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Summary of deliberations

Addendum

Towards a United Nations system-wide strategic approach for achieving inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all

I. Context

1. The High-level Committee on Programmes received a paper at its thirty-sixth session, held in October 2018, which was prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with the support of a task group consisting of 16 other United Nations entities, outlining a road map for a strategically prioritized light-touch United Nations system-wide approach to the future of education and learning that complement existing frameworks and mechanisms. That paper followed an earlier one prepared by UNESCO and UNICEF for the Committee that focused explicitly on the implications of new digital technologies for the future of education and learning. The road map provided a rationale explaining why there is a need for such a system-wide United Nations strategy and outlined a framework through which such a strategy could be developed. The Committee approved the proposed road map and requested UNESCO and UNICEF to co-lead the process to develop a fully fledged draft for the Committee's consideration at its thirty-seventh session. The present paper in response outlines a light-touch strategy aimed at providing United Nations entities with a system-wide and holistic approach for providing advice and catalysing support among Member States to deliver inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all, so that all countries and all of their citizens are prepared for, and able to adapt to, the evolving realities of their lives.

2. Two overarching global processes have shaped the context for the present paper: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its associated Sustainable Development Goals; and the activities of the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in seeking to ensure that these goals and their associated targets are indeed delivered. Education is addressed explicitly in Sustainable Development Goal 4, with its

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10 associated targets,[1] and will be reviewed by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July 2019. Education, training and learning are essential for delivering all of the Sustainable Development Goals, however, and are therefore of fundamental importance to the work of every United Nations agency. The Committee, CEB and the Secretary-General of the United Nations[2] have all also taken a particular interest in the impact of new digital technologies on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 4. This strategy is therefore part of a trilogy of initiatives of the Committee, and is closely linked to the strategies on capacity development with regard to artificial intelligence and the future of work.[3] The logic of this progression is that developments in artificial intelligence have significant implications for the future of work, and that these require educational systems to provide people of all ages with appropriate learning opportunities so that they have the skills necessary for gainful employment. The present paper also considers education and learning more broadly, noting that quality education is essential for providing the skills necessary for the development of technologies such as artificial intelligence in the first place. It is also crucial that people gain the critical and social skills necessary to understand the interests underlying the development and spread of such technologies and to have the acuity of mind to appreciate their role in shaping a sustainable world in which everyone can live peaceful, just, safe and fulfilled lives. It is also very important that systems be put in place to ensure that the poorest and most marginalized are empowered through the use of new digital technologies, and that the potentially negative impacts of such technologies are mitigated, while also realizing the potential benefits.

3. The strategy has been developed in line with the proposals contained in the earlier road map. All United Nations entities were reinvited to nominate representatives to the task group, which was subsequently expanded to 21 entities.[4] Five working groups consisting of task group members, each led by a different United Nations agency in collaboration with UNESCO and UNICEF, were then responsible for crafting the strategic elements for each of the five themes identified in the road map. This was undertaken mainly through five workshops, held in Geneva and New York in January 2019. In order to ensure maximum synergies with the other strategic approaches of the High-level Committee on Programmes, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (lead agency for the strategy on capacity

[1] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4.

[2] The Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation was established in July 2018. See www.un.org/en/digital-cooperation-panel and https://digitalcooperation.org/about.

[3] See also International Labour Organization (ILO), *Work for a Brighter Future: Global Commission on the Future of Work* (Geneva, 2019); Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Envisioning the future of education and jobs: trends, data and drawings", 2019; World Economic Forum, *The Future of Jobs Report 2018* (Geneva, 2018); and World Bank, *World Development Report 2019: the Changing Nature of Work* (Washington, D.C., 2019).

[4] United Nations entities participating in the final task group were: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (co-lead), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (co-lead), International Civil Aviation Organization, World Tourism Organization, United Nations Environment Programme, ILO, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations University, World Health Organization, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Bank and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Considerable recognition should be given to the many staff members in these entities who contributed to the development of the strategy, especially in the workshops held in Geneva and New York in January 2019.

development with regard to artificial intelligence (CEB/2019/1/Add.3)) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) (lead agency for the future of work strategy (CEB/2019/1/Add.2)) hosted two of these thematic groups and shared updates on the development of their papers during the crafting of the strategy (see also annex II below).

4. The task group and its working groups were guided by two fundamental principles: the strategy should be a United Nations system-wide and holistic approach for providing advice and catalysing support among Member States to deliver inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all in changing societies; and that it should be relatively light-touch approach, focusing on doing the most important things exceptionally well. To this end, the strategy has a very practical focus, with specific objectives; targets related to education, learning and training; intended outcomes; a clear timeline; and the actions and resources expected from respective United Nations entities.[5]

II. Overview and vision

5. The strategy builds directly on global initiatives previously undertaken to enhance both access to and the quality of education and learning provision in the context of preparing societies for future social, economic, cultural and political changes. It identifies key interventions that the United Nations can make at a system-wide level to deliver these better, more swiftly and more effectively. In particular, it draws on the vision of the 2030 Agenda; the Incheon Declaration: Education 2030 – towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all, and the Education 2030 Framework for Action;[6] and the key messages of the Global Education Meeting, held in Brussels in December 2018, as summarized in the Brussels Declaration.[7] These not only highlight the importance of education as a right for all, but also stress the responsibility of Governments and individuals to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to learn appropriately throughout their lives. At its heart is the recognition that education and learning are critical in preparing countries and their people for the changes resulting from the accelerated development and spread of technological innovations. It also recognizes the need to transform educational systems so that they better serve the needs of society in the future, placing particular emphasis on the changing demands for employment and decent work. The strategic approach thus complements the United Nations strategy on the future of work and the United Nations system-wide strategic approach and road map for supporting capacity development with regard to artificial intelligence, developed in parallel under the auspices of the High-level Committee on Programmes.

6. The strategy has identified the most important practical recommendations that build on the unique role of the United Nations and is aimed at overcoming the main challenges that the Organization has faced in the past. United Nations entities are particularly well placed to anticipate and assess future educational challenges and support Member States in designing appropriate and relevant holistic educational and learning policies and interventions, and in assisting in their effective implementation. They can also help share good practices globally, catalyse resources from different sectors, build partnerships with civil society and the private sector for effective

[5] More details on further practical actions that could be taken under each theme are available in the outputs of each of the working groups (available from the Committee secretariat).

[6] The Incheon Declaration was coordinated by seven United Nations entities: UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, United Nations Population Fund, UNDP, UN-Women and UNHCR. See http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002456/245656e.pdf.

[7] See A/CONF.191/13, chap. I. The Brussels Declaration has also provided key messages for the high-level political forum on sustainable development to be held in July 2019.

implementation and inspire everyone to place an emphasis on educational systems and lifelong learning that is required to support the realization of all the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, there is a wealth of ongoing research, practice and policymaking experience within the United Nations that is intended to improve the quantity and quality of education, training and learning. Nevertheless, the Goals face significant delivery challenges, in part because of the lack of necessary levels of coherence, coordination and collaboration within the United Nations system. These, at times, are manifest in an overlap and duplication of initiatives; competition between entities for limited resources; mandate creep; the aspirational, rather than practical, nature of many existing strategies; conflicting views among Member States; lack of clarity and evidence base; and the complexities of partnerships, especially those with the private sector. The strategy provides an approach to mobilize joint United Nations system-wide actions to meet the evolving challenges of the future and thus to ameliorate conditions related to many of these challenges specifically in the context of education, training and learning.

7. The road map developed by the task group and endorsed by the High-level Committee on Programmes identified five main interrelated thematic areas for practical, United Nations-wide integrated action.

8. The United Nations has a key role in helping to ensure that no one is left behind; the strategy therefore places its main emphasis on the needs of the most marginalized. This can be achieved by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to gain and use relevant knowledge and skills throughout their lives. Moreover, flexible opportunities for skills acquisition throughout the life cycle must also be addressed, not least because of the rapid development of new technologies that require people to gain new skills at an increasing pace. New technologies can also be used to enhance access to quality education and training, however, provided that people use them judiciously, safely and wisely. Finally, all such transformations will require innovative and holistic approaches for which new kinds of partnerships and resource mobilization will be required.

III. Organization and structure of the strategy

9. The working groups refined the criteria in the road map to identify the optimal elements that should be included within the strategy. The criteria used for the final selection were the following:

- Requires collective engagement across the United Nations system
- Is critical for the building of human capabilities fit for the future
- Enables subsequent further interventions by other stakeholders
- Is practical and feasible, rather than aspirational and unrealistic
- Is urgent and important
- Is capable of being delivered in a light-touch context
- Is a new area of need, or an area requiring reinvigorated attention
- Delivers on all the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda, especially focusing on Goal 4 and the context of work

10. The strategy begins with a summary (see sect. IV below) of the two most important specific recommendations for each of the five themes. Each of these recommendations includes a short summary of the key problem that it seeks to address, the overall approach that it offers and the most important specific United

Nations system-wide actions required to deliver effective solutions. The four overarching elements that evolved during the five workshops are then summarized (sect. V). Annex I provides a schematic summary of each element of the strategy, and annex II indicates areas of synergy with the latest versions of the strategies of the High-level Committee on Programmes on artificial intelligence and the future of work. Many of these recommendations align around three broad types of activity that the United Nations is best able to undertake system-wide: enhanced and more focused advocacy; improved shared understanding within the United Nations system and beyond; and practical support for Member States.

IV. Theme-specific approaches

Theme 1: Ensuring equity, empowerment and support for learning by the most marginalized

11. The problem, proposed approach and recommended action are set out below:

(a) *Problem*: The most marginalized people and communities continue to have the least access to quality education, training and learning.

(b) *Proposed approach*: The United Nations has committed to leaving no one behind and to endeavouring to reach the furthest behind first.[8] The present strategy treats such a commitment very seriously, in large part *because* of the evidence that new digital technologies may increase social, spatial and economic inequalities, and thus relative poverty, at an accelerating pace.[9] It reinforces arguments that the United Nations should focus above all on the poorest and most marginalized people, communities and countries, and those most vulnerable to setbacks, recognizing their rich diversity and the importance of local context. The approach thus places particular emphasis on the multidimensional poor, those with disabilities, women and girls, out-of-school youth, migrants, refugees, older persons, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples and those living in isolated rural communities. It advocates universal inclusion as a key principle for the work of the United Nations on the future of education and learning. It also promotes the principle of progressive universalism, through the appropriate use of financing decisions, whereby those who are poor or marginalized should gain at least as much as those who are better off at every step of the way through the educational system.[10] To this end, it also recognizes that in many instances marginalized people and communities do not have access to education or new technologies because of restrictive government policies or corruption. System-wide United Nations advocacy is therefore important for removing such policies and practices.

[8] UNDP, "What does it mean to leave no one behind?", July 2018. This identifies five key factors that determine who is left behind: discrimination, shocks and fragility, governance, socioeconomic status and geography. See also United Nations Sustainable Development Group, *Leaving No One Behind: A UNSDG Operational Guide for UN Country Teams*, interim draft (New York, 2019).

[9] Tim Unwin, *Reclaiming Information and Communication Technologies for Development* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

[10] The concept of progressive universalism in education refers to the recommendation from the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity in its 2016 publication entitled *The Learning Generation: Investing in Education for a Changing World* (https://report.educationcommission.org/report) to prioritize lower levels of education first where social returns are highest and support the complementary role for private financing and cost recovery for higher levels of education, where appropriate, and increase gradually public allocations to higher levels of education as coverage comes close to universal at lower levels.

(c) *Recommended actions*:

Objective 1.1: Advocacy of equity-based financing for progressive and universal inclusion in lifelong learning, training and education. [11] The rapidly changing world of work, enabled in part by swiftly evolving technologies (see CEB/2019/1/Add.2), requires a commitment to equity-based financing that will enable everyone to have equal opportunities for participation in training and learning throughout their lives. Although this is a widely accepted goal, it has proved difficult to implement (see also theme 5), especially in low-resource contexts where Governments do not find it easy to address the many trade-offs that have to be made in financing their responsibilities. It is also challenging to ensure transparency and accountability in such systems, and therefore essential to strengthen capacity within the specialized financial teams in relevant government ministries.[12] Specific activities that the United Nations should develop system-wide include:

- Developing an integrated approach across all United Nations entities promoting progressive universalism when informing public spending breakdown across levels of education and promoting equity-based financing for education at every level, especially focusing on inclusion of the most marginalized and investment in the early years of education[13]
- Broadening existing financial assessments and funding targets to account for budgeting and expenditure on learning and training throughout the life cycle and at key points of transition in the labour market
- Building the capacity of Governments to establish, track and achieve appropriate equity targets for education and training, including through the use of benefit-incidence indicators, such as the share of public education spending benefiting the poorest quintile
- Supporting initiatives that provide appropriate mechanisms and incentives for institutions, teachers and trainers to work in marginalized contexts and with marginalized groups[14]
- Advocating that government digital technology procurement should increasingly be used to encourage universal inclusivity, thereby reducing the need for expenditure on additional assistive technologies

Objective 1.2: A joined-up United Nations practical intervention in support of education, learning and training for the poorest and most marginalized. The United Nations should lead by example. If requested by one or more Member States, it is recommended that a joined-up United Nations system-wide showcase initiative should be developed and implemented in one or more countries in support of learning and training for the most marginalized, focusing

[11] In the educational context, equity-based financing is "a dual funding principle which acts as a means of ensuring that as much equality as possible is built into the provision of educational services and as much fairness as is administratively feasible is applied to sharing the taxation burden for education among the general citizenry". See S. McGrath, "Equity and efficiency in educational finance: an operational conundrum", in *Studies in Newfoundland Education Society*, vol. I, Ishmael J. Baksh, George Haché and Amarjit Singh, eds. (St. John's, Canada, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1993).

[12] The Public Sector Tracking Survey is one approach that could prove useful in the context of education and new digital technologies.

[13] For an example of UNICEF work in Nepal on the equity index for education, see www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/General%20Presentation%20Nepal.pdf.

[14] For an example of the work on teacher hardship allowances in the Philippines supported by UNICEF, see www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/DMS%20Philippines%20General%20Presentation.pdf.

on one specific intersection of marginalization.[15] This would be supported by multiple United Nations entities working in an integrated manner, within the One United Nations framework and aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Plan and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.[16] It would build on existing United Nations good practices,[17] as well as initiatives in country, thereby minimizing the need for additional financing. It would also serve as an example and demonstration of what can be achieved if the will is there and if entities work creatively together in an integrated manner. Above all, it should have an equity focus that emphasizes and illustrates the benefits of inclusion and progressive universalism. It is likely that this would involve incentives for trainers and teachers to work in marginalized and difficult contexts. This could be a United Nations flagship initiative for the strategy. Practical elements would include:

- Selection, by a Member State, of a single context in which to develop the initiative, focusing on an instance involving multiple intersections of marginalization
- Implementation of evidence-based programme design and implementation, flexible enough to allow for course correction and improvements along the way
- Good practices learned from such initiatives could then be shared more widely within the United Nations system and beyond so that optimal ways of delivering effective education, training and learning for the most marginalized could be implemented elsewhere with the necessary adaptation to context and dimensions of marginalization to be addressed

Theme 2: Ensuring appropriate depth and breadth of relevant skills acquisition and activation

12. The problem, proposed approach and recommended action are set out below:

(a) *Problem*: The mismatch between the skills acquired by people through existing educational systems and those needed for leading fulfilled lives is well known, and is getting worse rather than better as societies undergo transformative changes; it has often particularly been identified in the context of training and employment (see CEB/2019/1/Add.2). This is an issue of both supply and demand; there are often insufficient remunerative jobs for the most marginalized.

(b) *Proposed approach*: This theme focuses on how best the United Nations can work holistically in support of Member States to ensure that everyone gains appropriate skills and can use them effectively to fulfil their lives. It recognizes that the learning and skills crisis affects all States and that the United Nations has a key overarching and integrating role to play in sharing good practices, providing support to Member States and developing common understandings of the issues. In particular, the widening gender gap in digital skills in many States is a pressing priority at a time when digital technologies are being used *increasingly* to effect changes in educational

[15] Such efforts would also contribute to realizing the United Nations system framework for action on equality and non-discrimination, developed under the auspices of the High-level Committee on Programmes and endorsed by CEB in 2016. See CEB/2016/6/Add.1.

[16] United Nations Development Group, “United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidance”, 2017.

[17] See, for example, experiences of the Global Partnership for Education and the Education Cannot Wait fund (www.globalpartnership.org/education-cannot-wait). Other relevant initiatives include those by UNDP, ILO, FAO, the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNODC. See especially the Education for Justice initiative of UNODC (www.unodc.org/e4j) and the WFP school feeding programme (www1.wfp.org/school-meals).

systems. The United Nations approach should recognize that education is a right and skills are developed in a cumulative process that starts from the early years and continues throughout life. This approach also recognizes that education and learning are about much more than merely the acquisition of skills for employment. They provide the grounding for all aspects of life, and must be relevant for global and democratic citizenship, attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, safeguarding human rights, building and sustaining peace, enabling people to live together in an increasingly challenging and digital world and ensuring that everyone can live healthily throughout their lives. The recommended actions begin with the creation of an agreed common language and then address its utilization in support of skills policy development in Member States.

(c) *Recommended actions*:

Objective 2.1: Development of a common United Nations language around skills, and especially digital skills. Many organizations are developing new skills taxonomies and classifications in efforts to define exactly what skills are needed for success in life, school and work in rapidly changing societies and what will become essential in the years ahead (see CEB/2019/1/Add.2). The United Nations can play an important role by developing an overarching common language around skills that can then be used to support skills policies in Member States. This could take the form of a taxonomy, but, along with conceptual discussions, it is essential that any output be practical and easy to use.[18] An alternative approach might be to build on existing work on common principles.[19] It is important, however, that any such framework be enabling and not create barriers to learning and work. Activities to be developed within this strand are:

- The United Nations should adopt a system-wide mechanism to develop a new common skills language that is relevant, practical and easy to use[20]
- This common skills language should build on existing frameworks but should focus especially on:
    - A redefinition of literacies, including digital literacy
    - The depth, breadth and character of skills required in the future
    - The skills necessary for sustainable living, culture, peace, security, justice, human rights, the rule of law and environmental care, which are also required to enhance integrity, transparency and accountability
    - The importance of local context, as well as recognition of rich multicultural diversity
    - The different and evolving balance of skills that will be needed in both the formal economy and the informal economy, where large numbers of the poorest and most marginalized people work

[18] The categories of foundational, life/transferable, technical, vocational and digital skills are widely accepted within the United Nations system, but an exact taxonomy has not been agreed. This could usefully draw on evidence from the Digital Literacy Global Framework developed through the Global Alliance for Monitoring Learning. See Nancy Law and others, *A Global Framework of Reference in Digital Literacy Skills for Indicators 4.4.2* (Montreal, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018).

[19] Such principles might include approaches that are holistic, rights-based, lifelong, gender-responsive, multi-pathway and systemic.

[20] While the 1996 report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, entitled *Learning: The Treasure Within*, provided an acceptable framework for the 1990s, there is a need for a new framework to take the context of the 2020s into account.

Objective 2.2: Advocacy of a unified approach to skills policy, especially at the national level. The United Nations should draw on the extensive experience of its different entities[21] to provide Member States with common programming principles and approaches to the development of skills policies within a framework of lifelong learning based upon the sharing of good practices (see CEB/2019/1/Add.2) and recommendations that are innovative, flexible and forward looking. The following elements could be included (see also objective 5.1):

- United Nations teams consisting of relevant staff from different entities would be created at the request of Member States in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework to advise and help them develop skills policies and strategies relevant to their context
- Each United Nations agency within the team could subsequently interact with the most relevant line ministries to help support the development and implementation of the policy[22]
- Each policy should not only cater for market demand, but also seek to deliver on the varied needs of people at different stages of their lives
- Over time, the United Nations could build up a standard skills policy toolkit that States could use to support their skills policy development[23]
- Skills policies should include vocational career guidance and employment services within each Member State to support the various employment transitions that occur and require lifelong learning. These should be integrated within both educational and employment policies

Theme 3: Enabling flexibility and continuous learning throughout the life cycle

13. The problem, proposed approach and recommended action are set out below:

(a) *Problem*: People are facing unprecedented challenges in terms of learning, empowerment, work and social cohesion in the context of globalization, new technologies (see CEB/2019/1/Add.3), migration, changing *labour* markets, and transnational environmental and political changes and conflicts. This places greater requirements on them to continue learning throughout their lives to a much greater extent than heretofore. There is therefore an urgent need to increase the quantity and skills of all teachers and trainers to deliver such learning opportunities within every context.[24]

(b) *Proposed approach*: There is considerable ongoing work in this field, both by specific United Nations entities (notably UNICEF, UNESCO and ILO) and by other stakeholders in companies, States and civil society. This strategy therefore

[21] See, for example, UNODC and UNESCO, “Global citizenship education for the rule of law: doing the right thing”. Available at www.unodc.org/e4j/en/about-e4j/unodc-unesco-partnership.html.

[22] Such policies could be closely linked to existing frameworks such as those contained within the Incheon Declaration.

[23] This toolkit should draw on the proposed common language/taxonomy outlined in objective 2.1. Examples of ongoing activities include guidance being developed by ILO, as well as the work of UNODC and UNESCO in their publication entitled, *Strengthening the Rule of Law through Education: A Guide for Policymakers* (available at https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/about-e4j/unodc-unesco-guide-for-policymakers.html).

[24] There are also gender disparities that should be considered in many contexts when devising specific actions to attract and maintain female teachers.

focuses on two main practical actions that require an integrated approach at the United Nations-wide level, especially at the interface between technology and education. Much of the acquisition and development of technical and vocational skills, particularly in poorer countries, takes place in the informal sector. The United Nations therefore needs to foster initiatives to enable people to be trained and learn both within and beyond the confines of traditional educational systems (see CEB/2019/1/Add.2).[25] It should also be recognized that learning experiences in the early years of life are fundamental to the ability to undertake effective continued learning later in life.

(c) *Recommended actions*:

Objective 3.1: Development of a United Nations-wide initiative on credentials and qualifications throughout the life cycle. There are many ongoing initiatives to develop systems to recognize and provide credentials for formal and non-formal/informal learning qualifications across educational systems that can facilitate employment across States in the context of increasing mobility.[26] Nevertheless, the rapidly changing work environment will require people to be able to show their enhanced learning and skills acquisition pathways throughout their life cycles, and not just in terms of formal qualifications (see CEB/2019/1/Add.2). Emerging digital technologies, particularly in the form of learning passports or digital portfolios containing a complete record of a person's qualifications, can greatly facilitate labour movement, which is of interest to workers (labour) and companies/employers (capital) alike. Such systems are also of particular value to marginalized people, and especially refugees,[27] thereby being one means of reducing inequalities in the labour market. The United Nations is well situated to put in place a global mechanism for developing and sharing such a system.[28] Technical aspects that should be addressed include:

- Crafting systems for mutual recognition of qualifications
- The development of global reference levels to allow easier comparison of qualifications
- The formal recognition and credentialing of non-formal and informal learning, alongside existing formal learning qualifications
- The importance of ensuring flexibility over time as new learning requirements and qualifications emerge
- The need for credentials that lead to further learning and skills development, and are not just treated as a means in themselves alone

Specific modalities that could be developed for this strategic element include the development of softer tools such as guidelines and recommendations, and a global convention on recognizing systems for non-formal and vocational learning and skills acquisition. This could be a United Nations flagship initiative for the strategy.

[25] The work of FAO on schools for farmers, for example, emphasizes the importance of a lifewide approach to learning. See www.fao.org/farmer-field-schools/en.

[26] The European Qualifications Framework is typical of these. See www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/european-qualifications-framework-eqf.html.

[27] European States are extending qualifications passports for refugees. See www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/europe-to-extend-qualifications-passports-for-refugees. Other partnerships between United Nations entities, the private sector and academia are exploring the potential value of learning passports for refugees who do not have formal qualifications.

[28] This will require close collaboration with the skills initiatives proposed in theme 5.

Objective 3.2: Reducing the capacity gap: training for the future. There is currently a substantial shortage of teachers and trainers throughout the world, and many of those involved in education in the poorest and most marginalized contexts lack formal qualifications of any kind. There is therefore a critically pressing need to improve the expertise of teachers, to compensate them appropriately and to ensure that they have appropriate resources. It is also essential that there be a global shift in all societies towards greater understanding and appreciation of educators, teachers and trainers. The rapidly changing context of work requires increased flexibility and substantial reskilling to enable everyone to gain the new skills and certification that they require. This issue affects not only the short-term delivery of all the Sustainable Development Goals, but also the kind of world that people aspire to live in beyond 2030. Aspects could include:

- United Nations entities working systematically together should foster a new culture of learning that encourages States and individuals to focus on flexible lifelong and lifewide learning for all teachers, trainers and educators, in which new and emerging technologies can play a significant delivery role.
- In the first instance, the United Nations could begin by offering multi-agency support teams within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework to advise States about practical steps that can be taken to create an environment where such a vision can be promulgated and implemented.

Theme 4: Promoting and ensuring appropriate and synergistic use of emerging innovation and technologies

14. The problem, proposed approach and recommended action are set out below:

(a) *Problem*: There remains considerable uncertainty and lack of understanding within the United Nations system about the balance between the opportunities and challenges of technology in all educational and training systems, as well as for individual *learning*. The use of the latest technologies also often serves to increase inequalities, because the poorest and most marginalized tend to be the last to benefit from the potential opportunities.

(b) *Proposed approach*: The United Nations should promote and support the development and implementation of well-designed policies and technological solutions that may be used to disseminate resources, connect students to information, *enhance* teachers' practices and students' performance in all subject areas, improve school management and support data-driven policymaking, while ensuring equitable access and minimizing the potential negative impact on particular marginalized people of all ages.

(c) *Recommended actions* (there are two theme-specific objectives to this strategy; it is also related closely to the generic objective on data (see cross-cutting objective 3)):

Objective 4.1: Advocacy for global minimum standards and quality of basic infrastructure connectivity in all learning places. Only 51 per cent of the world's population used the Internet in 2018.[29] Given the centrality of digital connectivity to the acquisition and sharing of relevant learning resources for people of all ages and in all places, it is essential for affordable, reliable, trustworthy and high-quality digital connectivity to be made available globally

[29] *ITU News*, "New ITU statistics show more than half the world is now using the Internet", 6 December 2018. Available at https://news.itu.int/itu-statistics-leaving-no-one-offline.

(see CEB/2019/1/Add.3). Access to such connectivity is crucial to the future of education, learning and training. Many global initiatives are seeking to achieve this, but progress to date has been slow. The United Nations therefore has an important strategic role to play through the following key activities:

- United Nations-wide agreement should be reached on the minimum standards and expected quality of basic digital connectivity for educational establishments that should be achieved universally by 2020, 2025 and 2030, and the identification of realistic ways to achieve this[30]
- Much closer integration of the work of different United Nations entities is necessary so that a joined-up United Nations-wide approach to the key messages that need to be promoted can be achieved. Mechanisms such as the annual World Summit on the Information Society Forum could be used more productively to achieve this
- The importance of, and support for, States in having a holistic intragovernmental (cross-departmental) and intersectoral (involving both civil society and the private sector) (see theme 5) approach to the use of digital connectivity in the educational and training system should be promoted
- The United Nations should advocate for greater training of global and national policymakers so that they can have a better understanding of how best to deliver digital connectivity in the context of education and training

Objective 4.2: Implementation of a national readiness assessment framework for innovation through the use of technology for education, training and learning. United Nations entities should work together to develop tools on readiness for innovation and technology in education (see CEB/2019/1/Add.2). These would need to be demand-driven by States. Conducting such educational assessments would be useful for both Member States and United Nations entities in prioritizing spending and action, and could become a prerequisite for a United Nations entity to undertake work in this area in a Member State.[31] To be effective, such a programme should be anchored within a single organization, but it is essential that it involve multiple United Nations entities in its delivery. It could become a flagship initiative of this strategy. This will require:

- Better United Nations-wide understanding of the interface between technology and education, training and learning
- Enhanced understanding of the core educational and technology requirements for innovation and future employment
- Drawing on experience and examples of good practice in other readiness indexes[32]

[30] This could usefully be undertaken in collaboration with the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, led by the International Telecommunication Union and UNESCO. See www.broadbandcommission.org/Pages/default.aspx.

[31] These could build in part on the ongoing development of a United Nations innovation toolkit.

[32] Such examples might include the UNCTAD rapid e-trade readiness assessment (https://unctad.org/en/Pages/Publications/E-Trade-Readiness-Assessment.aspx), the World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (http://saber.worldbank.org/index.cfm), especially its information and communications technologies module (http://saber.worldbank.org/index.cfm?indx=8&pd=10&sub=0), and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs-led United Nations e-Government Survey (https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Reports/UN-E-Government-Survey-2018).

Theme 5: Enhancing effective partnerships, coordination and optimization in financing and resource mobilization

15. The problem, proposed approach and recommended action are set out below:

(a) *Problem*: There is a global education funding gap that requires substantial additional resources. The resources that are currently available are often insufficiently targeted at where there is most need, are not always effectively managed and/or are inappropriately utilized. Moreover, States face considerable difficulties in generating enough domestic revenue and official development assistance resources to cover existing educational demands, let alone *match* the ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals.[33] In addition to problems of funding and financing, there are also gaps in the coordination of technical assistance, capacity-building and delivery.

(b) *Proposed approach*: Partnerships are often recommended as a solution to funding problems in education, but there are at best mixed results concerning the efficacy of such partnerships.[34] Greater coordination and cross-cutting action in the United Nations response to these issues is crucial (see cross-cutting objective 4), especially in the context of digital partnerships. Key issues to be addressed include: achieving an appropriate balance in the level of private sector contributions to training for lifelong learning; facilitating standards-setting and relevant regulations; ensuring a more coordinated approach by individual entities participating in global partnerships; and focusing on more disadvantaged populations through scholarships (Sustainable Development Goal 4.b) and higher education (Goal 4.3). In addressing these issues, the United Nations should guard against a tendency towards investment in digital technologies whose educational impact remains uncertain and whose value for money is unclear; it should also identify and mitigate risks associated with new technologies increasing inequalities. These all serve as reminders of the importance of context. It is also necessary for investments in education, learning and training, and their returns, to be shared fairly between individuals, institutions, the private sector and taxpayers, while fully recognizing the ownership of educational systems by Member States.

(c) *Recommended actions* (many actions are required in this area, but the following two are particularly important, especially in the context that this strategy is intended to be a light-touch approach):

> **Objective 5.1: Prominent inclusion of education, learning and training in emerging United Nations-wide partnership guidance.** Given education's central importance to achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals, it is essential that it be embedded as a high priority in all United Nations partnership initiatives, and especially in the emerging work of the Sustainable Development Goals Results Group for Strategic Partnerships. The extensive experiences from educational partnerships can especially contribute to improved wider United Nations understanding of good partnership practices and principles. These

[33] The review by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of voluntary national reviews showed that almost half of the countries surveyed expressed concerns about financing the Sustainable Development Goals. The Department-led Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, involving some 60 entities, can be seen as one means through which greater coordination in financing can be achieved (see *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2018* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.I.5)), although the creation of a new United Nations task force specifically on digital financing for the Sustainable Development Goals is yet another worrying aspect of duplication and overlap within the United Nations system (see https://digitalfinancingtaskforce.org/un-launches-task-force).

[34] See, for example, Jasmine Gideon and Elaine Unterhalter, "Exploring public private partnerships in health and education: a critique", *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, vol. 33, No. 2; see also next footnote below.

illustrate that the role of the private sector in education is not without some degree of contestation, and it is essential to engage civil society actively in educational partnerships if they are to be inclusive, effective and sustainable. Once a holistic United Nations partnership framework is in place, United Nations entities should use this to engage with and support ministries of education in coordinating multiple stakeholders in education (especially with respect to technology projects), as they frequently cut across several sectors and entail great expense, as well as technical and organizational complexity. Three scales related to partnerships can be considered: internal United Nations partnerships; partnerships of the United Nations with external organizations; and generic principles for partnerships.

- With respect to internal United Nations partnerships and their linkage with States, the United Nations should play a stronger role in coordinating and overseeing the many different global education partnerships that have been designed to deliver within the framework of the 2030 Agenda.[35] This should address funding and financing, technical assistance, capacity-building, coordination and delivery elements. It is especially important for the relationships that the United Nations has with Member States, and it is crucial that different United Nations entities work together to present a unified set of context-specific principles and evidence-based recommendations in a holistic approach to financing education and training for people throughout the life cycle, from preschool to old age

- The United Nations approach to education- and technology-related partnerships with the private sector and civil society is disjointed, and practice varies considerably between entities. Most United Nations entities focus on public-private partnerships,[36] in which the private sector is seen mainly as a means of gaining additional resources. In practice, companies have other more important strengths, not least their approaches to financial sustainability, their management expertise and the speed with which they can deliver in implementing educational- and technology-related initiatives. It is also important that the United Nations shift from a focus mainly on the "public" (States) and the "private" (companies) to include civil society (including workers organizations) and other entities in ensuring the crafting of effective "multisector" partnerships that are more likely to be successful and sustainable in delivering the necessary transformation of educational and training systems

- There is much research and experience with regard to good practices and principles in implementing educational partnerships, particularly those which involve digital technologies.[37] This evidence suggests that many such partnerships fail to deliver their intended learning and training outcomes, frequently because they do not draw sufficiently on existing knowledge and

[35] The Global Partnership for Education (www.globalpartnership.org) is one of numerous educational partnerships, many of which focus particularly on the linkage between technology and education.

[36] "Public-private partnerships" is, for example, the predominant terminology used in the terms of reference of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group's Results Group for Strategic Partnerships. See also the United Nations Global Compact (www.unglobalcompact.org). A notable exception is ILO, which is tripartite in origin, combining the interests of Governments, employers and workers.

[37] Marije Geldof and others, *What Are the Key Lessons of ICT4D Partnerships for Poverty Reduction?: Systematic Review Report* (Egham, United Kingdom, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2011); see also Tim Unwin, "Multi-stakeholder partnerships in information and communication for development interventions", in *International Encyclopedia of Digital Communication and Society*, Robin Mansell and others, eds. (Chichester, United Kingdom, Wiley-Blackwell, 2015).

good practices. It will be important for the Sustainable Development Goals Results Group for Strategic Partnerships to draw on these well-established principles as it seeks to harmonize the approaches of United Nations entities to such partnerships

Objective 5.2: Heightened advocacy for an integrated approach by Member States to financing education, learning and training throughout the life cycle from the early years to old age. The United Nations should advocate for, and where possible support, an integrated approach, through technical assistance and capacity-building, to identify the key systemic bottlenecks in national systems to achieving access and quality for education, training and learning at all ages and in all dimensions of learning. This approach is essential to enable coordinated support to identify equity-focused financing and delivery strategies at each level of education and learning, especially given the increasing complexity of educational systems and the need to minimize the transaction costs of delivery for Member States, and for United Nations entities as well. The goal is that appropriate flexible and differentiated learning and training opportunities can be made available throughout the life cycle, enabling all people to gain the new skills required for appropriate employment, citizenship and life in a rapidly changing world (see CEB/2019/1/Add.2). It should also be emphasized that people participate in different educational and learning roles throughout their lives, with parenting skills being especially important, for example, for effective early learning. Key practical recommendations for delivering this agenda include:

- Ensuring that appropriate financing for lifelong learning and training is always included in United Nations Development Assistance Framework discussions with States
- Exploring innovative ways through which the private sector can support skills training throughout the life cycle and explicitly in support of the most marginalized. This may involve a shift away from existing notions of corporate social responsibility towards new ideas around shared-value propositions
- Encouraging States to adopt a holistic and integrated approach, based upon the principle of progressive universalism, to the financing of learning and training that involves all relevant ministries
- Encouraging Governments to resist the temptation to use educational funding to support digital infrastructure and development
- Encouraging Governments to explore the introduction of lifelong learning entitlements funded through public and private contributions and linked to social protection systems which enable lifelong learning in practice

V. Cross-cutting objectives

16. A strategy on the future of education and learning must address a range of important cross-cutting issues that are often complex to deliver. The present section summarizes the four most significant of these issues.

Cross-cutting objective 1: Improved coordination through a mapping of mappings

17. All relevant United Nations entities require a better holistic understanding of ongoing initiatives in the field of education and learning, especially at their interface

with new digital technologies. This will help improve coordination (see cross-cutting objective 4 below), avoid duplication of effort and reduce failures to learn from past mistakes. A mapping of existing mappings of ongoing initiatives across each of the five themes identified in the strategy for achieving inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all would therefore be valuable. This should be incorporated within effective knowledge management systems in each United Nations agency, as well as Member States. There are also considerable challenges with regard to such a mapping exercise: it would be impossible to undertake at every scale, from specific small projects to global initiatives; it would be very time consuming; and it would need to be organic and ongoing. Balancing these challenges with the potential benefits, it is recommended that the following therefore be prioritized within a United Nations system-wide strategy:

- An overarching mapping of initiatives seeking to capture what is being undertaken globally, especially by United Nations entities, on the future of education, training and learning, particularly at their interface with digital technologies[38]
- At a national level, all United Nations entities working on aspects of education, training and learning should map and coordinate their activities in the context of the aspirations of the United Nations with regard to "Delivering as one".[39] This could involve country offices of different entities in each country sharing details about their ongoing activities in this field through an online database or portal, or another feasible system developed by the Resident Coordinator (see cross-cutting objective 4 below)
- It is crucial that the information gained from such mappings be used to support the practical recommendations in section IV, to improve coordination and advice in-country and to identify further gaps that can be addressed through United Nations system-wide interventions.

Cross-cutting objective 2: Enhancement of the availability and use of data and evidence in and for education, training and learning

18. Data and evidence on education, training and learning has always been a bottleneck in efforts to increase access to, and the quality of, such services. This is becoming even more the case in the context of the data requirements of artificial intelligence systems (see CEB/2019/1/Add.3), especially in ensuring that these benefit disadvantaged communities and marginalized peoples and do not only serve the interests of powerful corporations and States. Lack of relevant and accurate data in many parts of the world, especially in Africa, is a critical problem. There is nevertheless potential within the United Nations system for much greater information-sharing, impact analysis and support for Member States so that better education, training and learning policies can be developed and implemented for all. Elements of the strategy include:

[38] Such a mapping could draw on evidence from, and provide support to, the new multi-country directorate for a research and innovation hub on technology for education of the Department for International Development (details available at https://opportunities.export.great.gov.uk/opportunities/multi-country-directorate-for-a-research-and-innovation-hub-on-technology-for-education), as well as other similar initiatives.

[39] See www.un.org/en/ga/deliveringasone.

- Enhancing wider evidence-building and impact-sharing in ongoing and new initiatives, especially those which focus on education and technology.[40] These efforts should also draw on evidence from existing and new initiatives being funded by bilateral and multilateral donors[41]
- Creating joint United Nations agency teams to assist Member States in the development of appropriate policies surrounding data and education (linked to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and in alignment with the Resident Coordinator's work)
- Providing advice and support for Member States in the use of appropriate technology to support regular and reliable data for planning and policy, financial management, management of school facilities, decisions about school personnel (including teachers) and support for student learning
- Developing integrated United Nations policy guidance on the privacy, security and compatibility issues surrounding data within educational systems, particularly around protecting the well-being of individuals
- Focusing particularly on the data and digital objects that specifically enhance the quantity and quality of educational and learning provision, including qualitative, citizen-led and disaggregated data
- Creating and curating better data to enable new artificial intelligence systems to enhance appropriate educational provision for all (see CEB/2019/1/Add.3)
- Strengthening the capacities of States to gather sufficiently disaggregated data on education, learning and training, particularly with reference to the informal sector and marginalized people, who are frequently missing or undercounted in surveys, censuses and legal registration

Cross-cutting objective 3: Policy guidance

19. Policy guidance to Member States should convey the important point that education, training and learning need to be treated in a holistic manner across all ministries. This is especially so in the context of lifelong and lifewide learning, as well as their importance for employment. Such policies must recognize that there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution and that the United Nations should be advocating a series of good (rather than best) practices that Governments can draw upon in implementing their own effective context-specific policies and strategies. Generic aspects of this recommendation include:

- United Nations entities should work more closely together in Member States to provide holistic and cross-governmental advice on integrated policies and strategies with respect to all aspects of education, training and learning, especially in the context of lifelong and lifewide learning and the Sustainable Development Goals as a whole

[40] For example, the United Nations World Data Forum and the work being undertaken by the Department for Economic and Social Affairs. The United Nations e-Government Survey is one example where multiple entities are involved. See https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/About/Methodology.

[41] United Nations entities could usefully work closely with the new education and technology hub being funded and developed by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (see https://opportunities.export.great.gov.uk/opportunities/multi-country-directorate-for-a-research-and-innovation-hub-on-technology-for-education), as well as similar initiatives being supported by other donors.

- Policy guidance should emphasize the importance of building a culture of learning in all Member States. Such guidance should emphasize the need for flexibility of programmes and pathways in the context of rapidly changing external environments, reflecting in particular the importance of gaining the learning and skills necessary for living and working in more environmentally sensitive ways
- Appropriate monitoring and evaluation, alongside effective data collection and use, should always be central to such policies

Cross-cutting objective 4: Ensuring that education, learning and training feature appropriately within enhanced United Nations coordination mechanisms at all levels

20. Enhanced education, training and learning in the future are central to the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals. Every United Nations entity undertakes some kind of training and provision of learning opportunities. It is therefore essential that education, training and learning feature prominently in the delivery of ongoing efforts within the United Nations system to improve coordination, particularly through the United Nations Development Assistance Plan, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the One United Nations agenda (see objective 3.2 and cross-cutting objective 2 above). Not least, there needs to be a United Nations-wide system through which entities can learn from each other and share good practices in this area. The willingness of 21 entities to come together and work collaboratively in developing this strategy is evidence of the shared commitment that already exists in developing a brighter global future for education and learning. Practical actions and mechanisms building on this that should be addressed include:

- Streamlining the multiplicity of digital platforms designed to achieve largely the same thing, both within the United Nations system as a whole and within entities
- Linking education, training and learning more closely with the ongoing work of the United Nations Innovation Network.[42] Attention should be paid to ways of balancing the use of public funding for financing innovation, and thus often failure, as against funding improvements in tried and tested technologies in the interests of the poorest and most marginalized
- Urgently improving coordination and synergy among initiatives within the United Nations that address broadly similar issues at the interface between technology and education
- Increasing collaboration among United Nations entities through United Nations focal points and working groups at the country level so as to understand better how to support Member States in using new technologies to deliver a holistic vision of education, training and learning

VI. Next steps, including implementation and monitoring arrangements

21. This strategy has explicitly focused on a relatively light-touch approach in line with guidance from the High-level Committee on Programmes and identifies the most important United Nations system-wide actions that will have a maximum impact on

[42] See www.uninnovation.network.

the enhanced provision of effective education, training and learning in the future (see criteria in para. 8). It therefore excludes substantial resource-intensive initiatives, and instead concentrates on realistic practical actions that can be undertaken together by United Nations entities with relative ease and within their existing mandates. Nevertheless, strategies without leadership and implementation plans remain but aspirations. The present concluding section therefore outlines next steps that should be taken to ensure that this strategy is implemented in a timely and effective manner.

22. A schematic outline of the strategy is included as annex I, which depicts the objectives, relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals, intended outcomes and provisional timeline of each element. It also (in the second-to-last column) shows how the elements build on existing good practices within the United Nations system, and the final column provides indicative involvement of the United Nations entities most likely to participate in implementation. This framework provides the starting point from which a management team could begin to implement the strategy and monitor its progress.

23. It is recommended that strategic elements be integrated into existing governance and accountability structures within the United Nations to ensure effective coordination, under the leadership of UNESCO and UNICEF. Having led the development of this strategy, UNESCO and UNICEF will continue to play a leadership role in translating the strategy into action, including especially at the country level, in close partnership with all relevant United Nations entities and mechanisms to ensure the strategy's coordinated implementation and impact. At the country level, Resident Coordinators play a key coordinating role and should be engaged to promote coherence and collaboration in support of the strategy's operationalization.

24. At the global level, the strategy could also provide inputs to ongoing forward-looking processes such as:

- The review of Sustainable Development Goal 4 by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July 2019
- The *Global Education Monitoring Report* processes

25. Participation in the task group and working groups that developed this strategy provided a valuable opportunity for staff in United Nations entities to discuss in detail mechanisms through which they can collaborate better to enhance United Nations support for Member States in developing fit-for-purpose systems for education, learning and training in the future within the Incheon Framework and the 2030 Agenda. In the light of these experiences, it is recommended that, regardless of decisions concerning the overall leadership of this strategy, members of the task group and its working groups should be invited to continue in place to carry forward the ideas and practices contained herein.[43]

[43] A simple team collaboration tool such as Slack (https://slack.com) or an Elgg (https://elgg.org) platform could be used to facilitate this process. The UNESCO chair in information and communications technologies for development might be approached to carry this process forward.

* IMF opted out of endorsement based on the scope of its individual mandate and specific legal status.

Annex I

Schematic summary of the strategy

A system-wide and holistic approach for providing advice and catalysing support among Member States to deliver inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all

Themes	*Objectives*	*Main targets related to education, learning and training (Sustainable Development Goals)*	*Intended outcomes*	*Timeline (D = Development; I = implementation)*	*Examples of ongoing practices by United Nations entities*	*Actions and resourcing to be contributed by United Nations entities*[a]
Theme 1 Ensuring equity, empowerment and support for learning by the most marginalized	1.1 Advocacy of equity-based financing for progressive and universal inclusion in lifelong learning, training and education	Sustainable Development Goals 4.5, 8, 9 and 10	Greater affordable access to education, and learning and training by the most marginalized	D: 2019 I: 2019–2030	UNICEF in Nepal and ILO in Bangladesh	UNESCO, UNICEF, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, World Bank, ILO, UNHCR and IOM
	1.2 Flagship practical initiative on a joined-up United Nations practical intervention in support of education, learning and training for the poorest and most marginalized	Sustainable Development Goals 4.5, 8, 9 and 10	Increased knowledge about how to implement learning and training for the most marginalized	D: 2019–2022 I: 2022–2030	UNDP, ILO, FAO and UN-Women	UNESCO, UNICEF, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, World Bank, ILO, UNHCR and FAO

A system-wide and holistic approach for providing advice and catalysing support among Member States to deliver inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all

Themes	*Objectives*	*Main targets related to education, learning and training (Sustainable Development Goals)*	*Intended outcomes*	*Timeline (D = Development; I = implementation)*	*Examples of ongoing practices by United Nations entities*	*Actions and resourcing to be contributed by United Nations entities*[a]
Theme 2 Ensuring appropriate breadth and depth of relevant skills acquisition and activation	2.1 Development of a common United Nations language around skills, and especially digital skills	Sustainable Development Goals 4, 8, 9, 10 and 16	Agreed global common terminology around skills	D: 2019–2022 I: 2022–2030	ITU (digital skills toolkit), *2019 World Development Report* (acquisition of skills during the early years) and UNODC and UNESCO (global citizenship skills)	UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, ITU, World Bank, UNODC and Department of Economic and Social Affairs
	2.2 Advocacy of a unified approach to skills policy, especially at the national level	Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 16	United Nations and Member States have unified skills policies in place	D: 2022–2025 I: 2022–2030	UNICEF (country-level work) and ILO and UNESCO (review of digitalization in technical and vocational education and training and skills systems)	UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, ITU and World Bank
Theme 3 Enabling flexibility and continuous learning throughout the life cycle	3.1 Development of a United Nations-wide initiative on credentials and qualifications throughout the life cycle	Sustainable Development Goals 4, 8, 9 and 10	Enhanced flexibility in workforce and people able to live more fulfilled lives	D: 2020–2025 I: 2025–2030	UNESCO World Reference Levels initiative	UNESCO, UNICEF and ILO
	3.2 Reducing the capacity gap: training for the future	Sustainable Development Goals 4, 8 and 9	Enhanced global culture of learning, better skilled educators and	D: 2019–2030 I: 2019–2030		UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR and ILO

A system-wide and holistic approach for providing advice and catalysing support among Member States to deliver inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all

Themes	*Objectives*	*Main targets related to education, learning and training (Sustainable Development Goals)*	*Intended outcomes*	*Timeline (D = Development; I = implementation)*	*Examples of ongoing practices by United Nations entities*	*Actions and resourcing to be contributed by United Nations entities*[a]
			trainers, and greater flexibility			
Theme 4 Promoting and ensuring appropriate and synergistic use of emerging innovation and technologies	4.1 Advocacy for global minimum standards and quality of basic infrastructure connectivity in all learning places	Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5 and 10	Ensuring all citizens have lifelong access to connectivity for learning	D: 2019–2025 I: 2022–2030		ITU, UNCTAD, UNESCO, Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNICEF
	4.2 Implementation of a national readiness assessment framework for innovation through the use of technology for education, training and learning	Sustainable Development Goals 4.4, 5, 8 and 16	States better placed to support effective technology use in education	D: 2019–2023 I: 2023–2030	UNCTAD e-trade readiness assessment and United Nations e-Government Survey	UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNICEF, ITU, ILO and Department of Economic and Social Affairs

A system-wide and holistic approach for providing advice and catalysing support among Member States to deliver inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all

Themes	*Objectives*	*Main targets related to education, learning and training (Sustainable Development Goals)*	*Intended outcomes*	*Timeline (D = Development; I = implementation)*	*Examples of ongoing practices by United Nations entities*	*Actions and resourcing to be contributed by United Nations entities*[a]
Theme 5 Enhancing effective partnerships, coordination and optimization in financing and resource mobilization	5.1 Prominent inclusion of education, learning and training in emerging United Nations-wide partnership guidance.	All, but especially Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 17	Enhancement of delivery of education, learning and training through partnerships	D: 2019 I: 2019–2030		UNDP, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Sustainable Development Goals, ILO, UNESCO and UNICEF
	5.2. Heightened advocacy for an integrated approach by Member States to financing education, learning and training throughout the life cycle from the early years to old age	Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 16 and 17	Appropriate levels of funding being allocated to lifelong and lifewide education and training for all, particularly in support of employment in a rapidly changing world	D: 2019–2022 I: 2020–2030		UNDP, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank
Cross-cutting themes	1. Improved coordination through a mapping of mappings	Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 16	Greater United Nations synergy and coordination, better policymaking and improved advice to Member States	D: 2019–2025 I: 2022–2030	UNODC-UNESCO partnership, UNESCO inter-agency group on technical and vocational education and training, and Learning and Knowledge Development Facility platform at UNIDO	

A system-wide and holistic approach for providing advice and catalysing support among Member States to deliver inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all						
Themes	*Objectives*	*Main targets related to education, learning and training (Sustainable Development Goals)*	*Intended outcomes*	*Timeline (D = Development; I = implementation)*	*Examples of ongoing practices by United Nations entities*	*Actions and resourcing to be contributed by United Nations entities*[a]
	2. Enhancement of the availability and use of data and evidence in and for education, training and learning	Sustainable Development Goals 4, 9, 10 and 17	Better educational systems, better use of technology in delivering effective learning and innovation	D: 2019–2030 I: 2022–2030	United Nations World Data Forum	UNESCO, Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNICEF
	3. Policy guidance	Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 16	More joined up and unified advice by the United Nations to Member States	D: 2022–2025 I: 2022–2030		UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF
	4. Ensuring that education, learning and training feature appropriately within enhanced United Nations coordination mechanisms at all levels	Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 17	More efficient, appropriate and effective United Nations delivery of support to States in implementing relevant education, learning and training	D: 2019–2023 I: 2019–2030		UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF

[a] Existing working groups would continue to lead in each thematic area. Those noted in this column are those most likely to be in a position to resource activities from their existing budgets in a "light-touch" approach.

Abbreviations: FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; ILO, International Labour Organization; IOM, International Organization for Migration; ITU, International Telecommunication Union; UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund; UNIDO, United Nations Industrial Development Organization; UNODC, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; UN-Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

Annex II

Integration of the strategy with those on capacity development with regard to artificial intelligence and on the future of work

Objectives of future of education and work strategy	*Relevant main paragraphs of the 2015 Incheon Declaration*	*Relevant part[a] of the strategy on capacity development with regard to artificial intelligence*	*Relevant paragraphs of the future of work strategy*
1.1 Advocacy of equity-based financing for progressive and universal inclusion in lifelong learning, training and education	14–15, 19, 28 and 77	–	Para. 36
1.2 Flagship practical initiative on a joined-up United Nations practical intervention in support of education, learning and training for the poorest and most marginalized	6, 13, 19, 32, 51, 54 and 57	Para. 9 (a), measures 1.4 and 6.1; and commitment 9	Para. 53
2.1 Development of a common United Nations language around skills, and especially digital skills	5–6, 14, 22–25, 29, 31–32, 34–35, 38, 41, 45–50, 58–60, 62–63, 68, 74, 82, 97 and 108, and annex II	–	–
2.2 Advocacy of a unified approach to skills policy, especially at the national level	5–6, 14, 22–25, 29, 31–32, 34–35, 38, 41, 45–50, 58–60, 62–63, 68, 74, 82, 97 and 108, and annex II	–	Paras. 6–7, 9–10 and 36
3.1 Development of a United Nations-wide initiative on credentials and qualifications throughout the life cycle	42, 45, 49 and 74, and annex II	–	–
3.2 Reducing the capacity gap: training for the future	10, 13, 22, 26, 32, 64, 66, 70–74, 81 and 85, and annex II	Commitments 2 and 3 and measure 5.3	Paras. 18, 30 and 49
4.1 Advocacy for global minimum standards and quality of basic infrastructure connectivity in all learning places	26 and 64	Para. 12 and theme 1	Para. 53
4.2 Implementation of a national readiness assessment framework for innovation through the use of	Annex II	Paras. 14–16	Paras. 36 and 47

Objectives of future of education and work strategy	*Relevant main paragraphs of the 2015 Incheon Declaration*	*Relevant part[a] of the strategy on capacity development with regard to artificial intelligence*	*Relevant paragraphs of the future of work strategy*
technology for education, training and learning			
5.1 Prominent inclusion of education, learning and training in emerging United Nations-wide partnership guidance	23, 28, 45, 77, 79, 82, 85, 87, 89, 96 and 107	Para. 9 (h)	Paras. 36 and 61–63
5.2 Heightened advocacy for an integrated approach by Member States to financing education, learning and training throughout the life cycle from the early years to old age	24, 101, 104 and 107	–	Para. 36
X.1 Improved coordination through a mapping of mappings	89, 97, 100 and 102	–	–
X.2 Enhancement of the availability and use of data and evidence in and for education, training and learning	18–19, 21, 33, 49, 57, 60, 70, 76, 89, 97–98, 100 and 102, and annex II	Paras. 12–13 and 16	Paras. 14, 36, 42, 44 and 60
X.3 Policy guidance	10, 17, 45, 57, 60, 72, 74–75, 79–85, 89, 92 and 98	Paras. 11–13 and 16	Paras. 23, 29–30, 34, 36 and 40–41
X.4 Ensuring that education, learning and training feature appropriately within enhanced United Nations coordination mechanisms at all levels	37, 60, 77, 86–96, 100, 102–103 and 107–108, and annex 1	Para. 16	Paras. 43–46, 51–52, 55 and 57

Activity unique to, or most fully developed in, the future of education and learning strategy

Activity closely similar to recommendation in other strategy (either future of artificial intelligence or future of work) and where close synergies should be developed

[a] For the purpose of promoting synergy, avoiding potential conflict, or addressing direct overlap.