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GROUP



TCG4: GAML 4 Decisions and Key Messages

TCG4/24

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Dusit Thani Dubai

133, Sheikh Zayed Road, Trade Centre,

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Decision 1: GAML and GAML related activities

The GAML Plenary,

Having reviewed:

- *GAML 2017 Progress Report (GAML4/1)*
 - *GAML Strategic Planning Committee Terms of Reference (GAML4/REF/1)*
 - *Priority areas for GAML governance, communications and direction setting (GAML4/REF/2)*
 - *Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Guide (GAML4/REF/3)*
 - *GAML Overview and glossary (GAML4/REF/4);*
1. **Greeted** the attendants and expressed its appreciation to the OEI, UIS, and Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of Spain;
 2. **Welcomed and thanked** UIS' technical partners for their efforts and hard work throughout the past months;
 3. **Thanked** the chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, David Coleman, for his guidance and advice throughout the process and extended gratitude to the SPC members;
 4. **Welcomed** the report prepared by the Secretariat on the 2017 progress of the GAML activities;
 5. **Expressed its gratitude** to the Member States participating in the meeting and appreciated their valuable input;
 6. **Agreed in principle** on the revised terms of reference of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC);and
 7. **Agreed as a practical starting point** with the proposed GAML priorities in organization and communication, as reflected in GAML4/REF/2, subject to future amendments as needed.

Decision 2: UIS Work on Funding Learning Assessment

The GAML Plenary,

Having reviewed:

- *Investment case for expanding coverage and comparability for Global Indicator 4.1.1 (GAML4/8)*
 - *Questionnaire of cross-national assessment (country participation, agencies, supporting institutions) (GAML4/REF/5)*
 - *UIS Fact sheet: More than one-half of children and adolescents are not learning worldwide (GAML4/REF/6)*
 - *UIS Information paper: Counting the number of children not learning (GAML4/REF/7);*
1. **Welcomed** the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and acknowledged the 2017 Survey of Cross National Assessments as a joint endeavor between UIS and GPE;
 2. **Welcomed** the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and supported the outcomes of the Expert Meeting held in Hamburg, in September 2017;
 3. **Agreed** that the case for investment in education has been well made in the context of the Sustainable Development agenda, the ongoing GPE replenishment campaign and potential prioritization of learning assessment as a thematic area of the Education Commission;
 4. **Acknowledged** that the case for investing in data for SDG 4 monitoring, including the monitoring of learning and the associated aspects, such as increasing coverage of existing assessments and capacity building for implementing surveys and making effective use of the data, needs to be reinvigorated with a view to reversing the current underfunding;
 5. **Recognized** that in light of the rapid growth of international and regional large scale assessments and national assessments in the last two decades, all countries have many opportunities to benefit from participating in a variety of existing large scale assessments that are being used to monitor SDG 4, as well as contribute to capacity building and the strengthening of national assessments. However, inadequate financing (to participate and to have access to technical assistance/training) remains a significant hurdle to participation in cross-national large scale assessments for many middle income and low income countries and if additional resources (domestic and external) are not mobilised quickly for this purpose opportunities for advancing the monitoring of learning will be lost;
 6. **Acknowledged** the needs of countries, especially developing countries, for continued statistical capacity building and technical assistance for the implementation of learning assessments.
 7. **Recognized** the work done by UIS in developing the methodology of Children Not Learning estimates and acknowledged the effort in the production of the information paper; and
 8. **Expressed its appreciation** of the anchoring methodology developed by Nadir Altinok, and acknowledged the importance of globally comparable data for the proportion of students reaching the Minimum Proficiency Level (MPL) in reading and mathematics.

Decision 3: Measurement strategy proposal – Task Force 4.1

The GAML Plenary,

Having reviewed:

- *SDG 4 reporting: UIS global framework contents for reference (GAML4/2)*
 - *SDG 4 reporting: Defining benchmarks and proficiency levels in the UIS Reporting Scale (GAML4/3)*
 - *SDG 4 reporting: Linking to the UIS Reporting Scale through social moderation (GAML4/4)*
 - *SDG 4 reporting: Data alignment (GAML4/5)*
 - *SDG4 reporting : Proposal of a Protocol for reporting Indicator 4.1.1 (GAML4/6);*
 - *SDG 4 reporting: Indicator 4.1.1 development process summary (GAML4/7)*
 - *Investment case for expanding coverage and comparability for Global Indicator 4.1.1 (GAML4/8)*
 - *Cross-national Assessments Technical Meeting (September 2017, Hamburg): Summary (GAML/9)*
 - *Data Alignment for SDG 4 reporting – Concept Note (GAML4/10)*
 - *TF 4.1 2018 work plan proposal (GAML4/11)*
 - *Constructing UIS Proficiency Scales and Linking to Assessments to Support SDG Indicator 4.1.1 Reporting (GAML4/REF/8)*
 - *Monitoring Progress towards SDG4.1: Initial Analysis of National Assessment Frameworks for Mathematics (GAML4/REF/9)*
1. **Appreciated** the report of the Secretariat and the chair of the Task Force, and supported the outcome of the Expert Meeting held in Hamburg in September 2017;
 2. **Agreed generally** with the strategies and projects, especially regarding the global framework for reference;
 3. **Supported** the proposed priorities of the work of the Task Force, requesting the members to complete the plan for 2018 with the focus on increased political support at the national and international levels through enhanced country involvement;
 4. **Acknowledged** the work of the chair, Ms Marguerite Clarke, and members of the Task Force in creating a sub-group for the early grades (indicator 4.1.1.a) and recommended that:
 - i. The GAML Secretariat/UIS should convene a group of reading and mathematics content experts, developmental psychologists, assessment experts, and others who can bring the latest research, evidence, and data to bear on the drafting of a longer-term measurement strategy for Indicator 4.1.1a. This group of experts should be diverse in terms of regions, languages, and scripts. They should help the GAML Secretariat/UIS clarify whether certain purposes and uses for early grades assessment data are better than others (e.g., formative versus diagnostic versus summative) and then use this information to shape the kinds of approaches they recommend for reporting against Indicator 4.1.1a; and
 - ii Countries should be brought into the discussions on Indicator 4.1.1a in order to ensure that the proposed measurement approaches are sufficiently adaptive and responsive to their contexts. It's unclear, however, whether GAML should be the context in which these consultations take place.



5. **Recognized** the work of the Secretariat in the development of the *Code of Practice for developing a learning assessment*, and emphasized the importance of this guide as a capacity development tool for countries.

Decision 4: Measurement strategy proposal and work plan – Task Force 4.2

The GAML Plenary,

Having reviewed:

- *Measurement/reporting strategy for SDG Indicator 4.2.1 (proposal by GAML TF 4.2) (GAML4/12)*
 - *TF 4.2 Action plan: Examining developmental milestones within and across countries (GAML4/13)*
 - *Key question on the domains of measurement for SDG 4.2.1 (GAML4/REF/12)*
 - *SDG 4.2.1: Connecting early learning to the UIS reporting scales (GAML4/REF/13)*
 - *Measurement options for development of SDG indicator 4.2.1 (GAML4/REF/14);*
1. **Congratulated** the Task Force chair, Ms Baela Jamil, and members on the progress they have done and welcomed their measurement strategy and action plan, and supported the outcomes of the Expert Meeting held in Washington D.C. in October 2017;
 2. **Acknowledged** the UNICEF, being the custodian agency for indicator 4.2.1 and expressed its appreciation the IAEG-ECD working group;
 3. **Emphasized** that national ownership is key to achieving sustainable development, hence the importance of alignment with national standards and consistency with each country's own purposes and initiatives;
 4. **Encouraged** the complementarity in the work of the IAEG-ECD and GAML Task Force 4.2, and recognized the importance of the advisory role the Task Force assumes;
 5. **Agreed in principle** with the long term holistic approach to measure indicator 4.2.1 – that is, a measure that encompasses all three domains: health, learning, and psychosocial well-being;
 6. **Stressed** that the implementation of the reporting framework will present a challenge in many countries, and that appropriate efforts to strengthen national statistical capacities will need to be made, emphasizing the coordination in the work of GAML and the IAEG-ECD in the process;
 7. **Noted** the interim measurement strategy proposal set out for indicator 4.2.1, and emphasized that its development ensures the inclusion of the maximum number of countries reporting to the indicator
 8. **Noted** that although the holistic view and aim should prevail for the long term, the use of an interim strategy to report for each domain separately will maximize the use of information; and

9. **Reconfirmed** the importance of global comparability and the provision of items and definitions that would allow a country to determine its comparability with a certain degree of accuracy.

Decision 5: Measurement strategy proposals and work plans – Task Force 4.4

The GAML Plenary,

Having reviewed:

- *Measurement strategy and action plan for SDG Target 4.4 (proposal by GAML TF 4.4) (GAML4/14)*
1. **Congratulated** the Task Force 4.4 chair, namely, Mr Manos Antoninis as well as the Task Force members on the progress they have done and welcomed their measurement strategy and action plan;
 2. **Recognized** the support of the Secretariat, especially in inviting Member States to join the Task Force, and noted the importance of country representation;
 3. **Noted** the importance and the difficulties in arriving at a globally agreed definition of digital literacy skills, and hence acknowledged the effort of UIS in commissioning a Global Competency Framework of Reference on digital literacy skills; and
 4. **Acknowledged** the work program for Task Force 4.4 and supports the proposed work plan recommended by the Task Force.

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Decision 6: Measurement strategy proposals and work plans – Task Force 4.6

The GAML Plenary,

Having reviewed:

- *Measurement strategy and action plan for SDG Target 4.6 (proposal by GAML TF 4.6: OECD) (GAML4/15)*
 - *Measurement strategy and action plan for SDG Target 4.6 (proposal by GAML TF 4.6:UIL) (GAML4/16)*
 - *Functional literacy and numeracy: Definitions and options for measurement for the SDG Target 4.6 (GAML4/REF/15)*
 - *LAMP international report (GAML4/REF/16) with special reference to measurement in the low end of the skills distribution;*
 - *Expert meeting (4.6.1) draft summary (GAML4/REF/22)*
1. **Congratulated** the Task Force chair and co-chair, namely, Mr William Thorn and Ms Rakhat Zholdoshalieva, as well as the Task Force members on the progress they have done and welcomed their measurement strategies and action plans, and supported the outcome of the Expert Meeting held in Paris in November 2017;
 2. **Acknowledged** the work program for Task Force 4.6 and supported the possible projects recommended by the Task Force chair;
 3. **Emphasized** the importance of having concrete views and the need to involve countries in the discussion to know more about their perspective and priorities;
 4. **Expressed** its gratitude to the UIS for commissioning research studies such as the classification of inventory of literacy definitions provided by Scott Murray; and
 5. **Invited** the Task Force to consider the elaboration of a module of a global public good.

Decision 7: Measurement strategy proposals and work plans – Task Force 4.7

The GAML Plenary,

Having reviewed:

- *Measurement strategy and action plan for SDG Target 4.7 (proposal by GAML TF 4.7) (GAML4/17)*
1. **Congratulated** the Task Force chair and co-chair, namely, Mr Alexander Leicht, Dr Ximena Dueñas, and Ms Hoda Jaberian, as well as the Task Force members on the progress they have done and welcomed their measurement strategy and action plan.
 2. **Emphasized** the importance of having concrete views;
 3. **Acknowledged** the work program for Task Force 4.7 and noted the key challenges laid out by the Task Force members.

Decision 8: Interim reporting strategy

The GAML Plenary,

Having reviewed:

- *Framework for interim reporting (proposal by the Secretariat);*
 1. **Welcomed** the framework for interim reporting proposed by the Secretariat and the concrete guidelines proposed;
 2. **Agreed** with the approach taken in the interim reporting framework - which is to take advantage of existing efforts and building on top of that keeping as focus the long term view and the need to have these criteria as a beacon light
 3. **Agreed with** the defining principles for reporting laid out by the Secretariat, and coincided with the pragmatic approach taken in that respect;
 4. **Recognized** that an interim strategy promotes the highest level of participation and reporting by prioritizing a fit-for-purpose approach with an intensive use of annotation.
 5. **Highlighted** that the focus would be to take all efforts, regardless of whether they meet these criteria, and report those using annotations for those that do not meet all the criteria.
 - Non-ideal measures would be accepted;
 - Report data with annotations;
 - National non comparable data would be reported;
 - National benchmarks likewise are to be utilized; and
 - Solutions will be worked out with governments.
 6. **Specified** that data gaps are going to be filled with available data, provided the following are given to judge alignment:
 - Data on the indicator; and
 - Information about procedural decisions.
 7. **Acknowledged** the need to identify if further methodological work and data collection tools are required, encouraged the use of resources in that direction, and supported UIS' role in that respect;
 8. **Acknowledged** the UIS' detailed proposal about alternative reporting options for indicator 4.1.1 and the protocol for reporting, and recognized the concordance proposal mentioned;
 9. **Advised** to weigh on the risks of non-comparability embedded in interim reporting;



10. **Agreed** on the UIS implementing the protocol for reporting on indicator 4.1.1 and to complement the protocol with a quick guide to countries explaining and simplifying how reporting will work;
11. **Advised** the departure from a long-term view regarding indicator 4.2.1 by describing the learning domain and its ties to other domains;
12. **Encouraged** the definition of long-term criteria for indicator 4.4.2 that will act as guidance and allow footnoting and interim reporting;
13. **Advised** UIS to finalize the protocol for reporting indicator 4.6.1 based on the General Framework;
14. **Encouraged** the definition of long-term criteria for indicators 4.7.4 and 4.7.5 that will act as guidance and allow footnoting and interim reporting;
15. **Encouraged** UIS to implement the criteria laid out in the framework for all indicators as soon as possible starting with year 2018; and
16. **Emphasized** maximum participation from countries as one of the main objectives of the interim strategy, and urged further work to be carried out with this priority in mind.

Decision 9: Ways forward

The GAML Plenary,

Having reviewed:

- *SDG 4 monitoring: Framework development*;
1. **Welcomed** the actions plans laid out by the Task Force chairs and the Secretariat;
 2. **Approved** the measurement strategies and acknowledged the conceptual, methodological, and reporting frameworks laid out in them;
 3. **Agreed** on the approach of building on existing work and approved the idea of conceptual alignment;
 4. **Congratulated** UIS and partners on the effort for running global consultations for validating the frameworks;
 5. **Encouraged** more effort over the course of the coming months in agreeing on the global framework for reference and proficiency level descriptors;
 6. **Agreed** that the compilation and collection of the learning outcomes indicators will be based to the greatest extent possible on comparable and standardized national official statistics, provided by countries;
 7. **Stressed** that the implementation of the reporting frameworks will present a challenge in many countries and that appropriate efforts to strengthen national statistical capacities will need to be made; and
 8. **Acknowledged** the UIS effort in the development and implementation of the Catalogue of Learning Assessments.

Decision 10: Key messages

The GAML Plenary,

Agreed on the following key messages:

1. **For the TCG** to incorporate the costs of building on what exists in respect of national learning assessments and expanding coverage of cross-national assessments in its investment case for SDG 4 monitoring and to emphasise the role of cross-national assessments in capacity building and the bench-marking and strengthening of national assessment systems (US\$ 250 million every four years);
2. **For the Education 2030 Steering Committee** to adopt the TCG investment case for SDG 4 monitoring. If the GPE Board endorses learning assessment (and data) as priority thematic areas for the KIX platform, the case could be further promoted at the GPE Replenishment Conference on 2 February 2018. Funds could potentially be mobilized for the purpose of developing country capacity to build and sustain strong learning assessment systems, supporting regional assessment programs, linking regional and international benchmarks and developing tools to ensure data quality according to minimum standards and to support alignment under the auspices of GAML;
3. **For the Education 2030 Steering Committee** to encourage country's ownership of learning assessment and data more broadly, such as through partnership and inclusiveness at the national level, alignment with policy priorities and long term coordination of ongoing activities and to support country prioritisation of indicators according to context and national policy priorities;
4. **For the GPE** to consider as input the TCG/SC investment case for SDG 4 monitoring in its planning following the replenishment conference, and to support work in this domain at the national, regional and global levels, *pending decision on its board*; and
5. **For GAML and TCG** to prepare guidelines for national governments and development partners on how to ensure the SDG 4 monitoring indicators, especially the learning outcome indicators, are supported and funded in every national education plan and budget, every education loan and every education grant. These guidelines would serve a fundamental purpose that is twofold:
 - i. To align existing and new education strategies, loans, projects, technical assistance, training and funding to complement the investment in data collection taking a comprehensive capacity development approach that includes institutional strengthening for data analysis, data literacy to support evidence-based decisions; and
 - ii. To ensure the necessary funding of methodological development and innovation to strengthen the ability to build reliable, timely information and ensure the cost effectiveness of monitoring of learning outcomes, better coordination and the promotion of networking and peer learning mechanisms.

Decision 11: GAML4 Resolution

The GAML Plenary,

1. **Expressed its gratitude** to UIS staff, GAML Strategic Planning Committee, and Donors
2. **Emphasized** the importance of the close collaboration with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Governments of Canada and Quebec, Global Affairs Canada, The Government of Norway, The Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA), The Department for International Development (DFID), The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and **thanked them** for their continuous support to UIS and GAML;
3. **Recognized** the fruitful collaboration between UIS and GPE, and encouraged further partnership in the future;
4. **Welcomed** the consultations with experts and countries, and urged more technical dialogue and stakeholder involvement in the future; and
5. **Encouraged** the close dialogue with members of the Technical Co-operation Group (TCG).