JOINT SADC SECRETARIAT/UNESCO STRATEGY ON ENSURING CONTINUITY OF LEARNING IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

#LearningNeverStops

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat and UNESCO agreed on the strategy for rallying governments, international organizations, private sector partners in a broad coalition to ensure continuity of learning in the context of school disruptions as a result of COVID-19. Through this strategy the SADC Secretariat and UNESCO will work in close coordination with SADC Member States, public and private education sector stakeholders to generate evidence on the impact of school closures on education, and develop appropriate solutions, while taking into account unique requirements and circumstances in each of SADC countries. The strategy is guided by the following result areas:

- Ensuring health, safety and wellbeing of learners, parents/caregivers, and teachers during the crisis period.
- Ensuring the right to education, especially for those most disadvantaged and vulnerable.
- Resilience of national education systems through national education policies is crucial in strengthening the humanitarian and development nexus in times of crisis and during the recovery process.

Key Interventions will include:

i. Making distance learning possible for all learners at all levels (from early childhood to higher education and TVET) – Ensure the continuation of education of all learners and at all levels through distance learning options through locally adapted, technology based, on-line and off-line solutions for alternative and home based education.

ii. Safeguard health and well-being of learners - Create awareness on the importance of health and hygiene, and on COVID-19 prevention through age-appropriate information about coronavirus and other infectious disease for teachers and learners.

iii. Support teachers and teacher educators through access and capacity building to use relevant technologies to facilitate and support distance learning.

iv. Improve STI and R&D Response to COVID-19 and strengthening capacities and skills for quality STEM education through the dissemination of timely and relevant research output including sharing best practices, information, mutual learning, and upscaling initiative with regional dimension, and minimising duplication of efforts on COVID-19.

SADC Secretariat and UNESCO will work with SADC Member States to harness the lessons learned from the crisis and transform education. This will include lessons on how to (i) build the resilience of education and learning systems, (ii) enhance the capacity of systems to contribute to health and other contemporary challenges, and (ii) rethink the purpose, the delivery and the content of education to accelerate progress towards SDG4.
### ACTION PLAN – JOINT SADC-UNESCO COLLABORATION ON ENSURING CONTINUITY OF LEARNING IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

**APRIL-DECEMBER 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>OUTPUT</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ENSURING CONTINUITY OF LEARNING IN SADC MEMBER STATES IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19</strong></td>
<td>Support Provided to Member States to Make Distance Learning Possible for All and to Ensure Feasibility, Accessibility and Inclusiveness</td>
<td><strong>Short Term Actions</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Mobilise resources to implement innovative and contextually appropriate solutions to provide education and learning remotely during school closures, while taking into account unique requirements and circumstances in each of SADC countries. Innovative solutions will include:&lt;br&gt;  - E-learning platform for continued learning for learners who have closed schools earlier than scheduled due to COVID-19&lt;br&gt;  - Support the education sector plan for continuity of learning from Early Childhood Development (ECD) to Further Education and Training (FET), including E-learning&lt;br&gt;  - Lessons on core subjects and health topics offered through national and community radios</td>
<td>SADC Member States&lt;br&gt;SADC Secretariat&lt;br&gt;UNESCO&lt;br&gt;Global Coalition Partners</td>
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<td>Health and Well-Being of Learners Safeguarded</td>
<td><strong>Short term Actions</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Develop Standard Operating Procedures (OPS) and fact sheets for parents, teachers and learners on dealing with COVID 19 and support the distribution in digital spaces</td>
<td>SADC Member States&lt;br&gt;SADC Secretariat</td>
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### Access and Capacity of Teachers to Use the Relevant Technology to Facilitate and Support Distance Learning Increased.

**Short term Actions**
- Strengthen national platforms with on-line resources and courses for teachers

**Medium to long term actions**
- Strengthen networking among the teacher education institutions to enhance continuous professional development in the area of distance learning
- Develop on-line teacher education programmes in specific areas including Education and Skills Development; Global Citizenship Education (GCED); use of ICT in education
- Joint Mobilization of Resources to accelerate infrastructure development in the area of Renewable Energy

### STI Policy and R&D Response to COVID-19 Improved

**Short term Actions**
- Support Centres of Excellence (CoEs) to undertake studies to document the impact of school closures on girls and vulnerable children, as well as good practices, and monitor learning engagement with support from partners, to facilitate inter-country learning and up scaling of good practices
- Promote access and data sharing of COVID-19 research and development among MS.

**Medium to Long term Actions**
- Strengthen Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education to ensure learners will develop the right knowledge, skills and creative minds required by productive sectors in member states.