UNESCO convenes periodic Global Education Meetings (GEMs) aligned with the meeting schedule of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). The 2021 GEM consists of a Ministerial Segment aligned with the 2021 HLPF in July and a High-Level Segment aligned with the 41st Session of the UNESCO General Conference in November.

With the SDG-Education 2030 Agenda’s midpoint in sight, countries and the international community face the pressing need to transform the way we work. The Ministerial Segment of the 2021 Global Education Meeting, organized by UNESCO with the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, sent a powerful message about the joint commitment of countries, multilateral, bilateral and regional organizations, civil society, the teaching profession, and students and youth themselves, to embark on a new path towards acceleration of the 2030 Agenda. Over 85 education ministers as well as leaders of the international education community endorsed the proposal to improve the global cooperation mechanism in education to better respond to the unprecedented learning disruption caused by COVID-19 and to put education at the center of political agendas.
The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

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Executive Summary

In follow-up to the 2020 GEM Declaration, UNESCO with the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee convened the Ministerial Segment of the 2021 Global Education Meeting (2021 GEM) under the theme “From recovery to accelerating SDG 4 progress”. The 2020 GEM called for a consultation process “to develop a proposal to strengthen the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee to be able to effectively steer and coordinate the global education cooperation mechanism in line with the Education 2030 Framework for Action and in the post-COVID-19 context”. A multi-stakeholder Working Group, co-chaired by UNESCO and Norway, developed a proposal through an extensive consultation process and submitted it to the 2021 GEM for endorsement.

The on-line meeting was attended by delegations of 110 Member States, including some 85 Ministers and Vice-Ministers, as well as representatives of multilateral and regional organizations, development partners, the teaching profession, students and youth and civil society. The Working Group’s proposal aims at forging a purposeful and effective global cooperation mechanism in education to create a better policy environment to drive recovery and accelerate countries’ progress towards SDG 4. Ministers commended UNESCO’s leadership and the Working Group’s work undertaken over the past eight months. Representatives of multilateral, bilateral and regional organizations as well as civil society and the teaching profession expressed their support and commitment to take active part in the reformed global education cooperation mechanism.

Ministers shared innovative responses in transforming their education systems amid the crisis and discussed the lessons learned that would help accelerate countries’ progress toward SDG 4. The recurring challenges included unequal access to remote learning opportunities, especially digital learning, to ensure learning continuity during school closures; equipping teachers with ICT and remote teaching skills; and providing learners with targeted catch-up learning as well as psychosocial support. Many ministers emphasized the importance of skills to adapt to an increasingly digitalized learning environment, build resilience and preparedness for future shocks and steer the transition towards green societies. There was a consensus over the urgent need for increased investment in education and for international and inter-sectoral collaboration and cooperation.

Discussions were enriched by the report of the third round of the UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank-OECD Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures, which was launched at this meeting. The survey report, covering 142 countries, finds that around one in three countries where schools are or have been closed is yet to implement remedial programmes post-COVID-19 school closures, and that there are large gaps in how countries are implementing the most basic health measures to ensure a safe return to school.

In the outcome document, UNESCO is invited to lead the further development of the proposal for strengthening the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism (GCM) in collaboration with its Member States and partners, to be shared at the High-Level Segment of the 2021 GEM in November 2021. As part of the reformed GCM, a High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC), chaired by the UNESCO Director-General and a Head of Government, will provide strategic guidance, review progress, and make recommendations on priorities, monitor and advocate for adequate financing, and encourage harmonization and coordination of partner activities. The HLSC will be officially established at the High-Level Segment of the 2021 GEM in November 2021, which will be co-hosted by UNESCO and France at the margins of UNESCO’s General Conference and the Paris Peace Forum, as announced by the French Minister of Education.
Introduction

Background:
In October 2020, Heads of State and Government, Ministers and representatives of the international education community met at the extraordinary session of the Global Education Meeting (2020 GEM), in response to the urgent call to protect education suffering from the worldwide school closures and the constrained fiscal environment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and to promote education as a catalytic force for inclusive recovery and sustainable development.

The 2020 GEM triggered a dialogue about improving the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism as a means to support countries to accelerate their progress toward SDG 4, recovering from the COVID-19-affected context. Many have called for stronger policy leadership, better synergies, greater efficiency and improved delivery in global and regional cooperation as the response to these goals and challenges. The 2020 GEM Declaration called specifically for a multi-stakeholder consultation process “to develop a proposal to strengthen the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee to be able to effectively steer and coordinate the global education cooperation mechanism in line with the Education 2030 Framework for Action and in the post-COVID-19 context”. UNESCO was mandated to design and lead this process, and a Working Group, co-chaired by UNESCO and Norway, provided inputs and deliberated on various versions of the draft proposal.

From January to June 2021, UNESCO with the support of Working Group members led an extensive consultation and co-creation process, including a series of consultative meetings across all regions and constituencies. An in-depth review of the current state of the global education architecture, including comparison with the global health and climate sectors, was conducted by an independent expert, the key findings of which informed the Working Group’s deliberations. In addition, a country survey was carried out to explore coordination challenges and good practices at the global, regional and country levels. Consultations on the emerging proposals, across all regions and key constituencies, including civil society organizations, the teaching profession, development aid donors, education in emergency partners, and youth, were organized in this process. The Working Group’s final proposal was then submitted to this Ministerial Segment of the 2021 Global Education Meeting for endorsement.

Meeting objectives and expected outcomes:
With the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda’s midpoint in sight, countries and the international community face the pressing need to transform the way we work. At the global level, it is critical to create an enabling environment to allow accelerated progress toward SDG 4, leveraging the partnerships, innovations, and lessons learned gained from the COVID-19 response and recovery action in the past year and a half. In this context, this 2021 GEM Ministerial Segment aimed to:

- Endorse the multi-stakeholder Working Group’s proposal for the improved Global Education Cooperation Mechanism, including its functions and institutional arrangements
- Take stock of measures and lessons learned from the COVID-19 education response that help to accelerate progress toward SDG 4

Debates to address these objectives took place in two sessions, informed by the Working Group’s proposal and the report of the third round of the UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank-OECD Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures.
Opening

Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General, UNESCO – video here
As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many educational inequalities are widening between and within countries, as confirmed by the joint UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and OECD Report on the Global Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures. The findings highlight four alarming divides—inequality of access to learning, the digital gap, the gender divide and the education financing gap—, calling for immediate remedial action. To shape the future of education, the international community must do better in collecting and sharing more and better data, in investing more and more effectively, as well as in streamlining and strengthening international cooperation on education. To improve coordination in the area of data, UNESCO will establish a Global Education Observatory that will provide Member States and the international community with a gateway to education-related data and up-to-date information on education policy practices and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Commitments made at the 2021 GEM will only have meaning if they are acted on by putting education at the top the political agenda.

H. E. Mr Koichi Hagiuda, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan/Co-chair of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee – video here
The educational disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is a critical challenge for all countries and the UN Secretary-General rightly warned that it may turn into a generational catastrophe without targeted action. To achieve SDG 4, international cooperation is indispensable and the strengthened Global Education Cooperation Mechanism provides a unique opportunity in this regard. To respond to the challenges of today, there is an urgent need to develop human resources that will be the driving force for social transformation. Building more resilient societies calls for additional emphasis on Education for Sustainable Development to ensure crisis preparedness. Education must be recognized as a critical enabler for the acceleration of progress across all SDGs.
Session 1. Endorsement of the Working Group’s proposal on the improved Global Education Cooperation Mechanism

1. Presentation of the proposal by the Working Group Co-chairs

H.E. Mr Aksel Jakobsen, State Secretary for International Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway - video here
The Co-chairs are delighted to present the proposal for an improved Global Education Cooperation Mechanism (GCM) to the GEM. The proposal is the fruit of the gatherings of the multi-stakeholder Working Group and the result of background papers, extensive consultations, responses to questionnaires, written comments and feedback, as well as numerous discussions. There have been differing points of view; however, what we present to you today is a strong proposal that we can all stand behind and support. We need effective collaboration and commitment to speed up the process to reach SDG 4, high-level engagement and technical advice based on joint research, evidence and knowledge. We also need to improve monitoring and data use and advocate for mobilization and better use of domestic and international finance. The mechanism which we present holds the key to turning these important and well justified requests into reality. It is now up to us to realize the potential that lay in this mechanism. In the times ahead we must effectively implement, and further develop, the mechanism.

Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO – video here
The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we work together as an international community to deploy solutions and advocate for prioritizing education in the recovery; it has also triggered the rethinking of global cooperation in education for greater efficiency, stronger synergies and larger impact at country level - with the ultimate goal to leave no one behind. The proposal of the Working Group adheres to the principle of SDG 4-Education 2030 as a universal, holistic and lifelong learning agenda. It aims to add value to the existing global, regional and country-level coordination mechanisms by ensuring that the overall policy environment is conductive to driving faster progress at the country level and by supporting coalitions of countries or partners to develop time-bound initiatives.

Three main functions of this global education cooperation mechanism are: 1) promote evidence-based policy formulation and implementation, 2) monitor progress and improve the availability and use of SDG 4-related data and 3) drive financing mobilization and improve alignment.

The proposal envisages a lighter and nimbler, yet more empowered and purposeful Steering Committee whose membership is representative of the global education community, operating under the auspices of the Global Education Meeting, which will periodically set thematic priorities. A dedicated Inter-Agency Secretariat hosted by UNESCO will support the High-Level Steering Committee and potentially other GCM forums/platforms.

The Outcome Document endorsed today is a critical step, laying the foundation for the beginning of a new phase. We must continue to collaborate all together to translate this vision into action.
2. Statements from Ministers and Constituency Representatives

**Brazil** - *H.E. Mr Milton Ribeiro, Minister of Education* – video [here](#)
Progress in reducing inequalities in education depends on cooperative efforts, especially considering the post Covid-19 recovery context. It is important to design participation methodology in the new regional mechanisms, which should be aligned with diverse national realities. And it is hoped that all countries cooperate in the framework of the strengthened mechanism to feel effectively represented.

**China** - *H.E. Mr Baosheng Chen, Minister of Education* – video [here](#)
China appreciates UNESCO’s work in taking the lead to establish the improved GCM and is willing to actively participate in it, so as to work with all parties to accelerate the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda. China hopes that the new mechanism will be based on multilateralism, capitalize on the wisdom and the strength of all Member States, and play an effective role in promoting global, regional and national cooperation.

**Colombia** - *H.E. Ms María Victoria Angulo González, Minister of National Education* – video [here](#)
The Working Group’s proposal highlights three key issues for multilateralism and international cooperation in face of the challenges that the pandemic has brought: to co-construct and provide orientations for education policies to reduce inequalities; to follow up on the commitments made at the regional and national levels within the SDG 4 framework especially with respect to budgetary allocation and prioritization for education; and to achieve a representative composition of the new of global coordination structure. The reduction of inequalities in learning should be the central axis of this cooperation mechanism. Colombia appreciates and supports this proposal and is ready to join forces at this most challenging time for global education.

**France** - *H.E. Mr Jean-Michel Blanquer, Minister of National Education* – video [here](#)
France approves the new cooperation mechanism and underlines the principles of respecting Member States’ voices and maintaining the representativity of stakeholder groups. While education must respond to local and national contexts and needs, the pandemic illustrated that challenges are universal we must thus have a global view of education, for humanity as a whole. Education deserves massive investment and France dedicates 13% of ODA to education. Acknowledging the important priorities that the High-Level Steering Committee will be examining, in particular education financing, France is pleased to announce that it will co-chair with UNESCO the next High-Level GEM in November 2021 in Paris. Paris will become the global capital of education, as the host city of UNESCO and OECD.

**Germany** - *H.E. Mr. Niels Annen, Minister of State, Federal Foreign Office* – video [here](#)
Thanks to extensive consultation and the impressive work of UNESCO and the Working Group, a concise proposal to reform the GCM has been developed. An effective international order can only be based on readiness to engage in cooperation in a spirit of solidarity and commitment to common institutions. The proposed GCM builds on existing bodies, adheres universally to SDG 4 and embraces all relevant actors of the education community. As a member of the Working Group, Germany has contributed to the reform process and is looking forward to supporting the new High-Level Steering Committee. Today’s endorsement is the first step towards more effective coordination.

**Indonesia** - *H.E. Dr Anindito Aditomo, Deputy Minister of Research and Development* – video [here](#)
Indonesia fully supports and appreciates the Working Group’s proposal. The pandemic has challenged the country’s ongoing comprehensive education reform aimed at developing lifelong learners, as well as democratic and productive citizens of Indonesia and of the world; however, Indonesia is committed to accelerate progress towards achieving SDG 4. The COVID–19 pandemic underlines the importance of addressing educational inequalities and accentuated the importance of cooperation and collaboration between all stakeholders.
Italy - H.E. Mr Patrizio Bianchi, Minister of Public Education – video here
The Italian government fully supports the proposal of the Working Group. The G20 ministerial meetings focused on educational poverty as a new aspect of inequalities and the need for collective action to exist from the pandemic. We need to think together, to create education systems that are unified by the common goal to create a human sustainable economy and society; and education is the engine of the new society. The Working Group’s proposal is a good basis for long-term cooperation. UNESCO must operate as the “General Secretary” of the collective efforts to design a new society which places education at the centre.

Kenya - H.E. Prof. George Magoha, Minister of Education – video here
The global social and economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic exposed the pre-existing inequalities affecting the vulnerable communities and learners, especially those with disabilities. Kenya welcomes UNESCO’s responses to this situation, including through the extraordinary session of the Global Education Meeting, which called to review the global coordination mechanism. Kenya appreciates and acknowledges the cooperation of African States through consultative meetings, recognizes the active participation of the African Union in the process and endorses. Kenya, as co-host with the UK, of the Global Education Summit, calls on UNESCO Member States to fully support the Heads of State’s call to action on education finance.

Russian Federation - H.E. Mr Valery Falkov, Minister of Science and Higher Education – video here
Russia approves the new global cooperation mechanism for SDG 4, which should be intergovernmental in which Member States must play a key role. The year 2020 for the international community was extremely difficult, but we have now unique experience and many lessons learned. Despite all the difficulties linked to the Covid-19 pandemic, learning must be maintained without interruption. This is possible when there is willingness of all stakeholders to work together to overcome difficulties.

Saudi Arabia - H.E. Mr Abdulrahman AlBarrak, Deputy Minister of Planning and Development, Ministry of Education – video here
Saudi Arabia affirms its support to the Working Group and the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism to enhance capacity development in the Arab region, forming a meaningful and effective global education cooperation mechanism. In particular, Saudi Arabia supports the realization of the most strategic achievements for the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee to face the dynamic changes and accelerating needs and expanding achievements of SDGs.

Slovak Republic - H.E. Mr Ludovit Paulis, State Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport – video here
Education holds the key to unlocking sustainable development. To achieve SDG 4, countries must invest a higher share of national resources into education. The right to education will remain an empty promise, unless education spending increases. The Slovak Republic strongly endorses and supports the 2021 GEM outcome document and the proposal of strengthened global cooperation for education. We acknowledge the Working Group’s dedicated work in developing the proposal through a co-construction process and building broad consensus around the proposal. We would like to highlight our role in cooperation and co-leading the extensive consultations with our region as a WG member.

Global Partnership for Education - Ms Alice Albright, Chief Executive Officer – video here
GPE fully supports and is willing to assist the process of the global cooperation mechanism. It suggested consideration of two practical concerns going forward. First, the high-level steering group may be too big while needing to take into account what is expected of education from other sectors such as agriculture, health and gender. Second, the 7 indicators for benchmarking results are based on SDG 4 indicators adopted some time ago; it is important to make sure that indicators are country driven and reflect the main challenges today.
**African Union Commission – H.E. Professor Sarah Anyang-Agbor, Commissioner for Human Resources Science Technology – video [here](#)**

The African Union (AU) and the UN have been working harmoniously, evidenced by the recent initiatives and partnerships on education development, including through the close collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Education Monitoring Report in setting regional benchmarks for SDG 4 and Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA) indicators, and a continental report on CESA and SDG4 to be presented during the UN General Assembly 2021. The AU will be part of the journey of strengthening the Global Cooperation Mechanism on education. We endorse the GCM proposal with a commitment to continue taking actions for purposeful and effective regional and country level mechanisms towards realizing education targets.

**Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States - H.E. Dr. Abdul Rahman Alasmi, Director-General – video [here](#)**

The Bureau, together with UNESCO and other partners, has worked together to establish indicators for the Gulf States and thanks UIS in the process. The Bureau we will support the Member States in rolling out reforms to establish the best possible vision for education based on the skills required for the 21st century, emphasizing expertise in technology.

**European Commission - Mr Martin Seychell, Deputy Director-General for International Partnerships - video [here](#)**

EC gladly supports the outcome of the reform process and the outcome document, having participated in the Working Group as a member of the donor constituency. Throughout the process, EC stressed that the reform should deliver on: 1) contributing to SDG 4 progress where needed, 2) eliminating duplication and overlap, 3) designing a lean coordination mechanism to allow agile delivery and 4) building on the strength of all relevant SDG 4 key players and strengthening joint coordination. We underline the importance of the proposed structure to respect mandates, consider capacity and strength, guarantee inclusive participation and representation of stakeholders, share leadership, enable collaboration and to be able to act decisively and with agility. Stronger foundations have been laid for global coordination. We need to continue the co-creation process to maintain the commitment of all actors and further develop the proposal.

**Education International - Mr David Edwards, General Secretary – video [here](#)**

Teachers rose above countless challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic, adapting technology and any means available. Achieving SDG 4 requires a renewed sense of urgency, shared commitment to realizing rights and a coordination mechanism that transcends individual agendas. We thank UNESCO and the members of the Working Group for organizing the difficult yet critically important conversations which led to this strengthened mechanism. The teaching profession from all regions of the world took part in this process.

**Global Campaign for Education - Mr Refat Sabbah, President – video [here](#)**

We fully support the international mechanism that will strengthen cooperation. We commit to playing a key role in making sure that the education agenda is implemented—we have to achieve SDG 4. We commend the work of the Working Group. It was a collective, inclusive and democratic process that delivered an unprecedented outcome. It was vital to include everyone and we succeeded in taking onboard the views of all stakeholders in education.

**Mr Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Global Education – video [here](#)**

Today’s meeting signals the desire of all organizations concerned with delivery and promotion of education to ensure greater global coordination, essential to meet the SDG for universal education. We do so with the strengthened Global Education Meeting, a new high-level steering committee dedicated to better policy decisions, higher standards, greater progress and more guaranteed funding to deliver SDG4. We must make progress to coordinate more effectively to deliver the extra finance
that is needed. The education aid and national government spending must not only rise but must be
used more efficiently and better coordinated. In cooperation with the Global Education Meeting and
the High-Level Steering Committee, the Global Education Forum will endeavor to raise aid, pool
funding and make for more efficient delivery.

**Message by Ms Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General** – video [here](#)

The global education landscape is rich in actors, which have often worked in their own lanes. It is my
ardent hope that the endorsement today of the proposal for the improved global education
cooperation mechanism with a more focused and purposeful high-level steering committee and
functions will set new ground in the collective path ahead. The Working Group’s efforts during the past
the 6 months to reach a final proposal, has already started breaking down silos and fostering a spirit
of solidarity and efficient cooperation. This proposal is only the beginning for the united front for
education. The year 2021 sees us equipped for the cooperation mechanism to help advance Education
2030 Framework for Action, and to realize education as a catalytic force for recovery and sustainable
development. The high-level segment of the Global Education Meeting in November 2021 will be a
critical moment to see the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism in full action.

3. **Showcasing regional benchmarks setting**

**Ms Silvia Montoya, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Mr Manos Antoninis, Director**
**of the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report** - videos [UIS](#) and [GEMR](#)

A linchpin of the reform of the global education cooperation mechanism is for countries to set their
national benchmarks for SDG-Education 2030 targets by setting the starting point and feasible rates of
progress. The seven benchmark indicators, approved by the Technical Cooperation Group in 2019,
refer to policy areas that are relevant for all countries and for which there is enough, even if
incomplete, data to monitor whether benchmarks are being achieved. Following extensive
consultations with regional organizations and member states over the past nine months, regional
organizations in Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, South-east Asia and the Pacific have
proposed minimum regional benchmarks values for selected SDG 4 indicators. Over the next 2-3
months, Member States are expected to confirm national values for these indicators.

**Caribbean Community (CARICOM)** - [Ms Laurette Bristol, Programme Manager, Human Resource Development](#)

Regional benchmarks are introduced to build on the regional organizations’ unique convening power,
to use the mechanisms and processes already in place, and to align global, regional and national
education monitoring frameworks for coherence. As the Framework for Action described them,
national benchmarks are the contribution each country is committing to make for the achievement of
SDG 4, similar to the climate-related nationally determined contributions, while taking into account
countries’ different starting points. All countries are requested to submit by 30 September their
national benchmark values.

**African Union Commission (AUC)** - [Mr Mahama Ouedraogo, Director, Department of Education, Science, technology and Innovation](#)

The African Union and UNESCO have been working over the past years to put in place a joint
mechanism for monitoring and reporting against the SDG 4 and the Continental Education Strategy for
Africa Agenda 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25). The African Union took the benchmarking process as an
opportunity to jointly communicate with member states on the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable
Development and CESA. Six indicators that reflect aspirations specific to CESA were selected as
additions to the seven global SDG 4 benchmarking indicators.

**Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)** - [Ms Ethel Agnes Pascua-Valenzuela, Director](#)

The regional benchmark exercise in Asia and the Pacific has become a unique opportunity for regional
bodies, partners and countries to further strengthen regional collaboration and coordination and promote the regional and national commitment towards achieving SDG4. Due to the region’s diversity, the exercise is undertaken at the sub-regional level, in partnership with sub-regional bodies, such as ASEAN, SEAMEO, SAARC, the Pacific Community, making the regional benchmarking process more relevant and linked to the existing sub-regional education frameworks and their respective objectives and targets. The countries have agreed with the regional minimum benchmarks for all the proposed indicators and will establish national benchmarks.
Session 2. From recovery to highlighting SDG 4 progress

1. Voices from youth and teachers

Video messages introduced by Ms Victoria Ibiwoye, Youth Representative to the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, and Ms Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth – videos Youth Representative, UN Envoy on Youth and What youth and teachers have to say

Across the world, young people consider education to be a critical aspect of their lives. At the same time, education is an aspect of life that raises great concern among youth and teachers, especially in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Many young people today feel that education systems are not responding to their realities, concerns, challenges and opportunities.

Creating safe and inclusive education systems must remain a key priority to ensure no one is left behind, in particular young girls and women, LGBTQ youth, indigenous youth and young people with disabilities. Youth demand that comprehensive human rights and sexuality education, climate action and gender transformative education be mainstreamed across curricula. Young people and teachers are calling for transformational change in educational systems; one that is systemic and long-term, with an aim to disrupting the status quo.

Societies thrive on a well-educated workforce and benefit from investing in education, which helps prepare learners for the future. The past year is a proof that the international community needs to re-strategize and renew the collective commitment to achieving SDGs. Moving forward, it is crucial to include the perspective of students and teachers in decision-making, initiatives and the strengthened Global Education Cooperation Mechanism.


Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO – video here

This third round of the joint survey covers the period from February to May 2021 and provides an updated information on policy interventions covering 142 countries; it documents how countries are mitigating learning losses, addressing the challenges of opening schools and delivering distance-learning strategies. The survey takes a holistic approach to education, encompassing teachers, learners, psycho-social dimensions, as well as support and special measures aimed at the most vulnerable. It also underscores the need to develop digital learning policies and produce better evidence on the effectiveness of remote learning.

Mr Robert Jenkins, Global Director of Education, UNICEF – video here

While the number of lost school days is significant, there were numerous efforts made to provide access to remote learning through TV, radio, mobile phones, take-home packages and online platforms. When schools were closed, 470 million children did not have access to remote learning. Access to remote learning has a direct relationship with the level of education and the country’s income: the higher the level of education, the higher the access; the higher the income of the country, the higher the access. Therefore, the importance to focus on low and lower-middle income countries where children have less access to remote learning.

Mr Andreas Schleicher, Director of Education and Skills, OECD - video here

Keeping schools safe calls for better infrastructure (e.g. ventilation), but also more investment and up-scaled coordination between education and other sectors. Low-income countries struggle particularly in this regard: while 79% high-income countries implement health and safety guidance in all schools, just 27% of low-income countries report universal implementation. School opening doors is important...
but it alone does not ensure that students come back and disadvantaged students need tailored and sustained support to catch up and readjust. Short-term remedial instruction can reduce long-term learning losses by half; it is thus encouraging that two thirds of the countries which did not implement a remedial programme in the previous survey round, reported implementing one in the current wave after six months. Mobilizing additional resources for education is primordial with the financing gap to achieve SDG 4 by 2030 is estimated to 200 billion USD as a result of the pandemic.

Mr Jaime Saavedra, Global Director, Education Global Practice, World Bank – video here
Schools were closed for 80 days on average, but this loss of in-person learning varied with more than 200 school days lost in Latin America and South Asia. Learning losses have been considerable and unequal. Remedial education is thus vital and essential necessity. Yet, one out of three countries is not implementing remedial programmes post-COVID, and they require strong investment and adaptation particularly in human resources—teachers, principals, parents and communities. Effective catch-up strategies require countries to measure learning levels at national and classroom levels to inform teaching and learning practices. However, only one third out of the surveyed countries are measuring learning losses. Quality data on learning losses is essential for informed decision and policymaking. Progress in education requires political commitment to mobilize financial resources, technical resources and managerial resources for the implementation of reforms and interventions.

3. Ministerial Roundtable

What measures and lessons learned from your country’s COVID19 response would contribute to accelerate progress toward SDG 4? How could these and other acceleration measures in your country be supported through regional and global SDG 4 cooperation mechanisms?

- Asia and the Pacific

Bangladesh - H.E. Ms Dipu Moni Nawaz, Minister of Education – video here
In Bangladesh remote learning started within 10 days of school closure through the use of social media, newspapers, as well as TV and radio channels. The country also has a dedicated COVID-19 recovery plan to achieve SDG 4 and tackle learning loss, inequalities in learning, increases in dropout, child labor, as well as mental health issues. The overarching objective of this plan is to ensure quality, equity and inclusiveness, while trying to reduce the digital divide. Despite these efforts, Bangladesh continues to require more investments and additional technical support.

Lao People's Democratic Republic - H.E. Assoc. Prof. Dr Phout Simmalavong, Minister of Education and Sports – video here
Lao PDR is developing a series of initiatives on Education for Sustainable Development. In the context of the global health crisis, measures to ensure education continuity have been implemented, such as the delivery of hygiene products and the distribution of learning materials to support distance learning. Lao PDR will continue to uphold its commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development.

Mongolia - H.E. Mr Enkh-Amgalan Luvsantseren, Minister of Education and Science – video here
Mongolia made use of online platforms and TV programs to ensure learning continuity. UNESCO’s policy support and technical assistance provided valuable support for the recovery of the country. Mongolia also recently started its SDG mid-term review process.

Nauru - H.E. Mr Richard-Hyde Menke, Deputy Minister for Education and Training – video here
In Nauru, schools have remained open through the pandemic. The country is, however, exploring options for virtual education including the use of TV and radio to ensure crisis preparedness. The government made additional resources available to all schools, revised policies and recruited regionally to actively address teacher shortages.
Philippines - H.E. Ms Leonor Magtolis Briones, Secretary of the Department of Education – video here
When it comes to benchmarking, it is essential to take the legal framework of each country into account, as well as the role of the Head of State. For low-income countries, sustainable solutions to challenges related to financing must be sought. Finally, developing a learning continuity programme for each region is essential.

Republic of Korea - H.E. Ms Eun-Hae Yoo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education – video here
Korea ensured educational continuity through online and offline learning, with reinforced disinfection of school facilities and additional childcare support. In addition, customized support for student health, including both emotional and social support, was put in place. Korea will continue to cooperate with the global community towards the implementation of the Incheon Declaration.

• Arab States

Oman - H.E. Ms Madiha Ahmed Al-Shaibani, Minister of Education – video here
Oman deployed substantial efforts to get children back to school safely, creating a national committee that addresses learning losses. In addition, the country prioritized vaccination for all students above 12 years. Good practices of the global community inspired the country in the development of its own online learning programme. Cooperation with regional and international organizations in support of education was further strengthened.

Syrian Arab Republic - H.E. Mr Darem Tabbaa, Minister of Education – video here
The Ministry of Education managed to guarantee education continuity even during the war, especially by bolstering school health services. Throughout the pandemic, the government developed strategies to address the educational impact of the health crisis by reducing school hours, shutting down schools when needed, developing outreach programmes for hygiene, as well as through concrete measures aimed at guaranteeing school safety.

United Arab Emirates - H.E. Mr Hussain bin Ibrahim Al Hammadi, Minister of Education – video here
Education and a swift return to school is a priority for the country. The U.A.E worked closely with international organizations, particularly with those having a mandate in education. Guaranteeing educational continuity is a central objective of the government. In this spirit, an exhaustive education program that focuses on excellence is being developed and will be presented at the 2022 Dubai Expo.

Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) - Dr. Salim M. AlMalik, Director General – video here
In the context of the pandemic, ICESCO provided IT equipment and training for online teaching and supported school reopening. The findings of a study conducted by ICESCO illustrate that schools need to adapt and innovate school textbooks to respond to a new educational reality. Finally, international cooperation should offer tailored technical support for each country.

• Europe and North America

Andorra – H.E. Ms Ester Vilarrubla Escales, Minister of Education and Higher Education – video here
Andorra adopted a personalized approach to target the difficulties encountered by students and their families. Training was provided for teachers and families to perfect the use of digital tools. After several months of distance learning, students have been evaluated. These evaluations made it possible to review the situation of each student and support them in a more individualized way. Moving forward, partnerships and collaboration between countries remain essential to promoting quality education.
Armenia - H.E. Mr Artur Martirosyan, Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport – video here
Armenia provided digital support by using applications such as Microsoft Teams and providing computers to pupils for distance learning. Resources have also been provided by the private sector and development partners to ensure connectivity, notably of the most disadvantaged students. In addition, social and psychological support has been strengthened in schools. Equipping teachers with digital skills remains essential and the lack of qualified teachers remains a challenge for the country.

Azerbaijan – H.E. Mr Mukhtar Mammad Oglu Mammadov, Minister of Education – video here
The COVID-19 crisis allowed Azerbaijan to identify the most striking challenges of its educational system. Disadvantaged families have been the most impacted by the pandemic and the government therefore decided to cover the tuition fees of 20,000 students. Special loans also seek to help these students. The country furthermore invested in professional development of educational staff, training and capacity building.

Bulgaria - Ms Evgenia Peeva, Deputy Minister of Education and Science – video here
Bulgaria completed a survey, which showed that the most vulnerable students have been the most affected by this pandemic, notably when it comes to dropouts. The crisis has had impacts on the emotional well-being, behavior and cognitive development of students, which Bulgaria is addressing through targeted policies. Finally, ensuring equal access to digital tools remains a central priority for the country.

Cyprus - Mr Prodromos Prodromou, Minister of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth – video here
The Ministry made a programme that included online training and online content available, which is enriched on an ongoing basis. In addition, an educational YouTube channel will be established in the near future. Cyprus also provided schools with adequate technologies and upgraded existing ones to transform classrooms into digital classrooms. A programme will also be developed to enhance the digital skills of teachers. To respond to the digital needs of students, the government will sponsor 25% of students to acquire a computer.

Finland – H.E. Mr Antti Kurvinen, Minister of Science and Culture of Ministry of Education and Culture – video here
The crisis provided the opportunity for Finland to re-imagine education. The country put particular emphasis on supporting teachers’ creativity and worked to improve the resilience of its education system. Finland raised the educational level of society and extended the minimum school leaving age to 18. Today, more than ever, investment in digital learning to ensure continuous learning remains critical for all countries, together with the need for collective actions and a better collaboration.

Georgia – H.E. Mr Mikheil Chkhenkeli, Minister of Education and Science – video here
Georgia implemented distance learning until face-to-face courses could be delivered in a safe environment. The pandemic taught Georgia useful lessons related to resilience, allowing it to create mechanisms for the improvement of inclusivity in education. Just as in other countries, the need to invest in distance learning courses remains critical for Georgia.

Greece – H.E. Ms Niki Kerameus, Minister of Education and Religious Affairs – video here
Greece’s education system experienced many challenges during the pandemic and adapted by delivering distance learning courses to the two million students of the country. Greece also invested 450 million euros in digital learning to provide equitable access to quality education for all learners. The pandemic allowed Greece to make important progress from a digital point of view.
Latvia – H.E. Ms Anita Muižniece, Minister of Education and Science – video here
Latvia prioritized the continuity of learning, connectivity and accessibility of technology to all learners, as well as support for teachers’ digital skills development. The country is implementing a nation-wide initiative to support the youth centers at schools in promoting the psycho-emotional health and well-being of young learners. Latvia is strongly committed to raising awareness of the importance of youth resilience and to promoting their civic engagement and action for the recovery of the society.

Malta – H.E. Ms Justyne Caruana, Minister of Education – video here
In the context of the pandemic, Malta strengthened online resources and distance learning by promoting connectivity and accessibility of technology for all learners. Financial assistance to ensure connectivity and access to devices was provided by the government. Malta implemented summer schools for those who missed school due to the global pandemic. Additional funds are needed to implement education programs such as summer school.

Netherlands – H.E. Ms Ingrid Katharina van Engelshoven, Minister of Education, Culture and Science – video here
While education might be a victim of the pandemic, it is essential to recognize that it is also an important part of the solution and a chance to build back better. Education has the power to connect and close gaps, such as the digital or gender divide. It prepares young people for the labor market, as well as for becoming global citizens. To ensure all SDGs remain in sight, it is essential to strengthen cooperation.

Portugal – H.E. Mr Tiago Brandão Rodrigues, Minister of Education – video here
Portugal’s approach to the pandemic has been to ensure that learners are in the classroom as much as possible. Schools have also been provided with computers to enhance equal access to education and academic achievement for disadvantaged families. The country strengthened social support for schools, learners and families to facilitate the transition to distance learning. Portugal also focuses its actions on adult learning. The country therefore strongly supports and recommends investing in lifelong learning.

Republic of Moldova – H.E. Ms Lilia Pogolsa, Minister of Education, Culture and Research – video here
The Republic of Moldova actively supported the development of digital skills of learners and teachers for an inclusive learning environment for all children. The pandemic illustrated the importance of investing in digital tools for learners and teachers. Education systems must be further strengthened through quality and inclusive planning to provide equal opportunities for all children.

Romania – H.E. Mr Sorin-Mihai Cîmpeanu, Minister of Education – video here
Romania worked on teacher training and the establishment of infrastructure to allow access to online education for all. Future actions will focus on the development of digital tools, the prevention of school dropout, technical education and inequality reduction. The country’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan includes a budget of 3.6 billion euros for education. Romania recognizes the necessity to act in a holistic way through strengthened cooperation across sectors and actors.

Russian Federation – H.E. Mr Alexander Bugaev, First Deputy Minister of Education – video here
The pandemic taught Russia to be flexible in its learning format. Teaching models varied according to the epidemiological situation of the different regions. Russia implemented a training project for people who have suffered from the consequences of COVID-19, which is benefiting more than 110,000 citizens. Training teachers in the use of digital tools remains a central priority.
• Africa

Benin - H.E. Mr Kouaro Yves Chabi, Minister of Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education – video here
Since the start of the pandemic, Benin has been working to ensure that the country is able to achieve the SDGs. Benin has been compelled to suspend classes from primary schools to upper secondary school. Despite these challenges, there have been some positive impacts and developments such as the provision of online education through platforms, as well as radio broadcasts allowing for learning continuity.

Botswana – H.E. Mr Douglas Letsholathebe, Minister of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology – video here
The suspension of classes resulted in alarming learning losses in Botswana. To ensure learning continuity and that no one is left behind, hybrid learning solutions were sought. In this regard, partnership between the government and the private sectors were strengthened for the development of online learning tools and platforms.

Burkina Faso - H.E. Mr Stanislas Ouaro, Minister of National Education, Literacy and Promotion of National Languages – video here
Burkina Faso had to close schools as of June 2020. In 2021, the country was able to hold some exams compared to the previous year. The pandemic had an impact not only on education but on financing as well. Various international partners had to cut down on education financing as they were redirecting resources to their own countries. In the context of the crisis, child marriage increased, resulting in an increase of dropout rates, which the Ministry is mobilized to address.

Ghana – H.E. Mr Yaw Osei Adutwum, Minister of Education – video here
Before COVID-19, Ghana had a major education initiative, which included the provision of free secondary education. The policy aimed to help children without resources to go to school. As a result of its implementation, the number of students enrolled in high school increased from 800,000 to 1.2 million within 3 years. In the context of the pandemic, universities were able to fully offer online programs. In high schools, junior high schools and primary schools learning continued through TV and radio channels, as well as other platforms. Catch-up strategies remain essential to address learning losses, notably for the most vulnerable students.

Madagascar - H.E. Ms Marie Michelle Sahondrarimalala, Minister of Education – video here
Madagascar ensured learning continuity through various initiatives and various channels. 130 schoolbooks have been distributed together with equipment allowing children to follow online classes. The next academic year will begin earlier, with four weeks being dedicated to catch up. The government also provides targeted psycho-social support to students, parents and teachers. To strengthen resilience, 10,000 primary school teachers have been trained.

Malawi – H.E. Ms Agnes NyaLonje, Minister of Education – video here
During school closure, Malawi set up a national planning task force that coordinated the management of the COVID-19 response and the safe return of learners to schools, colleges, and universities. Prevention measures have been implemented, such as training in mask making. To address learning loss, catch-up classes have been put in place to prevent setbacks and support students, notably with the preparation for exams. Multisectoral planning, resource mobilization and monitoring helped Malawi address the challenges of the crisis.

Mali - H.E. Ms Dedeou Ousmane Sidibe, Minister of National Education – video here
Mali has been facing a serious food crisis and a complicated security situation while the pandemic is adding another layer of complexity. The provision of psycho-social support for teachers, students and parents who have been traumatized by the crises remains a priority. Mali also initiated national
campaigns specifically targeting women to raise awareness about the importance of education and allocated additional resources to schools in remote areas.

**Rwanda** – *H.E. Mr Gaspard Twagirayezu, Minister of State in charge of Primary and Secondary Education* – video [here](#)

Rwanda has invested in remote learning to ensure that learning does not stop whenever children cannot physically go to school. Remote learning approach focuses on developing quality content and increasing access to devices and connectivity. During school closures, Rwanda increased school infrastructure, recruited trained teachers and strengthened education sector and policy frameworks.

**Senegal** – *H.E. Mr Mamadou Talla, Minister of National Education* – video [here](#)

To respond to the pandemic, Senegal had to rethink its strategy, readapting planning and resources. Particular emphasis has been put on the development of digital learning opportunities and support to teachers. Thanks to these efforts, Senegal was able to improve the exam results of students. The use of digital technology for education to ensure systematic teaching will remain critical.

**South Africa** - *H.E. Ms Matsie Angelina Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education* – video [here](#)

South Africa’s overall goal is to continue to improve the quality of learning outcomes and reduce inequalities in education. In the lower grades, the country reduced the number of subjects to allow teachers to spend more time on foundation skills such as literacy and numeracy to cover up the time lost during the pandemic. South Africa also extended the academic year, reducing the number of vacations. Further, teachers have been trained in redesigning programmes from face-to-face education to hybrid learning.

**Uganda** – *H.E. Ms Janet Kataaha Museveni, Minister of Education and Sports* – video [here](#)

In basic education, Uganda is expanding access to quality home study materials appropriate for all learners and classes. In higher education, the country is strengthening and expanding open, distance and e-learning. Universities are working to discover their own vaccines while utilizing their treatments and therapy to cure the pandemic and prevent the loss of additional lives. The pandemic encouraged societies to become more resilient and self-reliant, which is a positive development for humanity.

**Tanzania** – *H.E. Prof. Joyce Lazaro Ndalichako, Minister of Education, Science and Technology* – video [here](#)

During the COVID-19 crisis, schools and universities were closed. Educational institutions in Tanzania provided local instructions and guidance on how to make and use masks. Collaborative work has been carried out with development partners and stakeholders to ensure child protection and provide advice to parents. Teacher training on digital tools remains essential to ensure learning continuity.

**Zimbabwe** – *H.E. Mr Machingura Raymore, Deputy Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology* – video [here](#)

Zimbabwe mobilized all educational stakeholders to ensure that educators are computer literate. The government diffused prevention and awareness messages on the measures to be implemented to overcome the COVID-19, especially in remote areas. The country is actively mobilizing resources and strengthening the manufacture of masks and vaccines. Zimbabwe is committed to raising awareness of the importance of investing in technology to ensure learning continuity for all students.

- **Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Cuba** - *Ms Ena Elsa Velázquez Cobiella, Minister of Education* – video [here](#)

Distance learning was guaranteed through educational programmes addressed to different school levels and TV broadcasting, with the support of interpreters of sign language to ensure the inclusion of every student. Learning materials were provided for every level, along with online tutoring programmes. Families were also involved in the learning process of students through mobile
applications, and training for teachers was provided. Cuba continued to work jointly with families, organizations and communities to towards SDG 4.

**Dominican Republic** - *H.E. Ms Julissa Hernández, Vice Minister of Education* – video [here](#)

At the beginning of November 2020, the Ministry of Education set up a national plan to replace in-person learning with home/distance learning until the health situation allows to gradually reopen schools. Providing fair access to digital platforms for teachers and learners has been a central priority for the government. Targeted support was provided for teachers, learners and parents at all levels of education, as enshrined in the country’s legislation.

**Ecuador** - *H.E. Ms María Brown Pérez, Minister of Education* – video [here](#)

COVID-19 was a catalyst for innovation and technologies. This experience has contributed to a more inclusive education system and led to a discussion on how to innovate the pedagogical model. Project-based learning and interdisciplinary learning have become a real possibility. However, learning disruption has also taken a toll on mental health and increased dropout rates, child labor and domestic violence. Moving forward, international cooperation and investment will be essential for the resilient recovery of all societies.

**Guatemala** - *H.E. Ms Zaida Lorena Arogón Ayala de Argueta, Vice Minister of Education* – video [here](#)

In the context of the global health crisis, Guatemala faced considerable challenges related to the provision of tools and platforms for distance learning. Reducing the digital divide between the rich and the poor was among the greatest difficulties encountered. Addressing the impact of the pandemic at global and regional levels requires both pedagogical, as well as technical solutions. UNESCO’s support to countries to implement high quality education programmes will remain critical.

**Mexico** – *H.E. Mr Juan Pablo Arroyo, Undersecretary of Education*

Mexico is a country with many economic, social and regional inequalities. These inequalities are the origin of the inequity in education in both rural and urban settings. In the context of the crisis, all teachers have been vaccinated. The training of teachers in digital skills in the course of 2020 has been the single most important technological leap of innovation in the last decades. ICTs and digital resources provide valuable opportunities for the future of education.

**Nicaragua** - *H.E. Ms Miriam Raudez, Minister of Education* – video [here](#)

Nicaragua maintained in-person classes as of March of 2021 and implemented plans to maintain face-to-face learning, combining health and education measures. Digital systems and platforms have been strengthened. The crisis also illustrated the need to adjust teaching practices to a new reality, as well as the central role of families. In this regard, it would be desirable to have dedicated fora allowing for international discussions to share experiences and lessons learned among countries.

**Paraguay** – *H.E. Ms Celeste Mancuello, Vice Minister of Higher Education and Sciences* – video [here](#)

The crisis provided a unique opportunity to transition to a better education system. Thanks to the measures implemented, the government will be able to ensure full education cycles in 2022, involving the use of digital platforms for online learning along with printed pedagogical materials for the most vulnerable children and youth who are unable to access the internet.

**Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** - *H.E. Mr Eduardo Piñate, Minister of Education* – video [here](#)

Venezuela managed to ensure continuity of academic activity in both public and private sectors. The government put in place dedicated support structures for students and parents. Educational continuity was ensured through the use of radio and TV channels, dedicated web pages, social networks and other electronic tools. Teachers have been prioritized in the country’s vaccination campaign. With the support of UNESCO, UNICEF and FAO, Venezuela organized a series of webinars to provide support to teachers.
Prof. Kazuhiro Yoshida, Co-Chair of the outgoing SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee (Japan) – video here
Inclusive equitable quality learning is at the core of SDG 4. Learning includes social and emotional, as well as cognitive domains. Naturally, education should play a central role in nurturing transformation and behavioural change, as a key enabler for the remaining SDGs. The international community has to do more and better to deliver on SDG 4. Moving forward, it is essential to bring in wider partners who have knowledge, technology and resources. Information on effective practices must be pulled to inform policies. Additional transformative efforts are needed to achieve results at the country level. The strengthened GCM points to the key areas in which targeted action is needed.

Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO – video here
The adoption of the meeting’s Outcome Document marks a critical step, laying the foundation for the beginning of a new phase for strengthened, more effective cooperation and accelerated progress towards SDG 4. Rethinking, transforming and strengthening the global cooperation mechanism is an ongoing process, calling for the engagement of all actors. Further development at regional and country levels is needed to ensure its relevance and sustainability and to make a meaningful difference. The next milestone is the High-level Session of the 2021 GEM, co-hosted with France in November, at which the High-Level Steering Committee will be established.
Annex 1. Programme

13:00 – 13:10
Opening
- Ms Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO Director-General
- H. E. Mr Koichi Hagiuda, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan/Co-chair of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee

13:10 – 14:20
Session 1: Endorsement of the Working Group’s proposal on the improved global education cooperation mechanism (GCM)

Presentation of the proposal by the Working Group Co-Chairs
- H.E. Mr Aksel Jakobsen, State Secretary for International Development for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
- Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

Endorsement of the proposal

Statements from Ministers and Constituency Representatives
- H.E. Mr Milton Ribeiro, Minister of Education, Brazil
- H.E. Mr Baosheng Chen, Minister of Education, China
- H.E. Ms María Victoria Angulo González, Minister of National Education, Colombia
- H.E. Mr Jean-Michel Blanquer, Minister of National Education, France
- H.E. Mr. Niels Annen, Minister of State, Federal Foreign Office, Germany
- H.E. Dr Anindito Aditomo, Deputy Minister of Research and Development and Books Agency, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Indonesia
- H.E. Mr Patrizio Bianchi, Minister of Public Education, Italy (G20)
- H.E. Prof. George Magoha, Minister of Education, Kenya
- H.E. Mr Valery Falkov, Minister of Science and Higher Education, Russian Federation
- H.E. Dr. Abdulrahman AlBarrak, Deputy Minister of Planning and Development-Ministry of Education, Saudi Arabia
- H.E. Mr Ludovít Paulis, State Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, Slovak Republic
- Ms Alice Albright, Chief Executive Officer, Global Partnership for Education
- H.E. Professor Sarah Anyang-Agbor, Commissioner for Human Resources Science Technology, African Union
- H.E. Dr. Abdul Rahman Alasmi, Director-General, Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States
- Mr Martin Seychell, Deputy Director-General for International Partnerships, European Commission
- Mr David Edwards, General Secretary, Education International
- Mr Refat Sabbah, President, Global Campaign for Education
- Mr Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Global Education
- Message by Ms Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General
Meeting report: Ministerial Segment of the 2021 Global Education Meeting

14:11 – 14:25
Showcasing regional benchmarks setting
- Ms Silvia Montoya, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Mr Manos Antoninis, Director of the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report
- Panel on the regional benchmarking process:
  * Mr Mahama Ouedraogo, Director, Department of Education, Science, technology and Innovation, African Union Commission
  * Ms. Ethel Agnes Pascua-Valenzuela, Director, Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)
  * Ms. Laurette Bristol, The Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

14:25 – 16:50

Session 2: From recovery to accelerating SDG 4 progress
Voices from youth and teachers
- Introduction by Ms. Victoria Ibiwoye, Youth Representative to the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee
- Ms Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth
- Insights from youth and teachers around the world (video)

Presentation of the joint UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and OECD Report on the Global Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures
- Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO
- Mr Robert Jenkins, Global Director of Education, UNICEF
- Mr Andreas Schleicher, Director of Education and Skills, OECD
- Mr Jaime Saavedra, Global Director, Education, World Bank

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Ministerial Roundtable: What measures and lessons learned from your country’s COVID-19 response would contribute to accelerate progress toward SDG 4? How could these and other acceleration measures in your country be supported through regional and global SDG 4 cooperation mechanisms?

Ministers from:
- Asia-Pacific
- Arab States
- Europe and North America
- Africa
- Latin America and the Caribbean

Please see speakers’ list

16:50 – 17:00
Closing
- Prof. Kazuhiro Yoshida, Co-Chair of the Outgoing Steering Committee, Japan
- Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO
Annex 2. Outcome Document

1. We, ministers and delegates of Member States, representatives of United Nations’ agencies, international and regional organizations, civil society organizations, youth and students, the teaching profession, foundations and the private sector, met on 13 July 2021 at the Ministerial Segment of the 2021 Global Education Meeting (GEM), organized by UNESCO and the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee.

2. We recall the 2020 GEM Declaration, which invited UNESCO expeditiously to lead a consultation process to develop a proposal for strengthening the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee to steer and coordinate the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism (GCM) in line with the Education 2030 Framework for Action and in the post-COVID-19 context.

3. We express our appreciation to the Working Group, co-chaired by UNESCO and Norway, which developed the proposal and submitted it to this Ministerial Segment of the 2021 GEM following extensive consultations with Member States and other education actors.

4. We recognize with appreciation the important contributions the current SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee has made in providing strategic guidance and policy recommendations in pursuit of SDG 4-Education 2030. In concluding its mandate, we count on its members’ continuing support and active participation.

5. Having examined the proposal by the Working Group titled ‘Forging a Purposeful and Effective Global Education Cooperation’ set out in Annex 1, we:
   a) Agree on the proposal by the Working Group for strengthening the GCM, including in their entirety the objectives, functions and institutional arrangements;
   b) Invite SDG 4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee constituencies to nominate their representatives, prior to its official establishment at the High-Level Segment of the 2021 GEM, and request UNESCO to facilitate this process;
   c) Invite UNESCO to lead the further development of the proposal in collaboration with its Member States and partners for strengthening the GCM, to be shared at the High-Level Segment of the November 2021 GEM, and covering:
      i. Functions of the GCM (evidence-based policy, data, financing).
      ii. Operating arrangements for the High-Level Steering Committee – both Leadership and Sherpa Groups – and its Inter-Agency Secretariat.
      iii. Strengthened linkages in the global-regional-country levels of coordination within the GCM.
      iv. The Multilateral Education Platform and the Global Education Forum, as embedded parts of the GCM.
      v. Accountability framework covering SDG 4 progress on their own commitments by Member States and contributions/support by international actors.
   d) Reaffirm the seven SDG 4-Education 2030 monitoring indicators for benchmarking as well as the regional processes to set minimum regional benchmarks and invite Member States to submit national benchmarks on these indicators for UNESCO to compile and present at the High-Level Segment of the Global Education Meeting in November 2021.
Outcome document - continued - Annex 1

Forging a purposeful and effective global education cooperation mechanism – final proposal by the working group

Outline of contents

Executive Summary
2. Case for change: Observed challenges for global level cooperation on Education 2030.
4. Proposed functions of a fit-for-purpose Global Cooperation Mechanism.
5. Proposed institutional arrangements for an effective Global Cooperation Mechanism.
6. The next steps.
Annex A: Configuration, mandates, responsibilities and membership for the GCM structures.
Executive summary

Background

Global education faces a changing agenda and fast-moving set of demands. It has become increasingly dynamic and complex in terms of an expanding scope across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a widening array of actors engaged at the global, regional and country levels. Reversals in SDG 4 progress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have heightened the urgency for action and have increased the need to work across sectors to respond to the interconnectedness of the SDGs. Many have called for clearer policy leadership, stronger synergies, greater efficiency and better delivery in global and regional cooperation as the most effective response.

SDG4-Education 2030 is a universal agenda applicable to all countries and it is a holistic, lifelong learning agenda giving equal validity to all the targets. Effective global and regional cooperation among the education community is expected to support progress by countries in five ways: high-level advocacy and action-focused political will; improved data and enhanced monitoring of results; adequate and aligned global financing; knowledge sharing about effective policies and practices; and support for implementation capacity and systems strengthening.

The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (Steering Committee) was intended to be a representative driving force in making global cooperation relevant and in supporting countries to achieve SDG4-Education 2030. However, the Steering Committee has not kept pace with the rapidly evolving education agenda and its changing actors. It has also suffered from a lack of high-level participation and from inadequate resourcing of its secretariat. As a consequence, the Steering Committee has not proved sufficiently effective and the contribution and impact of global cooperation have fallen below the intended expectations.

In response, the 2020 GEM called for a proposal to improve the GCM and to strengthen the Steering Committee. The GCM is the totality of the GEM, the Steering Committee and its Secretariat, the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CCNGO), the Global Education Forum (GEF), the Multilateral Education Platform (MEP) and relevant regional coordination platforms.

GCM objectives and functions

A GCM that is relevant to all countries and international actors will need to serve a dual purpose as specified:

- Create a strong overall enabling environment for faster progress towards SDG 4 by facilitating global and regional cooperation on better knowledge, evidence, data and monitoring and by boosting the shared ambition and commitment by governments and international actors to achieve results.
- Support time-bound initiatives developed by coalitions of countries or partners, guided by thematic areas endorsed by the GEM and driven by country priorities, to help countries accelerate towards SDG 4-Education 2030.

The focus will not be about creating new initiatives in most cases, but it will be about amplifying, deepening, or scaling the initiatives already being developed by coalitions of
actors. Equally, the GCM will not seek to duplicate country-level coordination mechanisms, but will aim to strengthen the institutional incentives of global actors to collaborate and coordinate better at the country level.

Based on the expected contributions of cooperation at the global level, three core functions are proposed for an improved GCM. These are:

- **Promote evidence-based policy formulation and implementation** – Provide policy leadership of the GCM to recommend priority actions for accelerating progress towards the achievement of SDG 4 based on evidence, knowledge and lessons on overcoming bottlenecks in achieving the SDG 4 targets. Promote the effective use of evidence for making appropriate policies and implementation strategies at the country level.

- **Monitor progress and improve the availability/use of data** – Pursue the monitoring, follow-up and review arrangements for the SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda while helping hold all relevant partners to account for their commitments. Develop and pursue advocacy strategies based on reported national and regional benchmarks and create a Global Education Observatory.

- **Drive financing mobilisation and improve alignment** – Advocate for mobilisation and better use of domestic and international education financing in support of agreed priorities, by galvanising renewed commitments, pushing for greater harmonisation and alignment, championing innovative sources of finance and promoting efficiency and equity in education spending.

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overcoming bottlenecks in achieving the SDG 4 targets. Promote the effective use of evidence for making appropriate policies and implementation strategies at the country level.

- **Monitor progress and improve the availability/use of data** – Pursue the monitoring, follow-up and review arrangements for the SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda while helping hold all relevant partners to account for their commitments. Develop and pursue advocacy strategies based on reported national and regional benchmarks and create a Global Education Observatory.

- **Drive financing mobilisation and improve alignment** – Advocate for mobilisation and better use of domestic and international education financing in support of agreed priorities, by galvanising renewed commitments, pushing for greater harmonisation and alignment, championing innovative sources of finance and promoting efficiency and equity in education spending.

**GCM structures and membership**

Strengthening and transforming existing structures is the priority – not creating new ones. The new arrangements aim to be simpler and nimbler, while also being more powerful and visible. Proposals for reform centre on two institutional elements.

A remodelled **SDG4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee (SDG4 HLSC)** will serve as the global education apex body, in place of the current Steering Committee. In line with the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the SDG4 HLSC will provide strategic guidance, review progress and make recommendations on priorities/actions; monitor and advocate for adequate financing; and encourage harmonisation and coordination of partner activities.

It will have a membership that is representative of the global education community. The structure will comprise a ‘Leadership Group’ (comprising a maximum membership of twenty-eight ministers, agency heads and equivalent top organizational leaders) and a corresponding ‘Sherpa Group’ of senior technical representatives. The latter will provide support to the Leadership Group and will lead technical work on the three GCM functions.

The HLSC will operate under the auspices of the Global Education Meeting, which will periodically set thematic priorities. It will be co-chaired by the head of state, or government of a Member State and the Director-General of UNESCO.

A dedicated **Inter-Agency Secretariat to support the SDG4 HLSC will be established.** This will be convened and hosted by UNESCO and will have specialist staff assigned or seconded by members of the global education community. It will support the functions, activities and meetings of the SDG4 HLSC and other GCM forums/platforms; liaise with other relevant bodies involved in global education; manage external communications and outreach for the GCM; and maintain data, knowledge and reporting systems in line with the SDG4 HLSC mandate.
Relationship with other global actors and forums/platforms

Noting their important roles in the global system and in order to ensure a close link to the UN Secretary-General’s Office, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education and the UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth will have standing invitations to attend meetings of the SDG4 HLSC Leadership Group. Further opportunities will also be sought for the HLSC to engage influentially across the UN system on education issues as part of the entire 2030 Agenda and to ensure the involvement of non-members of UNESCO that are active in education.

The GEF and the MEP will each work under the auspices of the HLSC and they will provide updates on progress at annual HLSC meetings. The GEF and MEP will be reviewed as part of the next phase of GCM reform to ensure coherence and avoid duplication.

It is expected that the different platforms and fora of the GCM would complement each other in contributing to the three core functions, under the overall guidance of the HLSC.

The next steps

This final proposal will accompany the draft outcome document created at the Ministerial Segment of the Global Education Meeting on 13 July 2021. This is being shared with all Member States to seek endorsement of the Working Group’s final proposal.

The analysis and proposals in this paper represent the first step in a global co-creation process towards an improved GCM. The process requires further steps at regional and country levels, as well as an elaboration of how these levels will relate to one another, in order to ensure its relevance and to make a meaningful difference. Further work will also be carried out to develop the three GCM functions.
1. Context and introduction

UNESCO, with the governments of Ghana, Norway and the United Kingdom, convened an extraordinary session of the Global Education Meeting in October 2020 (2020 GEM), with the aim of protecting education as a catalytic force for COVID-19 recovery and sustainable development. At the 2020 GEM, governments and the international community:

- Agreed to uphold their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDG 4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, thus reaffirming the universal and holistic education agenda.

- Triggered a dialogue about improving GCM as a means to assist countries accelerate their progress toward SDG4.

The 2020 GEM called specifically for a multi-stakeholder consultation process ‘to develop a proposal to strengthen the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee to be able to effectively steer and coordinate the global education cooperation mechanism in line with the Education 2030 Framework for Action and in the post-COVID-19 context’.

The Steering Committee is considered to have a relevant and important mandate, but has previously not proved to be an effective body. The overall GCM includes the GEM, the Steering Committee and its Secretariat, the CCNGO, the GEF and the MEP.

A Working Group (WG), co-chaired by UNESCO and Norway, was tasked with developing and consulting upon a proposal to improve the GCM and to strengthen the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee.

An extensive set of consultative meetings with global education stakeholders has been running alongside WG discussions. An in-depth and evidence-based review of the current state of the GCM, including a comparison with the global health and climate sectors, was prepared by an independent expert. A survey of Member States was carried out to explore coordination challenges and good practices at the global, regional and country levels. A consultation on the emerging proposals, across all regions and key constituencies (including civil society organizations, the teaching profession, education in emergency partners and youth), was conducted in May 2021.

Consultation and discourse across a wide and diverse global community has itself been a challenging endeavour, which has illustrated the complexity and weaknesses of the existing GCM. The analysis in this paper represents only a first step in a global co-creation process towards an improved GCM. That process will require further work at the global, regional and country levels to ensure its relevance and in order to make a meaningful difference.

A formative review of GCM reform will be carried out two years after it was endorsed by the July 2021 GEM. This evaluation will assess in particular whether the new GCM arrangements have improved the relevance and effectiveness of the SDG4 HLSC.

This final proposal reflects the ideas and feedback from all of these consultative processes. The proposal accompanies the draft outcome document of the Ministerial Segment of the Global Education Meeting on 13 July 2021, which is shared with all Member States to seek endorsement of the Working Group’s final proposal.
The paper presents the following material:

- A summary of key challenges with the current GCM, identified through the in-depth review and consultations and then validated by WG members;

- A framework for linking global cooperation to country-level outcomes based on the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action;

- A proposed set of functions and institutional arrangements for the GCM, to strengthen the Steering Committee and to provide leadership on global actions in support of progress toward SDG 4-Education 2030.
2. Case for change: observed challenges for global-level cooperation on Education 2030

Global education confronts a changing and fast-moving agenda. It has become increasingly dynamic and complex in terms of an expanding agenda which connects to many of the SDGs and a widening array of institutional stakeholders at the global, regional and country levels.

Reversals in SDG 4 progress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have heightened the urgency for action and have increased the necessity to work across sectors to respond to the interconnectedness of SDG 4 with the other SDGs. Education in emergency settings presents urgent and distinctive demands, but also has close interactions with other SDG priorities.

Many have called for clearer policy leadership, stronger synergies, greater efficiency and better delivery in the GCM for education as a response to these goals and challenges.

The effectiveness of cooperative global action in education over the past two decades is widely considered to have fallen below expectationsiv, especially with respect to countries and population groups furthest behind in the implementation of SDG 4. Whether one takes a universal lens across all countries or a partial lens focused on the development cooperation sector, the evidence points to shortcomings of progress and performance in the global system.v

The following five challenges stand out as particular impediments:

- **Ability of leaders across the global education system to translate high-level/political priorities and commitments into focused, credible and sustained actions** – There has either been insufficient engagement by political and institutional leaders to create sustained commitment at the global level, or the engagement has not translated into sustained action at the country level. While education is often identified as an area of high priority, the agenda falters because of a failure to follow through.

- **Accountability for fulfilling commitments in respect of support for improved education outcomes and sufficient data and monitoring with which to do so** – There has been a broad failure, by national and international actors, to ensure accountability for achieving results..iv Despite multiple global platforms promoting SDG 4 and existing mechanisms within countries and international or regional organizations, effective joint monitoring and accountability for achieving results is lacking. Data gaps on key SDG 4 indicators remain a major bottleneck to tracking and monitoring progress.

- **Adequate global financing for education, including credible commitments, less fragmentation and greater innovation** – Underfunding of education, a lack of transparency and accountability about financing commitments, fragmentation of international financing flows and limited progress with innovative finance are recurring themes.vii This problem goes beyond countries/governments not meeting desired spending levels for education and this is linked to systemic public finance challenges. More efficient use of available funding is neededviii, as well as commitment by international funding providers to improve harmonisation and alignment.
• **Supply, uptake and effective use of knowledge and evidence about what has worked in improving education outcomes** – Research and evidence in global education are given too little emphasis and in many instances are underutilized. A lack of capacity to produce, share and deploy evidence limits its use in country-level dialogue and decision-making. Few initiatives focus on national researchers and institutes in lower-income countries. Despite demand from governments, coordinated global efforts at the consolidation and sharing of evidence and lessons are insufficient.

• **Well-coordinated and effective international technical and policy support for strengthening government implementation capacity and systems in the education sector** – Problems of inadequate, uncoordinated, or ineffective support are widely acknowledged. A number of global initiatives have been developed or attempted but most have struggled to find broad multi-agency support or to get to scale. On the demand side, governments have been either unable to access readily the responsive and flexible support they require. While much of this issue is at the country level, the right incentives are lacking in the global system for better coordinated support.

While a strengthened GCM is by no means the panacea, it could make a significant difference. Explanations for the shortcomings in effective cooperation at the global level often focus on the increasingly diverse and complex network of actors and organizations engaged in the global education architecture. Many interested parties have overlapping and even potentially competitive mandates, objectives and memberships. There is a widening array of coordination mechanisms, convening platforms and partnership frameworks, which complicates the challenge of linking together evidence, advocacy and monitoring to support results. Yet there is no credible and agile ‘clearing house’ function to the support synthesis and exchange of pertinent information (e.g. on priorities, initiatives and results) and to help in facilitating joint actions (e.g. based on demand from governments).

**SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and other forums/platforms**

The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee was intended to provide leadership for the global education community and to improve cooperation among global education actors. Its mandate in the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and the Framework for Action (FFA) states that: ‘it will, among other activities, 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; monitor and advocate for adequate financing; and encourage harmonization and coordination of partner activities’.

While the purpose and mandate of the Steering Committee in the global architecture remains relevant – indeed it has become more necessary – it is viewed as relatively ineffective. It has suffered from a lack of high-level participation and from inadequate resourcing of its secretariat. Additionally, it has insufficient coverage of new global education actors, a weak connection to regional and country-level cooperation mechanisms and a limited focus on education in emergency settings. As with many such international bodies, it faces a problematic and unresolved trade-off between inclusiveness and efficiency.

The result is that the Steering Committee has not lived up to its mandated role. The Steering Committee has struggled to position itself at the centre of the global education architecture.
It currently lacks visibility and the capacity needed to have a meaningful impact. A major observed challenge is that the Steering Committee is not taking any particularly relevant or significant decisions. In practice, it lacks the heft that in principle it should have as a result of its mandated role.

Other forums and platforms in the GCM may also have room for improvement. The GEF and the MEP are recent additions, since 2019, that are working to establish themselves. GCM reform presents a valuable opportunity to clarify the purpose and membership of each forum/platform and to strengthen them. The aim should be to avoid duplication, to demonstrate value addition and to improve the overall coherence of the GCM.

The assessment of the Steering Committee points to a particular conundrum. If there is a need and a demand for improved global cooperation and if there is already an apex body with the right mandate and requisite legitimacy, why not empower it and give it the capacity to fulfil that role? This paper makes the case for strengthening the Steering Committee and making it fit-for-purpose as the apex body for SDG 4-Education 2030.
3. Country-level relevance of a Global Cooperation Mechanism

Starting with a clear purpose is vital, otherwise global cooperation risks being a detached and abstract exercise. **Country-level education outcomes** are unquestionably the driving concern. This paper works back from that purpose to ask what contributions the international cooperation architecture/system for education – with all its participation, knowledge, resources and resolve – can and should make in support of country-level efforts. This document adheres to the principle of **SDG 4-Education 2030 as a universal agenda** applicable to all countries and as a holistic, lifelong learning agenda giving equal validity to all the targets.

While the influence of global-level actions should not be overstated or overestimated, there is nonetheless an expectation for these actions to make a meaningful contribution in the service of country efforts. The Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (FFA) provides a framework to consider how global and regional cooperation can support governments and other country-level actors in their efforts to achieve the SDG 4-Education 2030 targets (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1. Adapted Incheon/FFA framework for effective global cooperation around SDG 4](source: Derived from the GCM Input Paper (Mundy, 2021) and from the SDG4-Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action.)

The framework takes country-level needs, priorities and actors as an anchor. It assumes that certain enabling factors at the country level (e.g. political commitment, performance accountability, targeted funding, applied know-how, implementation capacity) will create the conditions and incentives necessary to accelerate progress toward SDG 4 targets. Regional and global actors can assist through actions that help to establish or reinforce those conditions. There is also a feedback loop, with demand and insight emanating from countries propelling more effective global contribution.
The five significant contributing factors at the global level, as identified in the FFA, are:

- High-level advocacy and action-focused political will;
- Improved data and enhanced monitoring of results;
- Adequate and aligned/effective global financing;
- Knowledge sharing about effective policies and practices;
- Support for implementation capacity and systems strengthening.

The regional and global levels are both important. While the focus of this paper is on the global level, further work is proposed to develop comparable analysis and proposals for strengthening regional cooperation mechanisms and their relationships to the global level. Feedback from Member State consultations suggests that moving to a more differentiated and decentralised approach across different regions may prove most effective.

This framework for global cooperation is not intended as monolithic. Global education has a complex and diverse architecture without the preconditions or tolerance for a single unifying framework. The five contributing factors (i.e. action-focused advocacy, data-led monitoring, effective financing, knowledge sharing and systems strengthening) are intended to be relevant to one organization/entity operating within the global system (e.g. an international organization), or to a coalition of actors (e.g. an acceleration initiative), or to the entire global system (i.e. the GCM). However, the contributory effect of these global factors will be multiplied in the context of a strengthened GCM which can facilitate and encourage greater cooperative and collective action.

A GCM that is relevant to all countries and international actors will need to serve a dual purpose as follows:

- Create a strong overall enabling environment for faster progress towards SDG4 by facilitating global/regional cooperation on better evidence, data and monitoring and by boosting the shared ambition and commitment by governments and international actors to achieve results;

- Support time-bound initiatives developed by coalitions of countries or partners, guided by thematic areas endorsed by the GEM and driven by country priorities, to help countries accelerate towards SDG 4-Education 2030.

The threshold question for the GCM in all cases will be whether there is an expected value addition from additional or enhanced global-level engagement. The focus on acceleration initiatives will not be about creating new initiatives in most cases, but about amplifying, deepening, or scaling initiatives already being developed by coalitions of actors. Multilateral agencies have a strong track record of devising such initiatives in partnership with selected Member States, but it has often proved harder to secure broad engagement and support by global education actors. Equally, the GCM will not seek to duplicate country-level coordination mechanisms such as local education groups and education clusters which are the locus of collective support for country priorities. It will seek to strengthen the institutional incentives of global actors to collaborate and coordinate at the country level (especially multilateral agencies and bilateral cooperation providers).
4. Proposed functions of a fit-for-purpose Global Cooperation Mechanism

The objective for an improved GCM is to generate conditions and incentives at the global and regional levels so actors across all constituencies cooperate more efficiently and effectively in the service of better and faster progress towards SDG 4 outcomes at the country level. This means the system of global cooperation must respond better to what countries say they need in order to achieve results.

While different models could be envisaged, a lesson from the global climate sector is that a static, monolithic and all-embracing approach to GCM may not be optimal and is unlikely to succeed. GCM needs to balance this tension between, on one hand, motivating political will by governments and supporting their actions to accelerate progress toward SDG 4 and on the other hand, reviewing progress towards SDG 4 and encouraging all parties (e.g. governments, international and regional organizations, civil society) to be accountable to their respective commitments. Meanwhile experience in the global health sector reinforces the case for combining a system-wide focus on evidence, data and monitoring with more targeted coalitions to accelerate progress on specific priorities.

Drawing on these lessons from other sectors and harnessing the expected contributions of cooperation at the global level (i.e. action-focused advocacy, data-led monitoring, effective financing, knowledge sharing, systems strengthening); the Working Group proposes three core functions for an improved GCM:

I. Promote evidence-based policy formulation and implementation.
II. Monitor progress and improve the availability/use of data.
III. Drive financing mobilisation and improved alignment.

An additional function of the GCM may be considered in due course – effective support for implementation capacity and systems strengthening. While it is not principally a global-level issue, engagement by the GCM could serve to increase the attention by all actors to capacity development and system strengthening and to improve incentives for adequate, coordinated and effective support at the country level. No direct role in country-level capacity development is envisaged. Regional coordination mechanisms already serve an important contributory role as hubs for provision and coordination of capacity support to countries. The system strengthening/transformation agenda is a universal one, as well as a development cooperation priority, which makes it pertinent to a wider array of global education actors. It is clearly of vital importance to SDG 4 progress, alongside financing and evidence.

The broad scope and approach for each of the first three functions are outlined below. The strategies and main actions of these functional areas will be further developed prior to the GEM in November 2021. To support an inclusive approach and to address both a universal agenda and development cooperation issues adequately through the GCM, each of the three functional areas will be co-led by representatives from more than one HLSC constituency category.

I. Promote evidence-based policy formulation and implementation

One of the key functions of the GCM is to promote stronger evidence-based policy making and implementation in the education sector. At the global level, the Steering Committee’s recommendations on policy priorities and catalytic actions will be informed under this GCM.
function by the consolidated data, research evidence and knowledge about education policies and their effective implementation for the advancement of the SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda into policy briefs and memos. At the country level, the effective use of evidence for making appropriate policies and implementation strategies will be promoted and supported by using the existing regional and national SDG4-Education coordination platforms.

Building on what already exists (e.g. research networks, knowledge production/management initiatives and platforms), the emphasis of this functional area is on collaboration among global and regional partners and stakeholders to collate and consolidate evidence, knowledge and lessons learned with respect to overcoming bottlenecks in achieving the SDG 4 targets, including policy options and implementation strategies chosen to transform the situation. Thus, joint and collaborative action will be undertaken to:

- Further promote decision-making for policy and its implementation based on evidence and knowledge about successful and innovative programmes and interventions in advancing the SDG-Education 2030 agenda;
- Support the capacity of national actors to develop and adapt such evidence and knowledge for policymaking;
  - Facilitate peer-learning and cross-country collaboration, including South-South cooperation.

Given the SDG-Education 2030 agenda’s universal, lifelong learning scope, this GCM function’s added value consists in its global coverage – across geographic regions as well as countries’ wealth or development levels – and the education sector-wide and lifelong learning perspective. The closer coordination with the regional SDG-Education 2030 coordination mechanisms will be sought to ensure the bi-directional feedback loop and knowledge sharing between the global and country levels and across regions.

II. Monitor progress and improve the availability/use of data

In line with the established SDG 4 monitoring framework and supported by the Technical Cooperation Group on SDG 4 Indicators (TCG), the monitoring, follow-up and review arrangements for the SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda, as established in the Education 2030 Framework for Action, will be pursued under this functional area while helping hold all relevant partners to account for their commitments. The Framework for Action also recognizes the technical leadership of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) as the official source of cross-nationally comparable data on education and the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report) as an independent and authoritative source of monitoring and reporting on SDG 4 progress.

Enhanced collaboration and collective action among national, regional and global SDG 4 stakeholders is essential to leverage technical and financial resources, improve the efficiency of investments in data systems and build national capacity in the production of education statistics. At the global level, the creation of a Global Education Observatory is proposed to provide Member States and the international community with easy access to education data, bringing together different data international sources (e.g. UIS, World Bank, UNICEF, OECD).
Setting regional and national benchmarks is the linchpin of the improved GCM\textsuperscript{11} as they serve as a framework to identify and support national actions to fill data and policy gaps and to help address respective regions’ common challenges by prompting an exchange of best practices, mutual learning, gathering and dissemination of information and evidence of what works, as well as advice and support for policy reforms. In this way, monitoring of progress against SDG 4 targets would be centred on nationally determined commitments made by individual governments within the SDG 4 framework. It is recognized that, while the SDGs are universal, targets cannot be the same from one country to another. Moreover, regular monitoring against benchmarks would help identify multi-stakeholder time-bound acceleration initiatives, whose investment will need to be monitored in turn.

\section*{III. Drive financing mobilisation and improved alignment}

Under this function of the GCM, the advocacy for increased domestic and international funding for education and for spending equity and efficacy is prioritized. Ensuring that the case for education has a strong voice in national and global discussions, including around tax, debt, austerity and wider macroeconomic policies, is critical, particularly when lower-income countries are facing increased fiscal pressure from high levels of public debt and competing spending needs compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. This may include strengthening the capacity of education ministries to engage in strategic dialogue with finance ministries to ensure that the impact on education is considered in key public finance discussions. Moreover, reinforcing country capacity for stronger and more reliable data systems, analytical capabilities for translating data into evidence and strong dissemination capabilities are all critical. Such capacity support includes refining toolkits and learning resources to support policy makers in diagnosing major weaknesses in education financing systems and identifying ways to tackle them.

It is essential that development partners, including bilateral donors and multilateral agencies, coordinate and harmonize their support to governments, aligned with country-owned education plans, thus reinforcing the aid effectiveness principles. This should be complemented by efforts to support developing credible financing strategies underpinning national education plans; promoting and ensuring the necessary (international and domestic) financing uplift; ensuring that national priorities are identified based on evidence; and investing funds in low cost/high-effectiveness programmes that target the greatest needs. There is also the scope to leverage innovative financing tools to unlock additional funding for education and crowd in new funding and new partners.

This GCM function would require close links with relevant forums/platforms in the GCM, as well as focused engagement with individual governments, international and regional financial institutions, donor countries and innovative sources of financing. Action areas include tracking and reporting of metrics such as financing commitments, mobilisation and allocation of flows, fragmentation of international financing and sources of innovative finance. These should be linked to wider discussions on public finance covering revenue mobilisation, debt servicing and medium-term revenue strategies.

For international financing, GEF could serve as a platform for dialogue among development cooperation providers and facilitate agreement on joint actions and donor harmonisation, in support of the priorities agreed at the GEM. For domestic financing, discussion among a technical advisory group composed of representatives of finance and education ministries
could become an integral part of the GCM agenda. It could support a periodic joint roundtable of ministers of education and finance as part of the GEM.

A note on the link from data/monitoring to increased accountability

Enhanced accountability was mentioned frequently during the review process as a highly desirable element of a strengthened GCM. It is also the most difficult global-level issue to address credibly and concretely. The phrase itself creates a risk of different interpretations and applicability. The usage here is that each and every global education actor is held accountable for its own commitments and distinctive contributions to improving education outcomes.

Two different dimensions of accountability are covered implicitly here. The first is domestic accountability by national governments (i.e. Member States of the United Nations) for the achievement of substantive progress and results against SDG 4 targets and indicators. The second is global accountability by international actors (e.g. international organizations, donor governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector) for their commitments made to support global education in general and various countries in particular.

Given the poor track record of attempts at mutual accountability, it is suggested that peer-to-peer approaches to accountability may be a more promising avenue to pursue. This would apply, for example, to regional groupings of governments attempting to make domestic progress on SDG 4, or to bilateral development cooperation providers attempting to make their contributions more relevant and effective.

Better data and improved monitoring may also provide a pathway to enhanced accountability through the GCM. However, while a lack of data and weakness of monitoring are clear impediments to stronger accountability for results, the foremost requirement is a top-level political/institutional commitment to accountability on the part of both national and international actors.

The ambition may be to move towards regular and systematic reporting by countries on SDG4 progress. The GCM at the regional and global levels could collate the reporting done at the country level and produce a progress score card. A similar approach could be applied to development agencies and international organizations with respect to their contributions to supporting country-level progress. While the primary accountabilities are, respectively, to domestic taxpayers and to governing boards, that would not prevent commitment to a score card process through the GCM.

Whichever approach is taken, it is essential to be precise about who is accountable, for what, and to whom as part of the GCM. None of these have been adequately clear to date. Further work, as part of the process to improve the GCM ahead of the November 2021 GEM meeting, is needed to find an agreement on the form of a global or regional accountability mechanism that Member States would find acceptable and valuable. Consultations so far suggest a good deal of support in principle for greater accountability, but very limited inclination to translate this into a credible global mechanism.
5. Proposed institutional arrangements for an effective Global Cooperation Mechanism

The consultations and Working Group discussions indicated a number of guiding principles for reform of the GCM institutional arrangements, as follows:

- A desire for the GCM structures to have the authority and capacity needed to deliver in practice on the mandates and functions that are agreed for them by the GEM;
- An intention that priorities established by the GEM and the SDG4 HLSC should guide the activities of all forums/platforms in the GCM;
- A strong preference that membership of the GCM structures should continue to be representative of the global education community;
- A broad agreement that the aim should be to strengthen or transform existing structures (notably the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee) rather than to create new ones;
- An expectation that the relationships among all the GCM forums/platforms (including the GEF and the MEP) should be clearly explained and agreed.

The central proposal is **to strengthen the current SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and to overhaul its support structures**. The new arrangements should be more visible and influential.

**Figure 2: Proposed structures and functions for the strengthened GCM**

Source: Formulation by GCM Working Group
Figure 2 illustrates the proposed basic structures – highlighting the proposed top-line mandate and functions (i.e. evidence-based policy leadership, monitoring and accountability and advocacy for financing), as well as the links to the GEM and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). Two institutional elements are envisaged as integral parts of an improved GCM:

- A strengthened and rebranded **SDG4 HLSC** to serve as the global education apex body, consisting of:
  - *Leadership Group* at ministerial or head of agency level (or equivalent for other entities).
  - *Sherpa Group* at a senior official level (or equivalent for other entities).
- A dedicated **Inter-Agency Secretariat** to support the SDG4 HLSC and potentially other GCM forums/platforms.

A more detailed presentation of the proposed configuration, mandates, responsibilities, memberships and working arrangements of the SDG4 HLSC and the Inter-Agency Secretariat is included in **Annex A**.

**SDG 4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee**

Operating under the auspices of the Global Education Meeting, the SDG4 HLSC will provide political leadership on global education priorities and create stronger accountability incentives for accelerating progress toward SDG 4. It will help to strengthen accountability through high-level advocacy and monitoring. It will be mandated by the GEM with the following principal responsibilities:

- Provide leadership on SDG4-Education 2030 policy issues and evidence;
- Monitor commitments and progress and drive improvements in data;
- Advocate for mobilisation and effective use of education financing;
- Empower and facilitate the work of the GEF and the MEP, within the GCM framework.

A ‘Leadership Group’ of twenty-eight members, operating with a strong ‘no delegation’ policy, will comprise:

- Member States – to be represented at the ministerial level;
- Regional intergovernmental organizations – to be represented at the head of agency level;
- Multilateral organizations/banks/funds (GPE, OECD, UNICEF, World Bank) – to be represented at head of agency level and with reference to membership of the MEP;
- Development cooperation agencies – to be represented at the ministerial or head of agency level and with reference to membership of the GEF;
- Non-state actors (i.e. teaching community, civil society, youth/students, foundations, private sector) – to be represented by the top leadership (or equivalent);
- UNESCO (ex officio) – to be represented by the Director-General.

The SDG4 HLSC will be co-chaired by the head of state or government of a Member State and by the Director-General of UNESCO.
Keeping the HLSC to a maximum size of twenty-eight members is considered an important factor for ensuring that the vision and objectives for the GCM reform, as determined by the 2020 GEM, can be achieved.

Representatives on the HLSC Leadership Group, especially through the Sherpa Group, will have a responsibility to consult actively with their relevant constituencies ahead of HLSC meetings and to provide feedback following these meetings.

The HLSC Leadership Group will be supported by a ‘Sherpa Group’ of twenty-eight senior technical representatives. These will meet at least quarterly. The Sherpa Group will have the following responsibilities:

- Identify opportunities for effective SDG4 HLSC action and impact;
- Carry out consultations among SDG4 HLSC constituencies;
- Facilitate inter-agency/multi-actor initiatives and activities related to the functions of the SDG4 HLSC:
  - Promoting evidence-based policy formulation and implementation.
  - Monitoring progress and improving the availability/use of data.
  - Driving financing mobilisation and improved alignment.

To ensure the HLSC is an influential and effective body in the context of global efforts to accelerate progress toward SDG 4, specific decision-making authorities will be granted to the Leadership Group by the GEM. Decision-making powers will relate to the functional areas of the GCM. For example:

- The HLSC could decide which thematic priority areas and catalytic actions to recommend to the GEM for adoption;
- Based on reported national benchmarks, the HLSC could decide on advocacy strategies for follow up;
- The HLSC could decide which finance-related commitments to advocate and monitor.

Formal proposals will be developed consultatively following the July GEM as part of further work on the functional areas.

**Inter-Agency Secretariat**

A small and agile Inter-Agency Secretariat will be responsible for initiating and supporting work across agencies on evidence and policy, data and monitoring and financing. Besides facilitating the functioning of the SDG4 HLSC, this support structure will carry out underpinning, or preparatory analytical and consultative work relevant to the GCM. The Secretariat will be mandated by the HLSC with the following principal responsibilities:

- Support functions, activities and meetings of the SDG4 HLSC and other GCM bodies;
- Organize periodic GEM and SDG 4-Education 2030 side-events at the HLPF;
- Manage external communications and outreach for GCM bodies and forums;
- Maintain data, knowledge and reporting systems in line with the SDG4 HLSC mandate;
- Negotiate and resolve obstacles to better coordination, aggregation, monitoring and exchange among global stakeholders.
The Secretariat will be convened by UNESCO. Staff will be assigned or seconded from global education actors, subject to operational and funding considerations. Seconded staff could remain physically located in their respective organizations and countries.

**SDG4 HLSC relationship to other global forums/platforms and bodies**

The role and positioning of the SDG4 HLSC in the global education architecture is intended to provide an umbrella and an *enabling* impetus and to serve as a focal point for other global organizations or mechanisms. Experience from other sectors, such as health and climate, counsels against over-engineering these relationships and it suggests instead a focus on finding complementary and mutually reinforcing roles. There is also an efficiency question as the overlap in institutional membership of the various global mechanisms is high.

To ensure strong links to the UN Secretary-General, the SDG4 HLSC will continue to report to the HLPF on SDG 4-Education 2030 progress. An additional meeting with the presence of the UN Secretary-General, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education and the UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth will be convened back-to-back with the annual SDG4 HLSC meeting to share and receive feedback beyond education actors.

Noting their important roles in the global system and in order to ensure a close link to the UN Secretary-General’s Office, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education and the UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth will have standing invitations to attend meetings of the HLSC Leadership Group. Further opportunities will also be sought for the HLSC to engage influentially across the UN system on education issues as part of the entire Agenda 2030 and to ensure the involvement of non-members of UNESCO that are active in education.

The Global Education Forum and the Multilateral Education Platform will each work under the auspices of the HLSC and they will provide updates on progress at the annual HLSC meetings. The GEF and MEP will be reviewed as part of the next phase of GCM reform (following the July GEM) to ensure coherence and avoid duplication. Any revisions needed regarding the purpose and membership of each forum/platform will be determined through consultations in the period between July and the November 2021 GEM.

Each of the multilateral organizations (e.g. World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, GPE, ECW and OECD) has its own governing body. The reform of the GCM does not interfere with these organization’s arrangements. However, the overlap of multilateral mandates in global education and the overlap of membership on the governing bodies both suggest there is benefit in cross-sector dialogue through the GCM about how to strengthen and align the incentives for coordinated actions and accountability for results.
6. The next steps
Consultation and discourse about improving the GCM has highlighted the breadth and diversity of the global education community, as well as the complexity of existing global cooperation mechanisms. The analysis and proposals in this paper represent the first step in a global co-creation process towards an improved GCM. The process requires further steps at the regional and country levels to ensure its relevance and to make a meaningful difference. The proposed next phases of work are as follows:

**Phase 1: Extraordinary Session of the GEM (13 July 2021)**
- Adopt proposals for strengthening the GCM, covering:
  - Purpose, coverage and functions of the GCM.
  - Configuration, mandate, responsibilities, membership and working arrangements for the SDG4 HLSC and the Inter-Agency Secretariat.
- Initiate the process of constituency nominations for membership of the HLSC Leadership Group and request Member States to consult on the appointment of an inaugural co-chair.
- Reaffirm the seven SDG4-Education 2030 global indicators for benchmarking and the regional processes to set minimum regional benchmarks and invite Member States to submit national benchmarks on these indicators.
- Mandate UNESCO to lead the further development of the proposal with its Member States and partners on:
  - Developing the functions of the GCM (evidence/policy, data/monitoring, financing) and considering the merits of an additional function (capacity development).
  - Developing the detailed operating arrangements for the SDG4 HLSC (including decision-making authorities, Sherpa Group responsibilities) and its Inter-Agency Secretariat (including responsibilities, structure, staffing and budget).
  - Strengthening of global-regional-country links in the GCM.
  - Reviewing and potentially revising the functions and membership of the GEM and the MEP, as embedded parts of the GCM.

Strengthening global/regional accountability frameworks covering SDG 4 progress by Member States and contributions/support by international actors (including development cooperation providers and multilateral agencies).

**Phase 2: Establishment of the SDG4 HLSC and High-level Session of the GEM back-to-back with the UNESCO General Conference (November 2021)**
- Adopt proposals for further strengthening the GCM, covering:
  - Detailed functions of the GCM.
  - Detailed operating arrangements for the HLSC and its Inter-Agency Secretariat.
  - Strengthened global-regional-country links in the GCM.
  - Strengthened global/regional accountability framework covering SDG 4 progress by Member States and contributions/support by international actors.
- Endorse revisions to the functions and membership of the GEF and the MEP, as part of the GCM.
- Mandate further work on:
Proposing global thematic areas of the GCM based on country priorities within the scope of SDG 4-Education 2030 for proposed adoption at the next GEM.
Outcome document – continued - Annex A

Configuration, mandates, responsibilities and membership for the GCM structures

Proposals are set out below for the organization of the SDG 4 HLSC and the Inter-Agency Secretariat.

The configuration of these core GCM bodies will be as follows:

- **SDG4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee** consisting of:
  - *Leadership Group* at ministerial or head of agency level (or equivalent for other entities).
  - *Sherpa Group* at senior official level (or equivalent for other entities).
- **SDG4 Inter-Agency Secretariat** (IAS) for the HLSC.

Revision of other elements of the GCM, notably the GEF and the MEP, will be considered once the GEM has provided endorsement for the overall GCM vision, purpose and configuration.

**SDG 4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee**

**Mandate:**

To act as the **apex body for the SDG 4-Education 2030 Agenda**, comprising top-level leaders, with a mandate to drive and oversee the GCM. To **provide political leadership on global education priorities and create stronger accountability incentives for accelerating progress toward SDG 4**.

The apex body will operate under the auspices of the GEM as well as the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

To ensure the HLSC is an influential and effective body in the context of global efforts to accelerate progress toward SDG 4, specific decision-making authorities will be granted to it by the GEM. Decision-making powers will relate to the functional areas of the GCM (i.e. promote evidence-based policy formulation and implementation; monitor progress and improve the availability/use of data; drive financing mobilisation and improved alignment).

**Leadership Group**

**Responsibilities:**

- Provide strategic guidance, review progress (drawing on the Global Education Monitoring Report) and make recommendations to the education community on priorities and catalytic actions to achieve the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda;
- Provide leadership and direction for GCM functional areas intended to support and enable country-level progress;
- Encourage harmonisation and coordination of partner activities at international, regional and country levels;
- Mandate and empower the MEP to improve coordination in the multilateral system and provide a locus for updates on its agenda and results;
Facilitate the work of the GEF as an arena for dialogue and advocacy on education financing and development cooperation issues, by providing guidance on areas of thematic priority and by receiving updates on results.

Membership and working arrangements:

- Co-chaired by the head of state, or government of a Member State and by the Director-General of UNESCO;

- Twenty-eight members representing the following constituencies:
  - Two Member State representatives for each of the six regions – to be represented at the ministerial level (twelve).
  - One representative of regional intergovernmental organizations for each of the six regions – to be represented at the head of agency level (six)
  - Four representatives from multilateral organizations/banks/funds (with close links maintained to the MEP); GPE, OECD, UNICEF and the World Bank – to be represented at the head of agency level (four).
  - One representative from a development cooperation (with close links maintained to the GEF) – to be represented at the ministerial, or head of agency level (one).
  - One representative of civil society: CCNGO on Education 2030 – to be represented at the top leadership level (one).
  - One representative of teacher organizations: Education International – to be represented at the top leadership level (one).
  - One representative of foundations and the private sector (shared seat) – to be represented at the top leadership level (one).
  - One representative of students and youth (one).
  - UNESCO (ex officio member) – to be represented by the Director-General (one).

- Reflecting their important global roles, the following individuals will have standing invitations to attend HLSC meetings:
  - UN Special Envoy for Global Education.
  - UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth.

- A ‘no delegation’ policy will apply to the Leadership Group in order to ensure and maintain the seniority of HLSC members;

- Unless stipulated otherwise, constituencies will operate on a self-governing principle for selecting Leadership Group members and there will be a rotation every two years;

- Sub-regional balance among MS representatives for each region will also be important;

- Best endeavours will be made to ensure gender balance among the HLSC membership;

- Each full member will be accompanied and supported by a senior level technical officer, who will collectively form a ‘Sherpa group’;
• Representatives on the HLSC Leadership Group, especially through the Sherpa Group, will have a responsibility to consult actively with their relevant constituencies ahead of HLSC meetings and to provide feedback following those meetings;

• Representatives of non-education stakeholders may be invited to attend meetings on an ad hoc basis in line with the GEM rolling priorities, with opportunities sought to ensure the involvement of non-members of UNESCO that are active in education.

• Annual meetings:
  o Meets annually alongside another major international gathering (e.g. UNGA or UN HLPF), or more frequently if required.
  o Additional meeting with the presence of the UN Secretary-General, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, convened back-to-back on the same occasion, to share and receive feedback beyond education actors.

Sherpa group

Responsibilities:

• Identify opportunities for effective HLSC actions and impact;
• Carry out consultations among HLSC constituencies;
• Facilitate inter-agency/multi-actor initiatives and activities related to the functional areas of the HLSC (i.e. evidence/policy, data/monitoring, financing);
• Provide substantial input and preparation to the agenda for HLSC meetings.

Membership and working arrangements:

• Twenty-eight members in total at the level of senior official/specialist (e.g. director-level) matching the institutional composition of the Leadership Group;
• Best endeavours will be made to ensure gender balance among the HLSC membership;
• Further work to develop the functional areas will be carried out after the 13 July GEM, at which point the potential need for additional participants in the Sherpa Group may be considered based on further work to develop the functional areas of the HLSC;
• Convenes at least quarterly and more frequently as required.

Inter-Agency Secretariat

Mandate:

To enable effective actions of the SDG4 HLSC by taking forward initiatives, addressing challenges and providing support on technical and administrative issues.

Responsibilities:

• Support functions, meetings and other activities of the GEM, SDG4 HLSC and other GCM forums/platforms as designated by the GEM/HLSC;
• Troubleshoot obstacles to better coordination, aggregation, monitoring and exchange among global stakeholders;
• Provide specialist technical support to the Sherpa Group on the HLSC functional areas (i.e. promote evidence-based policy formulation and formulation; monitor progress and improve the availability/use of data; drive financing mobilisation and improved alignment):
  • Organize periodic GEMs and Education 2030 side-events at the HLPF and support the preparation of a periodic HLSC report to the HLPF;
  • Liaise with other relevant bodies involved in global education, including regional organizations;
  • Manage external communications and outreach for the GCM bodies and forums;
  • Maintain data, knowledge and reporting systems in line with the HLSC mandate.

Membership and working arrangements:

• Core team located at UNESCO headquarters in Paris with an expanded virtual team located in different organizations;
• Specialist staff either assigned or seconded from global education actors, with personnel costs covered by those organizations;
• Small cadre of fixed-term management and administrative staff (including a head of secretariat) based in UNESCO, with funding for personnel costs by Member States;
• Responsibilities, performance metrics and overall budget for the Secretariat to be approved every two years by the HLSC.
Notes

i 2020 GEM Declaration

ii Membership includes: Member States on the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee Bureau (Japan, Norway, Slovak Republic, Colombia, China, Kenya and Saudi Arabia); UN and multilateral organizations (UNESCO, UNICEF and African Union); global funds for education/multilateral banks (World Bank, GPE and ECW); Donors (EU-INTPA, UK and Germany); Civil society/teaching profession (Education International, Global Campaign for Education); the UN Special Envoy for Global Education.


vii See: Aid effectiveness: key issues for a global education architecture, a paper prepared by UNESCO’s Global Monitoring Report Team and shared during the meeting of education aid donors on 17 February 2021.


xii The TCG endorsed seven SDG 4-Education 2030 monitoring indicators for benchmarking in August 2019. Since this validation, regional and national benchmark setting is under way among partners including UNESCO (UIS, GEM Report and Regional Bureau), regional organizations (the African Union, ASEAN, CARICOM, CECC-SICA, the European Union, the Forum of Education Ministers’ Meeting, SEAMEO) and Member States. The Working Group proposed at the Global Education Meeting in July 2021 to reaffirm these seven indicators for benchmarking and the regional processes to set minimum regional standards. Member States will be invited to submit national benchmarks on these indicators and UNESCO will compile these and present them to the Global Education Meeting in November 2021.
UNESCO – a global leader in education
Education is UNESCO’s top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation for peace and sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations’ specialized agency for education, providing global and regional leadership to drive progress, strengthening the resilience and capacity of national systems to serve all learners. UNESCO also leads efforts to respond to contemporary global challenges through transformative learning, with special focus on gender equality and Africa across all actions.

The Global Education 2030 Agenda
UNESCO, as the United Nations’ specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.

Stay in touch
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