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SUSTAINABLE  
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# Benchmarks for SDG 4 indicators:

## Fulfilling a neglected commitment



## Education 2030 Framework for Action

Called on countries to establish “appropriate intermediate **benchmarks** (e.g. for 2020 and 2025)” for the SDG indicators, seeing them as “indispensable for addressing the accountability deficit associated with longer-term targets” (§28).

Global Education Meeting, 2020 “We request UNESCO and its partners, together with the SDG Education 2030 Steering Committee, to ... accelerate the progress and propose relevant and realistic benchmarks of key SDG 4 indicators for subsequent monitoring” (§10).

# Objectives and principles of benchmarks

Three **objectives**:

- ▶ **Availability:** identify data gaps that hamper SDG 4 monitoring
- ▶ **Accountability:** assess progress relative to feasible trends
- ▶ **Accionability:** lead to data collection and policy responses

Five **principles**:

- ▶ **Fairness:** benchmarks values take SDG 4 aspirations, initial conditions and feasible progress into account
- ▶ **Efficiency:** data to support benchmarks are available for most countries, on regular basis and in timely way
- ▶ **Relevance:** indicators linked to national and regional agendas and assessment of progress linked to policy responses
- ▶ **Simplicity:** benchmarks understood by all
- ▶ **Transparency:** process is verifiable and communicated clearly

# Proposed benchmark indicators

7 indicators to benchmark were adopted by the TCG in 2019, which satisfy the principles of efficiency and relevance

- ▶ **4.1.1 Minimum learning proficiency in reading and maths**
- ▶ **4.1.2 Completion rate**
- ▶ **4.1.5 Out-of-school rate**
- ▶ **4.2.2 Participation rate one year before primary**
- ▶ **4.c.1 Trained teachers**
- ▶ **Education expenditure as share of GDP/total expenditure**
- ▶ **Equity indicator** (to be defined)

# Political process: why the regions?

For benchmarks to be sustainable, countries must own them. At regional level countries have more dialogue opportunities. (Sub-)regional organizations can align global and regional education agendas to avoid duplication. They need to::

- ▶ **confirm** willingness to support a benchmarking process
- ▶ **coordinate** with organizations where memberships overlap
- ▶ **identify** timeline of consultation and other steps leading to approval of benchmarks
- ▶ **communicate** steps to TCG to develop a global roadmap
- ▶ **request** technical support, where necessary

Two aspects of **flexibility** in the process:

- ▶ any willing regional organization can lead the process
- ▶ regional organizations may set additional benchmarks

# Technical issues: Two Perspectives

## Approach 1

- Common benchmark for all countries in a region = equal to the feasible progress a country can make (e.g. country furthest behind, in bottom 25% etc.)
- more meaningful in homogeneous (sub-)regions

## Approach 2

- Different benchmark for each country = based on its initial condition and a measure of feasible progress based on past observations (e.g. progress of average country, of fastest 25% etc.)

## Regional Process of defining Regional benchmarks

- **Regional Consultation – 22 October 2020, UNESCO Bangkok and UIS**
- **Further discussed with sub regional bodies- SEAMEO, ASEAN, SPC and SAARC (mobilization of the regional and sub regional interest, mapping of existing frameworks and integrate benchmarks process within the frameworks) - 23-27 October 2020**
- **Presented very first ideas of process of Regional benchmarks for Asia and Pacific, 27-29 Oct, TCG Meeting**

# Technical Process of Setting Regional Benchmarks

- **Technical team has been established**
- **Meeting between TCG ( Co-chairs- UIS, GEMR) and Technical team to decide the process of technical work**
- **Scenario preparation and communique on benchmarks process ( work in progress)**
- **Consultation with countries through sub regional and regional meetings**



# Steps / anticipated meetings to reach a ministerial/higher level decision on benchmarks

## South East Asia

### **SEAMEO**

- High Officials Meeting (HOM/Vice Ministers Meeting) – 30 November 2020
- SEAMEO Councils of Ministers Meeting – Singapore, May 30, 2021

### **ASEAN**

- The proposal of setting up benchmarks will be presented to Senior Official Meeting of Education (SOMED) – 18 November 2020

## South Asia ( SAARC )

- Education Ministerial Meeting in Nepal- end of 2021

## Pacific

- Forum Education Ministers' Meetings (FEdMM)                      March 2021
- Pacific Heads of Education Systems (PHES)                      March 2021

***For East Asian Countries, we are still in consultation identify the forums to engage with countries to discuss on the process***

# Future events to discuss benchmarks in the region

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- Forthcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> Asia Pacific Regional Education Ministerial Conference (APREMC-II), 2nd Quarter of 2021 (Political Level)
- Asia Pacific SDG-4 Coordinators' Meeting on Education in 2021 (Technical Level)

**Final Regional Benchmarks will be presented in General Conference for endorsement, November 2021**



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