

# Education 2030



## Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action

for the implementation of  
Sustainable Development Goal 4

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**Ensure inclusive and equitable  
quality education and promote lifelong  
learning opportunities for all**



Education 2030

# **Incheon Declaration**

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**Towards inclusive and  
equitable quality education  
and lifelong learning for all**

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**UNESCO together with UNICEF, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR organized the World Education Forum 2015 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 19 – 22 May 2015, hosted by the Republic of Korea. Over 1,600 participants from 160 countries, including over 120 Ministers, heads and members of delegations, heads of agencies and officials of multilateral and bilateral organizations, and representatives of civil society, the teaching profession, youth and the private sector, adopted the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, which sets out a new vision for education for the next fifteen years.**

## Preamble

**1.** We, Ministers, heads and members of delegations, heads of agencies and officials of multilateral and bilateral organizations, and representatives of civil society, the teaching profession, youth and the private sector, have gathered in May 2015 at the invitation of the Director-General of UNESCO in Incheon, Republic of Korea, for the World Education Forum 2015 (WEF 2015). We thank the Government and the people of the Republic of Korea for having hosted this important event as well as UNICEF, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR, as the co-convenors of this meeting, for their contributions. We express our sincere appreciation to UNESCO for having initiated and led the convening of this milestone event for Education 2030.

**2.** On this historic occasion, we reaffirm the vision of the worldwide movement for Education for All initiated in Jomtien in 1990 and reiterated in Dakar in 2000 – the most important commitment to education in recent decades and which has helped drive significant progress in education. We also reaffirm the vision and political will reflected in numerous international and regional human rights treaties that stipulate the right to education and its interrelation with other human rights. We acknowledge the efforts made; however, we recognize with great concern that we are far from having reached education for all.

**3.** We recall The Muscat Agreement developed through broad consultations and adopted at the Global Education for All (EFA) Meeting 2014, and which successfully informed the proposed education targets of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We further recall the outcomes of the regional ministerial conferences on education post-2015 and take note of the findings of the 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report and the Regional EFA Synthesis Reports. We recognize the important contribution of the Global Education First Initiative as well as the role of governments and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in galvanizing political commitment for education.

**4.** Having taken stock of progress made towards the EFA goals since 2000 and the education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as the lessons learned, and having examined the remaining challenges and deliberated on the proposed Education 2030 agenda and the Framework for Action as well as on future priorities and strategies for its achievement, we adopt this Declaration.

## Towards 2030: a new vision for education

### 5.

Our vision is to transform lives through education, recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs. We commit with a sense of urgency to a single, renewed education agenda that is holistic, ambitious and aspirational, leaving no one behind. This new vision is fully captured by the proposed SDG 4 **'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'** and its corresponding targets. It is transformative and universal, attends to the 'unfinished business' of the EFA agenda and the education-related MDGs, and addresses global and national education challenges. It is inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity; social justice; inclusion; protection; cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity; and shared responsibility and accountability. We reaffirm that education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights. It is essential for peace, tolerance, human fulfilment and sustainable development. We recognize education as key to achieving full employment and poverty eradication. We will focus our efforts on access, equity and inclusion, quality and learning outcomes, within a lifelong learning approach.

### 6.

Motivated by our significant achievements in expanding **access** to education over the last 15 years, we will ensure the provision of 12 years of free, publicly funded, equitable quality primary and secondary education, of which at least nine years are compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes. We also encourage the provision of at least one year of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education and that all children have access to quality early childhood development, care and education. We also commit to providing meaningful education and training opportunities for the large population of out-of-school children and adolescents, who require immediate, targeted and sustained action ensuring that all children are in school and are learning.

### 7.

**Inclusion and equity** in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and we therefore commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No education target should be considered met unless met by all. We therefore commit to making the necessary changes in education policies and focusing our efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind.

**8.**

We recognize the importance of **gender equality** in achieving the right to education for all. We are therefore committed to supporting gender-sensitive policies, planning and learning environments; mainstreaming gender issues in teacher training and curricula; and eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence in schools.

**9.**

We commit to **quality** education and to improving learning outcomes, which requires strengthening inputs, processes and evaluation of outcomes and mechanisms to measure progress. We will ensure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems. Quality education fosters creativity and knowledge, and ensures the acquisition of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills. It also develops the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges through education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED). In this regard, we strongly support the implementation of the Global Action

Programme on ESD launched at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD in Aichi-Nagoya in 2014. We also stress the importance of human rights education and training in order to achieve the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

**10.**

We commit to promoting quality **lifelong learning opportunities** for all, in all settings and at all levels of education. This includes equitable and increased access to quality technical and vocational education and training and higher education and research, with due attention to quality assurance. In addition, the provision of flexible learning pathways, as well as the recognition, validation and accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal education, is important. We further commit to ensuring that all youth and adults, especially girls and women, achieve relevant and recognized functional literacy and numeracy proficiency levels and acquire life skills, and that they are provided with adult learning, education and training opportunities. We are also committed to strengthening science, technology and innovation. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) must be harnessed to strengthen education systems, knowledge dissemination, information access, quality and effective learning, and more effective service provision.

**11.**

Furthermore, we note with serious concern that, today, a large proportion of the world's out-of-school population lives in conflict-affected areas, and that crises, violence and attacks on education institutions, natural disasters and pandemics continue to disrupt education and development globally. We commit to developing more inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults in these contexts, including internally displaced persons and refugees. We highlight the need for education to be delivered in safe, supportive and secure learning environments free from violence. We recommend a sufficient crisis response, from emergency response through to recovery and rebuilding; better coordinated national, regional and global responses; and capacity development for comprehensive risk reduction and mitigation to ensure that education is maintained during situations of conflict, emergency, post-conflict and early recovery.

## **Implementing our common agenda**

**12.**

We reaffirm that the fundamental responsibility for successfully implementing this agenda lies with governments. We are determined to establish legal and policy frameworks that promote accountability and transparency as well as participatory governance and coordinated partnerships at all levels and across sectors, and to uphold the right to participation of all stakeholders.

**13.**

We call for strong global and regional collaboration, cooperation, coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the education agenda based on data collection, analysis and reporting at the country level, within the framework of regional entities, mechanisms and strategies.

**14.**

We recognize that the success of the Education 2030 agenda requires sound policies and planning as well as efficient implementation arrangements. It is also clear that the aspirations encompassed in the proposed SDG 4 cannot be realized without a significant and well-targeted increase in financing, particularly in those countries furthest from achieving quality education for all at all levels. We therefore are determined to increase public spending on education in accordance with country context, and urge adherence to the international and regional benchmarks of allocating efficiently at least 4 – 6% of Gross Domestic Product and/or at least 15 – 20% of total public expenditure to education.



**15.**

Noting the importance of development cooperation in complementing investments by governments, we call upon developed countries, traditional and emerging donors, middle income countries and international financing mechanisms to increase funding to education and to support the implementation of the agenda according to countries' needs and priorities. We recognize that the fulfilment of all commitments related to official development assistance (ODA) is crucial, including the commitments by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for ODA to developing countries. In accordance with their commitments, we urge those developed countries that have not yet done so to make additional concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for ODA to developing countries. We also commit to increase our support to the least developed countries. We further recognize the importance of unlocking all potential resources to support the right to education. We recommend improving aid effectiveness through better coordination and harmonization, and prioritizing financing and aid to neglected sub-sectors and low income countries. We also recommend significantly increasing support for education in humanitarian and protracted crises. We welcome the Oslo Summit on Education for Development (July 2015) and call on the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa to support the proposed SDG 4.

**16.**

We call on the WEF 2015 co-convenors, and in particular UNESCO, as well as on all partners, to individually and collectively support countries in implementing the Education 2030 agenda, by providing technical advice, national capacity development and financial support based on their respective mandates and comparative advantages, and building on complementarity. To this end, we entrust UNESCO, in consultation with Member States, the WEF 2015 co-convenors and other partners, to develop an appropriate global coordination mechanism. Recognizing the Global Partnership for Education as a multi-stakeholder financing platform for education to support the implementation of the agenda according to the needs and priorities of countries, we recommend that it be part of this future global coordination mechanism.

**17.**

We further entrust UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, to continue its mandated role to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 agenda, in particular by: undertaking advocacy to sustain political commitment; facilitating policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and standard setting; monitoring progress towards the education targets; convening global, regional and national stakeholders to guide the implementation of the agenda; and functioning as a focal point for education within the overall SDG coordination architecture.

**18.**

We resolve to develop comprehensive national monitoring and evaluation systems in order to generate sound evidence for policy formulation and the management of education systems as well as to ensure accountability. We further request the WEF 2015 co-convenors and partners to support capacity development in data collection, analysis and reporting at the country level. Countries should seek to improve the quality, levels of disaggregation and timeliness of reporting to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. We also request that the Education for All Global Monitoring Report be continued as an independent Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report), hosted and published by UNESCO, as the mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the proposed SDG 4 and on education in the other proposed SDGs, within the mechanism to be established to monitor and review the implementation of the proposed SDGs.

**19.**

We have discussed and agreed upon the essential elements of the Education 2030 Framework for Action. Taking into account the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda (New York, September 2015) and the outcomes of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, July 2015), a final version will be presented for adoption and launched at a special high-level meeting to be organized alongside the 38th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO in November 2015. We are fully committed to its implementation after its adoption, to inspire and guide countries and partners to ensure that our agenda is achieved.

**20.**

Building on the legacy of Jomtien and Dakar, this Incheon Declaration is an historic commitment by all of us to transform lives through a new vision for education, with bold and innovative actions, to reach our ambitious goal by 2030.

**Incheon, Republic of Korea**

**21 May 2015**

## Statements of the Heads of the WEF 2015 Convening Agencies

“This Declaration is a huge step forward. It reflects our determination to ensure that all children, young people and adults gain the knowledge and skills they need to live in dignity, to fulfil their potential and contribute to their societies as responsible global citizens. It encourages governments to provide learning opportunities through life, so that people can continue to grow and be on the right side of change. It affirms that education, a fundamental human right, is the key to global peace and sustainable development.”

*Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO*

“Education is the key to a better life for every child and the foundation of every strong society – but far too many children are still being left behind. To realize all our development goals, we need every child in school and learning.”

*Anthony Lake, Executive Director, UNICEF*

“To end poverty, boost shared prosperity, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, we must use development financing and technical expertise to effect radical change. We must work together to ensure that all children have access to quality education and learning opportunities throughout their lives, regardless of where they are born, their gender, or their family’s income.”

*Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank Group*

“Together we must promote and protect every person’s right to education, and ensure that quality education reaches all, and instils values of peace, justice, human rights and gender equality. We are proud to have been a co-convenor of the World Education Forum and pledge to take forward the new action agenda on education for all by 2030.”

*Babatunde Osotimehin, UNFPA Executive Director*

☞ In our world, knowledge is power, and education empowers. It is an indispensable part of the development equation. It has intrinsic value – extending far beyond the economic – to empower people to determine their own destiny. That is why the opportunity to be educated is central to advancing human development. ☞

*Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator*

☞ The Incheon Declaration rightly commits us to non-discriminatory education that recognizes the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainable development. This is a crucial opportunity for us to work together, across sectors, towards the fulfilment of the Education for All promise of peaceful, just and equal societies. A world where people are equal can only be achieved if our education also universally teaches this. ☞

*Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka,  
UN Women Executive Director and UN Under-Secretary-General*

☞ We have a collective responsibility to ensure education plans take into account the needs of some of the most vulnerable children and youth in the world – refugees, internally displaced children, stateless children and children whose right to education has been compromised by war and insecurity. These children are the keys to a secure and sustainable future, and their education matters for us all. ☞

*António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

# SDG4 – Education 2030

## **Framework for Action**

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**Ensure inclusive and  
equitable quality education  
and promote lifelong learning  
opportunities for all**

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## Acknowledgements

The Education 2030 Framework for Action was adopted by 184 UNESCO Member States on 4 November 2015 in Paris. It is the result of a collective effort involving in-depth, wide-ranging consultations driven and owned by countries, and facilitated by UNESCO as well as other partners. The development of the Framework was guided by the Education for All (EFA) Steering Committee convened by UNESCO, and finalized through the Drafting Group for the Education 2030 Framework for Action.

On behalf of UNESCO, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the members of the EFA Steering Committee and the Drafting Group for the Education 2030 Framework for Action. My thanks go in particular to the representatives of Armenia, Benin, Brazil, China, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, India, Japan, Kenya, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Uganda for their involvement and contribution.

The following United Nations agencies, multilateral agencies, civil society organizations and private entities participated actively and made critical inputs to the development of the Education 2030 Framework for Action: the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Women and the World Bank; the Global Partnership for Education (GPE); the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); Education International (EI); the Global Campaign for Education (GCE); the Africa Network Campaign on Education For All (ANCEFA); the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE); and Intel. Their tireless efforts and exhaustive consultations within their respective constituencies helped ensure the relevance of the Framework to education stakeholders in different settings across the world.

Special thanks go to Dankert Vedeler (Chair of the EFA Steering Committee and Co-chair of the Drafting Group for the Education 2030 Framework for Action, Norway), Camilla Croso (Vice-Chair of the EFA Steering Committee and Vice-Chair of the Drafting Group for the Education 2030 Framework for Action, GCE) and Kazuhiro Yoshida (Vice-Chair of the EFA Steering Committee and Vice-Chair of the Drafting Group for the Education 2030 Framework for Action, Japan) for their deep commitment to and skills in guiding and carrying out a complex process of consultations.

The development of the Education 2030 Framework for Action would not have been possible without the valuable and generous contributions, peer reviews and advice of my colleagues in UNESCO's Education Sector, including its Institutes and Regional Bureaux for Education. In this regard, I would like to commend the Sector's Education for All Team, which led and coordinated the process of developing the Education 2030 Framework for Action and provided the necessary technical support. Its dedication to the task was unwavering.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Q. Tang', written in a cursive style.

**Qian Tang, Ph.D.**  
**Assistant Director-General for Education**  
**UNESCO**  
**December 2015, Paris**

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(Working Draft – Status as of July 2016)

# Sustainable Development Goal 4

## The Sustainable Development Goal 4 targets:

☞ *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.* ☞



4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes



4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education



4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university



4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship



4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations



4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy



4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development



4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all



4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries



4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

# Introduction

## 1.

The world has made some remarkable progress in education since 2000, when the six Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established. Those goals were not, however, reached by the 2015 deadline and continued action is needed to complete the unfinished agenda. With Goal 4 of **Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**<sup>(i)</sup> – *‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’* (hereafter referred to as **SDG4-Education 2030**) – and its associated targets, the world has set a more ambitious universal education agenda for the period from 2015 to 2030. Every effort must be made to guarantee that this time the goal and targets are achieved.

## 2.

SDG4-Education 2030 was developed through a broad consultative process driven and owned by Member States, and facilitated by UNESCO as well as other partners and guided by the EFA Steering Committee.<sup>1</sup> SDG4-Education 2030 draws on the thematic consultations on education post-2015 of 2012 and 2013 led by UNESCO and UNICEF, the Global

Education for All Meeting held in Muscat, Oman, in May 2014, non-government organization (NGO) consultations, the five regional ministerial conferences organized by UNESCO in 2014 and 2015, and The E-9 meeting held in Islamabad in 2014.<sup>2</sup> A key milestone in its development is The Muscat Agreement<sup>(iii)</sup> which was adopted at the Global EFA Meeting in May 2014 and which informed the global education goal and its associated targets and means of implementation as proposed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly’s Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG).

This process culminated in the **Incheon Declaration**, which was adopted on 21 May 2015 at the World Education Forum (WEF 2015) held in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The Incheon Declaration constitutes the commitment of the education community to SDG4-Education 2030 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of development. The **SDG4-Education 2030 Framework for Action**, which provides guidance for implementing SDG4-Education 2030, was discussed at WEF 2015, and its essential elements were agreed upon in the Incheon Declaration.

It was finalized by the Education 2030 Drafting Group and adopted by 184 Member States and the education community during a high-level meeting at UNESCO, Paris on 4 November 2015. The Framework for Action outlines how to translate into practice, at country/national,<sup>3</sup> regional and global level, the commitment made in Incheon. It aims at mobilizing all countries and partners around the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on education and its targets,

and proposes ways of implementing, coordinating, financing and monitoring SDG4-Education 2030 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. It also proposes indicative strategies which countries may wish to draw upon in developing contextualized plans and strategies, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.

*1 The EFA Steering Committee, convened by UNESCO, is composed of Member States representing all six regional groups of UNESCO, the E-9 initiative\* and the host country of the World Education Forum 2015; the five EFA convening agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Bank); the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); the Global Partnership for Education (GPE); civil society; the teaching profession; and the private sector.*

*\* The E-9 Initiative is a forum established in 1993 to accelerate progress towards the achievement of EFA. It comprises the nine most highly populated countries of the South (Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan).*

*2 The outcomes of regional ministerial conferences on education post-2015 and the E-9 meeting are the Bangkok Statement (2014), the Lima Statement (2014), the Islamabad Statement (2014), the Kigali Statement (2015), the Sharm El Sheikh Statement (2015) and the Paris Statement (2015).*

*3 It is acknowledged that in federal systems, government responsibilities often lie at sub-national levels. Moreover, decentralized responsibility for education governance and provision is common practice in many countries which do not have a federal system. Where possible, appropriate terms are used to reflect this, but in some cases 'national' is used to refer to countries with either centralized or decentralized governance systems.*

3.

The Framework for Action has three sections. Section I outlines the vision, rationale and principles of SDG4-Education 2030. Section II describes the global education goal and its associated seven targets and three means of implementation, as well as indicative strategies. Section III proposes a structure for coordinating global education efforts, as well as governance, monitoring, follow-up and review mechanisms. It also examines ways of ensuring that SDG4-Education 2030 is adequately financed and outlines the partnerships needed to realize the agenda at country/national, regional and global level.

# I. Vision, rationale and principles

4.

Education is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and essential for the success of all SDGs. Recognizing the important role of education, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights education as a stand-alone goal (SDG 4) and also includes targets on education under several other SDGs, notably those on health; growth and employment; sustainable consumption and production; and climate change. In fact, education can accelerate progress towards the achievement of all of the SDGs and therefore should be part of the strategies to achieve each of them. The renewed

education agenda encapsulated in Goal 4 is comprehensive, holistic, ambitious, aspirational and universal, and inspired by a vision of education that transforms the lives of individuals, communities and societies, leaving no one behind. The agenda attends to the unfinished business of the EFA goals and the education-related MDGs, while effectively addressing current and future global and national education challenges. It is rights-based and inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development, based on the principles of human rights and dignity, social justice, peace, inclusion and protection, as well as cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity and shared responsibility and accountability<sup>[iii]</sup>.

5.

Building on and continuing the EFA movement, SDG4-Education 2030 takes into account lessons learned since 2000. What is new about SDG4-Education 2030 is its focus on increased and expanded access, inclusion and equity, quality and learning outcomes at all levels, within a lifelong learning approach. A key lesson of past years is that the global education agenda should work within the overall international development framework, with strong links to humanitarian response, rather than alongside it as occurred with the separate EFA goals and education-related MDGs. By adopting the Incheon Declaration, the education community set a single renewed education goal in accordance with the overall development framework. The new education agenda's focus on inclusion and equity – giving everyone an equal opportunity, and leaving no one behind signals another lesson: the need for increased efforts especially aimed at reaching those marginalized or in vulnerable situations. All people, irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, ethnicity, language, religion,

political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or birth, as well as persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, and children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations or other status,<sup>4</sup> should have access to inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. The focus on education quality, learning and skills highlights yet another important lesson: the danger of concentrating on access to education without paying enough attention to whether students are learning and acquiring relevant skills once they are in school. The fact that the EFA goals have not been reached carries a further lesson: 'business as usual' will not bring quality education to all. If current rates of progress continue, many of the countries lagging furthest behind will not reach the new targets by 2030. This means that it is of utmost importance to change current practices and mobilize efforts and resources at an unprecedented pace. Another new feature of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda is that it is universal and is owned by the entire world, developed and developing countries alike.

4 Hereafter, 'marginalized and vulnerable groups' refers to all groups in this list. It should be noted that the list, which combines paragraphs 19 and 25 of 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', is not exhaustive and that countries and regions may identify and address other status-based vulnerability, marginalization, discrimination and exclusion in education.

**6.**

SDG4-Education 2030 must be seen within the broader context of development today. Education systems must be relevant and respond to rapidly changing labour markets, technological advances, urbanization, migration, political instability, environmental degradation, natural hazards and disasters, competition for natural resources, demographic challenges, increasing global unemployment, persistent poverty, widening inequality and expanding threats to peace and safety. By 2030, education systems will need to enrol hundreds of millions of additional children and adolescents to achieve basic education (that is, pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education) for all<sup>[iv]</sup> as well as provide equal access to upper secondary and post-secondary education opportunities for all. At the same time, it is critical to provide early childhood care and education to ensure children's long-term development, learning and health. It is also vital for education systems to ensure that all children, youth and adults are learning and acquire relevant skills, including proficiency in literacy. There is an urgent need for children, youth and adults to develop throughout life the flexible skills and competencies they need to live

and work in a more secure, sustainable, interdependent, knowledge-based and technology-driven world. SDG4-Education 2030 will ensure that all individuals acquire a solid foundation of knowledge, develop creative and critical thinking and collaborative skills, and build curiosity, courage and resilience.

**7.**

The renewed attention to the purpose and relevance of education for human development and economic, social and environmental sustainability is a defining feature of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda. This is embedded in its holistic and humanistic vision, which contributes to a new model of development. That vision goes beyond a utilitarian approach to education and integrates the multiple dimensions of human existence<sup>[iv]</sup>. It understands education as inclusive and as crucial in promoting democracy and human rights and enhancing global citizenship, tolerance and civic engagement as well as sustainable development. Education facilitates intercultural dialogue and fosters respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, which are vital for achieving social cohesion and justice.



## 8.

For countries and communities that embrace the need to bring quality education to all, the benefits are enormous. Evidence of education's unmatched power to improve lives, particularly for girls and women continues to accumulate<sup>[vi]</sup>. Education has a key role in eradicating poverty: it helps people obtain decent work, raises their incomes and generates productivity gains that fuel economic development. Education is the most powerful means of achieving gender equality, of enabling girls and women to fully participate socially and politically, and of empowering them economically. Education is also one of the most potent ways to improve individuals' health – and to make sure the benefits are passed on to future generations. It saves the lives of millions of mothers and children, helps prevent and contain disease, and is an essential element of efforts to reduce malnutrition. Moreover, education promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities<sup>[vii]</sup>. It is also fundamentally protective for children, young people and adults whose lives have been devastated by crisis and conflict, and provides them with the tools to rebuild their lives and communities.

## 9.

Unlocking education's power for all will require creating more opportunity everywhere, but especially in countries and regions in conflict. Many of the largest education gaps are found in conflict and emergency situations. It is, therefore, critical to develop education systems that are more resilient and responsive in the face of conflict, social unrest and natural hazards – and to ensure that education is maintained during emergency, conflict and post-conflict situations. Better education is also central to preventing and mitigating conflicts and crises and to promoting peace.

10.

The principles informing this Framework are drawn from international instruments and agreements, including Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>[viii]</sup>, the Convention against Discrimination in Education<sup>[ix]</sup>, the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>[x]</sup>, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights<sup>[xi]</sup>, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>[xii]</sup>, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women<sup>[xiii]</sup>, the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees<sup>[xiv]</sup> and the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Right to Education in Emergency Situations<sup>[xv]</sup>.

Those principles include:

- **Education is a fundamental human right and an enabling right.** To fulfil this right, countries must ensure universal equal access to inclusive and equitable quality education and learning, which should be **free and compulsory**, leaving no one behind. Education shall aim at the full development of the human personality and promote mutual understanding, tolerance, friendship and peace.
- **Education is a public good**, of which the state is the duty bearer. Education is a shared societal endeavour, which implies an inclusive process of public policy formulation and implementation. Civil society, teachers and educators, the private sector, communities, families, youth and children all have important roles in realizing the right to quality education. The role of the state is essential in setting and regulating standards and norms<sup>[xvi]</sup>.
- **Gender equality** is inextricably linked to the right to education for all. Achieving gender equality requires a rights-based approach that ensures that girls and boys, women and men not only gain access to and complete education cycles, but are empowered equally in and through education.

# III. Goal, strategic approaches, targets and indicators

## Overarching goal

🌐 *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.* 🗨️

### 11.

The overarching 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development education goal (SDG 4) commits to providing inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels and expresses the new key features of SDG4-Education 2030, which underpin this Framework for Action.

### 12.

Ensure **access** to and completion of quality education for all children and youth to at least 12 years of free, publicly funded, inclusive and equitable quality primary and secondary education, of which at least nine years are compulsory, as well as access to quality education for out-of-school children and youth through a range of modalities. Ensure the provision of learning opportunities so that all youth and adults acquire functional literacy and numeracy and so as to foster their full participation as active citizens. The provision of at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education of good quality should also be encouraged.

**13.**

Ensure **equity and inclusion** in and through education and address all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparity, vulnerability and inequality in education access, participation, retention and completion and in learning outcomes. Inclusive education for all should be ensured by designing and implementing transformative public policies to respond to learners' diversity and needs, and to address the multiple forms of discrimination and of situations, including emergencies, which impede the fulfilment of the right to education. As **gender equality** is another key feature of SDG4-Education 2030, this agenda pays particular attention to gender-based discrimination as well as to vulnerable groups, and to ensuring that no one is left behind. No education target should be considered met unless it is met by all.

**14.**

An integral part of the right to education is ensuring that education is of sufficient **quality** to lead to relevant, equitable and effective learning outcomes at all levels and in all settings. Quality education necessitates, at a minimum, that learners develop foundational literacy and numeracy skills as building blocks for further learning, as well as higher-order skills.

This requires relevant teaching and learning methods and content that meet the needs of all learners, taught by well-qualified, trained, adequately remunerated and motivated teachers, using appropriate pedagogical approaches and supported by appropriate information and communication technology (ICT), as well as the creation of safe, healthy, gender-responsive, inclusive and adequately resourced environments that facilitate learning.

**15.**

The right to education begins at birth and continues throughout life; therefore, the concept of **lifelong learning**<sup>5</sup> guides SDG4-Education 2030. To complement and supplement formal schooling, broad and flexible lifelong learning opportunities should be provided through non-formal pathways with adequate resources and mechanisms and through stimulating informal learning, including through use of ICT.

5 'In essence, lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages (children, young people, adults and elderly, girls and boys, women and men) in all life-wide contexts (family, school, community, workplace and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Education systems which promote lifelong learning adopt a holistic and sector-wide approach involving all sub-sectors and levels to ensure the provision of learning opportunities for all individuals.' (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. n.d. Technical Note: Lifelong Learning. <http://uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/keydocuments/LifelongLearning/en/UNESCOTechNotesLLL.pdf>)

## Strategic approaches

### 16.

To achieve SDG 4 on education and the education targets included under other SDGs, it will be necessary to mobilize national, regional and global efforts that are aimed at:

- achieving effective and inclusive partnerships;
- improving education policies and the way they work together;
- ensuring highly equitable, inclusive and quality education systems for all;
- mobilizing resources for adequate financing for education;
- ensuring monitoring, follow-up and review of all targets.

A set of strategic approaches (outlined below) is recommended to deliver on the vastly more ambitious universal SDG4-Education 2030 goal and agenda, and to monitor progress. Building on the lessons of EFA and the MDGs, states should invest in and scale up innovative, evidence-based and cost-effective approaches that enable all individuals to gain access to, participate in, learn through and complete a quality education, with a special focus on those who are the hardest to reach in all contexts. In addition, indicative strategies specific to each target are described under the targets. It should be noted that these strategies are quite generic and will require appropriate adaptation by governments to different country contexts and priorities.

## Strengthening policies, plans, legislation and systems

### 17.

A number of international standard-setting instruments protect the fundamental human right to education. Legally binding instruments such as treaties, conventions, agreements and protocols, as well as international instruments, such as recommendations and declarations<sup>[xvii]</sup> that have political and moral force have established a solid international normative framework for the right to education without discrimination or exclusion. Multi-stakeholder participatory reviews, led by governments, should be undertaken to institute measures to fulfil their obligations and to ensure strong legal and policy frameworks that lay the foundation and conditions for the delivery and sustainability of quality education.

### 18.

In implementing the new agenda, the focus should be on efficiency, effectiveness and equity of education systems. Education systems should reach out to, attract and retain those who are currently excluded or at risk of being marginalized. Furthermore, to ensure quality education and conditions for effective education outcomes, governments should strengthen education systems by instituting and improving appropriate, effective and inclusive governance and accountability mechanisms; quality assurance; education

management information systems; transparent and effective financing procedures and mechanisms; and institutional management arrangements, as well as ensure that robust, timely and accessible data are available. Innovation and ICT must be harnessed to strengthen education systems, disseminate knowledge, provide access to information, promote quality and effective learning and deliver services more efficiently. System strengthening should also draw on South-South and triangular collaboration and sharing of best practices, adapted to country and regional contexts.

## Emphasizing equity, inclusion and gender equality

**19.** Cross-sector policies and plans should be developed or improved, consistent with the overall 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to address the social, cultural and economic barriers that deprive millions of children, youth and adults of education and quality learning. Relevant and realistic intermediate benchmarks and stepping stones should be set at the national level. This must include changes as appropriate in education content, approaches, structures and funding strategies to address the situation of excluded children, youth and adults. Evidence-based policies and strategies to address exclusion may include elimination of cost barriers through, for example, cash transfer programmes; provision of school meals/nutrition and health services; learning and teaching materials and

transport services; second chance/re-entry programmes; inclusive school facilities; teacher training on inclusive education; and language policies to address exclusion. To measure marginalization in education, set targets for reducing inequity and monitor progress towards these targets, all countries should collect, analyse and use disaggregated data, broken down by the specific characteristics of given population groups, and ensure that indicators measure progress towards reducing inequality.

**20.** To ensure gender equality, education systems must act explicitly to eliminate gender bias and discrimination resulting from social and cultural attitudes and practices and economic status. Governments and partners need to put in place gender-sensitive policies, planning and learning environments; mainstream gender issues in teacher training and curricula monitoring processes, and eliminate gender-based discrimination and violence in education institutions to ensure that teaching and learning have an equal impact on girls and boys, women and men, and to eliminate gender stereotypes and advance gender equality. Special measures should be put in place to ensure the personal security of girls and women in education institutions and on the journey to and from them, in all situations but in particular during conflict and crises.

**21.** Given the significant challenges faced by persons with disabilities in accessing quality education opportunities and

the lack of data to support effective interventions, particular attention is needed to ensure access to and outcomes of quality education and learning for children, youth and adults with disabilities.

## **Focusing on quality and learning**

### **22.**

Increasing access must be accompanied by measures to improve the quality and relevance of education and learning. Education institutions and programmes should be adequately and equitably resourced, with safe, environment-friendly and easily accessible facilities; sufficient numbers of teachers and educators of quality using learner-centred, active and collaborative pedagogical approaches; and books, other learning materials, open educational resources and technology that are non-discriminatory, learning conducive, learner friendly, context specific, cost effective and available to all learners – children, youth and adults. Teacher policies and regulations should be in place to ensure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited and remunerated, well trained, professionally qualified, motivated, equitably and efficiently deployed across the whole education system, and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems. Systems and practices for assessment of quality learning that include evaluation of inputs, environments, processes and outcomes should be instituted or improved. Relevant learning outcomes must be well defined in cognitive and non-cognitive domains, and

continually assessed as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Quality education includes the development of those skills, values, attitudes and knowledge that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions and respond to local and global challenges. A focus on quality and innovation will also require strengthening science, technology, engineering and mathematics education (STEM).

## **Promoting lifelong learning**

### **23.**

All age groups, including adults, should have opportunities to learn and to continue learning. Beginning at birth, lifelong learning for all, in all settings and at all levels of education, should be embedded in education systems through institutional strategies and policies, adequately resourced programmes, and robust partnerships at the local, regional, national and international levels. This requires the provision of multiple and flexible learning pathways and entry points and re-entry points at all ages and all educational levels, strengthened links between formal and non-formal structures, and recognition, validation and accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal education. Lifelong learning also includes equitable and increased access to quality technical and vocational education and training and to higher education and research, with due attention to relevant quality assurance.

**24.**

Special measures and increased finance are needed to address the needs of adult learners and of the millions of children, youth and adults who remain illiterate. Moreover, all youth and adults, especially girls and women, should be provided with opportunities to achieve relevant and recognized functional literacy and numeracy proficiency levels and acquire skills for life and decent work. Importantly, the provision of adult learning, education and training opportunities must be ensured. Cross-sector approaches traversing education, science and technology, family, employment, industrial and economic development, migration and integration, citizenship, social welfare and public finance policies should be used.

### **Addressing education in emergency situations**

**25.**

Natural disasters, pandemics and conflicts, and the resulting internal and cross-border displacement, can leave entire generations traumatized, uneducated and unprepared to contribute to the social and economic recovery of their country or region. Crisis is a major barrier to access to education, stalling and in some cases reversing progress towards the EFA goals in the last decade. Education in emergency contexts is immediately protective, providing life-saving knowledge and skills and psychosocial support to those affected by crisis. Education also equips children, youth and adults for a sustainable future, with the skills to prevent disaster, conflict and disease.

**26.**

Countries must, therefore, institute measures to develop inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults in crisis contexts, including internally displaced persons and refugees. The principles of prevention, preparedness and response, and established international guidelines such as the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards, should guide planning and response. Education sector plans and policies should anticipate risks and include measures to respond to the educational needs of children and adults in crisis situations; they should also promote safety, resilience and social cohesion, with the aim of reducing the risks of conflict and natural disaster. The capacity of governments and civil society for disaster risk reduction, peace education, climate change adaptation and emergency preparedness and response should be strengthened at all levels to ensure that risk is mitigated and education maintained during all phases, from emergency response to recovery. Well-coordinated national, regional and global responses and systems are needed to prepare for and respond to emergencies and to ‘build back’ better, towards safer and more equitable education systems.



27.

Stakeholders should make every effort to ensure that education institutions are protected as zones of peace, free from violence, including school-related gender-based violence. Special measures should be put in place to protect women and girls in conflict zones. Schools and educational institutions – and the routes to and from them – must be free from attack, forced recruitment, kidnapping and sexual violence. Actions must be taken to end impunity for persons and armed groups that attack education institutions.

## Targets and indicative strategies

28.

The targets of SDG4-Education 2030 are specific and measurable, and contribute directly to achieving the overarching goal. They spell out a global level of ambition that should encourage countries to strive for accelerated progress. They are applicable to all countries, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. Country-led action will drive change, supported by effective multi-stakeholder partnerships and financing. Governments are expected to translate global targets into achievable national targets based on their education priorities, national development strategies and plans, the ways their education systems are organized, their institutional capacity and the availability of resources. This requires establishing appropriate intermediate benchmarks (e.g. for 2020 and 2025) through an inclusive process, with full

transparency and accountability, engaging all partners so there is country ownership and common understanding. Intermediate benchmarks can be set for each target to serve as quantitative goalposts for review of global progress vis-à-vis the longer-term goals. Such benchmarks should build on existing reporting mechanisms, as appropriate. Intermediate benchmarks are indispensable for addressing the accountability deficit associated with longer-term targets.

### Target 4.1:

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

**29.**

Despite significant progress since 2000, an estimated 59 million children of primary school age and 65 million adolescents of lower secondary school age – of whom girls remain the majority – were still out of school in 2013<sup>[xviii]</sup>. In addition, many of those in school are not acquiring basic knowledge and skills. At least 250 million primary-school-aged children, more than 50% of whom have spent at least four years in school, cannot read, write or count well enough to meet minimum learning standards<sup>[xix]</sup>.

**30.**

The provision of 12 years of free, publicly funded, inclusive, equitable, quality primary and secondary education – of which at least nine years<sup>6</sup> are compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes – should be ensured for all, without discrimination. The provision of free education includes the removal of cost-related barriers to primary and secondary education. Immediate, targeted and sustained action is required to provide meaningful education and training opportunities for the large population of out-of-school children and adolescents.

**31.**

Upon completion of the full cycle of primary and secondary education, all children should have established the building blocks of basic literacy and numeracy skills and achieved an array of relevant learning outcomes as defined by and measured against established curricula and official standards, including subject knowledge and cognitive and non-cognitive skills,<sup>7 [xx]</sup> that enable children to develop to their full potential.

<sup>6</sup> *The first nine years of formal education, i.e. the cumulative duration of ISCED 1 and 2: ISCED 1 is the primary level, typically lasting six years (with variation across countries between four and seven years), and ISCED 2 is lower secondary, typically lasting three years (again, with variation). (UIS. 2012. International Standard Classification of Education: ISCED 2011. [www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf](http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf).)*

<sup>7</sup> *Noting that there is debate around the term 'non-cognitive skills' and that other terms have been used including '21st century skills', 'soft skills', 'transversal skills' and 'transferable skills', this document uses 'non-cognitive skills', which may include critical and innovative thinking; interpersonal skills; intrapersonal skills; global citizenship skills; media and information literacy, etc.*

### 32.

Effective and relevant learning outcomes can only be achieved through the provision of quality inputs and instructional processes that enable all learners to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and competencies. Equally important is the equity dimension: policies should be established to address the uneven distribution of learning opportunities and outcomes across regions, households, ethnic or socio-economic groups and, most importantly, in diverse schools and classrooms. Addressing inequality and ensuring inclusion in provision and in quality education outcomes requires deepening the understanding of teaching and learning in a given learning environment. In multilingual contexts, where possible and taking into account differing national and subnational realities, capacities and policies, teaching and learning in the first or home language should be encouraged. Given the increased global social, environmental and economic interdependence, it is also recommended that at least one foreign language is offered as a subject.

### 33.

Moreover, there is a need for shared understanding and viable strategies to measure learning in ways that ensure that all children and youth, regardless of their circumstances, receive a quality and relevant education, including in human rights, arts and citizenship. Such understanding can best be cultivated through improved availability of

systematic, reliable and updated data, and information obtained through formative and/or continuous (classroom-based) assessments and summative assessments at different levels. Finally, quality also requires systems for managing teachers, governance, accountability mechanisms and strong public financial management.

### 34.

#### Indicative strategies:

- Put in place policies and legislation that guarantee 12 years of free, publicly funded, inclusive, equitable, quality primary and secondary education, of which at least nine years are compulsory for all children, leading to relevant learning outcomes. Countries should increase the number of years of free and compulsory education to meet global benchmarks, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.
- Define standards and review curricula to ensure quality and relevance to the context, including skills, competencies, values, culture, knowledge and gender responsiveness.
- Strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of institutions, school leadership and governance through greater involvement of communities, including young people and parents, in the management of schools.
- Allocate resources more equitably across socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged schools.

- In multilingual contexts foster bi- and multilingual education, starting with early learning in the first or home language of children.
- Provide alternative modes of learning and education for children and adolescents who are not in school at both the primary and secondary levels, and put in place equivalency and bridging programmes, recognized and accredited by the state, to ensure flexible learning in both formal and non-formal settings, including in emergency situations.
- Develop more robust, comprehensive assessment systems to assess learning outcomes at critical points, including during and at the end of primary and lower secondary education, reflecting both cognitive and non-cognitive skills. These should include assessment of foundational reading, writing and numeracy skills as well as non-cognitive skills. Design formative assessments as an integral part of the teaching and learning process at all levels, with a direct link to pedagogy.

**Target 4.2:**

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

**35.**

Beginning at birth, early childhood care and education (ECCE) lays the foundation for children’s long-term development, well-being and health. ECCE builds the competencies and skills that enable people to learn throughout life and to earn a livelihood. Investments in young children, particularly those from marginalized groups, yield the greatest long-term impact in terms of developmental and educational outcomes<sup>[xxi]</sup>. ECCE also enables early identification of disabilities and children at risk of disability, which allows parents, health care providers and educators to better plan for, develop and implement timely interventions to address the needs of children with disabilities, minimizing developmental delays, improving learning outcomes and inclusion, and preventing marginalization. Since 2000, pre-primary education enrolment has increased by almost two-thirds and the gross enrolment ratio is projected to increase from 35% in 2000 to 58% in 2015<sup>[xxii]</sup>. Despite this progress, young children in many parts of the world do not receive the care and education that would allow them to develop their full potential.

### 36.

ECCE includes adequate health and nutrition, stimulation within the home, community and school environments, protection from violence and attention to cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and physical development. It is in the first few years of life that the most significant brain development occurs, and that children begin to engage in intensive meaning-making of the self and surrounding world, building the very basics for being healthy, caring, competent and contributing citizens. ECCE lays the foundation for lifelong learning and supports children's well-being and progressive preparation for primary school entry, an important transition that is often accompanied by increasing expectations of what children should know and be able to do. 'Readiness for primary school' refers to the achievement of developmental milestones across a range of domains, including adequate health and nutritional status, and age-appropriate language, cognitive, social and emotional development. To achieve this, it is important that all children have access to quality holistic early childhood development, care and education for all ages. The provision of at least one year of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education is encouraged, to be delivered by well-trained educators. This should be put in place taking into account different national realities, capacities, levels of development, resources and infrastructure.

In addition, it is critical that children's development and learning be monitored from an early stage at individual and system level. It is equally important that schools are ready for children and able to provide the developmentally appropriate teaching and learning opportunities that yield the greatest benefits for young children.

### 37.

#### **Indicative strategies:**

- Put in place integrated and inclusive policies and legislation that guarantee the provision of at least one year of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education, paying special attention to reaching the poorest and most disadvantaged children through ECCE services. This includes assessment of ECCE policies and programmes in order to improve their quality.
- Put in place integrated multisector ECCE policies and strategies, supported by coordination among ministries responsible for nutrition, health, social and child protection, water/sanitation, justice and education, and secure adequate resources for implementation.
- Devise clear policies, strategies and action plans for the professionalization of ECCE personnel by enhancing and monitoring their ongoing professional development, status and working conditions.

- Design and implement inclusive, accessible and integrated programmes, services and infrastructure of quality for early childhood, covering health, nutrition, protection and education needs, especially for children with disabilities, and support families as children’s first caregivers.

**Note:** While Targets 4.3 and 4.4 are discussed separately, it should be noted that they are closely related.

**Target 4.3:**

By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

**38.** Opportunities for access to higher levels of education are often insufficient, particularly in least developed countries, resulting in a knowledge gap with serious consequences for social and economic development. Therefore, it is imperative

to reduce barriers to skills development and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), starting from the secondary level, as well as to tertiary education, including university, and to provide lifelong learning opportunities for youth and adults.

**39.** TVET is provided at different levels of education. In 2013, its share of upper secondary education enrolment stood at around 23%. A number of countries have taken steps to expand vocational education to the tertiary education level (ISCED level 5).

**40.** All forms of tertiary education<sup>8</sup> have expanded rapidly, with total enrolment rising from 100 million in 2000 to 199 million in 2013<sup>[xxiii]</sup>. Yet wide disparity in access to tertiary education, in particular at university level, with regard to gender, to social, regional and ethnic background, and to age and disability remain. Disadvantages for females occur particularly in low-income countries, and for males in high-income countries.

<sup>8</sup> *Tertiary education builds on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. Tertiary education includes what is commonly understood as academic education but also includes advanced vocational or professional education. It comprises ISCED levels 5 (short-cycle tertiary education), 6 (bachelor’s degree or equivalent), 7 (master’s degree or equivalent) and 8 (doctorate or equivalent). Tertiary level programme content is more complex and advanced than at lower levels. (UIS. 2012. International Standard Classification of Education: ISCED 2011. [www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf](http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf))*

**41.**

In addition to imparting job skills, tertiary education and universities play a vital role in stimulating critical and creative thinking and generating and disseminating knowledge for social, cultural, ecological and economic development. Tertiary education and universities are critical for the education of future scientists, experts and leaders. Through their research function, they play a fundamental role in creating knowledge and underpin the development of analytical and creative capacities that enable solutions to be found for local and global problems in all fields of sustainable development.

**42.**

Another trend is the increasing mobility of staff and learners, and the flow of students moving abroad to enhance academic credentials. As a consequence, the comparability, recognition and quality assurance of qualifications has become a growing area of concern, in particular in countries where administrative systems are weak. At the same time, mobility in tertiary education is an asset and an opportunity and should be enhanced to develop students' competencies and global competitiveness.

**43.**

A well-established, properly regulated tertiary education system supported by technology, open educational resources and distance education can increase access, equity, quality and relevance, and can narrow the gap between what is taught at tertiary education institutions,

including universities, and what economies and societies demand. The provision of tertiary education should be made progressively free, in line with existing international agreements.

**44.**

TVET and tertiary education, including universities as well as adult learning, education and training, are important elements of lifelong learning. Promoting lifelong learning requires a sector-wide approach that encompasses formal, non-formal and informal learning for people of all ages, and specifically adult learning, education and training opportunities. It is necessary to provide opportunities for equitable access to university for older adults, paying particular attention to vulnerable groups.

**45.**

### **Indicative strategies:**

- Develop cross-sector policies for and between vocational skills development, TVET and tertiary education and strengthen links between science and policy development to keep pace with changing contexts and remain relevant; develop effective partnerships, in particular between the public and private sectors, and include employers and unions in their implementation.
- Ensure quality assurance, comparability and recognition of tertiary education qualifications and facilitate credit transfers between recognized tertiary education institutions.

- Develop policies and programmes for the provision of quality distance learning in tertiary education, with appropriate financing and use of technology, including the Internet, massive open online courses and other modalities that meet accepted quality standards to improve access.
- Develop policies and programmes that reinforce the research function in tertiary and university education through the early uptake of the STEM fields, particularly by girls and women.
- Strengthen international cooperation in developing cross-border tertiary and university education and research programmes, including within the framework of global and regional conventions on the recognition of higher education qualifications, to support increased access, better quality assurance and capacity development.
- Promote TVET, tertiary education and university as well as adult learning, education and training opportunities for young people and adults of all ages and socio-cultural background so as to enable them to continue to improve and adapt their skills, with particular attention to gender equality including the elimination of gender-based barriers, and to vulnerable groups such as those with disabilities.

- Tertiary institutions, including universities should support and foster the development of policies for and provision of equitable quality lifelong learning opportunities.

**Target 4.4:**

By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship

**46.**

Against a background of rapidly changing labour markets, growing unemployment particularly among youth, ageing labour forces in some countries, migration, and technological advancements, all countries are facing the need to develop people's knowledge, skills and competencies for decent work, entrepreneurship and life<sup>[xxiv]</sup>. In many countries, education and training policies are also expected to address rapidly changing needs for youth and adults to improve their skills and learn new ones. Consequently, it is imperative to increase and diversify learning opportunities, using a wide range of education and training modalities, so that all youth and adults, especially girls and women, can acquire relevant knowledge, skills and competencies for decent work and life.



#### 47.

Equitable access to TVET needs to be expanded while quality is ensured. Appropriate priorities and strategies need to be developed to better link TVET with the world of work, in both the formal and informal labour sectors, to improve its status, to build learning pathways between different education streams and to facilitate the transition between school and work. TVET systems must recognize and value skills acquired through experience or in non-formal and informal settings, including in the workplace and through the Internet.

#### 48.

A narrow focus on work-specific skills reduces graduates' abilities to adapt to the fast-changing demands of the labour market. Therefore, beyond mastering work-specific skills, emphasis must be placed on developing high-level cognitive and non-cognitive/transferable skills<sup>[xxvi]</sup>, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, communication skills and conflict resolution, which can be used across a range of occupational fields. Moreover, learners should be provided with opportunities to update their skills continuously through lifelong learning.

#### 49.

It is critical to evaluate impacts and outcomes of TVET education policies and programmes, and to collect data on the transition from learning to the world of work and on the employability of graduates, paying attention to disparity.

#### 50.

### Indicative strategies:

- Gather and use evidence about changing skills demand to guide skills development, reduce disparity and respond to changing labour market and societal needs and contexts, as well as to the needs of the 'informal economy' and rural development.
- Engage social partners in designing and delivering education and training programmes that are evidence-based and holistic. Ensure that TVET curricula and training programmes are of high quality and include both work-related skills and non-cognitive/transferable skills, including entrepreneurial, basic and ICT skills, and that TVET institutions' leaders and teaching staff, including trainers and companies, are qualified/certified.
- Promote the development of different forms of work-based and classroom-based training and learning where appropriate.
- Ensure transparent and efficient TVET quality assurance systems and develop qualifications frameworks.
- Promote collaboration on enhancing transparency and cross-border recognition of TVET qualifications to raise the quality of TVET programmes and enable workers' and learners' mobility, and to ensure that TVET programmes keep pace with the changing labour market demands.

- Promote flexible learning pathways in both formal and non-formal settings; enable learners to accumulate and transfer credits for levels of achievement; recognize, validate and accredit prior learning; and establish appropriate bridging programmes and career guidance and counselling services.

**Target 4.5:**

By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

**51.** Despite overall progress in enrolling more girls and boys in primary school, insufficient attention has been paid to eliminating inequality in education at all levels. For example, the probability that children from the poorest 20% of households in low and middle income countries would not complete primary school was more than five times as high as that of children from the richest 20% in circa 2009<sup>[xxvii]</sup>. In addition, poverty tends to exacerbate other factors of exclusion, for example by widening gender gaps.

**52.** Attention to poverty must remain a priority, as poverty is still the single greatest barrier to inclusion at all levels and in all regions of the world. Investment in education can decrease income disparity and many education programmes have found innovative ways to assist families and learners in overcoming financial obstacles to education. Such approaches must be invested in and taken to scale.

**53.** To achieve inclusive education, policies should aim to transform education systems so they can better respond to learners' diversity and needs. This is key in fulfilling the right to education with equality, and it is related not only to access, but also to participation and achievement of all students, with special attention to those who are excluded, vulnerable or at risk of being marginalized as detailed in paragraph 5.

**54.** Gender inequality is of particular concern. Only 69% of countries were projected to achieve gender parity in access at the primary level – enrolling equal numbers of girls and boys – by 2015 and 48% at the secondary level<sup>[xxviii]</sup>. Moreover, while gender parity is useful as a measurement of progress, more effort also is needed to ensure gender equality. Equality is a more ambitious goal: it means that all girls and boys, all women and men, have equal opportunity to enjoy education of high quality, achieve at equal levels and enjoy equal benefits from education. Adolescent girls and young women,

who may be subject to gender-based violence, child marriage, early pregnancy and a heavy load of household chores, as well as those living in poor and remote rural areas, require special attention. There are also contexts in which boys are disadvantaged; for example, in some regions boys' enrolment in secondary and higher education is lagging behind that of girls. Gender inequality in education often mirrors prevailing gender norms and discrimination in the broader society, so policies aimed at overcoming such inequality are more effective when they are part of an overall package that also promotes health, justice, good governance and freedom from child labour. The contexts and root causes of marginalization, discrimination and exclusion are wide-ranging. Vulnerable groups that require particular attention and targeted strategies include persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities and the poor.

**55.** Capacity-building efforts and investment will be required to guarantee gender mainstreaming across education systems and programmes in their implementation, monitoring, evaluation and follow-up. Special measures should be put in place to ensure the personal security of girls and women in and on the journey to and from education institutions and to eliminate gender-based violence in schools with policies against all forms of gender-based and sexual violence and harassment.

**56.** Many children's education opportunities are shattered by conflict, epidemics and natural disaster. Around 21 million of the world's out-of-school children, or 36%, lived in conflict-affected areas in 2012, up from 30% in 2000<sup>[xxviii]</sup>. It is crucial to maintain education during emergency, conflict, post-conflict and post-disaster situations, and to address the educational needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. In addition to the measures suggested for ensuring that equity, inclusion and gender equality are embedded in all education targets, the following strategies are proposed:

**57.**  
**Indicative strategies:**

- Ensure that education policies and sector plans and their budgeting guarantee the principles of non-discrimination and equality in and through education, and develop and implement targeted urgent strategies for vulnerable and excluded groups. Develop indicators to measure progress towards equality.
- Ensure that education policies, sector plans and budget planning include risk assessment, preparedness and response to emergency situations for education, and initiatives that respond to the education needs of children, youth and adults affected by disaster, conflict, displacement and epidemics, including IDPs and refugees. Support sub-regional and regional mechanisms and strategies that meet the educational needs of IDPs and refugees.

- Identify, monitor and improve girls' and women's access to quality education, as well as their level of participation, achievement and completion. In contexts where boys are disadvantaged, make them the focus of targeted action.
  - Identify the barriers that keep vulnerable children and youth out of quality education programmes and take affirmative actions to eliminate those barriers.
  - Support a comprehensive approach to making schools resilient to disaster impacts of all sizes. This includes safer school facilities, school disaster management, and risk reduction and resilience education.
  - Provide distance learning, ICT training, access to appropriate technology and necessary infrastructure to facilitate a learning environment at home and in conflict zones and remote areas, particularly for girls, women, vulnerable boys and youth, and other marginalized groups.
  - Ensure government review of education sector plans, budgets, curricula and textbooks<sup>[xxix]</sup>, along with teacher training and supervision, so that they are free of gender stereotypes and promote equality, non-discrimination and human rights and foster intercultural education.
- Ensure use of multiple sources of data and information, including from Education Management Information Systems and relevant school and household surveys, to facilitate monitoring of social exclusion in education. The World Inequality Database on Education is an example of how such information could be made available to decision-makers to take action.<sup>9</sup>
  - Collect better-quality data on children with disabilities, cataloguing different disabilities and impairments and assessing their level of severity. Indicators have to be developed and data should be used to establish an evidence base to inform programming and policy.

**Target 4.6:**

By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

**58.**

Literacy<sup>10</sup> is part of the right to education and a public good. It is at the core of basic education and an indispensable foundation for independent learning<sup>[xxx]</sup>. The benefits of literacy, in particular for women, are well documented. They include greater participation in the labour market, delayed marriage, and improved child and family health and nutrition; these, in turn, help reduce poverty and expand life opportunities. Numeracy is a key skill: manipulating numbers, accounts,

measurements, ratios and quantities is a basic to life required everywhere<sup>[xxxii]</sup>. But improving youth and adult literacy and numeracy remains a global challenge. Worldwide, in 2013, 757 million adults (aged 15 and over), of whom two-thirds are women, were unable to read and write<sup>[xxxiii]</sup>. Low literacy skills are a concern globally, including in middle and high income countries. About 20% of adults in Europe lack the literacy skills they need to fully participate in society<sup>[xxxiii]</sup>. Adults with poor literacy and numeracy skills face multiple sources of disadvantage. They are more likely to be unemployed, and those who are employed receive lower wages. They find it more difficult to make use of opportunities in society and to exercise their rights. They are also more likely to be in poor health.

### 59.

By 2030, all young people and adults across the world should have achieved relevant and recognized proficiency levels in functional literacy and numeracy skills<sup>11</sup>

that are equivalent to levels achieved at successful completion of basic education. The principles, strategies and actions for this target are underpinned by a contemporary understanding of literacy not as a simple dichotomy of 'literate' versus 'illiterate', but as a continuum of proficiency levels. The required levels, and how people apply reading and writing skills, depend on specific contexts. Particular attention should be paid to the role of learners' first language in becoming literate and in learning.

Literacy programmes and methodologies should respond to the needs and contexts of learners, including through the provision of context-related bilingual and intercultural literacy programmes within the framework of lifelong learning. Numeracy provision, an area that requires strengthening, should be part of literacy programmes. ICT, particularly mobile technology, holds great promise for accelerating progress towards this target.

9 *The database can be found at [www.education-inequalities.org](http://www.education-inequalities.org)*

10 *Literacy is defined as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with diverse contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, develop their knowledge and potential and participate fully in community and society. (UNESCO. 2005. *Aspects of Literacy Assessment: Topics and issues from the UNESCO Expert Meeting, 10–12 June 2003*. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001401/140125eo.pdf>)*

11 *A person is defined as 'functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his [or her] group and community and also for enabling him [or her] to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his [or her] own and the community's development'. (UNESCO. 2006. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006 – Literacy for Life*, p. 154 [http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/chapt6\\_eng.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/chapt6_eng.pdf).)*

60.

### Indicative strategies:

- Establish a sector-wide and multisector approach for formulating literacy policy and plans, as well as for budgeting, by strengthening collaboration and coordination among relevant ministries, including those dealing with education, health, social welfare, labour, industry and agriculture, as well as with civil society, the private sector and bilateral and multilateral partners, supporting decentralized provision in practice.
- Ensure that literacy and numeracy programmes are of high quality according to national evaluation mechanisms, tailored to learners' needs and based on their previous knowledge and experience. This requires paying close attention to culture, language, social and political relationships and economic activity, with particular attention to girls and women and vulnerable groups, and linking and integrating such programmes with skills development for decent work and livelihood as essential elements of lifelong learning.
- Scale up effective adult literacy and skills programmes involving civil society as partners, building on their rich experience and good practice.
- Promote the use of ICT, particularly mobile technology, for literacy and numeracy programmes.

- Develop a literacy assessment framework and tools to evaluate proficiency levels based on learning outcomes. This will require defining proficiency across a range of contexts, including skills at work and in everyday life.
- Establish a system to collect, analyse and share relevant and timely data on literacy levels and literacy and numeracy needs, disaggregated by gender and other indicators of marginalization.

#### Target 4.7:

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

**61.**

In a globalized world with unresolved social, political, economic and environmental challenges, education that helps build peaceful and sustainable societies is essential. Education systems seldom fully integrate such transformative approaches, however. It is vital therefore to give a central place in SDG4-Education 2030 to strengthening education's contribution to the fulfilment of human rights, peace and responsible citizenship from local to global levels, gender equality, sustainable development and health.

**62.**

The content of such education must be relevant, with a focus on both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of learning. The knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required by citizens to lead productive lives, make informed decisions and assume active roles locally and globally in facing and resolving global challenges can be acquired through education for sustainable development (ESD)<sup>12</sup> and global citizenship education (GCED),<sup>13</sup> which includes peace and human rights education as well as intercultural education and education for international understanding. While considerable progress has been made in recent years, only 50% of UNESCO's Member States indicate that they have, for example, integrated ESD into relevant policies<sup>[xxxiv]</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> *ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning, and is an integral part of quality education. ESD is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society. (UNESCO. 2014. Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230514e.pdf>.)*

<sup>13</sup> *GCED aims to equip learners with the following core competencies: a) A deep knowledge of global issues and universal values such as justice, equality, dignity and respect; b) cognitive skills to think critically, systemically and creatively, including adopting a multi-perspective approach that recognizes different dimension, perspectives and angles of issues; c) non-cognitive skills including social skills such as empathy and conflict resolution, and communicative skills and aptitudes for networking and interacting with people of different backgrounds, origins, cultures and perspectives; and d) behavioural capacities to act collaboratively and responsibly, and to strive for collective good. (UNESCO. 2013. Outcome document of the Technical Consultation on Global Citizenship Education: Global Citizenship Education – An Emerging Perspective. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002241/224115E.pdf>.)*

63.

### Indicative strategies:

- Develop policies and programmes to promote ESD and GCED and bring them into the mainstream of formal, non-formal and informal education through system-wide interventions, teacher training, curricular reform and pedagogical support. This includes implementing the Global Action Programme on ESD<sup>14</sup> and addressing themes such as human rights, gender equality, health, comprehensive sexuality education, climate change, sustainable livelihoods and responsible and engaged citizenship, based on national experiences and capabilities.
- Provide learners of both sexes and of all ages with opportunities to acquire, throughout life, the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are needed to build peaceful, healthy and sustainable societies.
- Develop and disseminate good practices on ESD and GCED within and between countries to better implement education programmes and enhance international cooperation and understanding.
- Promote participatory programmes for learners and educators related to ESD and GCED to engage in their communities and society.
- Ensure that education acknowledges the key role that culture plays in achieving sustainability, taking into account local conditions and culture as well as building awareness of cultural expressions and heritage, and their diversity, while emphasizing the importance of respect for human rights.
- Support the development of more robust assessment systems for ESD and GCED to assess cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural learning outcomes, using existing and proven tools when possible, identifying needs for the development of new tools and including a broad range of countries and regions, taking into account the work of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and other partners.
- Promote an interdisciplinary, and if necessary, multi-stakeholder approach to ensure ESD and GCED at all levels and in all forms of education, including through human rights education and training, promoting a culture of peace and non-violence.

<sup>14</sup> Endorsed by the UNESCO General Conference (37 C/Resolution 12) and acknowledged by the UN General Assembly (A/RES/69/211) as follow-up to the UN Decade of ESD.



# Means of implementation

## Target 4.a:

Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

### 64.

This target addresses the need for adequate physical infrastructure and safe, inclusive environments that nurture learning for all, regardless of background or disability status.<sup>15</sup> A quality learning environment is essential to support all learners, teachers and other education personnel. Every learning environment should be accessible to all and have adequate resources and infrastructure to ensure reasonable class sizes and provide sanitation facilities. Although the average percentage of primary schools with adequate sanitation coverage rose from 59% in 2008 to 68% in 2012 in 126 developing countries, only one in two schools met this standard in 52 of least developed and other low income countries<sup>[xxxv]</sup>.

### 65.

Ensuring that girls and women feel safe in their learning environments is key to continuing their education<sup>[xxxvi]</sup>. The onset of puberty makes girls more vulnerable to sexual violence, harassment, coercion and abuse. School-related gender-based violence is a significant barrier to girls' education. Many children are constantly exposed to violence in schools: an estimated 246 million girls and boys are harassed and abused in and around school every year<sup>[xxxvii]</sup>. In two-thirds of the countries in which there is gender disparity in lower secondary education, it is at the expense of girls<sup>[xxxviii]</sup>. Absence of private toilets, lack of access to sanitary pads and hygiene-related stigma when girls begin menstruating can harm their education, increasing their absenteeism rates and lowering their educational performance. Similarly, lack of attention to the rights and needs of children, youth and adults with disabilities severely limits their participation in education.

<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that conceptions of safe and inclusive learning environments have been developed through the INEE Minimum Standards and UNICEF's Child-Friendly School Checklist.

66.

### Indicative strategies:

- Institute comprehensive, multifaceted and cohesive policies that are gender- and disability-sensitive, and promote norms and systems that ensure schools are safe and free from violence.
- Establish policies and strategies to protect learners, teachers and staff from violence within the framework of violence-free schools, and, in areas of armed conflict, commit to and comply with international humanitarian law, which protects schools as civilian objects, and pursue accountability for violation thereof, in implementing SDG4-Education 2030.
- Ensure that every institution is secure and has water, electricity, gender-segregated toilets that work and are accessible, adequate and safe classrooms, and appropriate learning materials and technology.
- Ensure that resources are allocated equitably between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged schools and learning centres.
- Make learning spaces and environments for non-formal and adult learning and education widely available, including networks of community learning centres and spaces and provision for access to ICT resources as essential elements of lifelong learning.

### Target 4.b:

By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

67.

Scholarship programmes can play a vital role in providing opportunities for young people and adults who would otherwise not be able to afford to continue their education. They also offer an important contribution to the internationalization of tertiary education and research systems, particularly in least developed countries. They can help increase access to global knowledge and build capacity to transfer and adapt knowledge and technology to local conditions. In 2010 – 2011, an average of US\$3.2 billion in aid was allocated annually to scholarships and imputed student costs, equivalent to a quarter of total aid to education<sup>[xxxix]</sup>. This expenditure may be vital to strengthen

the skills of the workforce in low income countries, but most of it benefits upper middle income countries. For example, the total funding in the form of scholarships and imputed student costs received annually by just five middle income countries was equivalent to the total amount of direct aid to basic education for all 36 low income countries in 2010 – 2011. Where developed countries offer scholarships to students from developing countries, these should be structured to build the capability of the developing country. While the importance of scholarships is recognized, donor countries are encouraged to increase other forms of support to education.

#### 68.

In line with the SDG4-Education 2030 focus on equity, inclusion and quality, scholarships should be transparently targeted at young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Often scholarships are targeted at particular areas, such as science, technology, engineering, ICT, teacher education and vocational programmes. Particular attention should be given to providing girls and women with scholarships to study in the STEM fields.

#### 69.

#### **Indicative strategies:**

- Ensure that mechanisms, programmes and policies for international scholarship programmes reflect national development contexts, priorities and plans, focusing on strengthening human resources in the areas where they are most needed.
- Target all scholarship opportunities transparently at young women and men from disadvantaged backgrounds. Ensure that scholarship opportunities for disadvantaged youth are transparently promoted, so as to allow young people to make informed choices, and designed to protect their legal status and rights.
- Develop joint programmes between universities in the home country and the recipient country to motivate students to return home, as well as other mechanisms that prevent ‘brain drain’ – the emigration of highly trained people – and promote ‘brain gain’.
- Develop scholarships in the home country to increase numbers and types of beneficiaries in the recipient country as well as the local labour market.

#### **Target 4.c:**

By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

**70.**

Teachers are the key to achieving all of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda, so this target is critical. It requires urgent attention, with a more immediate deadline, because the equity gap in education is exacerbated by the shortage and uneven distribution of professionally trained teachers, especially in disadvantaged areas. As teachers are a fundamental condition for guaranteeing quality education, teachers and educators should be empowered, adequately recruited and remunerated, motivated, professionally qualified, and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems.

**71.**

By 2030, 3.2 million more teachers are required to achieve universal primary education<sup>[xi]</sup>, and 5.1 million more will be needed to achieve universal lower secondary education<sup>[xii]</sup>. Plus, teachers leaving the profession between 2015 and 2030 will need to be replaced. In addition, in one-third of the countries with data, less than 75% of primary school teachers are trained to national standards<sup>[xiii]</sup>. Past decisions to lower standards during shortages have contributed to a growing trend of classrooms being staffed by unprepared non-professionals. The absence and/or inadequacy of continuous professional development and support for teachers and national standards for the teaching profession are key contributing

factors to the low quality of learning outcomes. Successful education systems that ensure quality and equity have focused on a professional development continuum that supports teachers' own learning and improvement throughout their careers.

**72.**

Teachers also have socio-economic and political rights, including the right to seek decent working conditions and adequate remuneration. Governments should make teaching an attractive, first-choice profession with continuing training and development by improving teachers' professional status, working conditions and support, and should strengthen policy dialogue mechanisms with teacher organizations.

**73.**

Finally, teachers make a major contribution to the improvement of student learning outcomes, with the support of school leaders, government authorities and communities. There is strong evidence that teachers are open to change, and keen to learn and develop throughout their careers. At the same time, they need the time and space to take more initiative to work with colleagues and school leaders and to take advantage of opportunities for professional development.

74.

### Indicative strategies:

- Develop gender-sensitive strategies to attract the best and most motivated candidates to teaching, and ensure that they are deployed where they are needed most. This includes policy and legislative measures to make the teaching profession attractive to current and potential staff by improving working conditions, guaranteeing social security benefits and ensuring that the salaries of teachers and other education personnel are at least comparable to those paid in other professions requiring similar or equivalent qualifications.
- Review, analyse and improve the quality of teacher training (pre-service and in-service) and provide all teachers with quality pre-service education and continuous professional development and support.
- Develop a qualifications framework for teachers, teacher trainers, teacher supervisors and inspectors.
- Develop and implement inclusive, equitable and gender-sensitive teacher management policies that cover recruitment, training, deployment, remuneration, career development and working conditions, and improve the status of teachers and educators and the quality of teaching.
- Provide teachers with adequate technological skills to manage ICT and social networks, as well as with media literacy and source criticism skills, and provide training on how to address challenges of pupils with special education needs.
- Develop and implement effective feedback systems to support good teaching and teachers' professional development, ensuring that training has a positive impact on teachers' work.
- Strengthen school leadership to improve teaching and learning.
- Set up or strengthen mechanisms for institutionalized social dialogue with teachers and their representative organizations, ensuring their full participation in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education policy.

## Indicators

75.

Four levels of indicators are proposed:

- **global:** a small set of globally comparable indicators for all SDGs, including SDG 4 on education, developed through a consultative process led by the United Nations Statistical Commission to monitor progress towards the associated targets;
- **thematic:** a broader set of globally comparable indicators proposed by the education community to track the education targets more comprehensively across countries; they will include the global indicators;
- **regional:** additional indicators that may be developed to take account of specific regional contexts and relevant policy priorities for concepts that are less amenable to global comparison;
- **national:** indicators selected or developed by countries to take account of their national contexts and correspond to their education systems, plans and policy agendas.

76.

A set of thematic indicators developed by the Technical Advisory Group following broad public consultation can be found in Annex II. They are based on five criteria: relevance, alignment with the concepts in the target, feasibility for regular (but not necessarily annual) data collection across countries, ease of communication to a global audience, and interpretability. For some targets, robust indicators are already available for a large number of countries. For others, significant efforts are still needed to develop indicator methodologies and/or to build countries' capacity to collect and use data. In particular, greater national and global efforts are needed to bridge gaps in measuring equity and inclusion (for which data disaggregation by population and vulnerable groups is crucial), as well as quality and learning outcomes. These indicators will be tracked according to their relevance based on country context, capacity and data availability.

# III. Implementation Modalities

77.

Implementing SDG4-Education 2030 will require national, regional and global mechanisms for governance, accountability, coordination, monitoring, follow-up and review, reporting and evaluation. It will also require enabling strategies, including partnerships and financing. **The central aim of the SDG4-Education 2030 implementation mechanisms is to support country-led action.** To be most effective, these mechanisms will be inclusive, participatory and transparent. They will build on existing mechanisms to the extent possible.

## Governance, accountability and partnerships

78.

The heart of SDG4-Education 2030 lies at the national level. **Governments** have the primary responsibility to deliver on the right to education, and a central role as custodians of efficient, equitable and effective management and financing of public education. They should sustain political leadership on education and guide the process of contextualizing and implementing the SDG4-Education 2030 goal and targets, based on national experiences and priorities, while ensuring a transparent and inclusive process with other key partners. The role of the state is crucial in regulating standards, improving

quality and reducing disparity between regions, communities and schools. Governments should, where appropriate, integrate education planning into poverty reduction, sustainable development strategies and humanitarian response, while ensuring that policies are aligned with governments' legal obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to education.

79.

Over the 15 years to 2030, democratization of decision-making processes is expected to increase, with the voices and priorities of citizens reflected in the development

and implementation of education policies at all levels. Planning, implementation and monitoring can benefit from the support of strong, multifaceted partnerships that bring together all key actors, whose potential contributions and actions are spelled out below. Partnerships at all levels must be guided by the principles of open, inclusive and participatory policy dialogue, along with mutual accountability, transparency and synergy. Participation must begin with the involvement of families and communities to boost transparency and to guarantee good governance in the education administration. Increased responsibility at the school level could strengthen efficiency in the delivery of services.

**80.**

**Civil society organizations** (CSOs), including representative, broad-based coalitions and networks, play essential roles. They need to be engaged and involved at all stages, from planning through to monitoring and evaluation, with their participation institutionalized and guaranteed. CSOs can:

- promote social mobilization and raise public awareness, enabling the voices of citizens (particularly those who face discrimination) to be heard in policy development;
- develop innovative and complementary approaches that help advance the right to education, especially for the most excluded groups;

- document and share evidence from practice, from citizens' assessments and from research to inform structured policy dialogue, holding governments accountable for delivery, tracking progress, undertaking evidence-based advocacy, scrutinizing spending and ensuring transparency in education governance and budgeting.

**81.**

**Teachers and educators**, and their organizations, are crucial partners in their own right and should be engaged at all stages of policy-making, planning, implementation and monitoring. Teachers and education support personnel can:

- use their professionalism and commitment to ensure that students learn;
- bring classroom realities to the forefront of policy dialogue, policy-making and planning and provide a bridge between policy and practice, contributing their experiences as practitioners and their collective insights and expertise to overall policies and strategies;
- promote inclusion, quality and equity, and improve curricula and pedagogy.



82.

**The private sector, philanthropic organizations and foundations** can play an important role, using their experience, innovative approaches, business expertise and financial resources to strengthen public education. They can contribute to education and development through multi-stakeholder partnerships, investment and contributions that are transparent, aligned with local and national priorities, respect education as a human right and do not increase inequality. In addition, they can:

- mobilize additional resources for public education, including by paying fair taxes, and focus those resources on priority areas;
- help education and skills-training planners understand labour market trends and skills needs, thereby facilitating the school-to-work transition, and contribute innovative approaches to addressing education challenges;
- increase inclusive education opportunities by providing additional services and activities to reach the most marginalized within the framework of state-regulated standards and norms.

83.

The **research community** has an important contribution to make in education development in general and policy dialogue in particular. It can:

- develop policy-relevant research, including action research, to facilitate the achievement of the targets, and make

knowledge on education available in a usable form for policy-makers;

- develop local and national sustainable capacity for qualitative and quantitative research;
- help chart progress, propose options or solutions and identify best practices that are innovative, scalable and transferable.

84.

**Youth**, students and their organizations are essential partners with specific and unique expertise as one important target group of SDG4-Education 2030. They are therefore best placed to determine their requirements for improved learning as active, responsible learners. Efforts need to be made to ensure their active representation and participation. They can:

- encourage governments and other partners to develop education programmes for young people in consultation with young people, notably with vulnerable and marginalized youth, in order to better respond to their needs and aspirations;
- help shape policies that foster relevant and responsive education systems and enable a smooth transition from education and training to decent work and adult life;
- participate in intergenerational dialogue, making the case for recognition of children, adolescents and youth, and especially girls and young women, as rights bearers and legitimate interlocutors in education policy and practice at all levels.

**85.**

The success of SDG4-Education 2030 will depend on collective effort. Legal and policy frameworks that promote accountability and transparency as well as participatory governance and coordinated partnerships at all levels and across sectors, upholding the right to participation of all stakeholders, will need to be established or further developed. It is imperative for all partners to embrace the common vision of SDG4-Education 2030 outlined in this Framework for Action and to be held accountable: multilateral organizations should be accountable to their Member States, education ministries and other related ministries to citizens, donors to national governments and citizens, and schools and teachers to the education community and, more broadly, to citizens.

## Effective coordination

**86.**

While driven by education ministries, implementation of the education SDG and the education-related targets in the other SDGs at the country level requires a ‘whole of government’ approach to education. In light of the role of education in building knowledge-based societies and stemming increasing inequality, as well as the renewed emphasis on lifelong learning in the new education agenda, there is need for stronger leadership, coordination and synergy within governments as regards education development and its integration into wider socio-economic development frameworks. Country-led action will drive change; however, the ambitious education goal cannot be achieved by governments alone. They will need the support of all stakeholders, including non-state actors. **Governments** should establish appropriate mechanisms, and strengthen existing ones, to be the main source of information for the regional and global monitoring process, with UN support. They

will also establish procedures to drive, coordinate and stimulate interventions for education development, at various levels and across sectors, by genuinely involving all stakeholders in the planning, implementation and monitoring of education policies and strategies. In addition, in order to ensure country ownership, countries will coordinate any external assistance provided by the convening agencies and other multilateral and bilateral agencies.

**87.**

At the same time, regional and sub-regional collective efforts are critical to the successful adaptation and implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 at the national and regional levels. Regional and sub-regional cooperation will take place within broader regional processes and mechanisms for coordinating and monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These should build on existing partnerships, frameworks

and effective and efficient mechanisms, as well as new ones forged to ensure strong regional collaboration, cooperation, coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the education agenda. This process may include establishment of regional benchmarks where relevant and appropriate. Current and planned regional strategies and frameworks include the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025; the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization education strategy; the European Union's Europe 2020 strategy; the Council of Europe's framework on competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue; the Regional Education Project for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean; and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Community Vision 2025. Specific roles and activities of regional mechanisms could be carved out in 2016, drawing on the outcomes of the regional ministerial conferences on education post-2015.

**88.** Cooperation between the SDG4-Education 2030 co-convenors (**UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, the World Bank and ILO**), regional and intergovernmental organizations, and regional and sub-regional communities will help in tackling common challenges coherently. UNESCO, through its regional bureaux and together with the SDG4-Education 2030 co-convenors, will further promote sharing of knowledge, effective policies and practices across the regions.

The cross-regional Platform for Human Rights Education and Training will also contribute to this endeavour.

**89.** Inclusive and efficient regional coordination will focus on such aspects as data collection and monitoring, including peer reviews among countries; mutual learning and exchange of good practices; policy-making; dialogue and partnerships with all relevant partners; formal meetings and high-level events; regional communication strategies; advocacy and resource mobilization; capacity building; and implementation of joint projects.

**90.** While governments have the primary responsibility for successful implementation, follow-up and review of the SDG agenda, the **United Nations** has a special responsibility to coordinate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at global level, under the close supervision and guidance of its Member States. A United Nations that is 'fit for purpose' to deliver on the new development agenda will need to promote cooperation and collaboration among its agencies so as to respond coherently in linking the normative, standard-setting and operational dimensions of its work.

**91.** The SDG4-Education 2030 co-convenors, in particular UNESCO, as well as other partners, including GPE as a multi-stakeholder financing platform, will individually and collectively support countries in implementing SDG4-

Education 2030 by providing technical advice, national and regional capacity development and financial support, as well as support for monitoring, based on their respective mandates and comparative advantages, in complementary ways.

**92.**

**UNESCO**, as the specialized UN agency for education, will continue in its mandated role to lead and coordinate the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda, in particular by:

- undertaking advocacy to sustain political commitment;
- undertaking capacity development;
- facilitating policy dialogue, knowledge-sharing and standard-setting and providing policy advice;
- promoting South-South and triangular cooperation;
- monitoring progress towards the education targets, in particular through the work of the UIS and Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report;
- convening global, regional and national stakeholders to guide implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda;
- functioning as a focal point for education within the overall 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development coordination structure.

All of UNESCO, including its field offices, institutes, networks and relevant platforms, will work towards implementation of SDG4-Education 2030.

**93.**

The global coordination mechanism of SDG4-Education 2030, working within the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development architecture, is the totality of the relevant structures and processes, including the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SDG-Education 2030 SC), the Global Education Meetings (GEMs), regional meetings and the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All (CCNGO). The coordination mechanism will be reviewed through the GEMs and adapted as necessary.

**94.**

To ensure strong global coordination, UNESCO will convene a multi-stakeholder **SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SDG-Education 2030 SC)**, working within the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development architecture. The SDG-Education 2030 SC will support Member States and partners in achieving SDG4-Education 2030. To this end, 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. The SDG-Education 2030 SC will meet at least once a year.

The SDG-Education 2030 SC will be made up of:

- Member States, forming the majority, with three Member State representatives for each of the six regional groups and one representative of the E-9 countries on a rotational basis;
- UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, each having permanent seats, and one representative of the other convening agencies (UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UN Women and ILO) on a rotational basis;
- one representative of the GPE;
- two representatives of NGOs on a rotational basis;
- one representative of teacher organizations;
- one representative of the OECD, by virtue of its status as an international cooperation organization and its role in the global aid architecture related to official development assistance (ODA);
- one representative from regional organizations for each of the six regions, to be decided by the region, with an option to rotate representation. For Latin America and the Caribbean, the representative will be from the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture.

All members will be designated by their respective constituencies, will represent them and will be accountable to them. Rotation will take place every two years. In addition, a rotating group of affiliated members will be constituted, ensuring regional balance by the SDG-Education 2030 SC; it will include representatives of

the private sector, foundations, and youth and student organizations. Affiliate members will participate in meetings as observers, upon invitation by the SDG-Education 2030 SC. The SDG-Education 2030 SC may also form time-limited, ad hoc thematic expert groups to provide technical inputs to its work, and/or draw upon the work of existing ones. UNESCO will provide the Secretariat to the SDG-Education 2030 SC.

#### 95.

Periodic Global Education Meetings, aligned with the meeting schedule of the High-level Political Forum on sustainable development, will be organized by UNESCO in consultation with the SDG-Education 2030 SC to review the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda against progress made and share outcomes with the appropriate overall global follow-up and review mechanisms for the SDGs. All Member States and other stakeholders that are part of the coordination mechanism will participate in the GEMs. In addition, a high-level meeting will be held alongside the UNESCO General Conference. These will be complemented by regional meetings on a schedule to be determined at regional level by Member States and other stakeholders.

#### 96.

UNESCO will continue to facilitate dialogue, reflection and partnerships with specialized NGOs and civil society, including the CCNGO, as an integral part of the global coordination mechanism, building on previous experience and taking account of the expanded ambition of the new agenda.

## Monitoring, follow-up and review for evidence-based policies

97.

Follow-up and review based on robust monitoring, reporting and evaluation policies, systems and tools are essential for the achievement of SDG4-Education 2030. Monitoring quality in education requires a multidimensional approach covering system design, inputs, content, processes and outcomes. As the primary responsibility for monitoring lies at the country level, countries should build up effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms, adapted to national priorities, in consultation with civil society. They should also work to build greater consensus at the global level as to what specific quality standards and learning outcomes should be achieved across the life course – from early childhood development to adult skills acquisition – and how they should be measured. In addition, countries should seek to improve the quality and timeliness of reporting. Information and data need to be freely accessible to all. National-level data, information and outcomes based on existing reporting mechanisms, together with new data sources as necessary, will inform reviews at the regional and global levels.

98.

In order to better measure and monitor quality, equity and inclusion, efforts should be made to increase the capacity of governments to disaggregate data appropriately and use them effectively for planning and policy-making. Partners, in close cooperation with the UIS and other institutions as appropriate, will provide direct and targeted support to Member States to strengthen relevant measurement and monitoring capacities. The UIS will facilitate sharing of best practices with a view to strengthening country data systems, particularly for African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing states and middle income countries. Efforts should be made to include quality frameworks in national education plans and to build the capacity of countries to monitor equity, inclusion and learning outcomes.

99.

Global monitoring is integral to international and regional efforts to strengthen analysis and knowledge management. In line with the UN Secretary-General's recommendation, more efforts will be made to harmonize reporting on the SDGs with reporting to the various human rights treaty bodies that

relate to education. These official national reports, often reflecting contributions by civil society, offer important insights into the status of the right to education.

**100.**

In recognition of the importance of harmonization of monitoring and reporting, the UIS will remain the official source of cross-nationally comparable data on education. It will continue to produce international monitoring indicators based on its annual education survey and on other data sources that guarantee international comparability for more than 200 countries and territories. In addition to collecting data, the UIS will work with partners to develop new indicators, statistical approaches and monitoring tools to better assess progress across the targets related to UNESCO's mandate, working in coordination with the SDG-Education 2030 SC.

**101.**

The EFA Global Monitoring Report will be continued in the form of the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report. It will be prepared by an independent team and hosted and published by UNESCO. The Director of the team is appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO. Attention will be paid to geographical balance in its Advisory Board. The GEM Report will be the mechanism for monitoring and reporting on SDG 4 and

on education in the other SDGs, with due regard to the global mechanism to be established to monitor and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will also report on the implementation of national and international strategies to help hold all relevant partners to account for their commitments as part of the overall SDG follow-up and review.

**102.**

The collection, analysis and use of data will be further strengthened by encouraging a 'data revolution' based on recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development.<sup>16</sup> To address current data gaps, agencies need to improve coordination, including strengthening existing inter-agency groups and establishing new ones, to develop harmonized methodologies for deriving common estimates based on available data, while developing new comparative data sources as necessary. Countries and agencies should strengthen and standardize data on domestic resource mobilization and other streams of finance for education, including household contributions. Countries and agencies will also benefit from participating in proposed mechanisms to further develop standards, build capacity, collect necessary information and share data.

<sup>16</sup> *The Advisory Group's key recommendations are: (1) Develop a global consensus on principles and standards, (2) Share technology and innovations for the common good, (3) New resources for capacity development, (4) Leadership for coordination and mobilisation and (5) Exploit some quick wins on SDG data.*

**103.**

Moreover, a research and evaluation culture is necessary at the national and international levels to learn lessons from the implementation of strategies and policies and feed them back into actions. At the national level, countries should evaluate the effect of their education policies on achieving the SDG4-Education 2030 targets. They must build on monitoring results and research findings to ensure effective evidence-based decisions and results-oriented programmes. An evaluation process would look at all components of an education system with the aim of sharing lessons, opening debate on what works and providing constructive feedback. Key principles for the evaluation approach include the centrality of teaching and learning quality; the importance of school leadership; equity and inclusion as key dimensions; transparency; and partner participation at all levels. Overall, evaluation activities should contribute to the accomplishment of both accountability and development objectives. Furthermore, at the global level, the convening agencies commit to evaluating the effectiveness of their coordination mechanisms and the extent to which their programmes support countries in implementing SDG4-Education 2030.

## Financing

**104.**

The Oslo Summit on Education (July 2015)<sup>(xliii)</sup> and the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, July 2015) affirmed that a significant increase in financing is required to achieve SDG 4. Full realization of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda requires sustained, innovative and well-targeted financing and efficient implementation arrangements, especially in those countries furthest from achieving quality education for all at all levels and in emergency situations. Recognizing the finance and resource challenges, the Oslo Summit established a high-level Commission on the Financing of Global Education Opportunities as a decisive first step to reinvigorate the case for investment in

education and to reverse the current underfunding. Efforts to close the funding gap must start with domestic funding. At the same time, international public finance plays an important role in complementing the efforts of countries to mobilize public resources domestically, especially in the poorest and most vulnerable countries with limited domestic resources. Alternative and innovative funding approaches will also be needed.



### 105.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda<sup>[xliiv]</sup> encourages countries to set nationally appropriate spending targets for education. National contexts are diverse, but the following international and regional benchmarks are crucial reference points:

- allocating at least 4% to 6% of gross domestic product (GDP) to education; and/or
- allocating at least 15% to 20% of public expenditure to education.

The Incheon Declaration urged adherence to these benchmarks and expressed determination to increase public spending on education in accordance with country contexts. In 2012 countries allocated 5.0% of GDP and 13.7% of public expenditure to education, on average<sup>[xliiv]</sup>. Least developed countries need to reach or exceed the upper end of these benchmarks if they are to achieve the targets laid out in this framework. This is also confirmed by an analysis of the cost of achieving universal pre-primary, primary and secondary education in low and lower middle income countries by 2030, which projects an increase from US\$149 billion in 2012 to US\$340 billion, on average, between 2015 and 2030<sup>[xliiv]</sup>. The necessary increase in spending can be achieved through:

### 106.

**Increasing and improving domestic financing for education:** As domestic resources will remain the most important source for funding education, there must be a clear commitment by governments to provide equitable financing commensurate with national educational priorities, needs and capacities to advance the progressive realization of the right to education. Countries will need to:

- **Increase public funding for education:** This requires widening the tax base (in particular, by ending harmful tax incentives), preventing tax evasion and increasing the share of the national budget allocated to education.
- **Prioritize those most in need:** Disadvantaged children, youth and adults, as well as women and girls and people in conflict-affected areas, typically have the greatest education needs and financing should therefore be targeted towards them. Financing should be sensitive to their needs and based on evidence of what works.
- **Increase efficiency and accountability:** Improving governance and accountability can increase efficiency and effective use of existing resources and ensure that financing reaches the classroom.

107.

**Increasing and improving external financing:**

In 2000, the global community affirmed that ‘no countries seriously committed to Education for All will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources.’<sup>[xlvii]</sup> Shortage of funds should not jeopardize the educational opportunities of the billions of learners entitled to receive a quality education. This commitment is even more important with the more ambitious SDG agenda. The total annual financing gap between available domestic resources and the amount necessary to reach the new education targets is projected to average US\$39 billion between 2015 and 2030 in low and lower middle income countries. The gap is particularly large in low income countries, where it constitutes 42% of annual total costs. An important use of international public finance, including ODA, is to catalyse additional resource mobilization from other sources, public and private. Aid will thus remain a crucial source of education finance over the next 15 years if the targets are to be met, and will be complemented by the growing contribution of middle income countries <sup>[xlviii]</sup>. Education partners therefore need to:

- **Reverse the decline in aid to education:** The fall in aid to education in recent years must be reversed. The fulfilment of all commitments related to ODA is crucial, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) for ODA to developing countries and 0.15% to 0.2% of GNI to least

developed countries. In accordance with their commitments, those developed countries that have not yet done so are urged to make additional concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7% of GNI for ODA to developing countries. Moreover, support to least developed countries for education has to be increased. Further to this, there should be a movement towards increasing aid spent on education according to countries’ needs and priorities. Aid to education must be predictable.

- **Improve aid effectiveness through harmonization and better coordination:** Donors, middle income countries and other partners should support the financing of all the targets of SDG4-Education 2030 according to each country’s needs and priorities, seeking to leverage domestic and external finance in support of the common agenda. Donors should continue to bring development cooperation in line with aid effectiveness guidelines, ensuring that it is better harmonized and coordinated and that it strengthens each country’s sense of ownership and accountability to its citizens.
- **Improve the equity of external financing:** External financing should be better targeted at supporting neglected subsectors and low income countries, and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in middle income countries. At the same time, the trend of declining ODA flows to lower middle income countries needs to be reversed. The allocation of official aid flows should not

be guided by per capita income only. In this context, particular attention needs to be paid to the needs of vulnerable countries such as small island developing states. Multi- and bilateral donors for education should develop strategies in cooperation with recipient countries as to what kind of support should be best provided through which channels and modalities of delivery.

- **Promote South-South and triangular cooperation:** South-South cooperation is another important element of international cooperation for development – as a complement to, not a substitute for, North-South cooperation. Given its increased importance, different history and particularities, South-South cooperation should be seen as an expression of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South, based on their shared experiences and objectives. Triangular cooperation should be strengthened as a means of financing education and bringing relevant experience and expertise to bear in development cooperation. Moreover, the establishment of the BRICS Development Bank by Brazil, China, India, the Russian Federation and South Africa may offer new sources of funding for education and help reverse aid declines.
- **Increase the amount of aid to education in conflict and crisis:** It will be impossible to deliver education to all without successfully reaching children, youth and adults in fragile states and those affected by conflict and natural hazard. Education receives just 2% of humanitarian aid

appeals<sup>[xlix]</sup>. Urgent efforts should be made to significantly increase support for education in humanitarian responses and protracted crises according to needs and to ensure a rapid response to conflict and crisis situations. Creating synergies between humanitarian and development financing as well as their modalities can increase the effectiveness of every dollar invested in recovery efforts and coherently address short-, medium- and long-term needs in order to support fragile and conflict-affected states in finding a long-term, sustainable solution to crisis.

- **Scale up and strengthen existing multi-stakeholder partnerships:** It is imperative that implementation of the full SDG4-Education 2030 agenda is supported. Investment and international cooperation will be scaled up to allow all children to complete free, equitable, inclusive, quality early childhood, primary and secondary education, including by scaling up and strengthening multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the GPE. Furthermore, education facilities will be upgraded and investment in STEM education increased; technical, vocational and tertiary education and training will be enhanced, ensuring equal access for women and girls and encouraging their participation therein; and the number of scholarships available to students in developing countries to enrol in higher education will be increased. It is equally necessary and urgent to boost financing for youth and adult literacy programmes, as well as adult learning, education

and training opportunities, in a lifelong learning perspective. Other options for coordinated financing of education should be considered where needs are identified across all targets.

108.

**Innovating, with a focus on partnership, transparency, equity and efficiency:**

Achieving this ambitious education agenda will require unlocking all potential resources to support the right to education, moving beyond ‘business as usual’ and sometimes doing more for less. A process of continuous improvement is needed that includes innovating, tracking and evaluating the results of innovation, and using new evidence to sustain successes and to alter course where needed. Additional efforts must be directed at leveraging all of the current spending to achieve better results. This is why improved governance and partnerships are essential, but other innovations are necessary too:

- **Focus investments on equity inclusion and quality:** Getting serious about equity, inclusion and quality is an innovation in most systems. All investments – current and new – should be screened against a key criterion: do they help ensure that all people, including the most marginalized and vulnerable, acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need for their lives and livelihoods and for the full realization of their right to education?

- **Orient private financing resources:** Beyond its crucial role in paying tax, the private sector has emerged as a contributor with significant potential to complement resources for education and increase synergies. It will be essential to ensure that spending on education from the private sector is oriented towards the countries and people most in need, and to reinforce education as a public good<sup>[1]</sup>. Successful partnerships with the private sector will require effective coordination and regulatory mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability.
- **Challenge and expose misuse of resources:** Crucial funds for education are lost through corruption and inefficiency. Independent monitoring and tracking of spending can significantly increase the funds that schools actually receive.
- **Institute transparent monitoring and reporting:** Direct commitment to a coordinated approach and mutual accountability system, including transparent monitoring and reporting on the financing of SDG4-Education 2030, is required. This would include particular attention to whether financial resources are reaching the most vulnerable populations and least developed countries. Such commitment requires developing capacity and setting aside adequate resources for data collection for financial reporting.

## Conclusion

109.

We, the international education community, stand strongly united on a new all-encompassing approach to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for children, youth and adults, while promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. We will work collectively to accomplish all of the education targets; this in turn will also strengthen international cooperation across the world of education. We agree that significant additional financing is needed to achieve the new targets and that resources should be used in the most effective manner in order to push forward progress on SDG4-Education 2030. We also stress the need for good governance and citizen-led accountability in education. Convinced that SDG4-Education 2030 will make historic progress in education, we commit to bold, innovative and sustainable actions to ensure that education truly transforms lives in the world. Achieving SDG4-Education 2030 means that success can only be declared when it can be declared for everyone.

## Annex I: Proposed global indicators

(Status as of July 2016)

The 11 global indicators proposed for monitoring SDG 4 were developed by the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and approved by the 47th Session of UN Statistical Commission in March 2016. The Economic and Social Council took note of the report of the Statistical Commission at the Coordination and Management segment in June 2016. The report was submitted to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) for their consideration. These 11 global indicators represent the minimum set of indicators proposed to countries for the global monitoring of the SDG 4 targets.

### Table 1. Global indicator framework

**Goal:** *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*

<p><b>4.1</b> By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes</p>
<p>4.1.1 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</p>
<p><b>4.2</b> By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education</p>
<p>4.2.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex</p>
<p>4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex</p>

<p><b>4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university</b></p>
<p>4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex</p>
<p><b>4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship</b></p>
<p>4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill</p>
<p><b>4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations</b></p>
<p>4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated</p>
<p><b>4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy</b></p>
<p>4.6.1 Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex</p>
<p><b>4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development</b></p>
<p>4.7.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment</p>

**4.a By 2030, build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all**

4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to: (a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions)

**4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries**

4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study

**4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States**

4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary; (b) primary; (c) lower secondary; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country



## **Annex II: Proposed thematic indicator framework**

**(Working Draft – Status as of July 2016)**

A broader set of internationally-comparable indicators were developed by the Technical Advisory Group on Education Indicators (TAG) and later 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 indicator set will serve to chart global progress on education and to monitor the SDG 4 education targets more comprehensively across countries, allowing the possibility to identify challenges regarding concepts of the targets that are not reflected well by the global indicators. The thematic indicator framework includes the global indicators as a subset and also represents a recommended set of additional indicators that countries may use to monitor based on the national context, policy priorities, technical capacity and data availability.

## Table 2. Thematic indicator framework

**Goal:** *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*

Concept	Non	Indicator	Proposed global indicators
<b>Targets 4.1 – 4.7</b>			

### 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

<b>Learning</b>	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	Yes
	2.	Administration of a nationally representative learning assessment (i) during primary (ii) at the end of primary and (iii) at the end of lower secondary education	
<b>Completion</b>	3.	Gross intake ratio to the last grade (primary, lower secondary)	
	4.	Completion rate (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary)	
<b>Participation</b>	5.	Out-of-school rate (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary)	
	6.	Percentage of children over-age for grade (primary, lower secondary)	
<b>Provision</b>	7.	Number of years of (i) free and (ii) compulsory primary and secondary education guaranteed in legal frameworks	

Concept	Non	Indicator	Proposed global indicators
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**4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education**

Readiness	8.	Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex	Yes
	9.	Percentage of children under 5 years of age experiencing positive and stimulating home learning environments	
Participation	10.	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex	Yes
	11.	Gross pre-primary enrolment ratio	
Provision	12.	Number of years of (i) free and (ii) compulsory pre-primary education guaranteed in legal frameworks	

**4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university**

Participation	13.	Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education	
	14.	Participation rate in technical-vocational education programmes (15 to 24-year-olds)	
	15.	Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex	Yes

Concept	Non	Indicator	Proposed global indicators
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**4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship**

<b>Skills</b>	16.1	Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills	Yes
	16.2	Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill	
	17.	Youth/adult educational attainment rates by age group, economic activity status, levels of education and programme orientation	

**4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations**

<b>Equity cross-targets</b>	...	Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated  Where possible, other indicators should be presented in relation to their distribution across the population	Yes
<b>Policy</b>	18.	Percentage of students in primary education whose first or home language is the language of instruction	
	19.	Extent to which explicit formula-based policies reallocate education resources to disadvantaged populations	
	20.	Education expenditure per student by level of education and source of funding	
	21.	Percentage of total aid to education allocated to low income countries	

Concept	Non	Indicator	Proposed global indicators
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**4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy**

<b>Skills</b>	22.	Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex	Yes
	23.	Youth/adult literacy rate	
<b>Provision</b>	24.	Participation rate of youth/adults in literacy programmes	

**4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development**

<b>Provision</b>	25.	Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment	Yes
<b>Knowledge</b>	26.	Percentage of students by age group (or education level) showing adequate understanding of issues relating to global citizenship and sustainability	
	27.	Percentage of 15-year-old students showing proficiency in knowledge of environmental science and geoscience	
<b>Provision</b>	28.	Percentage of schools that provide life skills-based HIV and sexuality education	
	29.	Extent to which the framework on the World Programme on Human Rights Education is implemented nationally (as per UNGA Resolution 59/113)	

Concept	Non	Indicator	Proposed global indicators
<b>Means of implementation</b> 4.a – 4.c			

**4.a By 2030, build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all**

<b>Resources</b>	30.	Proportion of schools with access to (i) basic drinking water; (ii) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (iii) basic hand-washing facilities	Yes
	31.	Proportion of schools with access to (i) electricity (ii) the Internet for pedagogical purposes and (iii) computers for pedagogical purposes	Yes
	32.	Proportion of schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities	Yes
<b>Environment</b>	33.	Percentage of students experiencing bullying, corporal punishment, harassment, violence, sexual discrimination and abuse	
	34.	Number of attacks on students, personnel and institutions	

**4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries**

<b>Number</b>	35.	Number of higher education scholarships awarded by beneficiary country	
	36.	Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study	Yes

Concept	Non	Indicator	Proposed global indicators
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**4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States**

<b>Qualified</b>	37.	Percentage of teachers qualified according to national standards by education level and type of institution	
	38.	Pupil/qualified teacher ratio by education level	
<b>Trained</b>	39.	Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary; (b) primary; (c) lower secondary; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country	Yes
	40.	Pupil/trained teacher ratio by education level	
<b>Motivated</b>	41.	Average teacher salary relative to other professions requiring a comparable level of education qualification	
	42.	Teacher attrition rate by education level	
<b>Supported</b>	43.	Percentage of teachers who received in-service training in the last 12 months by type of training	

## Endnotes

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