Sectoral position paper related to the theme of the 2018 High-Level Political Forum

"Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies - the contribution of education"

Executive Summary

Education is the most sustainable, long-term driver of social, economic and environmental justice and for fostering transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. The Sustainable Development Goals reviewed by the High Level Political Forum in 2018 rely on education for their realization and are at the same time determinant to the realization of Goal 4.

Free, quality education is crucial for breaking cycles of poverty and transforming societies, placing SDG4 at the heart of the Sustainable Development Agenda. To implement the latter, cross-sectoral relationships and interrelated policymaking are necessary —in line with Goal 17. Civil Society Organizations that work to promote the right to education have recognized this; networks have broadened, and cross-sectoral dialogues are achieving positive change.

Education and the SDGs under review in the 2018 HLPF:[1]

- Goal 6: Education and training increase skills and the capacity to use natural resources more sustainably and can promote hygiene.
- Goal 7: Educational programmes, particularly non-formal and informal, can promote better energy conservation and uptake of renewable energy sources.
- Goal 11: Education can give people the skills to participate in shaping and maintaining more sustainable cities, and to achieve resilience in disaster situations.
- Goal 12: Education can make a critical difference to production patterns (e.g. with regard to the circular economy) and to consumer understanding of more sustainably produced goods and prevention of waste.
- Goal 15: Education and training increase skills and capacity to underpin sustainable livelihoods and to conserve natural resources and biodiversity, particularly in threatened environments.
- Goal 16: Social learning is vital to facilitate and ensure participative, inclusive and just societies, as well as social coherence.

Progress has been witnessed in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular of SDG4, in some countries, along with efforts to align targets with national policies and legislations. Furthermore, we have seen the development of follow-up and monitoring mechanisms take shape at the national level, as well as at the global level, as can be exemplified by the work of the *Global Education Monitoring Report* and the establishment of accountability mechanisms, including the Sustainable Development Goal 4-Education 2030 Steering Committee. Analogous mechanisms have also taken shape in several regions of the world.

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[1] Source: ICSU and ISSC (2015).

Yet bottlenecks exist, particularly in a context of protracted and deepening crises and increasingly insular government policy. The financing of the Sustainable Development Goals has proven challenging. To deliver SDG4, domestic budgets remain insufficient, and in some cases have even decreased, and reductions in official development assistance have not helped. At the same time, proposals to close the financing gap through loans have been put forward, pointing to a worrying and unfitting return of the debt motif. A combination of increased domestic resources, particularly through mechanisms of tax justice at the national and international levels, and increased international cooperation are necessary to make the implementation of the agenda fully viable. Furthermore, lack of sufficient resource allocation to SDG4 by governments, has given rise to increasing privatization in some countries, with reports of for-profit actors taking advantage of gaps in public provision, undermining the responsibility of the State as the duty bearer for the 2030 Agenda.

Despite the participatory climate in which the SDGs were developed, often the doors have since closed to civil society and we have seen cases of rising criminalization of social protest. Citizens must have their perspective considered in decision-making and monitoring processes —as implied in the SDG Agenda.

A further challenge lies in the measurement and accountability processes. Civil society can contribute by actively engaging in the debate on indicators and data production, as well as in the debate on data transparency and publication, and in some cases with data collection, including by mobilizing the academia. Furthermore, we are seeing a predominance of attention attributed to several global education indicators that reduce the agenda to measures of testing, which fails the ambition of SDG 4 to deliver quality education, and of the full set of SDGs to ensure a fulfilling life for all.

Furthermore, bottlenecks related to education policy making have been identified, including: insufficient attention to gender equality; the persistence of violence, conflict and situations of emergencies; a narrowing of the broad SDG4 agenda with neglect to youth and adult education, and insufficient attention to the conditions and status of teachers.

The recommendations of the EASG include:

(a) Credible road maps must be developed for each Sustainable Development Goal; for SDG4, these must explicitly provide for education that is of quality, equitable, inclusive and free;
(b) States must deliver their responsibility to finance the Goals; for SDG4, this should be as detailed within the Education 2030 Framework for Action;
(c) Education systems must be supported to respond to the challenges of the future; human rights, sustainable development and global citizenship should be mainstreamed across curricula, teaching and learning methods and materials, assessment, and teacher training and support measures.
(d) Citizen participation in accountability at all levels must be enabled;
(e) Voluntary national reviews should include formal space for reporting by representative national civil society.

FULL CONTRIBUTION

Education is the most sustainable, long-term driver of social, economic and environmental justice and for fostering transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. Free, quality education is crucial for breaking cycles of poverty and transforming societies, placing SDG4 at the heart of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Education is a fundamental human right and an enabling right that promotes all other social, economic, cultural, political and civil rights. In this sense, SDG4 underpins the entire SDG Agenda. All Goals reviewed by the 2018 High-level Political Forum (Goals 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15) both rely on education for their realization and are determinant to the realization of SDG4, such is the interrelated, indivisible nature of the SDG Agenda. Education can play a major part in the required transformation for environmentally sustainable societies, shaping values and perspectives and contributing to the development of knowledge, concepts, technologies and solutions that can be used to this end. This is true concerning water availability and sustainable management and sanitation for all; accessible, reliable and sustainable energy for all; inclusive, safe and resilient cities and human settlements; sustainable consumption and production patterns; and protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.

SDG4, through its emphasis on equitable and inclusive education, entails that everyone must be able to access and complete a full cycle of quality, inclusive and free education, with special consideration to girls and women. The right of all learners to realize their full educational potential must start at birth and continue through all stages of life, including early childhood, primary education, lower and upper secondary education, higher education and beyond, in the context of lifelong learning. It implies that multiple forms of discrimination and violence should be overcome, in and through education. It also implies that public education systems should be strengthened, with public resources financing public education, including those from ODA, and that privatization trends, evidenced across the globe, which consolidate social segregation, should be halted. In a context of growing crises and conflicts, the right to education must be especially ensured for those most affected: marginalised girls and boys, youth and adults.

EDUCATION IS CRUCIAL FOR A FUNCTIONING JUSTICE SYSTEM and SOCIETIES

The rule of law is a critical component for the realization of all human rights, and for the entire SDG Agenda. Education plays a critical role to this end, considering the importance of awareness raising, critical thinking and education for citizenship and peace to ensure a more equitable justice system, build capacity in judicial and law enforcement, foster less violent and more democratic societies, increase understanding of the links between cultures, economy and environment, and prioritize actions that improve the lot of future generations.

We draw attention to Target 4.6, which looks at adult literacy, as often this drops out of governmental priorities, both in terms of policy development and financial attributions. This target underlies the importance not only of ensuring literacy and numeracy skills proficiency, but also the ability to use the latter to strengthen democracies, the rule of law and peaceful resolution of conflict.

EDUCATION RESPONDS TO AND OVERCOMES ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Education is an enabling human right, which is why it is called upon to build knowledge and enhance diverse capacities that protect and promote relations of equality, justice, solidarity and good living. For this reason, human-rights based education seeks a paradigm shift as a condition to move towards

sustainable societies, with social and environmental justice, where the economy is a means to achieve well-being and not an end in itself.

At the same time, education can only play this crucial role if enjoying adequate financing as well as investment in both quality and relevance. This implies progressive and profound transformations, promoting human rights, gender equality and social justice across all educational levels and modalities. It also seeks to develop knowledge on sustainable development, including environmental protection, according to the characteristics of each country and location, with the participation of communities and local development organizations, within the framework of national and local policies and plans on the subject, as well as making available, accessible, adaptable and acceptable resources and educational opportunities for sustainability and environmental justice. In practice, this requires the full mainstreaming of human rights, sustainable development and global citizenship across curricula, teaching and learning methods and materials, assessment and teacher training. Supporting teachers in this regard is particularly important for the sustainability of such transformative change, in part through in-service training.

The ecological crises that humanity faces are not limited to environmental problems and require first addressing the inequality conditions of predatory political and economic systems. The Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) underlines that "we must act with a sense of heightened urgency, and with long-term commitment. Failure to do so will not only adversely affect education but will hamper progress towards each and every development goal, including more equal and inclusive societies".

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As already pointed out, education plays a major part in the required transformation for more environmentally sustainable societies, shaping values and perspectives and contributing to the development of knowledge, concepts, technologies and solutions that can be used to this end. Furthermore, the goals under review also play a critical role in the promotion of SDG4, considering the indivisible and interdependent nature of all SDGs, as detailed below.

Education and Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

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[2] Source: ICSU and ISSC (2015).

The availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation requires, as a necessary precondition, educational systems that promote awareness regarding the social inequalities in the access to knowledge and management of these resources. Target 4.7 brings attention to human rights education, global citizenship education as well as education for sustainable development, allowing for this expanded awareness and commitment on environmental sustainability and sustainable patterns of consumption and production. We call for a rights-based implementation of SDG6 and other water-related targets that recognises, promotes, and strengthens community-based water resource management to empower local and resilient communities to protect watersheds and ensure an equitable and sustainable distribution of water resources.

More specifically, improving water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in education institutions can have significant positive effects on health and education outcomes, especially for girls and women. Yet only 71% of primary schools had adequate water supply in 2013, and the figure was just 52% in the 49 least developed countries. School-based interventions can provide information on health and lead to behavioral change. Many water, sanitation and menstrual hygiene interventions in schools improve health and economic and gender equity.

Education and Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Environmental education encourages sustainable lifestyles, waste reduction, improved energy use, increased public transport use, support for pro-environment policies, and environmental activism. Some schools have adopted a 'whole school' approach to environmental education. Research shows improvements in the schools' ethos and students' health and learning, and reductions in the schools' ecological footprints.

Education for environmental sustainability must be addressed standing on the assumption that consumption should never put at risk environmental quality or people's health. Consumption habits that swell the industrial capital gains -whether green or not- are generally supported by global trading systems, in which people are induced to acquire superfluous goods and are usually considered customers rather than citizens.

Economic growth should not be considered an aspiration per se either, because it does not always benefit impoverished populations and because the wealth distribution is often inequitable. Growth should never jeopardize the quality of life or the access to opportunities, and the technological modernization that can bring about clean energy, should be guided by the criteria of equality, solidarity and fight against poverty. These values are cultivated in human-rights based education systems.

Education and Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

The scale and speed of urban change requires good governance, flexibility and innovation. Education should be integrated into urban planning so that the educational needs and rights of all are met as urban populations change. Notwithstanding, the education sector is largely missing from key urban development discussions. Education stakeholders and urban leaders need stronger advocacy and engendered leadership if education is to gain a seat in discussions on the future of cities.

At the same time, it is necessary to deepen the revaluation of rural environments and cultures, especially indigenous ones, in order to recognize the enormous diversity of communities. Urban environments are often considered paradigms of development and this belief many times produces a negative impact on the attention of peripheral communities. For everyone to benefit from economic and social opportunities in their communities, universal access to information is required. Education and training, notably in the skills needed for the jobs of the future, is a priority. Equal access to technology must be ensured, particularly targeting populations living in poverty.

Schools should be considered centers of development and community articulation, where knowledge that drives good living is cultivated. Security and resilience depend on ancestral knowledge about the environment and customs, which is why educational systems must respond to their contexts and enhance the culturally based responses from communities.

Population growth and migration shapes demand for basic education, lifelong learning, skills development and male and female teachers, and increases the need to foster social cohesion and respect for cultural diversity through education, including for slum dwellers, migrants and refugees. There is a significant need to consolidate public education systems, increasing the number of schools while ensuring inclusivity, gratuity and accessibility. Urban education systems that receive forcibly displaced girls, boys and youth need to adapt to support their long-term integration — particularly as the global refugee crisis is deepening- including a focus on skills development. Continuing education and skills development for people in the informal economy must be accessible to enable them to get decent work.

Education and Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Education and lifelong learning are needed to ensure production and consumption patterns are sustainable, as well as to supply skills for the creation of green industry, orient higher education and research towards green innovation and to play a part in transforming key economic sectors, such as agriculture, upon which both rich and poor countries and households rely. DG12 must also be integrated into sectoral plans and sustainable business practices, supported by educational programs which enhance consumer awareness by providing greater transparency and information on products and services.

Education is vital for sustainable food production and food security. Education gives future farmers foundation skills as well as critical knowledge about sustainability challenges in agriculture. Vocational training and skills policies bridge the gap between farmers and new technology. Literacy and agricultural extension programmes can help farmers increase productivity, while agricultural research connected with tertiary education helps produce innovation leading to increased sustainability. Yet many countries and donors have halted or reduced investment in such research.

Through information and consumer education, people will be able to contribute towards consumption patterns in harmony with nature. We call for consumers to have access to information about the impacts of the products they consume in order for them to be informed and lead sustainable lifestyles. Governments must invest in consumer education and awareness raising on sustainable consumption in schools, community learning centers, libraries and other means of information dissemination. The private sector should be held accountable in providing information on the products they produce for consumption of the people. We call on governments to regulate the private sector and enforce the provision of accessible information for consumers on the social, animal protection, and environmental impacts of a product and its packaging throughout its lifecycle.

Education and Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Local and indigenous knowledge have contributed to ecosystem functioning, disaster early warning systems, and climate change adaptation and resilience. Traditional – especially indigenous – knowledge in such areas as agriculture, food production and conservation has played an important role in environmental sustainability for centuries. Numerous examples of indigenous communities' traditional land management practices, particularly those led by women, are becoming recognized globally as excellent approaches for conserving biodiversity and maintaining ecosystem processes. These approaches should be disseminated widely and adopted in local contexts through education

programs in schools and communities targeting all children, youth and adults in the communities. Governments should provide educational programmes in schools and communities that reduce demand for wildlife products and promote harmony with nature.

Learning is a factor of life, it is a system of organization that integrates all ecological phenomena. Learning involves cognitive processes that project and feed on culture and society and are developed and stimulated through education. Education gives a holistic meaning to learning and for this reason education is a reference of life and, even more, a stimulus of life. According to the above, education has an undoubtable ethical, philosophical and scientific legitimacy and that is why the right to education not only constitutes a guarantee for humanity, but a foundation for ecology and development.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE SDGs IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EDUCATION CIVIL SOCIETY

There seem to be efforts to align SDG targets with national policies, for education and other SDGs, and education activists are taking the initiative to accelerate this by providing forward-thinking proposals to governments and raising awareness of the SDGs with citizens. It is also clear that the global infrastructure developed to support the 2000-2015 Education For All goals and the subsequent Education 2030 Framework for Action have enabled ongoing monitoring of SDG4 through the Global Education Monitoring Report and the swift establishment of accountability mechanisms, including the Education 2030 Steering Committee. However, there have also been threats to established and effective mechanisms, with proposals being put to the UN for their replacement by new fora, which are neither democratic nor representative, and do not afford space to broad-based civil society.

However, obstacles regarding the implementation have been encountered:

1) Financing of the SDGs has proven challenging. To deliver SDG4, it is necessary to increase significantly investments in the foundational elements of quality education, including qualified male and female teachers, and safe learning environments. However, domestic budgets remain insufficient to provide these and other public services of quality – and reductions in ODA have not helped. A combination of increased domestic resources, tax justice at national and international levels and increased international cooperation are necessary to make the implementation of the agenda truly viable. Domestic resource mobilization should be a priority for every State – not only to achieve the goals, but to do so in a sustainable way. Yet there has been reluctance from the international community to create mechanisms to support or encourage governments to increase their domestic resource bases – for example by establishing a global tax platform. Developing countries must expand their domestic tax base (to at least 20% of GDP), and for education, increase the share of spending on this sector (to at least 20% of budgets), progressing to at least 6% of GDP, and ensuring resources are closely scrutinized and spent sensitively to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and equitability of public education systems. At the international level, additional efforts are needed to support reforms to domestic tax systems and to develop a globally inclusive inter-governmental body that is empowered and resourced to set and enforce fair global tax rules. Education civil society strongly recommends that bilateral donors increase ODA (towards 0.7% global target), commit at least 30 percent of their education aid to support multilateral efforts, and ensure they are supporting the countries and populations most in need.

2) Challenges specific to civil society include increased and consistent CSO engagement in debate and decision making. Despite the participatory climate in which the SDGs were developed, doors have often closed to civil society. While ground is seemingly gained in participatory regional and international fora, simultaneously civil society is being squeezed out of national decision-making processes. The education civil society movement has recognized the criticality of joint working; at national, regional and global levels, networks have developed and

broadened. Nevertheless, civil society working nationally on individual goals has often found itself marginalized in SDG accountability spaces, which has been the case for education activists in several Voluntary National Review countries this year. Although governments agreed to work with civil society on planning and implementation of SDG4 at international level, civil society frequently does not have adequate space to engage in planning, monitoring and evaluation processes nationally. The available, yet limited, opportunities are often acquired by international organizations and large-scale NGOs. Therefore, education networks are increasingly seeking out opportunities to participate in multi-sectoral platforms, while also inviting organizations from different sectors to participate in dialogue and joint action, which is yielding results. Cross-sectoral dialogues have been initiated which are already achieving positive change.

Citizens must have a voice in all decision-making process which impacts on their lives – this is embedded in the SDGs themselves, and States must be held to account when citizens are denied this.

3) An ongoing challenge lies in the measurement and accountability processes. The global indicators framework and collection of stronger and disaggregated data are crucial to ensuring that the SDGs are delivering, particularly for the most marginalized. Civil society can contribute here, with community-based, citizen-collected data.

Several of the education indicators – at all levels – are reducing the agenda to measures of testing. This links to a much broader obstacle in delivering SDG4: the erosion of the defined and agreed vision of quality, inclusive and free education. The 2015 World Education Forum in Incheon, Korea, defined quality education as one that *"fosters creativity and knowledge and ensures the acquisition of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills. It also develops the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges…".*

The Education 2030 Framework for Action further states: *"This requires relevant teaching and learning methods and content that meet the needs of all learners, taught by well-qualified, trained, adequately remunerated and motivated teachers, using appropriate pedagogical approaches and supported by appropriate information and communication technology (ICT), as well as the creation of safe, healthy, gender-responsive, inclusive and adequately resourced environments that facilitate learning."*

Education systems that are directed towards standardized testing, often in literacy and numeracy only, reduces the scope of the education provided, and directly threatens the contribution of education to the broader achievement of SDG 4 as well as the other SDGs. States have committed to delivering this aforementioned definition of quality education, yet the diminishment of the role and voice of critical actors in education, the reduction in financing, and an overemphasis on testing, all pose threats to this. The more reductive global indicators for SDG4 fail its ambition to deliver quality education and fail the ambition of all the SDGs to ensure that everyone enjoys fulfilling lives.

These obstacles are slowing down delivery, and in education, this has given rise to increasing privatization in some countries. Specifically, civil society groups report that for-profit actors are taking advantage of gaps in public provision, establishing and expanding chains of 'low-fee' private schools, sometimes with the support of local or national governments. This plainly contradicts the commitment in Target 4.1 to the provision of free and universal education and undermines and diminishes the responsibility of the state as the duty bearer for the 2030 agenda.

EASG´s recommendations for the SDG implementation

- Regarding education, it will be important to retain coherence with the human rights paradigm, challenging those discourses of global education policy which reduce human beings to human capital and focus only on economic rates of return, and open the door to profit-making.

- Furthermore, it will be important to achieve relevant, inclusive and robust national and local education systems that mirror the societies in which they operate. To do so, education must respond to its community, rather than forcing its students and learners into a one-size-fits-all education model. In this sense, crucial to the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies is acknowledging cultural diversity, moving away from homogenizing patterns which deny diversities and identities which lead to multiple forms of discrimination and exclusions within education systems and beyond.

- Quality education, that is inclusive and equitable, promotes the overcoming of multiple forms of discrimination and of violence and entails global citizenship and care for others and for the environment, all of which is paramount to ensure no-one is left behind. At the heart of quality education, we must have qualified and motivated male and female teachers and other education workers, supported through decent working conditions. Education workers must be recognized as agents critical to structural change which leads to equality and inclusion.

- Necessary resources must be made available for the accomplishment of the SDG agenda, including the full spectrum of SDG4 targets, to ensure quality and inclusive education for all - and especially for those hardest to reach, such as out-of-school children, youth and adult who cannot read or write, and all above-mentioned discriminated groups. Girls and women needs, and rights should be in the heart of the quality inclusive education. Governments must allocate maximum available resources, and never less than 4-6% of GDP and 15-20% of public expenditure, as established in the Education 2030 Framework for Action.

Overall, ensuring the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies requires strengthened public education systems which provide quality, inclusive and equitable education and learning opportunities for all children, youth and adults. At the heart of this must be a valued education community (encompassing both students/learners and teachers/educators), adequate public financing, and transparent and participatory governance of the education system, including the management of schools and learning institutions. Marginalized sectors and those left behind must be represented in policy-making and evaluation processes at national, local and school levels. Privatization of education, including most public-private partnership arrangements, discriminates against the poor, exacerbates inequality and promotes segregation based on socio-economic status, gender, location, and learning abilities. Governments must adopt clear and effective regulatory frameworks and enforce regulations on private sector engagement in education that will ensure non-discrimination, equity, and the right to education.

Finally, the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group makes the following recommendations to accelerate SDG implementation:

National level:

- SDGs must be integrated into national plans, sector strategies and budgets.
- States must deliver their responsibility to finance the SDGs; for education, the targets of at least 6% of GDP/20% of domestic budget must be met in developing countries as detailed in the Education 2030 Framework for Action, and donor countries must increase ODA (towards 0.7% global target), committing at least 30% of their education aid to support multilateral efforts.

- Donor countries should align their bilateral funding priorities with recipient countries' development plans and budgets during SDG implementation. Alignment should be driven by a collective vision that includes all stakeholders, and the process of planning and policy change should be participative, inclusive and transparent.
- Public institutions must be strengthened and empowered to deliver the agenda in an inclusive, transparent and participatory manner:
  - National coordination mechanisms could be established, or existing mechanisms could be tasked with the responsibility to strengthen inter-agency, inter-ministerial and/or cross-departmental work. This should include formal spaces for engagement of civil society alongside strengthened social dialogue with representatives of the teaching profession.
  - For education, education ministries must be involved and empowered, and in countries where a Local Education Group exists, it could serve as the representative body with multi-stakeholder participation on education and should be connected to the SDG architecture.
  - Existing accountability institutions (independent national human rights institutions, parliaments and audit institutions) should be mandated to monitor government progress towards the SDGs, with input from and the participation of citizens.
  - Students and youth-led organizations should be encouraged to actively participate in monitoring and decision making opportunities.
- Conduct regular and participative reviews, irrespective of whether the country is participating in the VNR process. Governments should seek the views of groups that are the furthest behind and provide modalities for meaningful input and participation. Information about upcoming reviews/outcomes should be published in a timely manner and accessible formats, including in local languages.
- Provide an enabling environment for citizens to participate in accountability processes. Governments must guarantee the rights to freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly and access to information in law and practice. Mechanisms to build awareness and mobilise popular support for the SDG agenda would strengthen social accountability.

Regional level:

- Regional deliberations should be open and transparent, and reflect the modalities adopted for the HLPF, enabling the formal participation of civil society across each goal. CSO participation must be meaningful and contribute to a culture of collaboration.
- Regional accountability tools and mechanisms, such as regional observatories, peer review, or other measures to track progress, identify gaps, challenges and lessons learned should be established and supported. Links with existing rights-based regional governance frameworks and regional human rights mechanisms should be strengthened, with inputs from these bodies incorporated into the regional review process.

Civil society: working together to realise the SDGs

- Educators and learners must be involved in the decisions and policies which affect them. Fundamentally, and across all goals, civil society must be involved in the development of indicators, follow-up, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; this role must be institutionalised in decision-making processes.
- For education, take advantage of the existing, UNESCO-led Education 2030 regional review process by building a formal link with the SDG follow-up and review processes.
- The Education and Academia Stakeholder Group currently encompasses grassroots groups through to international federations.

Global level:

- Provide greater technical support to governments to improve monitoring and accountability processes.
- Strengthen the process of VNRs as the mainstay of the follow-up and review process and include formal space for representative national civil society and MGoS to submit alternative reports as part of the VNR. MGoS inputs should also be considered during the negotiations for the HLPF Ministerial Declaration.
- Strengthen coordination among MGoS to ensure more inclusive, cross-sectoral responses by civil society.
- International bodies must use their influence to make governments more responsive in engagement of civil society in planning, implementation, and monitoring of SDG goals.
- International bodies must also use their influence to realise greater financial commitments from governments for all SDGs, including support for increased domestic resource mobilisation.

Indicators and data systems for accountability

- National data systems should be strengthened to enable regular reporting and ensure that data collected is disaggregated, accessible and in the public domain. Governments should set national interim equity targets for specific groups and commit necessary financial, technical and capacity resources to ensure an appropriate level of disaggregation.
- National indicators should support, and not digress from, global and thematic indicator frameworks.