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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Regional Benchmarking Consultation on SDG 4 and CESA 16-25

CONCEPT NOTE AND DRAFT AGENDA

Date:
25 February (Experts meeting)

Introduction

The Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016 – 2025 (CESA 16-25) is driven by the desire to set up a “qualitative system of education and training” to provide the African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values and therefore capable of achieving the vision and ambitions of the African Union. CESA 16-25 is a continental strategy that matches the 2016-2025 framework of the African Union 2063 Agenda, meets the Common African Position (CAP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and draws lessons from previous continental plans and strategies concerning the role and place of the AUC (AU) which, unlike member states, has no territory for the implementation of strategies in the field.

Thus, CESA 16-25 seeks to provide each education stakeholder with the opportunity to make his or her best contribution to education and training in Africa. It is the umbrella framework for which national education development plans are premised. The strategy is accompanied by an indicators framework, that sets a clear path on what the measurement, reporting and implementation priorities are.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the SDG 4 and the Education 2030 framework set several global priorities and direction for which the member states of the United Nations are to orient national education development plans and agenda.

About half of CESA indicators are identical to the SDG 4. However, since the member states of the African Union are also member states of the UN, the burden to respond to the two frameworks, considering the sets of different indicators specific to each framework is heightened.

The benchmarks have been recognized by the Education 2030 Framework for Action to achieve long-term goals concerning the responsibilities of stakeholders. Political commitment is essential for the adoption and monitoring of benchmarks at the regional level.

In 2019, the Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) for SDG 4 Indicators, whose purpose is to develop the SDG 4 monitoring framework, agreed at its 6th meeting on a set of seven indicators to be benchmarked (see table below).

The Global Education Meeting declaration in October 2020 requested ‘UNESCO and its partners ... [to] propose relevant and realistic benchmarks of key SDG 4 indicators for subsequent monitoring’ reiterating a commitment made in 2015 in the Framework for Action to establish “appropriate intermediate benchmarks (e.g. for 2020 and 2025)” for the SDG indicators.

A global benchmarking exercise for the SDG 4 indicators would naturally follow global standards. Those standards that may or may not necessarily resonate with the realities that occur in African education and social systems. The global monitoring effort and setting of benchmarks should take into consideration the existing regional, sub-regional and national development contexts and education frameworks.

Setting benchmarks cannot be done only at the global level, given the very large differences in starting points between Members states, this is a reason why the regional benchmark exercise has been formally adopted as part of the AUC CESA Clusters work plan 2020-2021.

During the first Regional Benchmarking Consultation on SDG 4 and CESA 16-25 held in October 2020, AUC presented its proposed CESA indicators to be matched with the 7 global indicators and steps for a political process to agree benchmarks at national and regional, a follow-up consultation to deliberate on actual positions and agreements, on what is possible or not at the level of the member states and RECs is planned.

This follow-up consultation is organized by the Pan African Institute for Education for Development (IPED) with support of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the Secretariat of the Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 – Education 2030 (TCG).

At this juncture, African stakeholders involved in Education development must meet to further deliberate on a common position on the selected SDG 4 indicators, and the CESA 16-25 specific indicators that shall feature in the continental/regional benchmarking process.

The Need for an African Position

Following the letter of intent signed between the African Union Commission (AUC/IPED) and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) towards implementing the outcomes of the Pan African Conference on Education in Africa (PACE 2018), efforts to align the data collection processes, reporting, monitoring and evaluation of the CESA and SDG 4 processes commenced. This alignment process is geared towards reducing the burden on the AU member states and to eliminate double reporting on similar indicators, and to reorient data management processes at member states level to easily and efficiently respond to the two frameworks.

The SDG 4 framework for action requests that benchmarks be set for selected indicators. However, at the AU member states level, there is a huge difference in starting points and defined minimums between countries. It is therefore important to initiate discussion to chart a pathway for setting benchmarks as minimum levels that can be achieved by our member states in all regions.

Furthermore, critical indicators of skills, and TVET as defined by the CESA framework are missing among the seven global indicators. They need to be mainstreamed throughout the entire regional benchmarking process. In addition, the COVID-19 and its impact on Africa's education systems are calling on all key education stakeholders to come up with Indicators that will reflect COVID and Post COVID-19 scenarios on teaching and learning.

CESA – SDG 4 Common Indicators

Although there are similar indicators present in the CESA and the SDG 4 and Education 2030 framework, definitions are different. For African member states to be able to

effectively respond and report on the two frameworks, and for national data management processes to be positioned for the same, a common platform for definitions and monitoring and evaluation must be established. The table below presents the preliminary assessments of the selected global indicators to be benchmarked and the corresponding strategic objectives and indicators of CESA.

S/N	SDG	CESA
1	Global indicator 4.1.1 Minimum learning proficiency in reading and mathematics (a) in grade 3; (b) at the end of primary education; and (c) at the end of lower secondary education achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading (ii) mathematics and (iii) science, by sex	SO 4: 4.5 Proportion of children and young people (a) in grade 3; (b) at the end of primary education; and (c) at the end of lower secondary education achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading (ii) mathematics and (iii) science, by sex
2	Global indicator 4.1.2 Completion rate	SO1: 4.1 Gross intake ratio for the final year of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary SO4: 4.7 Percentage of girls who complete secondary education (under development)
3	Thematic indicator 4.1.5 Out-of-school rate	SO5: 5.4 Girls' dropout rate per reason of drop out
4	Global indicator 4.2.2 Participation rate one year before primary	
5	Global indicator 4..c.1 Percentage of trained teachers	SO1: 1.1 Percentage of Teachers Qualified to Teach According to National Standards SO1: 1.2 Percentage of teachers qualified in Science or Technology or Engineering or Mathematics by Sex SO1: 1.4 Percentage of Teachers who have undergone In-Service Training (under development)
6	Education expenditure as share of budget and GDP i) Public Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of Total Government Expenditure ii) Public Current Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of Total Education Expenditure by level iii) Public Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of GDP	F.1 Public Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of Total Government Expenditure F.2 Public Current Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of Total Education Expenditure by level F.3 Public Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of GDP

7	Global indicator 4.5.1 [Equity indicator to be defined]	SO5: 5.1 Gender Parity Index for Gross Enrolment Ratio SO5: 5.2 Percentage of Female Teachers SO5: 5.3 Percentage of Female Head Teachers SO5: 5.4 Girls' dropout rate per reason of drop out SO5: 5.5 Percentage of girls enrolled to STEM
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Objective and expected outcome

The overall objective of the Regional Benchmarking Consultation on SDG 4 and CESA 16-25 is to consider the selected global indicators to be benchmarked and agree on an African position. Given the issues and the preliminary assessments of the indicators presented above, it is clear that consultation to reflect African priorities like issues bordering on TVET and skills is necessary amongst stakeholders.

Expected outcomes of the consultation are:

1. Update Experts from Members states and RECs, Ministers and foster a sense of ownership of benchmarks at the national and regional levels;
2. Engage member states and RECs and agree on the most realistic level for each of the indicators to be benchmarked;
3. Adopt the intermediate level of regional and national benchmark for 2020 and 2025
4. Document the national benchmarking trends and challenges of national benchmarking processes discussing on the CESA complementary data to be submitted;
5. Engage Members states and RECs on the joint CESA-SDG4 continental baseline report 2021 and the plan for future reports.

Participants:

The expected participants in the regional exercise are experts from member states and RECs, Ministers and partners involved in strengthening African Education Systems particularly UNESCO and ADEA, all Education planning cluster members.

Date and Venue:

The Regional Benchmarking Consultation on SDG 4 and CESA will be held virtually on February 25 for the experts.

Time:

11am to 4pm Central African Time (Kinshasa).

Organizers:

The Regional Benchmarking Consultation on SDG 4 and CESA is organised by AU/IPED with the support of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

Agenda:

TIME	ITEM	Responsible
11:00 – 11:30	Welcome Remarks by Commissioner for HRST (10 mins) Statement by Mr. Albert Nsengiyumva, Executive Secretary of ADEA (10 mins) Remarks by the Secretariat of the TCG: Mrs Sylvia Montoya, UIS Director and Mr Manos Antoninis, Global Education Monitoring Report Director (10 mins)	Dr. Mahama Ouedraogo
11:30 – 11:35	Adoption of Programme of Work	IPED
11:35 – 11:40	Presentation on the expected outcomes of the meeting	IPED
11:40 - 12:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Introduction to benchmarking and the regional process<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Why benchmarking?○ Reporting achievements against CESA-SDG4 frameworks: 2021, 2025, 2030	IPED
12:15 – 12:30	Presentations by RECs and DRC on SDG 4 and CESA reporting: DRC, ECOWAS, ECCAS, SADC, EAC	IPED
12:30 – 13:00	Discussions	IPED
13:00 – 13:30	Health Break	
13:30 – 14:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Indicators for benchmarking▪ Simulations of the benchmarks for the selected indicators	UIS/IPED
14:15 – 14:40	Discussions	IPED
14:40 – 14:50	Adoption of the recommendations to ministerial meeting	
14:50 - 15:00	Closing Remarks by Director HRST	IPED