

## Learning and Education 2030+ – Asia and the Pacific

### Terms of Reference

#### 1. Background:

The United Nations Development System (UNDS) reform mandated by the General Assembly of the United Nations in Resolution of 31 May 2018 aims to reposition the UN development system as a cohesive, accountable and an effective partner to the Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The reform aims to establish a system to streamline and synergize capacities and resources that fit for purpose and meet the opportunities and challenges presented by the Sustainable Development 2030 Agenda.

In the proposed restructuring, the Regional Collaborative Platform (RCP) will be the central platform for collaboration and provide a responsive and coherent support to national level activities in support of the 2030 Agenda. The RCP will be supported by four major groups (See Annex I):

- 1) Issue-based Coalitions (IBC),
- 2) Means of Implementation and Reporting Group,
- 3) Country Support Group, and
- 4) Networking Groups.

This reform necessitates the need to revisit the key functions and roles of existing Thematic Working Groups (including the one on Education 2030+, co-chaired by UNESCO and UNICEF), that operated within the framework of the Asia and Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) since 2016.

In response to this ongoing UNDS reform of the coordination structure in Asia and the Pacific region, UNESCO and UNICEF convened a meeting with Heads of concerned UNAFIP agencies to discuss how the Regional Thematic Working Group (RTWG) – Education 2030+ could be integrated into the new RCP structure under the UN reform at the regional level to systematically link and advance the education agenda of SDG4 with other related SDGs and key cross-cutting issues and priorities, such as health.

As a result of the consultation, it is proposed to establish a new Network Group on *Learning and Education 2030+* in the new UN coordination mechanism. The group will build on the work of the TWG on Education 2030+. The word 'Learning' was specifically added to emphasize and promote various ways of learning within and beyond the traditional education system including the cognitive stimulation and early learning of young children, non-formal, alternative forms of learning, lifelong learning and skills development, distance learning often supported by technology in times of emergencies and disruptions, etc. The activities of this Network Group are now even more essential given the impact of COVID-19 on learning future implications for , especially for the most disadvantaged learners.

The new Network Group on *Learning and Education2030+* will include other non-UN stakeholders under the co-chairmanship of UNESCO and UNICEF. Furthermore, the group will serve as a bridge between the Global Steering Committee and SDG4 country interventions.

The inter-linkages between and among Sustainable Development Goals require going beyond the usual approach to coordination. Therefore, this new group aims to ensure that its effort will contribute not only to education but also to the overall advancement of other education-related SDGs such as poverty alleviation (SDG1), good health and wellbeing (SDG3), gender equality (SDG5), decent work (SDG8), disaster risk reduction and climate change (SDG13) and conflict (SDG16).

Aside from its role within the RCP structure, the Learning and Education2030+ Network Group will continue to be the focus group for monitoring progress towards SDG4 across the Asia-Pacific region. Specifically, it will continue to provide a platform for policy makers, development partners and other education stakeholders to discuss SDG4, through high-level meetings and advocacy activities on existing and emerging new challenges affecting progress towards SDG4 targets, such as the recent response to COVID-19 and the impact of climate change and political instability, etc.

The Learning and Education 2030+ Network Group will also continue to support a number of related groups which are represented and part of the Learning 2030+ TWG, namely the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC); the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI); the Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group (MLE WG); the Asia-Pacific Disability-Inclusive Education Working Group (IDEA-P) and two new groups on Digitization and Learning, and School Health, Nutrition and Well-being.

## **2. Purpose**

To facilitate and support the accelerated implementation of 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) – Education 2030, in countries across the Asia and Pacific region.

The work will be guided by the following key principles:

- Stronger cooperation and connection among country-regional-global levels of action
- Enhancement of cross-sectoral collaboration and partnerships
- Engagement with a variety of stakeholders/members beyond the UN system

## **3. Functions:**

The group will primarily function to lead and/or support relevant activities in the following four key areas:

### **(a) Mapping and stocktaking**

- i. Map and take stock of progress as well as persisting and emerging gaps/disparities in access to, and the quality of, education and learning, as well as other cross-cutting areas which affect progress in education

- ii. Periodically map relevant regional and national level capacity needs and facilitate/coordinate capacity building activities.
- iii. Exchange and share information/resources/documents on the implementation of SDG4 related activities and programmes in the region.
- iv. Monitor and report on regional progress toward SDG4 targets.
- v. Routinely assess the group's organization and functioning (relevance and effectiveness) and adjust as necessary.

(b) Analysis and publications

- i. Carry out the systematic dissemination of promising practices and information sharing for joint advocacy;
- ii. Conduct and co-publish joint research and publications covering regional trends and themes addressed by global and regional stakeholder communities of SDGs 4;
- iii. Develop joint policy briefs on education (SDG 4-Education 2030) and cross-cutting, thematic areas.

(c) Events and programme planning

- i. Establish priority areas for cooperation and undertake joint planning and implementation of regional programmes and events; create platforms for the development of shared priorities, joint planning and action, and the promotion of synergies;
- ii. Organize regional launches of global reports on education (e.g., the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report);
- iii. Coordinate engagement in the process leading up to major regional conferences (Asia and Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 – APMED2030, Asia-Pacific Regional Education Ministers Conference – APREMC).

(d) Partnership building

- i. Undertake joint initiatives in resource mobilization for regional projects;
- ii. Coordinate partnerships with CSO, NGOs, youth groups and the media;
- iii. Coordinate and link with networks, working groups and flagships (see below for details);
- iv. Coordinate engagement with RCs and UNCTs;
- v. Contribute to the production of CCA/UNDAF as relevant;
- vi. Ensure coordinated engagement with selected sub-regional forums (e.g., SEAMEO, ASEAN, SAARC, SPC); Maintain regular communication with the RCP Secretariat and support engagement with Issues Based Coalitions (IBCs).

**4. Membership and Group Operation:**

- Co-Chairs: by the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Bangkok) and UNICEF (the East Asia and Pacific Regional Office: EAPRO, and the Regional Office for South Asia: ROSA).
- Members: The core participants of Learning and Education2030+ will consist of multi-stakeholders including UN and multilateral organizations, sub-regional forums, global funds for education and multilateral banks, regional networks, NGOs/ CSOs,

- intergovernmental bodies, regional/international financial institutions, and research and education institutions. The group will review and expand participation as appropriate.
- Secretariat: UNESCO Bangkok will serve as the secretariat of Learning and Education2030+.
  - Frequency of meetings: The group will meet as often as necessary, but at least two times per year.
  - The group will report on its activities and recommendations at the scheduled RCP meetings as appropriate.
  - Each member shall be represented in the working group by its head and/or designated focal point. Cost of participation, when and where applicable, will be covered by each participating agency.

#### **5. Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- The group will routinely assess its organization and functioning and adjust as necessary.
- A more detailed assessment of the group's relevance and effectiveness will be conducted prior to the completion of two years.
- The report of findings from the routine and detailed assessments will be presented to the group members, the RCP, UNICEF EAPRO and ROSA and UNESCO Bangkok.

#### **6. Funding:**

- Learning and Education 2030+ will be hosted by UNESCO; UNESCO and UNICEF staff will provide pro-bono support to ensure that the group works effectively; group members and other donors may contribute funds for specific events.

#### **7. Sub-groups and related regional networks that coordinate with Learning and Education2030+:**

Currently, the following two sub-groups, MLE WG and IDEA-P are functioning under the existing RTWG Education2030+ and will be incorporated into Learning and Education2030+. However, it was proposed to establish two additional new sub-groups to reflect regional needs and address the emerging issues.

##### **(a) Sub-groups:**

- Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group (MLE WG)
- Asia-Pacific Disability Inclusive Education Working Group (IDEA-P)
- Working group on Digitization and Learning Working Group
- Working group on School Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing
- Asia-Pacific Thematic Working Group on Adolescent and Youth Education, Learning and Skills Development

##### **(b) Regional networks:**

- Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC)
- Network on Education Quality Monitoring in Asia-Pacific (NEQMAP)
- United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)