



Education  
2030

## First Meeting of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee

25-26 May 2016

UNESCO, Paris, France

### REPORT

#### Key Outcomes:

1. The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SDG-ED2030 SC) was officially established and its role defined:
  - Election of the Co-chairs and Vice-chairs of the Committee, and creation of a Bureau comprising the Co-chairs and Vice-chairs;
  - Draft Terms of Reference (TORs) of the SDG-ED2030 SC finalized and endorsed.

#### Strategic information shared and issues discussed:

1. 2016 Global Education 2030 Monitoring (GEM) Report;
2. Status of SDG-Education 2030 global and thematic indicators;
3. Activities initiated for SDG-ED 2030 implementation by different constituencies (as presented by Members of the SC);
4. Global SDG developments, including UN architecture for supporting SDG agenda and reviewing progress;
5. Activities already initiated for supporting the implementation of the SDG-ED 2030 agenda (UNESCO);
6. Potential thematic areas to organize support of the SC for implementing SDG-Education 2030;
7. Role of the Member State representatives and regional organizations in the coordination at regional level and in ensuring the articulation between the global and national levels;
8. Roadmap of activities of the SDG-ED2030 SC.

#### Next steps:

1. SDG-Education SC members to clarify what work to be undertaken regarding thematic areas as concerns: a.) how to best link with existing global initiatives/groups/commissions working on SDG4 themes b.) communicate outcomes of work of existing initiatives/groups/commissions, and c.) identify gaps and propose possible additional work to be undertaken on specific thematic areas, form working groups on these, etc.;
2. Regional groups, given their intergovernmental nature, to identify and propose how to best contribute to the success of the work of the SC;
3. Secretariat to develop a more in-depth proposal on how to work on thematic areas, including on how to draw upon the GEMR and Financing committee and use work of regional organisations and at the regional level including their regional reports;
4. Secretariat to develop further proposals for an advocacy and communication strategy and the role of for the SDG–Education 2030 SC. Possibly set up a working group within the SC on advocacy and communication;
5. The Bureau to decide on affiliated members to the SC (i.e.; youth, foundations and private sector), to be invited to the next SC meeting;

6. Secretariat to propose a date for the next SC meeting to take place in the last quarter of 2016 (November/December 2016);
7. Secretariat to develop a detailed draft roadmap of activities of the SDG-ED2030 SC;
8. Decision on global education meetings to be taken in the next SC meeting.

## **I. Introduction**

The UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education Qian Tang welcomed the members of the SDG-ED2030 SC and presented the procedures of the meeting, followed by a short presentation of each member. A request for simultaneous translation from and to Arabic was made. It was clarified that translation was provided for English and French following UNESCO's rules and procedures and that Spanish had been added upon request.

## **II. Presentation of candidates for Co-chairs and Vice-chairs of the SC and election into the bureau**

The candidates for chair were presented.

- Dankert Vedeler (Norway) was elected Co-chair and Qian Tang (Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO) was confirmed as Co-chair, both by consensus.

The candidates for Vice-chairs were presented.

- It was decided to have two Vice-chairs from Member State constituencies and one from civil society/teacher organizations;
- Roberto Iván Aguilar Gómez (Minister of Education, Bolivia), Professor Kazuhiro Yoshida, Hiroshima University (Japan) and Maria Khan (Secretary-General, Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) were elected Vice-chairs. Initially, David Edwards, Deputy General Secretary, Education International was elected as one of the Vice-chairs. After the issue of gender balance was raised by several members of the SC David Edwards offered to give up his seat as a Vice-chair in favour of Maria Khan. This was accepted;
- An outcome of this discussion was that in the future, efforts should be made to ensure better gender balance in the SC and the bureaux (Co-chairs/Vice-chairs);
- It was decided that the Co-chairs and Vice-chairs would form a Bureau with specific tasks beyond the sessions of the SC which are outlined in the Terms of Reference.

## **III. Welcome by Co-chair and adoption of the agenda**

In accepting his position, the newly elected Co-chair, Mr Dankert Vedeler, welcomed the members of the SC and made some further remarks on the meeting procedures and expectations. He expressed the hope that the Steering Committee would be consensus-oriented, transparent, inspiring, and results-oriented. He noted that the Bureau would need the support of all members of the SC. The Vice-chairs gave some brief welcome remarks. The agenda was adopted as amended.

## **IV. Presentation of the TORs of the SDG-ED2030 SC**

The Secretariat presented the draft terms of reference (TORs) and reminded the members of the SDG-ED2030 of their duty to consult with their regional group or the constituencies they represent. The main comments on the TORs received in writing prior to the meeting were presented. It was clarified that the TORs are meant to be generic to ensure for flexibility, whereas the roadmap provides for a more detailed plan of

work. A request was made to provide all working documents in French. Further comments on the TORs were collected. The Secretariat was asked to produce a revised version for the next day, based on the discussion. Main points on the TORs included:

Title of the Steering Committee: SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee.

**Functions:**

- Spelling out the importance of completing the unfinished EFA agenda;
- Spelling out the importance of education to the other SDGs and indicating the education-specific targets in the other SDGs;
- Define to whom strategic guidance is to be provided to by the SC;
- Define partnerships to be established by the SC;
- Putting particular emphasis on vulnerable populations and countries most at risk, including countries affected by conflict and crises.

**Membership:**

- Attention to be paid to gender balance in nominations;
- Ensure that institutional memory is maintained during rotation.

**Alignment between global, regional, and national levels**

- At global level, the SDG-Education 2030 SC to respond to requests for inputs from the UN, including from the High Level Political Forum (HLPF);
- Coordination at regional level key to ensure articulation between the global and national levels;
- At regional level, the three regional representatives from Member States, as well as the regional organization are recommended to participate in regional coordination processes and mechanisms;
- Information sharing of SDG-Education 2030 SC activities at regional and national level and information gathering on regional and national activities and achievements related to the SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda by SC Member States representatives as needed.

**Working modalities:**

- Adding the creation of the Bureau and detailing its functions, ensuring that all decisions are taken in consultation with the SC and the need to ensure regional and gender balance;
- Working languages of the meetings: English and French. When necessary and feasible, the Secretariat will attempt to provide interpretation in the other UN languages as required;
- Ensuring dialogue between the SDG-Education 2030 SC and the Technical Cooperation Group on Indicators (TCG);
- Addition of detailed definition of alignment of coordination between global, regional, and national levels.

Based on a revised version, the TOR was unanimously adopted.

## **V. Presentation of the 2016 GEM Report outline**

Aaron Benavot (UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report) presented the outline of the 2016 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report entitled 'Education for People and Planet: Creating Sustainable Futures for All'.

## VI. Update on global and thematic indicators for SDG-Education 2030

Silvia Montoya (UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)) provided an update on global and thematic indicators for SDG4-Education 2030. Members of the SC congratulated UIS for their work and welcomed the Technical Cooperation Group on Indicators (TCG).

### Key issues discussed:

- (1) The relationship between the SDG-ED2030 SC and TCG: Members stressed the need for transparency and coordination, and a clear understanding of the relationship between the SC and the TCG. In order to avoid any misunderstanding on the relationship, and decisions of the SC, it was emphasized that minutes of the Steering Committee meetings should be made available after each meeting. Clarification was also sought on the relationship between the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML), the TCG, and other interagency efforts, as well as on the relationship between UIS and the GEM. It was explained that UIS is responsible to work directly with Member States and partners in the production of the necessary data to produce the internationally-comparable official indicators on education that then are used by the GEM report team in producing its report.
- (2) Reflection on nature of indicators: Many members indicated that thematic indicators should be reasonable in number, solid and concrete. They needed to be linked to national realities. Indicators by region may, in some cases, be more relevant. In general, indicators needed to be disaggregated, in particular by gender. There was an enquiry about how regional institutions could contribute to the indicator development processes.
- (3) Assessment and indicators related to learning: It was noted that there was no universal data on student assessments. Members were reminded that there was consensus during the last meeting of the EFA Steering Committee in 2015 that the global indicator for target 4.1 should read 'end of primary and end of lower secondary', while the thematic indicator should read 'in and during primary' in order to give flexibility on when to test young children. This consensus is reflected in the Annex of the Framework for Action by the inclusion of indicator number 2. However, the current proposed global indicator reads 'Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex'. Some members expressed the view that high-stake testing was not good for learning. It was noted that the aspect of free basic education, as well as completion, was not reflected in the global indicators although they are well-represented in the thematic indicators.
- (4) Status of indicators:<sup>1</sup> Silvia Montoya (UIS) clarified the purpose and role of the different levels of indicators (global, thematic and national/regional). It was clarified that the 11 global indicators for SDG 4 were developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG) and approved at the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of UN Statistical Commission. They will be adopted by ECOSOC in June

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<sup>1</sup> UN agencies and other stakeholders are observers to the process of developing global indicators which is Member State-led. UN agencies are not party to the negotiations on the global indicators. UN agencies, including UNESCO, were limited to providing technical assistance. Following the country-led process, the final recommendations on the global indicator framework were made by the 28 members of the IAEG-SDGs. At the final meeting of the Drafting Group for the Education 2030 Framework for Action in Paris on 1-2 October 2015, the wording 'during primary' was reflected in paragraph 34 of the Framework for Action (FFA) and in the thematic indicator for target 4.1. At that stage of its development, the proposed global indicator for 4.1 in the IAEG deliberations read '*Percentage of children/young people (i) at the end of primary and (ii) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (a) reading and (b) mathematics*'. After further discussions, in the IAEG meeting in Bangkok in 26-28 October 2015, the IAEG proposed the following indicator for 4.1: '*Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex.*' This is the current indicator of which ECOSOC took note and which was submitted to the UNGA for their consideration.

2016 and the UN General Assembly in September 2016 within the overall global indicator framework for the SDGs, although indicators marked as tier III are recognised as requiring methodological improvements. Global indicators are expected to be regularly reported against by all countries. They may be reflected upon, but cannot be changed by the Steering Committee or any other instance, group or stakeholder, other than the UN official bodies involved in the selection and definition of the global indicators. The ECOSOC and UNGA were still opportunities, albeit slim ones, to advocate for a revised indicator. It was agreed that the Co-chairs send a letter re-stating the position of the SC on the global indicator for target 4.1.

- (5) Thematic indicators: At the same time, clarification was sought on the thematic indicators. The thematic indicators, a broader set of internationally-comparable indicators, were developed by the Technical Advisory Group on Education Indicators (TAG) and which will be finalized and implemented by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) working with countries, partners and stakeholders in the Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG4 – Education 2030 (TCG). The thematic framework will be presented to the SDG-Education 2030 SC which will be invited to endorse the framework. The thematic indicator set will serve to chart global progress on education and to monitor the SDG4 education targets more comprehensively across countries, allowing the possibility to identify challenges regarding additional concepts within the targets that are not reflected well by the global indicators. The thematic indicator framework includes the global indicators as a subset and represents a recommended set of additional indicators that countries may use to monitor based on the national or regional contexts, policy priorities, technical capacity, and data availability. The Chair noted that global and thematic indicators are to be understood as guidance for policy development and to develop cross-nationally comparable data.
- (6) The role of the TCG in capacity building: The issue of capacity building related to data collection, analysis and use, on indicators and on evaluation was recognized as important, especially as new forms of data are needed given the expanded scope of the agenda. Developing a specific capacity building programme on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for SDG4-Education 2030 in Africa was identified as a key priority as well as for other countries.
- (7) Financing of the indicator framework: The issue of the financing of the indicator framework was noted as important requiring particular attention.

#### **Decisions taken:**

- Close collaboration and dialogue between the SDG-Education 2030 SC and the Technical Cooperation Group on Indicators (TCG) will be ensured to support review of progress, including through: participation of members of the SDG-Education 2030 SC in the TCG as observers; regular reporting by TCG's Chairs to the SDG-Education 2030 SC on the implementation of the global and thematic indicator frameworks; recommendations by the TCG on the development of statistical capacities for monitoring. The SDG-Education 2030 SC will endorse the thematic indicators developed by the TCG, noting that technical discussions already undertaken in the TCG should not be re-opened in the SDG-Education 2030 SC deliberations. The debate in the Steering Committee on the global indicator for target 4.1 will not be re-opened.
- A letter will be sent to ECOSOC by the Co-chairs on the global indicator for target 4.1, outlining the consensus position of the Drafting Group of the Education 2030 FFA regarding the indicators for Target 4.1 at its October 2015 meeting.

## **VII. Presentation of other relevant ongoing activities with regard to SDG 4**

The following regional groups and constituencies presented ongoing activities related to SDG4: Regional Group I and II (Europe and North America), III (Latin America and the Caribbean), IV (Asia and the Pacific), Va (Africa) and Vb (Arab States); civil society; E-9; OECD; GPE; ILO; UNWOMEN; UNFPA, UNHCR and Council of Europe. The presentations showed that many activities are underway and underlined the need to continue sharing information.

## **VIII. Presentation of the work of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity**

Mr Justin van Fleet (International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity) and Ambassador Tarald Brautaset (Norway) presented the work of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity.

Members of the Steering Committee welcomed the Commission, thanked Norway for their support and raised several questions. Responding to the questions of the SC, the representatives of the Commission noted that the Commission is an independent short-term initiative. The aim was to make a compelling investment case and to put education higher on the agenda, which is why it addresses Ministers of Finance and Prime Ministers. There had been several rounds of outreach to governments. Note was taken that Francophone countries are underrepresented in the Commission. The Commission looked at education along the entire spectrum and was trying to bring evidence together to convince also non-traditional donors. The UN Secretary-General had announced that he would act upon the recommendations of the Commission. The representative of the Commission's secretariat hoped that the initiative be seen as a form of support to the work of the SDG-ED2030 SC. Steering Committee representatives recalled the importance of engaging with the formal SDG process and architecture that oversees and debates financing, which is Financing for Development.

The Steering Committee also recalled the possibilities offered by its mandate towards achieving a convergence of Governments' and Donors' commitments for a continuous and sustained funding for SDG4-Education 2030.

It further mentioned the need to develop and implement a mapping of financing needs of education 2030 by country given the highly diverse situations of countries.

## **IX. Presentation on the status of discussions at UN level on SDG implementation and review**

A video message to the SDG-ED2030 SC by David Nabarro, Special Advisor of the UN Secretary General on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, was shown and well received. The Secretariat presented the current proposals on follow-up and review for the 2030 Agenda.

## **X. Presentation of actions undertaken to initiate the implementation of SDG-Education 2030**

The Secretariat presented the actions undertaken by UNESCO on the implementation of the new education agenda. These include:

- Advocacy at high-level fora and events;
- Initiatives and Technical Work, both on-going and recently initiated e.g.: Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) on SDG4-Education 2030 Indicators; Inter-Agency Group on Education Inequality Indicators; mapping data capacity at country level (UIS) ; GEMR and series of policy papers; Learning Portal (IIEP); Global Alliance for Literacy (UIL); Interagency Group on TVET; Teachers' Task Force; Work on implementing and measurement of 4.7 (GCED and ESD); Technical support for policy mapping and integration of SDG4 into SWPPs (HQ and Regional Bureaux);
- Inputs to UN-level reports;
- Regional consultation meetings on SDG-Education 2030 developing:
  - A common understanding of SDG 4-Education 2030
  - A regional roadmap for the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030

Recommendations for regional coordination, partnerships, review and follow-up.

The different stakeholders presented what has been done since the adoption of the SDGs and the FFA. Information was shared that a new Education and Academia Stakeholder Group had been formed under the UN SDG architecture, linked to follow up and review, that allows for CSO engagement in the process.

## **XI. Discussion on coordination and cooperation in the implementation of SDG4- Education 2030 at global, regional and national level**

### *1. Thematic priority areas*

The Co-chair proposed that the work of the Steering Committee be planned in a three-year cycle as it is foreseen that SDG4 will be reviewed at the HLPF in 2019. The Steering Committee could work with existing expert groups requesting them to undertake specific technical work/research and/or establish new working groups with clear, time-bound objectives for specific areas of work building on that undertaken by existing groups. One possible modality of engagement might be to nominate focal points from the Steering Committee who could liaise with specific thematic groups. Another possibility would be to constitute a small internal core group within the Steering Committee on particular themes and which would link with/participate in ongoing work of various thematic groups. Caution was expressed that the working groups do not imply heavy administrative structures and do only reporting.

The Secretariat was commended for its earlier presentations. The following general proposals were made for the SDG-Education 2030 SC:

- Link up to regional initiatives and mechanisms;
- Engage with already existing groups;
- Focus on evidence-based awareness raising;
- Harness exchange of experience;
- Engage with emerging issues;
- Look at cross-cutting themes;
- Link to themes of the GEM and of the HLPF;
- Ensure regional balance in working groups;
- Need to have a clear idea of what we want to achieve and what has to be in place by 2019.

### **The following areas for working groups were discussed:**

Access to education; quality, including teachers, learning and assessment of learning outcomes; inclusion (focus on children and adults with disabilities), equity; technical and vocational education and training (including qualifications framework for lifelong learning); science, technology, engineering and mathematics education; literacy; skills and values for the 21<sup>st</sup> century; peace education and conflict prevention; migration; capacity development for monitoring; financing; role of the private sector; governance and accountability; empowerment of education stakeholders. Four possible areas were identified Financing, Learning, Inclusion, with Advocacy and Communication as a cross-cutting theme.

The Secretariat noted that all issues raised were important for SDG4. The Steering Committee needed to clarify what it might focus on, keeping in mind the limited capacity of the Secretariat.

It was also noted that sub-regional and regional consultations on the implementation of the Education 2030 FFA were still ongoing or planned, hence the need for the SC to not decide on priority areas during the current session, so as to maintain a bottom-up approach.

The Co-chair reminded that the GEM and UIS were unique and that the Steering Committee should build on their analyses, following up on gaps identified. Co- and Vice-chairs of the Steering Committee could be invited to regional events.

## 2. *Advocacy and communication*

UNICEF gave an introductory presentation on advocacy and communication, based on the paper which was shared with the Steering Committee before the meeting. The paper was welcomed, but should also draw on lessons learned (Why did the education community fail to highlight education over the past 15 years?). There is need to identify the different audiences we are aiming to reach through our advocacy and how to best reach them. Advocacy and communication needs to be in different languages. Communication on the Framework for Action is necessary. We should start with positive messages. The concepts of universality, leaving no one behind, and human rights should be the pillars for messaging. Advocacy on safe schools is needed. UNFPA and UNWOMEN expressed interest to work in the area of women's rights and sexual violence. Global citizenship was highlighted as one area for advocacy efforts. In general, advocacy was seen as core to the work of the Steering Committee. Resources would need to be given to the Steering Committee's advocacy work.

The Co-chair underlined the strong link between evidence and advocacy and urged the different agencies to use the members of the Steering Committee as resource persons for advocacy.

The Secretariat noted that the paper was a first draft of a communications and advocacy strategy which was to be further defined. While human rights were the basis of the agenda we needed targeted and adapted messages for different stakeholders and to see how to reach audiences outside of the education community. The Secretariat proposed a working group on communications and noted that we needed resources for this as a collective.

A representative of civil society commented that the logo of the SDG-Education 2030 is too reductionist and does not capture the scope and depth of Goal 4. The Steering Committee agreed on the name of 'SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee' instead of 'SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee' to reflect the broad new agenda.

## 3. *Global Meetings*

The discussion on global meetings was postponed to the next SC meeting.

## **XII. Adoption of TORS of the Steering Committee**

The Secretariat presented the revised TORs, which were subsequently discussed and agreed upon.

### **Decisions taken:**

- The TORs were adopted as amended. The Secretariat will finalize them based on what was agreed during the discussion.

## **XIII. Roadmap of the Work of the Steering Committee and Next Steps**

The Secretariat proposed that the Steering Committee agree on general and broad areas of work over the next years. The Secretariat would then make a more detailed proposal for a roadmap in consultation with the Bureau.

The Co-chair noted that we could: (1) form small working groups within the SC, (2) designate focal points in the SC to work with existing groups, (3) invite other groups/bodies to the SC meetings. He noted that the discussion on affiliate members had not taken place.

In the ensuing discussion it was proposed to engage with the UN Financing for Development process. Four possible working groups were suggested: (1) financing, (2) learning, (3) inclusion and (4) advocacy and communication as a crosscutting theme.



The Secretariat invited all members to send proposals for the roadmap in writing. The Co-chair proposed that the bureau will make a proposal on the affiliated members to be invited to the meetings of the Steering Committee.

**Decisions taken:**

- The Secretariat will work out a more detailed proposal for possible working groups.
- The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be in November/December 2016.

**XIV. Closing**

A civil society representative informed the meeting that a letter from OMEP (World Organization for Early Childhood Education) was sent to UNESCO, proposing a decade of Early Childhood Education.

Mr Tang closed the meeting reminding the Steering Committee of its added value: (1) It brings together all major players in education; (2) it can draw on data from UIS and (3) analysis of the GEM. The Steering Committee could review the GEM and make recommendations based on gaps identified. Based on this review it could engage in evidence-based advocacy and transmit it to the regional level. Moreover, the Ministries of Education were partners at the national level to capitalize on. The Steering Committee also provided a space for exchange on the work of the different members and constituencies.