



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee

Terms of Reference

As revised in March 2019

Background

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the UN Summit in September 2015, the international community has committed to a new global agenda, aimed at eradicating poverty by 2030 and achieving sustainable development, leaving no one behind. Education is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda reflected both through a stand-alone goal on education (SDG 4), as well as through important reciprocal linkages with other SDGs. SDG 4 on education aims to “*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*”; together with its associated targets, it sets an ambitious universal education agenda for 2030.

SDG 4–Education 2030 is the result of three years of intensive consultations, including milestones such as the Muscat Agreement (May 2014) and the Incheon Declaration (May 2015). It is based on a vision of education that transforms the lives of individuals, communities and societies, leaving no one behind, while contributing to all relevant SDGs. The Education 2030 Framework for Action for the implementation of SDG 4, adopted by 184 Member States in November 2015, is the vehicle for the implementation of the SDG-Education 2030 agenda. The Framework for Action specifies that UNESCO, as the specialized UN agency for education, will continue its mandated role to lead and coordinate SDG-Education 2030.

In order to ensure strong global coordination, UNESCO is tasked with convening a multi-stakeholder SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee as a key structure for coordinating the support to global education efforts within the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development architecture. The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee is part of the global coordination mechanism, which may be periodically reviewed and adapted as necessary through the Global Education Meetings (GEM).

Mandate

The primary mandate of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee is to support Member States and partners to achieve SDG 4 and the education-related targets in other goals of the overall 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹ To achieve this objective, the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee will:

¹ Education makes a contribution to achieving progress in all of the SDGs. Goals related to poverty eradication, health, gender equality, economic growth and employment, sustainable consumption and production, and climate change make specific reference to education either in the target language or the global indicator: 1.a, 3.7, 5.6, 8.6, 12.8 and 13.3.

- ✓ Provide strategic guidance to Member States to support the implementation of SDG 4, and the education-related targets in the other SDGs, based on the Education 2030 Framework for Action;
- ✓ Provide strategic guidance to the global education community, including national, regional and international partners to support coordinated implementation of SDG 4 based on the Education 2030 Framework for Action; ensure linkages between the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, education stakeholders² and the broader SDG architecture and process at global, regional and country level, including with the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC);
- ✓ Work with other relevant global bodies and supporting mechanisms within SDG processes;
- ✓ Make recommendations to education stakeholders on key priorities, as well as catalytic actions including on potential flagship initiatives;
- ✓ Review progress towards the education goal and targets, drawing on the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, UN-wide SDG Review Reporting, Regional Inter-Governmental Reports, as well as other appropriate complementary studies and sources, and make recommendations on remedial actions as appropriate, while feeding into the global follow up and review mechanisms for the SDGs;
- ✓ Provide recommendations regarding the focus, agenda and outcomes of the periodic Global Education Meetings or High Level Meetings;
- ✓ Build strong partnerships³ among diverse stakeholders and leverage support for the achievement of SDG-Education 2030;
- ✓ Promote and undertake joint advocacy activities;
- ✓ Monitor and advocate for adequate and sustainable financing, both domestic and external. Noting the principle of leaving no one behind, there should be a focus on vulnerable populations and countries most at risk, including countries affected by conflict and crises, those who may be most challenged in meeting the SDGs, as well as those that are furthest from ensuring basic education for all;
- ✓ Encourage harmonization and coordination of partner activities.

Membership and composition

As specified in the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee consists of representatives of diverse constituencies including governments, civil society organizations, multilateral agencies, teachers, private sector and youth. All members will be designated by their respective constituencies, represent them and are accountable to them. It is the responsibility of the representatives of all constituencies to communicate and consult with their peers as appropriate. Consultations within and across constituencies should be undertaken at

² These include Member States, UN agencies as well as multilateral, and bilateral organizations, civil society, the teaching profession, academia, youth, and the private sector and foundations.

³ In general, partnerships will involve the various constituencies represented in the SDG-Education 2030 SC. Specific partnership with particular entities will be determined and aligned to specific targets of the agenda or particular thematic issues.

global, regional and national levels as appropriate to ensure relevant two-way feedback between the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and stakeholders across the different constituencies at each level.

The composition of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee is as follows:

Regional Member State representation: Forming the majority, Member States are represented through four country representatives selected from each of the six UNESCO regional groups on a rotational basis. In this regard, the regional groups are encouraged to find an appropriate balance between renewal and continuity. As countries participate in the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee on behalf of their region, it is their responsibility to ensure appropriate designation and effective communication within/across their regions, in particular through their representation on the Bureau of the Steering Committee (see further details below).

E-9 countries: The E-9 countries comprised of Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan are represented by the E-9 chair.

UN agencies: UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank have a permanent seat each, with one seat reserved for a representative of other convening agencies (UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UN Women and ILO)⁴ on a rotational basis.

Global Partnership for Education (GPE): One representative.

OECD: 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);

Regional organizations: One representative from regional organizations for each of the six UNESCO regional groups, to be decided by the region, with an option to rotate representation.

Civil society organizations: Two representatives of NGOs designated by the Collective Consultative Committee on NGOs on Education 2030 (CCNGO) on a rotational basis.

Teachers: One representative of teacher organizations;

Affiliated members

Foundations: One representative on a rotational basis.

Youth: One representative on a rotational basis.

Private sector: One representative on a rotational basis.

Affiliated members fully participate in meetings and activities of the Steering Committee in an advisory role and have no decision-making authority.

Criteria for the selection of the affiliate members should be developed in consultation with these constituencies, including the current affiliate members to be presented for consideration of the

⁴ One agency officially represents all five organizations. All agencies will participate in the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee meetings with regard to their specific areas of expertise and contributions to work of the SDG-Education 2030 SC and achievement of particular targets or thematic areas of the agenda.

Bureau prior to the next Steering Committee meeting. Further, at its next meeting, noting that clear criteria for selection of representatives of these constituencies are developed and agreed by the Steering Committee, the Steering Committee should consider a proposal to accord these constituencies regular membership. In the interim, the current incumbents should continue as affiliate members but are encouraged to consult with and represent the views of the constituencies in the Steering Committee.

Observers

Member States that have not been nominated to represent their respective region on the Committee may take part in Steering Committee meetings as observers.

Observers do not in principle actively take part in the Steering Committee's discussions, and as such, are not given the floor or the possibility to make an intervention.

Should the Chair of a session deem it appropriate, he or she may decide to give the floor to observers for a limited set of comments or questions.

In addition, the Secretariat with the approval of the Bureau may invite a non-Member State observer to one of the Committee's meetings, should it consider that the latter is of particular relevance to the respective observer or that there would be an added value to the discussions of the meeting. In this context, the non-Member State observer may be invited to make an intervention on a specific topic in the area of its technical expertise.

Profile of members

As the focus of the implementation of SDG 4 and education-related targets in other SDGs is at the country level, Steering Committee representatives across all constituencies must have strong technical expertise and experience in national education policy development at senior level. Each constituency will ensure a balance between policy and political representation and technical expertise in education. Furthermore, nomination of members should ensure gender balance.

All nominations need to be accompanied by a biography in the form of a short abstract (no more than 200 words) and should be communicated to the UNESCO Secretariat. The term for constituencies represented on a rotational basis is two calendar years, starting in January and ending in December.

Working structures

Co-chairs: The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee is co-chaired by a Member State representative elected for a two-year term and the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education. The co-chairs:

- ✓ Lead the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee through both the meetings of all members, as well as through the Bureau [see further details below].
- ✓ Guide and oversee the work of the Steering Committee and the Secretariat which includes inputs for meeting agendas and key documents.
- ✓ Represent the Steering Committee in high-level political events related to the global SDG structures and processes (e.g. ECOSOC, HLPF) or other fora and events.

Bureau: In addition to the two co-chairs, the work of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee is facilitated by a Bureau comprising one representative from each of the six UNESCO regional electoral groups, one representative of the WEF 2015 co-convening agencies, as well as one representative from the civil society/teacher organizations constituency nominated by their constituencies for a two-year term. Nominations of members of the Bureau are endorsed by the Steering Committee as a whole. The tasks of the Bureau are as follows:

- ✓ Liaise between the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee at large and the Secretariat as necessary to address time-sensitive issues and requests addressed to the Steering Committee.

The Bureau will take decisions only when mandated by the Steering Committee;

- ✓ Support the Secretariat to define the agendas for SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and global meetings, and on other strategic or operational issues;
- ✓ The Member States Bureau members act as communication and consultation focal points for their respective regions and together with the other three Member States Steering Committee members of their region, provide two-way sharing of information and position between the Steering Committee and their region.
- ✓ The Member States Bureau members can represent the Steering Committee in regional SDG 4 structures and processes or other regional education fora and events.

Expert Working Groups: The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee may form ad-hoc thematic expert groups to provide technical inputs to its work, and/or draw upon the work of other existing relevant ones. Their membership will change in line with the overall rotation of the Steering Committee membership. In order to ensure linkages between the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and other global thematic/technical education groups, the Steering Committee may designate thematic focal points to represent the Committee in such groups.

Secretariat

In addition to hosting and co-chairing the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, UNESCO will also provide a secretariat to the Steering Committee. The Secretariat will support the Steering Committee and its working groups to deliver on agreed activities and outcomes.

Working modalities

- The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee will meet regularly, at least once a year, face-to-face. Further virtual meetings via teleconferencing and email consultations will be organized as necessary.
- The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee members are expected to cover their meeting travel costs. Travel costs of representatives of civil society organizations from developing countries and representatives of Least Developed Countries may be borne by the Secretariat.
- The working languages of the meetings will be English and French in line with UNESCO rules and regulations. When necessary and feasible, the Secretariat will provide interpretation in other UN languages as may be required.

Alignment between global, regional and national levels

- **Linkages between the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee and UN SDG architecture and processes:** The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee will engage with various processes and structures of the UN SDG architecture at global, regional and national levels. This may include interaction at the regional level with regional commissions and other fora. At the global level, the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee will respond to requests for inputs from the UN, including from the HLPF, as well as other entities on education-related efforts within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- **Coordination at regional level** is key to ensuring alignment of approach between global, regional, and national levels. The four Member States representing each of the six regions, and in particular, the regional representative on the Bureau, as well as the organization representing each of the six regions will have a key role to play in ensuring the articulation between the global and national levels. Regional articulation allows for two-way communication and articulation by ensuring: (i) that national priorities and concerns from diverse regions inform the work of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, and (ii) that the guidance provided by the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee to Member States is further supported at the regional level. One way of doing this is to ensure that the four regional representatives from Member States, as well as the regional organization be part of regional coordination mechanisms;
- Given their intergovernmental nature, **regional organizations** represented in the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee provide a legitimate platform for coordination, ensuring engagement of governments with representatives of civil society, co-convening agencies, as well as other partners, as appropriate;
- UNESCO, co-convenors and other partners who are facilitating regional and national consultations and SDG-related activities will support Member State representatives in the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee to share information on global processes and initiatives, as well as on regional and national activities and achievements related to the SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda as needed;
- The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee can play a role in ensuring coordination between the different (sub)regional efforts by facilitating links among the diverse consultations led by Member States, regional intergovernmental organizations, partners, civil society, academia and other stakeholders;
- The Steering Committee members will participate in SDG 4-Education 2030 consultations and related activities at national, regional and global levels as appropriate.

Specific outcomes, linked to the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee's activities may be defined in its operational plans.