



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

ARAB STATES
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 Arab states was organized virtually on 16 October 2023. The meeting provided the platform to discuss issues and priorities for the Arab region. During the preparatory meeting, a total of five presentations were made:

1. Use of household survey data for reporting on SDG 4
2. Learning Outcome data: What are the challenges going forward?
3. Administrative education data including teacher data: What are the challenges going forward?
4. Implementation of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED): challenges and solutions
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 ‘UNESCO Conference on Education Data and Statistics’ next year.

USE OF HOUSEHOLD SURVEY DATA FOR REPORTING ON SDG 4

- The meeting acknowledged the strengths and benefits of household surveys 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 household surveys 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 household surveys 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.
- Palestine raised the issue of expenses of the HHS and its periodicity, pointing out the difficulty in monitoring using HHS. The country suggested harmonization between HHS and administrative data. It also inquired about how participants for the Conference will be informed and selected.
- Libya expressed that it is often difficult to contribute to HHS as they are mostly conducted with the support of international agencies like the World Bank or ILO, etc.
- 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.

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.

- Palestine highlighted the issues of non-comparability between various assessments and urged UIS to take the lead in discussions and harmonizing various tools, methodologies, and processes. The country also emphasized that many countries undertook LAMP (later on mini-LAMP) studies for measuring adult literacy skills and suggested UIS build assessments upon LAMP to continue collecting data using those tools to fill the data gaps.

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.
- Palestine opined that administrative data need to be strengthened to reflect the data needs for SDG4. It believes that the proposed model could be a way forward to strengthen the system and it would like to see the EMIS improved model be presented and discussed during the Conference next year. It also raised concerns regarding financial support for upgrading and updating their existing system to a new improved data system to produce quality data for monitoring SDG4.
- Lebanon 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.

- Qatar inquired about the use of AI and Big data in administrative data and believed that in the coming years, more generative AI and big data could help improve the education data system and we should be ready for this.
- Egypt found difficulty in completing the questionnaire using ISCED levels, particularly on tertiary education, and requested the development of more user-friendly tools and guides to help countries compile data on higher education. It also raised difficulty in capturing expenditure data spent by international agencies.
- 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.

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.
- Palestine raised concerns regarding the classification of ISCED 4 and inquired about methods and additional guides on classifying vocational and short-term courses in ISCED levels.
- Libya sought clarification regarding the removal of the adult education data sheet from the education annual survey and would like to understand how they can provide data on adult education.

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.
- Palestine enquired the reason for using baseline values around 2015 and not using the latest data available.
- Libya requested to share the projection model that can be used for estimating benchmark values for the countries.
- It was clarified that the baseline value for 2015 has been used as the SDG4 monitoring should be tracked against the starting point of SDGs, i.e. 2015. It was also clarified that countries have been invited to update their benchmark values should they wish to make changes.
- Lebanon recommended adding yearly updated figures (apart from the baseline which is old, and the targets which are far forward) in the table of Indicators Benchmarks.