

**SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee**

Virtual meeting on COVID-19 education Response

2 April 2020





## The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee Recommendations for COVID-19 Education Response

2 April 2020

*The COVID-19 pandemic is a global health crisis as well as an educational crisis, with over 1.5 billion learners affected by near-universal school closures. It has hit at the start of the Decade of Action to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Following an emergency virtual meeting, the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee calls on all governments and partners to respect the following policy recommendations in their response to COVID-19.*

### **Make inclusion and equity the guiding principle of all COVID-19 education responses**

Learning cannot stop – the protection of the right to education is all the more primordial in times of crisis. The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee calls on all governments to renew their commitment to leave no single learner behind. Inclusion and equity must be the guiding principle of every educational response to prevent educational, socio-economic and digital inequalities from widening and to ensure equal opportunities for all – especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized, including refugees.

The Steering Committee calls on all partners to join forces to ensure that learning continues for all and that our education systems come out of this crisis stronger, more resilient, innovative, responsive and inclusive. It stresses collaboration with health and other relevant sectors to assure the safety and well-being of all learners, and places particular vigilance on protecting girls' right to education, given their heightened risk of sexual abuse, early marriage and pregnancy in the face of school closures. Monitoring and disaggregated data will be vital to prevent widening inequalities. The Steering Committee endorses the Global COVID-19 Education Coalition launched by UNESCO as a platform for united and coordinated support to countries.

### **Recognise and support the critical roles that teachers play in the COVID-19 response and recovery**

The Steering Committee draws attention to the 63 million pre-primary, primary and secondary school teachers who are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 education response and under considerable pressure as they adapt to distance delivery modes. They also play a pivotal role in maintaining community cohesion and in combating discrimination and exclusion. Teachers, particularly those serving in remote and under-resourced areas, require professional development and support to empower them with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to deliver learning in this time of crisis.

In line with the [call for action by the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030](#), the Steering Committee calls on governments to prioritize teachers' and education personnel's safety, health and wellbeing; preserve their employment, rights and wages; and provide professional support, training and collaborative platforms to share good practices and innovations. At the same time, we recognize that many students are doing their schoolwork with no or little teachers' support, and urge education authorities to provide guidance and support to parents and families as they struggle to provide learning assistance.

### **Ensure adequate political commitment and investment in education in the recovery phase**

The successful re-opening of schools will be key to an effective recovery. However, the Steering Committee expresses deep concern that the socio-economic shock of COVID-19 will negatively impact education spending in the medium to long term, exacerbating the already large funding gap to achieve SDG 4. With pre-existing high levels of debt prior to the crisis, low- and middle-income countries will be particularly hard hit.

The Steering Committee urges governments to maintain strong political commitment and investment in education throughout and after the crisis, and calls upon bilateral and multilateral institutions to mobilize funding for education in low- and middle-income countries through both current and innovative financial instruments. Governments should take into account the power of education, especially education for girls and women, on growth and development. The Steering Committee reiterates that education financing is not a cost but an investment in empowering people and building more equal, inclusive and sustainable societies; and calls for renewed international solidarity and multilateral cooperation for the enhanced resilience and preparedness of education systems.

## Welcome Remarks by the Co-Chairs

### **Introduction and update on UNESCO's coordination initiatives – Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant-Director General for Education, UNESCO**

Ms Giannini underscored that the COVID-19 pandemic is not only a health crisis but also a human crisis, calling on the Steering Committee to fulfil its mandated role to lead the international community's commitment to the Education 2030 Agenda. As the international community embarks on the Decade of Action, its commitment and responsibility to leave no one behind is even more critical at this time of crisis. This is a time for partnership and solidarity, for sharing innovations.

As a result of the current COVID-19 crisis, school and university closures became nearly universal, affecting 1.5 billion students across all continents. In light of this unprecedented educational disruption, the most vulnerable are at greatest risk of being left behind, making it essential to take immediate action to prevent inequalities from widening.

UNESCO is committed to mobilize the global community to ensure learning never stops and to support countries as we enter a radically new age of learning. To this end, UNESCO has been supporting its Member States through the following fronts:

1. The monitoring of school closure and the compilation of disaggregated data;
2. Peer learning, knowledge and information exchange, as well as the establishment of platforms for strategic dialogue and the documentation of national responses;
3. Offering access to tools, platforms and educational resources; and
4. The provision of technical support to countries.

UNESCO's action and support are rooted in the conviction that better coordination, strengthened multilateralism and strategic policy dialogue must be at the heart of the international community's educational response to the crisis. In this spirit, UNESCO convened an emergency meeting of the Principals of the Multilateral Education Partners (MEP) on 24 April and the 12 participating organizations agreed to join forces to respond to this global challenge. Moreover, as part of its global coordination and leadership role, UNESCO launched the COVID-19 Global Education Coalition on 26 March, with the aim of providing one platform to mobilize support for distance education provision for all learners. Some 80 partners, including UN and international organizations, civil society and private sector partners, have joined the coalition so far.

Looking ahead, the Steering Committee must anticipate the recovery phase and ensure that education receives the political attention, commitment and financial resources it warrants. With all barometers pointing to a recession with devastating impact on the poorest – and on social spending as budgets shrink – the world cannot afford cuts in education spending. In this context, the Steering Committee must defend the centrality of SDG 4 for building inclusive and sustainable societies.

### **Presentation of the meeting's agenda and framing of the discussion by Mr Kazuhiro Yoshida (Japan), Co-chair of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee**

At this time of crisis where humanity is tested, the role of education is even more important. Knowledge, skills, attitudes and values all have to be combined to face this enormous challenge. The Global Coalition rightly puts emphasis on the fact that learnings should not stop and that equity and inclusion must be at the heart of joint responses to the crisis. To ensure no one is left behind, it is crucial to bring the knowledge, skills and expertise of all partners together. In this regard, the Steering Committee should seize this momentum to ensure the alignment of efforts and join forces for the advancement of common educational goals and objectives.

## Part 1: Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in COVID-19 Education Responses

### Discussion questions:

- *How can we ensure continuity of learning for all, notably the most vulnerable, and prevent educational inequity from widening during and following the current school closures?*
- *How can governments and the international community support teachers' effective teaching practice, motivation and wellbeing during school closures?*

### **Colombia – The Honorable Ms Maria Victoria Angulo Gonzalez, Minister of National Education of Colombia, representative of Colombia on the Steering Committee**

H.E. Ms Angulo Gonzalez first highlighted the COVID-19 education response initiatives in the Latin American and Caribbean region, including a meeting of Education Ministries of Latin American countries and Spain, which was convened on 27 March at the initiative of Argentina and with the support of UNESCO, UNICEF, OEI and the Inter-American Development Bank, to share experiences, best practices and available resources to tackle the crisis.

In Colombia, the Education Sector, together with the Ministry of Health, issued a first declaration on hygiene and COVID-19 prevention practice on 9 March. Since then several regulations were enacted and on-site educational activities have been suspended, the school calendar has been adjusted in the public sector and guidelines for the private sector have been provided. Further, the Ministry developed regulations and guidelines on continuing education at home as well as on virtual and other tools with pedagogical content. The National Ministry of Education also assured the school food program, to reach 6.9 million children. The Ministry also works with universities and TVET programmes to support or newly develop distance learning tools. In addition, for higher education students with government funded loans, a variety of debt relief measures have been implemented.

In order for learning to continue, a digital platform called “Digital Learning” with more than 80,000 educational resources was developed. Vulnerable students or students in rural areas without access to computers are being supported through radio and television programmes as well as study-at-home kits. Families are provided with a guide to support children’s home learning. The Ministry of National Education developed teachers’ guides for each stage and provides concrete support to teachers in areas such as literacy, mathematics, early childhood education and evaluation. In higher education, an additional plan for better teacher support was also designed.

Finally, H.E. Ms Angulo Gonzalez stressed Colombia’s commitment to the joint efforts and to tackle the crisis through creativity, innovative and transformative solutions, ensuring that the international community comes out of this crisis stronger than before.

### **UNICEF - Mr Robert Jenkins, Chief, Education and Associate Director, Programme Division**

The current crisis accentuates existing vulnerabilities considerably. Children of disadvantaged status across countries, either in terms of gender, disability, ethnicity or poverty are at the greatest risk in the context of the pandemic. The lessons learned from the Ebola crisis was that the health crisis presented greater risks for children, accentuating vulnerabilities, which translated into alarming data in increased sexual violence, teenage pregnancies and a broad range of other vulnerabilities. To address equity and reach all vulnerable learners, better, disaggregated data remain essential. It is important to support system-wide scale up, led by governments in close cooperation with all partners.

UNICEF with WHO developed the Safe School Operations Guidance for countries to engage partners to keep schools safe while they are open and once reopened. A series of educational toolkits have also

been developed to encourage continuous learning during school closure. Alternative learning measures must be adjusted to the educational needs and specific context of each learner.

There has also been a considerable mobilization of “non-traditional” partners, such as mobile network operators, many of which are engaged with zero-rate costs for transferring learning-related data. The current crisis is a valuable opportunity to strengthen partnerships with these actors.

Looking ahead at the aftermath of the crisis, data are important to understand how children will be most affected and which ones will require additional support. Back-to-school campaigns must adopt a broad approach to ensure all learners are “caught” and returning to the school benches.

**Education International (EI) – Mr Dennis Sinyolo, Senior Coordinator, Education, Employment and Research, Education International**

EI developed a set of 12 principles and recommendations for the governments and partners to take into account across educational responses to COVID-19. EI is currently conducting a survey and the responses were received so far from 63 countries. In all 63 countries, some teachers are reported to continue teaching the children of frontline health and other workers and indicate that they are not equipped with protective clothing and exposed to the risk of infection. The survey findings furthermore indicate that teachers are usually not consulted in the actual development of tools and methodologies introduced for the current crisis; and in the majority of cases, teachers, particularly those in developing countries, indicated that they do not have the skills to use them and need adequate training. An additional emerging finding is that many countries do not have access to distance learning modalities, including access to computers, the internet or even radio as well as TV programs.

In some situations, teachers are being dismissed, with short-term or contract teachers being particularly affected. The supply of teachers is also affected, as well as teachers employed in higher education and migrant teachers.

It remains essential to prioritize the safety of students and teachers while maintaining a strong focus on ensuring the continuity of learning. In this spirit, an adequate infrastructure must be in place and teachers equipped with the necessary skills to deliver quality education in times of crisis. Payment of teacher salaries, social dialogue and engaging with teachers on the development of tools and initiatives are important dimensions of the response. Finally, it is essential to provide psycho-social support for affected students, teachers and educators. In ending, Mr Sinyolo drew attention to the statement released by the Teacher Task Force on 27 March, calling for attention to teachers and the strengthening of support for teachers.

**Kenya – Ms Nelly Marete, Deputy Director of Education, Policy Partnerships and East Africa Community Affairs, Ministry of Education**

As an immediate reaction to the crisis, Kenya set up a COVID-19 Emergency Response Team comprising of the Ministry of Education and partners to coordinate interventions. To ensure learning continuity, the Kenya Education Cloud has been strengthened. The national curriculum development agency uploaded resources and content to the Cloud, which is also made available through an education TV channel, radio and social media platforms. In addition, publishers have waived subscription fees to provide free access to materials.

The country is actively supporting capacity development efforts to enable teachers to transmit the digital education content to all students and monitor learning effectively. In addition, the government

is encouraging the inclusion of COVID-19 content in the curriculum and committed to ensure teacher wellbeing.

Ensuring connectivity remains an important challenge – particularly for the most disadvantaged learners. The government is struggling to adapt the digital learning content to learners with special needs. Going forward, the country's key concern will be to expand connectivity and to improve infrastructure. Finally, Kenya is also working towards the establishment of an effective mechanism for monitoring and evaluation to gain a better understanding of progress.

## **Open Discussion**

### **Education Above All (EAA) – Ms Leena Al Derham, Senior Education Specialist**

The foundations constituency is actively engaged in support of education during the pandemic. EAA, as the constituency's representative to the Steering Committee, has put in place both programmatic and advocacy actions, including a list of free learning resources in eight different languages to help guide parents and guardians. The latter was developed in partnership with WISE, Mantra for Change and Fondazione Scuola.

The Foundation will also launch a bank of Project Based Learning resources for learners aged 4 to 13 in low-resource and low-connectivity homes. All projects therefore require little to no technology and are aimed at those without access to devices and connectivity. Finally, EAA, through its largest program, Educate A Child, will put particular emphasis on recovery, recognizing the risk of increases in the number of out of school children.

### **Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS) - Mr Abdusalam Aljoufi, Advisor**

ABEGs organized a series of meetings with Ministers from the Arab region to share experiences on country responses. In the region, the question of how to ensure exams are organized is identified as a considerable challenge. ABEGS is in the process of translating a series of learning resources and engaged to ensure the critical role of teachers is recognized.

### **E9 – Bangladesh – Mr Kazi Imtiaz Hossain, Ambassador of Bangladesh to UNESCO**

The E9 countries host half the world's illiterate population and the impact of the crisis on education will be tremendous in these countries as they will prioritize national economic recovery in the aftermath of the crisis, resulting in important cuts of the education budgets. It is thus urgent to up-scale political commitment to education in the context of the crisis, but also in its aftermath.

In Bangladesh, access to distance learning is a challenge as internet access is not universal. The government has taken initiatives to reach out to secondary students using a dedicated television network on which recorded education programmes are provided; this programme will also be expanded to the tertiary level.

### **Republic of Korea - Mr Kwangho Kim, Secretary-General, Korean National Commission for UNESCO**

The prolonged crisis requires each government to elaborate a dedicated contingency plan to ensure the continuity of education and the crisis must also be seen as an opportunity to improve access to and the quality of learning for all. Governments need to provide those at greatest risk of missing out with adequate equipment and materials to ensure that learning takes place through the use of radios or audio-visual files, depending on the respective context and the infrastructure in place.

With regard to teacher training, distance learning and distance initial teacher training, as well as continuous professional development opportunities could be a solution. It is important to strengthen and broaden partnerships, mentioning in particular ICT companies.

#### **Japan - Ms Miki Sugimura, Member of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO**

We are facing worldwide difficulties towards the realization of SDG 4. Supporting learning during school closure is the common critical challenge all countries are facing today. Japan has taken measures such as the establishment of a web learning contents portal to support children's online learning and interactive study support using ICTs between teachers and students.

The Japanese Ministry of Education also provided a guideline regarding school resuming and the implementation of temporary school closures. Japan is planning to reopen schools at the beginning of the new school year in April, while continuing to monitor the situation carefully. The guideline on school resuming emphasize each person's "transformative actions" to build sustainable societies.

### **Part 2: Ensuring Political Commitment to Education in the Recovery Phase**

#### **Discussion question:**

- *How can the Steering Committee effectively contribute to enhanced advocacy for maintaining investment (both domestic and international) as well as political commitment at the highest level to education?*

#### **World Bank – Ms Reema Nayar, Head of Special Initiatives, Education Global Practice**

The World Bank is gearing up to provide immediate support to countries, notably through technical knowledge products and the development of strategies covering school re-openings, health, school feeding and learning continuity. Another stream of work focuses on ACT—awareness raising, client consultations and technology preparation— to advise the Ministries of Education on remote learning as well as on strategies to facilitate learning in the aftermath of the pandemic.

The Bank is also working on a simulation model to assess the losses in learning as well as the impact of the crisis on socio-emotional learning and girls' education. An additional stream of work focuses on concrete policy actions to recover from the effects of the pandemic. Particular attention will be paid to young populations, social instability and teenage pregnancy.

The Bank's upcoming spring meeting will provide a valuable opportunity to exchange with Ministers of Finance to secure political and technical support to education. The major global recession is likely to put a strain on public budgets, which may lead to the shrinking of educational financial resources. In this regard, the World Bank is working closely with the IMF on the assessment of the different budget shocks to advise countries and partners on ensuring sufficient resources are allocated to education. In times of acute crisis, strengthened cooperation is indeed crucial and highlighted that the World Bank stands ready to actively support the Global Education Coalition.

#### **Norway - Mr Joakim Bakke, Director, Ministry of Education and Research**

The COVID-19 crisis demonstrated that UNESCO is clearly the global lead in education and emphasized that good political leadership will be key to steering the international community through the crisis. He furthermore underscored that in the longer run, no country can afford to lose focus on the global learning crisis, which also calls for up-scaled political guidance, strength and action.

The Secretariat has urged Member States to increase the political involvement in the Steering Committee and the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research fully supports this approach. An empowered Steering Committee with greater political involvement will help coordinate joint efforts throughout the COVID-19 crisis and remains just as important once the international community returns to addressing the global learning crisis. Norway's ambition is to see involvement of top political leaders in the Steering Committee and stands ready to work together with UNESCO and other partners to make this ambition a reality.

**OECD - Mr Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Special Advisor on Education Policy to the Secretary-General**

We should have no illusion in recognizing that education will find itself in a very difficult position in the aftermath of the current pandemic, in particular as far as resources are concerned. In a few months, the health crisis will turn into employment, economic and financial crises, which are likely to have detrimental effects on the domestic as well as international financing of education. The Steering Committee must actively support countries in effectively addressing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and actively support countries allocating scarce education resources in ways that foster equity and inclusion.

Addressing the productivity question in education will also remain essential. Value for money needs to be improved and the Steering Committee can contribute in this regard. In the context of the crisis, multiple initiatives are emerging on how to do education differently, bringing forward both technological and social innovations. The Steering Committee must ensure that these changes last, to avoid a simple return to the status quo once the crisis is overcome.

Good evidence and data remain essential to address the crisis. In this area, the Steering Committee could also upscale its efforts to mobilize the best evidence. The OECD has just compiled an extensive report on technology, software and teacher preparation in 79 countries, highlighting that that even among OECD countries, one in 10 students does not have a place to study at home. In addition, adequate teacher training is key to ensuring the continuity of learning for all. The report highlights that around two thirds of young people are enrolled in schools today in which teachers lack experience to deploy technology effectively.

The Steering Committee must play a central role in raising greater awareness of these challenges and in capitalizing on the moment to secure public commitment to education, as the public has realized the consequences of school closures.

**GPE - Ms Sarah Beardmore, Senior Strategy and Policy Specialist**

COVID-19 will severely affect low and middle-income countries, underscoring that with fewer resources to address the pandemic, the scale of the crisis is unimaginable. GPE is particularly concerned about children in these countries, as the virus disrupts education, cutting students off from their peers, learning and the vital services and protection that schools provide. In light of these risks, it is not the time to reduce funding to education. The stress the COVID-19 crisis will put on domestic financing cannot be ignored, and the current threat of a global recession is likely to create long-lasting negative impacts in the area of education. It is consequently important to welcome the debt relief calls of the IMF and the World Bank.

The Steering Committee must work vigilantly to protect social sector spending, and to ensure that international aid for education is not diverted in the aftermath of the crisis. The international community has the responsibility to join forces in the context of this crisis. It is critical to strengthen multilateral cooperation to effectively support countries through technical and financial resources.



Working in a coordinated way now, will enable the international community to strengthen national systems and actively support government responses.

GPE already provided 8.8 million USD in emergency funding to UNICEF towards coordinated response planning in 87 countries. On 1 April, the GPE Board also unlocked the USD250 million COVID-19 response funding window for 67 countries. The GPE funding will support coordinated and country-driven responses, including the production of educational television and radio programs, the distribution of equipment, data collection, poverty mitigation and the elimination of barriers to learning, as well as teacher training for school re-opening. The mobilization of the Steering Committee and the Global Coalition are truly key to ensure that countries and national education systems develop the resilience needed to face future crisis.

### **Open Discussion**

#### **European Commission – Mr Bartek Lessaer, Policy Officer, DG Education, Sport, Youth and Culture, A4 - Evidence-based policy**

The European Commission will launch a digital action plan in June 2020. In light of the current COVID-19 crisis, this action plan will see the distance-learning component strengthened. The Commission is also setting up an online exchange platform, which will allow EU Member States to share good practices. As poorer households continue to lack adequate equipment but also the physical space necessary for learning, the European Commission welcomes the strong focus on the equity dimension in the Steering Committee's discussion.

#### **Belgium - Ms Marie-Anne Persoons, Advisor International Policy, Department of Education and Training, Strategic Policy Unit, Flemish Community**

The Steering Committee should jointly plea for the period of confinement to be limited as much as possible, not only because of economic consequences exacerbating social divides, but also in light of the considerable implications on human rights. It is essential to learn from countries who succeeded in containing the virus within limited boundaries, without stopping citizens to take care and responsibility for their own health and the health of others. The Steering Committee should up-scale its efforts to encourage stronger multilateral cooperation, which is primordial in overcoming the challenges of the current crisis.

#### **Council of Europe - Mr Villano Qiriaz, Special Adviser to the Director General**

The Council of Europe set up a COVID-19 task force as a platform for cooperation and exchange among education actors of 47 Member States. The Council of Europe is also trying to readapt some of its main actions to the current crisis, including the refugee qualifications passport as well as activities related to student refugees' medical qualifications. Moreover, the Council is adjusting some of its programmes on digital citizenship and education as well as projects related to the rights of children and women facing situations of violence. Specific recommendations and resources are being developed in these areas.

#### **World Bank - Mr Jaime Saavedra, Senior Director, Education**

In the context of the current crisis, inequality of opportunities, which existed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in many low and lower-middle income countries, will be exacerbated. Countries are actively searching for solutions and trying to not only rely on online learning but also on alternative delivery modes, which remain primordial to reach all learners and ensure no one is left behind when it comes to ensuring the continuity of learning.

There is a considerable risk that educational resources will suffer in the coming months and even years as national governments will focus on responding to the consequences of the severe economic recession. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the international community was already facing a “silent” education crisis, which will be exacerbated if greater commitment and adequate financial resources are not secured. The Steering Committee, in close cooperation with its partners, must ensure that this silent crisis is made visible, investments in education continue, and governments get back on track to continue improving learning.

**European Commission - Ms Annica Floren, Deputy Head of Unit, DEVCO B 4 - Culture, Education, Health**

The European Union is preparing an integrated response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which will address health, social and economic consequences of the crisis, both in the short and longer terms. It will be crucial to ensure education investments are maintained during and after the pandemic. In this spirit, the Steering Committee should work towards a common narrative on joint goals, support knowledge exchange and technical coordination, and consolidate data and resources, which underpin advocacy and help the political dialogues.

**United Arab Emirates - Ms Mahra Hilal Al Mutaiwei, Director, Regional Center for Educational Planning**

In the UAE, the government is actively taking a series of measures to ensure education and learning. In line with the government’s decisions, education will be delivered remotely until the end of the academic year. Students were trained on the use of the online learning platforms while teachers, principals and other education personal were trained during the scheduled two-week holidays. The government provides computers or laptops to students—both in public and private educational institutions—who do not have the necessary equipment for distance learning.

**Conclusion and Endorsement of Recommendations**

In her closing remarks, Ms Giannini highlighted that the Steering Committee must capitalize on this momentum by strengthening partnerships and boosting its strategic role as well as the SDG 4 architecture as a whole, in order to raise awareness of the acute but “silent” educational crisis.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Steering Committee and its partners struggled to shake the world to recognize that education must be prioritized as the foundation for the success of the entire 2030 Agenda. Without doubt, education will be in a difficult situation in the aftermath of the crisis. Recent discussions, initiatives, exchanges and strategic dialogues among a diverse range of stakeholders are however a first step and truly encouraging.

The crisis obliges the international community to break from the routine and “doing business as usual”. There is a need for a true paradigm shift to seize the opportunity of this crisis to shape the education of the future and make education systems stronger and more resilient.

Ms Giannini thanked the Steering Committee for its commitment and active support of the Global Education Coalition and underscored that now is the moment to relaunch a set of key political messages, which are essential advocate for the centrality of education on each and every agenda and foster stronger political commitment for education at the highest level.

Mirroring the key messages and takeaways of its discussion, the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee adopted a set of key recommendations for COVID-19 educational responses.



# SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee

**Virtual Meeting on COVID-19 Education Response**  
**2 April 2020, 13:00 – 14:30 pm (GMT+2)**

Proposed Agenda	
13:00 – 13:10	<p><b>Welcome and introduction by the Co-Chairs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant-Director General for Education, UNESCO</li> <li>Mr Kazuhiro Yoshida, Director/Professor, Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education, Hiroshima University, Japan</li> </ul>
13:10 – 13:35	<p><b>Part 1: Ensuring inclusion and equity in COVID-19 education responses</b></p> <p><b>Discussion questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>How can we ensure that educational inequity do not widen during and following the current school closures?</i></li> <li><i>How can we reach the most marginalized and ensure the continuity of learning?</i></li> </ul> <p>Over 1.5 billion learners across 165 countries (i.e. 87% of the world’s student population) are currently affected by nationwide school and university closures. School closures and confinement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic deprive children and youth of opportunities for learning and development, with the disadvantaged and vulnerable populations being disproportionately affected, as they tend to have fewer educational opportunities beyond school. Some of them may not return to school after schools reopen. In light of the current educational disruption, the world could go further off track from achieving SDG 4 and its commitment to leave no one behind.</p> <p><b>Introduction by UNICEF</b></p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
13:35 – 14:00	<p><b>Part 2: Adapting teaching to a new reality to ensure continuing learning</b></p> <p><b>Discussion questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What are the lessons learned from the countries’ responses to the past and current closures in terms of teacher support and capacity development?</i></li> <li><i>How can governments and international community support teachers’ effective teaching practice, motivation and wellbeing during school closures?</i></li> </ul> <p>The COVID-19 challenged the traditional way of delivering education, calling for the immediate adoption of new teaching models, strategies and pedagogies. Recent findings of the OCED highlight that only 53% of teachers in OECD countries have experience with online, digital delivery in their classrooms, distance learning and the use of technology. The effective delivery of quality education is rooted in the capacities of teachers to adapt and rapidly acquire additional skills to respond to new learning needs. Ensuring the continuity of learning therefore has to start by putting greater emphasis on the training of teachers who must be equipped with new skillsets to be enabled to ensure that the quality of learning is maintained, even in the event of school closures.</p>

	<p><b>Introductory remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education International</li> <li>• UNESCO</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
<p><b>14:00 – 14:25</b></p>	<p><b>Part 3: Ensuring political commitment to education in the recovery phase</b></p> <p><b>Discussion question:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How can the Steering Committee effectively contribute to enhanced advocacy for maintaining investment (both domestic and international) as well as political commitment at the highest level to education?</i></li> </ul> <p>Across all continents, the COVID-19 pandemic challenged national health but also economic systems. In the aftermath of the current crisis, aid and national education budgets are likely to shrink as a result of recession and the need for a swift economic recovery, leading to a shift of priorities at the expense of education. In light of the centrality of inclusive, equitable quality education for all for each and every country’s sustainable development, ensuring that education receives the attention and political commitment it deserves in the recovery phase of the crisis will be essential.</p> <p><b>Introductory remarks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OECD</li> <li>• GPE</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
<p><b>14:25 – 14:30</b></p>	<p><b>Conclusion and closing remarks by the Co-Chairs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant-Director General for Education, UNESCO</li> <li>• Mr Kazuhiro Yoshida, Director/Professor, Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education, Hiroshima University, Japan</li> </ul>