation and International relations-SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Algeria</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Wadha AlZafeiri</b>, Planning Dep-MoE / SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Kuwait</b></p> <p>(Three group break-out rooms: GCC, North Africa &amp; Levant)</p>
12:00-12:10	<b>Break</b>	
12:10–12:40	<p><b>Session 7 Panel (5): Accelerating action: How can we accelerate our work towards progress in the coming decade?</b></p> <p><b>Ms. Maki Katsuno-Hayashikawa</b>, Director of Division for Education 2030, UNESCO <b>TBD</b> - ESCWA</p> <p><b>Dr. Refaat Sabbah</b>, Regional Focal Point for the Arab States - Representative of Global Campaign for Education</p>	<b>Moderator:</b>
12:40-13:20	Reporting Session by Rapporteurs	<b>Moderator:</b> <b>Ms. Ibtisam Aqab Ayoub</b> , DG UNESCO National Commission-SDG4 National Coordinator, <b>Jordan</b>
13:20-13:30	<p><b>Session 8: Closing: What Do We Take from This Meeting?</b></p> <p><b>Ms. Hana Yoshimoto</b>, Chief of Education/Senior Programme Specialist UNESCO Beirut</p>	

**End of Day 3**