

A call for action to raise political support for Education 2030

SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee meeting

11-12 March 2019, Paris, France



The 6th SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SC) meeting took place at the [UNESCO](#) Headquarters in Paris. The meeting focused on preparations for the review of [SDG 4](#) at the [2019 High-level Political Forum](#) (HLPF) in July 2019 under the theme, 'Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equity', as well as the UN General Assembly four-year review of all SDGs in September 2019.

The meeting was structured around the following themes –

1. Follow-up to the [Global Education Meeting 2018](#).
2. Implementation of SDG 4 at global, regional, and national levels.
3. Steering Committee Submission to HLPF 2019.
4. Special publication on SDG 4 on the occasion of the HLPF 2019.
5. Strategic planning for the SC.

Keep hammering the evidence that education equals progress across the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), urged UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, Stefania Giannini, an appeal echoed by top UN officials at the meeting.

"The Steering Committee is a global think tank for education. It has a political, technical, and advocacy responsibility to raise up education as a basic human right and key driver for sustainable development," she said. *"It is only through determination, cooperation, and engagement that we will succeed in moving forwards, leveraging the knowledge, capacities, and networks that each of you represents."*

Counting 32 Members, the Committee, co-chaired by UNESCO, is a unique consultation and coordination mechanism for education in the [2030 Sustainable Development Agenda](#). It brings together representatives from Member States, multilateral institutions, regional organisations, civil society networks, teacher organisations, foundations, private sector, and youth. ASPBAE attended as an Observer being an alternate to the [Arab Campaign for Education for All](#) (ACEA). Cecilia (Thea) Soriano attended on ASPBAE's behalf.



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The 6th Committee meeting, organised by UNESCO and co-chaired by Japan, took place at a crucial crossroads, ahead of the UN High-level Political Forum in July, which will review SDG 4, and the [SDG Summit](#) in September.

United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohamed, stressed in a video message, *"the importance of the Committee for guiding the implementation of SDG 4 and all its connections to the other 16 goals. This involves prioritising, collaborating, and advocating around a shared vision."*

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Speakers referred to the Brussels Declaration a means to rally and strengthen the education movement, and commended its emphasis on teachers, as well as on the inclusion of refugees, in education systems.

“Our imperative is clear: to mobilise the political will, policies, capacity, and financing that will make progress possible,” she said. “Each member of this Committee has a voice and a role. I urge you to keep the pressure on political leaders to show, in all the upcoming forums, that they are serious about meeting this challenge.”

Stephania Giannini stressed that the [Brussels Declaration](#), adopted at the [Global Education Meeting](#) (GEM) in Brussels in December 2018, provides the shared vision and direction to speak with one voice in this decisive year for education. She urged the education community to act in coordinated and concerted ways, warning that *“fragmentation can and never will be the solution.”*

A panel on follow-up to the Brussels meeting noted the positive ways in which the Brussels Declaration is informing policy, including at the EU level. Speakers referred to it as a *“practical tool and reference,”* a means to rally and strengthen the education movement, and commended its emphasis on teachers, as well as on the inclusion of refugees, in education systems. Presentations by Belgium, the Philippines, [UNHCR](#), [Education International](#) (EI), the [Arab Campaign for Education for All](#) (ACEA), and the Youth Representative detailed a rich picture of the follow-up actions in the first few months after the GEM 2018, while identifying opportunities and some challenges.

The panellists and SC members acknowledged the impetus provided by the Brussels Declaration for immediate action both within countries and communities, and at a regional level. It was also highlighted as one of the first global commitments on education that explicitly includes minority groups such as asylum seekers, refugees, and marginalized youth.

In a session on implementing SDG 4 at global, regional, and national levels, it was highlighted that the annual cost of investment in data to monitor SDG4 is \$280m, \$148m is considered spent, leaving a \$132m gap; of which \$60m is needed per year in low/middle income countries for learning assessments (75%) and household surveys (25%). Countries need both technical and financial assistance to report on the SDGs while donors tend to prioritise innovation and data for investment. To address this, the UN Statistical Commission, in March 2019, endorsed the UIS as broker between data demand and funding supply. The Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) is the one-stop technical reference for Member States and representatives from all regions (IAEG-SDGs) and international partners. The TCG develops SDG 4 indicator methodologies, standards, and guidelines as well as tools to implement and report.



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In a series of presentations, regional organisations and Member States explained how they are aligning policies and priorities with the SDG 4 agenda. Colombia’s Minister of National Education of Colombia, Maria Victoria Angulo Gonzalez, stated that the SDG agenda is pivotal for planning the education

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sector. She described her government's comprehensive approach to equity and inclusion, encompassing legal reforms, intersectoral strategies and programmes at all levels. These include the promotion of early childhood care and education, rural education, school nutrition, and attention to global citizenship in curricula.

Many national presentations highlighted the challenges of literacy, teacher training, curriculum innovation, skills training, migration, and financing. They noted the complexity of translating the broad scope of SDG 4 into policy and difficulties in meeting the demand for more and better data to monitor SDG 4 targets.

The SC discussed its joint submission to the HLPF, and key areas for engagement, joint work and advocacy, with a view to reinforcing coordination around SDG 4 at national, regional, and global levels.

This article draws on a Steering Committee Meeting report as well as on information appearing on the [UNESCO website](#).

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