

Synthesis of key recommendations and decisions

8 March 2018

This synthesis summarizes the main recommendations and decisions made at the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee meeting (Paris, 28 February - 2 March 2018). Once validated, the key recommendations will be used for public communication of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee deliberations. Note that all recommendations recall and are all fully consistent with the principles and recommendations in the [Education 2030 Framework for Action](#) and previous recommendations of the Steering Committee.

1. Recommendations

Strategic Policy Guidance for the Implementation of SDG4:

While recognising that a great deal is being done in all regions to take forward the SDG4 agenda to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”, the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee has identified a number of bottlenecks in several policy areas that continue to hamper progress towards global targets and commitments. Some bottlenecks relate to education in the broader development context and include: insufficient attention to gender equality; the closing of civil society space; and the persistence of violence, conflict and situations of emergencies. Other bottlenecks more specific to education include: an inadequate focus on SDG4 targets and commitments; a narrowing of the broad SDG4 agenda with neglect of youth and adult education and skills development, both formal and non-formal; insufficient attention to the conditions and status of teachers; inadequate financing of education; limited capacity for policy design and implementation informed by research and evidence; as well as poor mainstreaming of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education. In light of these bottlenecks, the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee makes the following recommendations in respect of SDG4 policy and strategy:

- ✓ **Governments are encouraged to address these bottlenecks**, as relevant to their national contexts and priorities, and in accordance with national legislation.
- ✓ While prioritization of SDG4 targets is necessary to reflect national policy context and needs, **governments should ensure that the commitment to equal opportunity to effective and quality learning** is pursued at all levels and strands of education and training.
- ✓ **Governments, co-convening agencies, regional organizations and civil society networks should strengthen national ownership of the 2030 Framework for Action**, the SDG4 targets and commitments and indicative strategies through national and regional education consultations and mainstreaming of the SDG4 targets in their education systems.
- ✓ **Governments are encouraged to strengthen education sector-wide and inter-sectoral coordination**, mobilizing the range of ministerial departments involved in the achievement of SDG4 targets and commitments.

Financing of Education

Efforts to address the financing challenges and to fill the financing gap and achieve SDG4 requires strengthened domestic and external funding. Increasing the volume of resources and their effectiveness must involve a collective, harmonized combination of domestic financing, official development assistance, and innovative financing, emphasizing that the three must interact and complement each other and be consistent with the principles outlined in the Education 2030 Framework for Action. Serving as a forum for dialogue and consultation on financing of education, the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee recommends that:

- ✓ All **financing initiatives respect the principle of education as fundamental human right and a public good** of which the State is the duty bearer; and the principles of equity, quality and inclusion, as well as 12 years of free, publicly funded education.
- ✓ **Dialogue should be encouraged** between the bearers of innovative financing, donors, and beneficiary states and communities.
- ✓ Niches in which **innovative funding** should have an **added value should be identified** within a whole-sector approach and not undermine system-wide financing.
- ✓ The resources of the **private sector should be fully mobilized to complement the State in the financing of public education**. Successful partnerships with the private sector will require effective coordination and regulatory mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in compliance with established human rights instruments.
- ✓ In order to contribute to the increase of the overall resource base for education sector development, **innovative financing mechanisms should be explored**.
- ✓ Innovative financing projects currently being implemented or designed should be subject to **independent evaluation**.

Review, Monitoring and Reporting at national and cross-national levels

The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee recognizes the importance of review, monitoring and reporting at the national and cross-national levels as an integral part of policy, planning and implementation of SDG4. It advocates for addressing the data gaps needed to monitor the holistic agenda, as well as adequate financing and strengthened coordination across various stakeholders.

National

- ✓ **Governments are encouraged to strengthen data collection, analysis and reporting** efforts on the 11 SDG4 global indicators, for monitoring progress at national and cross-national levels. Governments and their partners are encouraged to strengthen and/or **develop holistic national evaluation and learning assessment systems** that include formative and summative components (if not already in place) and make plans to participate in cross-national assessment programmes, as appropriate. They are also encouraged, as appropriate, to **implement combined multipurpose surveys** (household and/or school-based) to address data and information gaps in key areas for monitoring the implementation and outcomes of SDG4.
- ✓ In order to strengthen accountability, **governments are encouraged to report publicly on progress towards national education policy goals** on a regular basis, linking them, to the extent possible, to regional and global commitments. Such reporting can be used as key sources for the education section of their SDG Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).

Regional and cross-national

- ✓ Regional and other cross-national coordination mechanisms and organizations with their Member States are encouraged to **develop regional and/or sub-regional monitoring and reporting frameworks**, including the setting of regional benchmarks, as feasible and contextually appropriate. These **frameworks should build on the SDG4 Thematic Indicator Framework, taking into account national priorities**, and working closely with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Education Monitoring Report.
- ✓ **Regional and other cross-national coordination mechanisms and organizations are encouraged to strengthen their support to countries in their monitoring and reporting** efforts taking into account national priorities, resources, and capacity and implementation needs through peer learning, sharing of experiences, resource mobilization and capacity development. They are also encouraged to harmonize different initiatives at the regional and sub-regional levels.

- ✓ As an integral part of policy planning and implementation, the **SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee advocates for the investment case for SDG4 monitoring and data collection of US\$ 280 million/year**, as estimated by the Technical Cooperation Group. **The Steering Committee also advocates for predictable financing of the institutions that contribute to producing global public goods** and which have a UN mandate to collect data and monitor SDG4, as well as those that provide national capacity development in using the data for policy and planning. The Steering Committee calls for countries, donors, UN agencies and relevant stakeholders to work in a coordinated manner, building on agreed responsibilities and shared cost.

2. Decisions

Domestic Financing Paper

The Steering Committee proposes that the paper on domestic financing be released after final revision by the Financing and Advocacy & Communication Working Groups.

The paper recalls that in order to successfully achieve SDG4, governments committed to progressively allocate at least 4 to 6 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and/or at least 15 to 20 percent of their total public expenditure to education as per agreed international and regional benchmarks, as they set nationally appropriate spending targets for education. To reach these targets, it is estimated that low- and middle-income countries will need to increase spending on education from the current US\$1.2 trillion per year to US\$3 trillion, requiring an annual rate of growth in public education spending of 7 percent. The paper makes the following recommendations:

- ✓ **Governments should increase public revenues, allocate more of these additional revenues to education** (to meet or exceed international benchmarks) and **prioritize spending on the most marginalized groups**. A share of increased revenue derived from economic growth or larger fiscal space should be allocated to the education sector, with a focus on ensuring basic education is sufficiently financed through public spending. Governments, particularly in low and middle-income countries, are encouraged to progressively enlarge and broaden the tax base to increase spending on education and meet the financing gap. Possible strategies include reducing exemptions, ending harmful tax incentives and preventing tax evasion of both domestic and international businesses operating in developing countries.
- ✓ **Governments should prioritize sensitive allocation and spending** of education resources in ways that focus on increasing equity and supporting the most marginalized groups and disadvantaged children and youth.
- ✓ **Governments should improve the availability, monitoring, transparency and use of financing data** - disaggregated by education sub-sectors. It should include data to better understand the scale and purpose of household costs of basic education in order to reduce the financial burden on families, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable.

High-Level Political Forum Review Process (2018)

The Steering Committee endorses the outline for 2018 HLPF Review submission, and requests that the education submission pay particular attention to the interlinkages between education and the SDG goals which are the focus of the 2018 review [SDG6: Water and Sanitation; SDG7: Energy; SDG11: Cities; SDG12: Sustainable Consumption and Production; and SDG15: Life on Land], noting the importance of: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD); the role of non-formal education and adult education; multi-stakeholder actions at the local level that include, inter alia, government, teachers, researchers, and civil society.

SDG–Education 2030 Steering Committee input to the 2019 HLPF

The Steering Committee endorses proposed strategies for SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee to input into 2019 HLPF Review which includes:

- ✓ The identification of a few key messages that are critical to progress towards SDG4, which can be built around such issues as those of quality, life and work skills and TVET, equity, inclusiveness, financing, peace and social justice, and lifelong learning.
- ✓ An SDG4 Expert Group Meeting to be organized back to back with the Global Education Meeting in December 2018.
- ✓ A more detailed work plan and timeline for the preparation of input for 2019 HLPF and the UNGA summit on the SDGs should be developed.
- ✓ The 2019 HLPF report should draw on Voluntary National Reviews, outcomes of regional consultations, outcomes of the Global Education Meeting 2018, the Global Education Monitoring Reports and UIS data, as well as on the work of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee working groups.

2018 Global Education Meeting

The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee endorses the expected outcomes of the Global Education Meeting 2018, but requires further clarification on the nature of the critical review as well as on how the event and its outcomes will link to the 2019 HLPF:

1. Critical examination of the progress to date towards the achievement of SDG4 and other education-related targets and commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including inputs from the regional education consultations/meetings, the work of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee working groups and the GEM Report.
2. Agreement reached on key messages and a SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee strategy to input into the global 2019 HLPF Review.
3. Identification and agreement reached on strategic areas requiring political guidance and/or intervention for the effective achievement of the Education 2030 Agenda and to be conveyed to the HLPF.

Advocacy, Communication and Outreach

The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee endorsed a set of decisions related to its engagement with regional and global processes, as well as its position vis a vis the Right to Education Campaign. It offers some recommendations for strengthening communication and outreach of the Steering Committee with Member States.

- ✓ **Engaging with UN processes.** The Steering Committee will engage with the UN processes and specifically considers targeted outreach including through possible side events: President of the General Assembly Youth Dialogue (New York, 30 May); HLPF (New York, July); United Nations General Assembly (New York, September).
- ✓ **G20:** The Steering Committee appreciates the Argentinian G20 Presidency's priority to education focusing on skills for lifelong learning and on financing of education. It welcomes the invitation to work closely with the G20 Presidency and agrees to explore options for a possible side event at the G20 Summit (Buenos Aires, Nov/Dec 2018).
- ✓ **Campaigns:** The Steering Committee endorses the right to education campaign, agreeing to release a joint statement proposed by the GEM Report. The Steering Committee also took note of the planned

campaign on national education monitoring reports that will be launched during Global Action Week 2018.

✓ **Strengthening internal and external communication:**

- In order to tackle global educational challenges in a coherent fashion, as stated in article 88 of the 2030 Framework for Action, and to strengthen the accountability of the global and regional actions carried out in this regard, UNESCO and the other organizations in the Steering Committee are encouraged to communicate on progress and results of their global and regional projects, programmes and initiatives on education, linking them to the specific targets of SDG4. The use of data, graphics, charts and other visually appealing and easy to understand information are recommended, notably through the new SDG4 website platform.
- The Secretariat will also improve its efforts to ensure regional groups are kept fully informed of the activities and outcomes of the Steering Committee and its work through regular information meetings, consultations and other communication efforts.

- ✓ **Internal working modalities:** The Steering Committee agrees that advocacy and communication products and initiatives be reviewed and endorsed by the Steering Committee through email; allows the Steering Committee Secretariat to establish direct contact with the Steering Committee members' communication officer for agreed communication products; provides content and timely feedback to the Secretariat for the sdg4education2030.org website and Steering Committee extranet.

Rotation and Transition

Proposals on modalities of rotation and transition will be developed by the Steering Committee Secretariat and shared with the current members for feedback. These proposals will include the pros and cons of increased Member State representation (from 3 to 4 Member States per region), as well as ways in which internal communication within regional electoral groups may be strengthened, including by keeping all delegations informed and encouraging submission of inputs to the Steering Committee when required. [It is to be noted that countries which are not members of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee may attend meetings as observers, and can contribute to the deliberations through their regional representatives].

The proposals for rotation and transition will be refined as necessary and presented at the next meeting of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (September 2018) for discussion and a decision on whether to propose any changes for consideration at the Global Education Meeting (Brussels, 3-5 December 2018). A final decision as per the Education 2030 Framework for Action in this regard will be part of the remit of the Global Education Meeting 2018.