



**REGIONAL PREPARATORY
MEETING FOR THE FIRST
SESSION OF THE 'UNESCO
CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION
DATA AND STATISTICS'**

AFRICA
OUTCOME DOCUMENT

2023

2024 CONFERENCE ON
**EDUCATION DATA
AND STATISTICS**

The regional preparatory meeting for the first session of the ‘UNESCO Conference on Education Data and Statistics’ for Africa was organized virtually on 24 November 2023. The meeting provided the platform to discuss issues and priorities for Africa countries.

During the meeting, a total of six presentations of the topics discussed in the position papers were made:

1. Implementation of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED): challenges and solutions.
2. Administrative education data including teacher data: What are the challenges going forward?
3. Use of household survey data for reporting on SDG 4
4. Learning Outcome data: What are the challenges going forward?
5. Setting and monitoring national SDG 4 benchmarks: What are the challenges going forward?

For each of the position papers, UIS presented the background, key challenges, and focus areas for countries in data collection, compilation, and reporting at the international level. Some of the prominent solutions were discussed and then an agenda was proposed for UIS to collaborate with Member States in improving data collection, compilation, and reporting at both national and international levels.

Following the presentations, participating countries were invited to provide their feedback, seek clarifications, express concerns, and offer any additional insights that each paper should address. After the country interventions, the Director of UIS summarized the discussions, highlighting agreed-upon points, including identified issues and challenges, as well as the proposed agenda for UIS to present at the Conference next year.

INFORMATION SESSION TO MEMBER STATES

- The UIS director, Ms. Silvia Montoya, opened the meeting with a presentation for Member States to introduce the Conference explaining the objectives, expected outcomes, schedule, participants and process leading towards the big event.

- Ms. Montoya encouraged all Member States' representatives in the meeting to participate and share their concerns. She also emphasized the importance to complete the nomination process for countries of the region characterized by very low response to this invitation.
- Some countries inquired about the composition of the TCG and on what basis member countries were selected, noting the absence of countries from West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire) and absence of countries with high volume of statistics (Nigeria, Morocco, Ethiopia, South Africa).
- South Africa mentioned the issues of having two different Ministries in charge and financial constraints to participate in Conference. Ms. Montoya advised them to write to UIS to see how this could be solved.
- Congo (Brazzaville) asked if one representative should present the status of three different ministries, to which Mr. Antoninis replied that there is no expectation to 'present' data, as the main goal is to compile and bring to the Conference the various 'issues' faced.
- The African Union stated that it is committed to mobilize all Member States to participate in the Conference and will do its best to provide the necessary support for countries that do not have enough resources.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATION (ISCED): CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FORWARD

- The meeting undoubtedly agreed on the role of ISCED in standardizing and compiling internationally comparable data in education and expressed thanks to UIS for its support in mapping national education programs into ISCED.
- The meeting noted countries' specific concerns, expectations, and challenges in implementing ISCED classification for reporting data at the international level.
- The meeting appreciated the proposed way forward and trusts that they would help to resolve the existing challenges. The creation of the ISCED Committee marked an important step in addressing these challenges and is expected to lead to recommendations in the coming months.

ADMINISTRATIVE EDUCATION DATA INCLUDING TEACHER DATA: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD?

- The meeting acknowledged administrative data as the most important and useful data sources for education planning, policy development, and monitoring. However, there are various challenges in ensuring the accuracy and maintaining the quality of the data in terms of data quality, reporting consistency, and data bias. It was acknowledged that a healthy and sustained communication between countries and UIS could help to minimize such challenges.
- The meeting highlighted the need for collaboration and data standardization among Member States to ensure meaningful international comparisons. The importance of developing clear criteria for teacher qualification was underlined, although it was acknowledged that global-level definitions might not be practical due to country-specific needs.
- Countries shared their specific difficulties in implementing administrative data reporting, underscoring the need for guidance and solutions in areas such as education expenditure, home schooling, and teacher training data. The meeting highlighted the importance of continued cooperation in addressing challenges related to administrative education data.
- South Africa and Nigeria emphasized the need of providing trainings, notably on ISCED, and the regular implementation of workshops as this has direct impact on the quality of the data collected and reported. Ms. Montoya mentioned that the UIS has undergone an intensive mapping of tools used to collect data at the country level and this exercise showed that not all the data needed to calculate the indicators are actually being collected at the country level.
- Morocco inquired about data that are no longer published and the director of the UIS clarified that this is due to the focus on the SDG framework and said that the UIS will increase communication to inform countries of such changes in the future.
- Several countries, including Nigeria and Kenya, raised issues of qualified and trained teachers and highlighted the need for international definitions and clearer guidance in collecting, compiling, and reporting data on qualified and trained teachers.

- Congo mentioned that classification of teachers is not always straight-forward as there are different types of teachers (bénévoles, volontaires, fonctionnaires, ...). Mozambique mentioned the different types of trainings provided and highlighted the importance of always taking into consideration the budget.
- Kenya and Mozambique both mentioned that some countries may have a unique situation with more teachers produced than teachers employed and the need to properly define the student to qualified or trained teacher ratios.
- Congo mentioned that their questionnaire is too long and changes from year to year because it is based on what information partners need and proposed to have a unified questionnaire from year to year and across the region.
- Rwanda highlighted the importance of international standards while Comores raised the issue of the lag in data production resulting in lack in information and that of public/private and redundancy.
- Ms. Montoya informed countries of the extensive mapping of teacher qualifications recently completed by the UIS.

USE OF HOUSEHOLD SURVEY (HHS) DATA FOR REPORTING ON SDG 4

- The meeting acknowledged the strengths and benefits of HHS in monitoring SDG4 but noted their under-utilization in policy discussions and monitoring due to a lack of capacity, awareness among policy makers, and coordination between MOE and NSO.
- The meeting underscored the challenges of using HHS for monitoring SDG4 and other policy objectives. These include non-standardized context questionnaires among various surveys, inconsistency in recording age, and not using ISCED classification in line with administrative data, etc.
- The meeting endorsed the agenda presented during the session to address the issues and challenges of using HHS in monitoring SDG4. This includes improving coverage, harmonizing contextual questionnaires, using international standards, and establishing collaborative partnerships to enhance the quality and reliability of data derived from household surveys.

- It was discussed and acknowledged that despite various challenges in using HHS, it is a useful and important data source for monitoring SDG4. However, there is a need for raising awareness among different stakeholders and establishing coordination between NSO and MOE for its meaningful use.
- Kenya talked about the challenges in using data from HHS to which Mr. Antoninis replied that the Conference will be looking at the positive side of using data from HHS as the indicators that may be derived are numerous.
- The issue of standardizing the timing of HHS was raised by a couple of countries including Mauritius and Mr. Antoninis acknowledged that this is difficult indeed but mentioned that standardizing the analysis is at least possible.
- Egypt inquired on whether HHS data will be used for all countries or only for countries with no administrative data and whether there will be comparison of data derived from administrative sources and household surveys.

LEARNING OUTCOME DATA: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD?

- The meeting acknowledged the importance of learning outcomes data in SDG4 monitoring and noted that there are significant data gaps in monitoring learning at various levels and among different groups.
- The meeting highlighted issues like comparability of grades and education levels, procedural quality, financial costs, and low coverage of cross-national assessments. National assessments may face alignment constraints due to the different frameworks being used.
- The meeting agreed on the agenda forward for potential solutions, particularly on implementing the Assessment of Minimum Proficiency Level (AMPL) assessment programs to measure minimum proficiency levels for reporting SDG4.1.1a, b, and c to ensure comparability.
- There were some interventions from Congo, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire to which Ms. Montoya replied that all countries will be invited to an additional meeting on learning outcomes and on teachers shortly and prior to the Conference in order to discuss more in detail the various aspects and associated issues.

SETTING AND MONITORING NATIONAL SDG 4 BENCHMARKS: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD?

- The meeting congratulates the UIS and GEMR for its leadership in establishing national benchmarks for SDG4 indicators. The meeting also acknowledged the contribution in establishing linkage between policies, plans and monitoring at national, regional, and global levels.
- The meeting emphasized the challenges faced in setting and monitoring national SDG 4 benchmarks, with particular emphasis on the need for broader participation and quality of benchmark values.
- The meeting recognized the agenda forward presented, e.g raising awareness among political levels as well as other stakeholders, providing more support to the countries in setting their national benchmarks and seeking national participation in reporting on benchmarking indicators linking with policy levels and extend their support in implementing them.