United Nations Development Group Team for Western & Central Africa

**Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030
for West and Central Africa (RCG4-WCA)**

Terms of Reference
Adopted on 16 June 2016, revised version December 2016

I. RATIONALE

Over the past decades, sub-Saharan African countries have overall achieved enormous progress in increasing access to education under the Education for All (EFA) programme that originated in Jomtien in 1990 and was reconfirmed in Dakar in 2000. However, progress has been uneven within and across countries, especially when it comes to quality, equity and inclusion, learning, and relevance of education including beyond basic education. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015, among countries where data was available, 18 developing countries worldwide were far from achieving the quantifiable EFA goals; 10 of which were in West and Central Africa.

Recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of sustainable development, the international community adopted a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the fourth goal devoted to education. SDG4, "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", its corresponding targets and education-related targets of other SDGs[1] constitute the core of a single, renewed education agenda that is holistic, ambitious, aspirational, transformative and universal, leaving no one behind. It attends to the 'unfinished business' of the EFA agenda and education-related MDGs, and further stresses the need to scale up efforts towards improved access, equity and inclusion, quality and learning outcomes, within a lifelong learning approach. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025 was also adopted in September 2015 to reflect the aspirations of the African Union members, situating education at the heart of the broader development agenda for Africa (Agenda 2063), and to position Africa's response at the heels of the Conference of Education Ministers (February 2015, Kigali, Rwanda) and the World Education Forum (May 2015, Incheon, Republic of Korea).

The Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA) emphasizes "the renewed attention to the purpose and relevance of education for human development and economic, social and environmental sustainability" and draws particular attention to "unlocking education's power… especially in countries and regions in conflict", recommending "to develop education systems that are more resilient and responsive in the face of conflict, social unrest and natural hazards and to ensure that education is maintained during emergency, conflict and post-conflict situations". The FFA also provides guidance for the implementation of SDG4, emphasizing that regional and sub-regional collective efforts are critical to the successful adaptation and implementation of Education 2030 at the national and regional levels. Cooperation between the World Education Forum 2015 (WEF 2015) co-convenors[2], regional and intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, and regional and sub-regional communities will help national governments and stakeholders in tackling common challenges coherently and promote sharing of knowledge, effective policies and practices across regions. Inclusive and efficient coordination should focus on such aspects as mutual learning and exchange of good practices; strategic information; policy dialogue and partnerships; regional communication and advocacy strategies; resource mobilization; capacity building; and implementation of joint projects.

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[1] Reference to education is reflected in other SDGs such as poverty eradication, health, gender equality, economic growth and employment, sustainable consumption and production, and climate change; specifically in the following targets (either in the target language or global indicator): 1.a, 3.7, 5.6, 8.6, 12.8 and 13.3.
[2] UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN Women, The World Bank and ILO

Convinced of the need for strong regional collaboration, cooperation, coordination and monitoring in support of national education development, representatives of the UN and other multilateral organizations[3], active for education development in the West and Central Africa (WCA) region, gathered on 19 May 2016 at the inaugural meeting of the Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030 for West and Central Africa (RCG4-WCA) to discuss the ways and means to operationalize an effective coordination mechanism in the West and Central African region under the overall guidance of the Regional United Nations Development Group (R/UNDG) team and in broad partnership with intergovernmental, bilateral and civil society organizations supporting national education development in this region.

II. RCG4-WCA VISION

The vision of the RCG4-WCA is, through synergy and coherence in the actions of member organizations at country and regional levels, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all in WCA countries. Particular consideration will be given to supporting governments to develop more inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults, including internally displaced persons and refugees, as the WCA region is particularly vulnerable to the current and multiple crises that the world is facing.

To this end, RCG4-WCA will support the national adaptation and implementation of the Education 2030 agenda in all countries of the West and Central African region, taking into consideration their development contexts and aspirations. This will be done through providing a regional platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing, collaboration and monitoring on SDG4 and other related goals, where all major regional actors involved in education development in WCA can come together to define and coordinate collective strategies and joint actions for advocacy, technical assistance and capacity development, and to exchange best practices, tools and information.

III. PARTNERS

RCG4-WCA primarily serves 24 countries[4]: Democratic Republic of Congo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

Within the above mentioned countries, the primary partners of the RCG4-WCA are:
- Education ministries and institutions, including higher education and the research community;
- Local education groups;
- RCG4 member agencies' country teams;
- Civil society organizations, and teacher associations and unions;
- Relevant foundations and the private sector.

RCG4-WCA will also aim to forge strong partnerships with regional intergovernmental organizations, structures and inter-country programmes such as Regional Economic Communities, as well as with regional civil society organizations, foundations, the private sector and the media.

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[3] UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR, UN Women, FAWE, Save the Children, CONFEMEN (including PASEC), CONFEJES, CAMES, REESAO and Handicap International

[4] This is based on the list of UNDG's regional distribution which may be different from individual agencies' regional coverage. Therefore, some flexibility and discussion may be required when delivering action as the regional coordination group.

IV. FUNCTIONS

Key functions of the RCG4-WCA:

- Provide a regional space for dialogue and communication through regular meetings;
- Facilitate exchange of knowledge, experiences, expertise and information, including by means of an online platform;
- Develop joint regional programmes to support national education development in light of SDG4 and its targets, including in areas of results-based planning, the use of SDG4 indicator framework, advocacy, capacity development and resource mobilization for national plan development, implementation and monitoring;.
- Support linking global-level efforts, initiatives and discussions with country-level processes, challenges and evidence (in terms of e.g. policy, financing, monitoring and reporting);
- Ensure coordination and cross-fertilization with the (planned) Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) RCG4, as well as with other continents' coordination mechanisms;

## V. COMPOSITION, RESPONSABILITIES AND WORKING MODALITIES

The RCG4-WCA endeavours to bring together all UN and non-UN agencies and organizations (including CSOs, higher education networks, research community, teachers' unions or representations, etc.) working on education development in West and Central Africa to coordinate and harmonize strategies and efforts.

Membership is based on the following eligibility criteria: an organization working on education in WCA that is regionally or globally based and has representation in one or more countries of the region. Membership in the RCG4-WCA is on the basis of invitation or request. Eligible organizations wishing to join are expected to make an official request to the Secretariat of the RCG4-WCA based at the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar, which will consult the group member organizations to enquire their approval or non-objection.

Membership is institutional and not individual in order to guarantee the continuity of participation and information exchange in the course of time. The list of the current member organizations of the RCG4-WCA is attached as annex.

The RCG4-WCA is composed of a plenary group and several task teams, whose work is facilitated by the Secretariat and a steering team.

Organizational structure of the RCG4-WCA
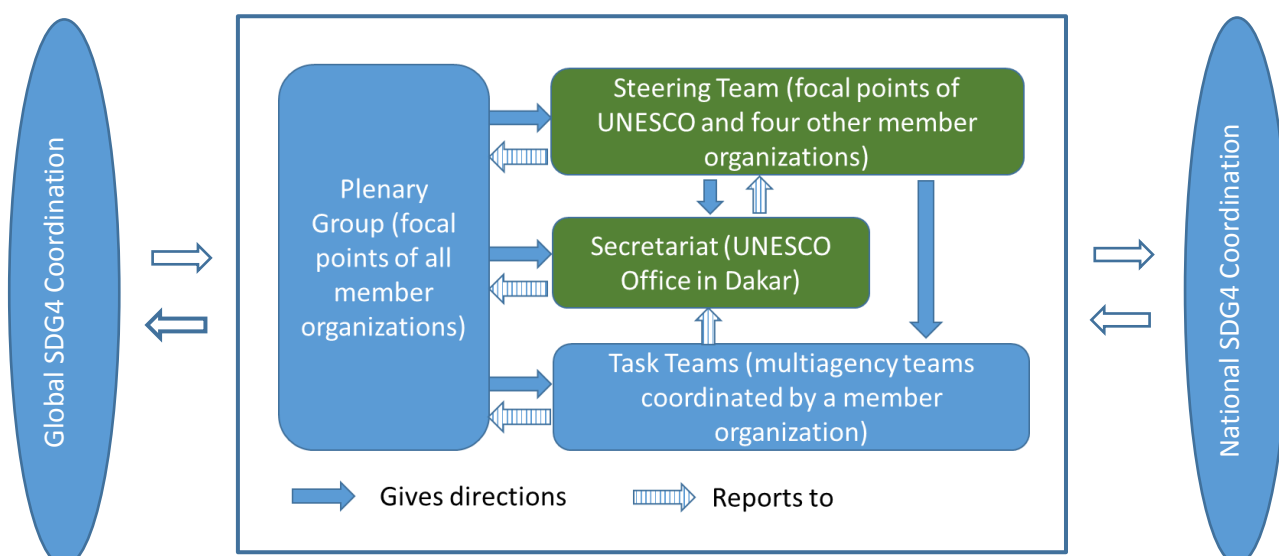
RCG4-WCA PLENARY GROUP

Members: member organizations' regional focal points responsible for education or their representatives. Each member organization of the RCG4-WCA is expected to designate one regional staff member as the focal point for the RCG4-WCA. The plenary group is the decision-making body of RCG4-WCA. It is expected that the terms of reference of those staff should reflect membership, active participation and coordination of this organization's inputs in the RCG4-WCA. Other professionals whose contribution could be beneficial to RCG4-WCA can be invited to join on an ad hoc basis.

Key responsibilities of RCG4-WCA focal points include:
- Actively contribute to the meetings of the plenary group of RCG4-WCA and its technical task teams ensuring proper individual and collective follow-up as necessary;
- Contribute to the development, the implementation, the monitoring and reporting of a biannual work plan;
- Mobilize member organizations' expertise and technical support in implementing RCG4's work plan and other joint activities;
- Timely share information of interest with the plenary group and/or task teams as relevant and pertinent for the effective coordination of RCG4-WCA work in the region;
- Facilitate information sharing, communication and interaction with country teams of respective member organizations and inform the RCG4-WCA on important issues, including relevant national processes and challenges, that may concern the rest of the group;
- Inform the respective heads of agencies and relevant staff on the activities of the RCG4-WCA (reporting).

Working Modalities:
- An RCG4-WCA work plan in light of the global directions and in line with regional priorities identified by the plenary group, and based RCG4-WCA task teams' work plans (see below);
- A meeting held at least every three months;
- An annual retreat to review progress on the work plan, identify bottlenecks and ways forward, and to develop the work plan for the biennium ahead (usually in November);
- One annual activity report against the work plan;
- Regular exchange of information through a dedicated web portal, bilateral contacts and email using a mailing list regularly updated and available to members

RCG4-WCA TASK TEAMS

A limited number of task teams were endorsed by the majority of member organizations, focusing around SDG4 targets and means of implementation as well as on important themes which cut across several SDG4 targets and common to the priority concerns of most organizations to ensure the participation of a sufficient number of member organizations. Each task team will be coordinated and facilitated by a member organization.

Adopted task teams are the followings:
- Education systems strengthening
- TALENT (Teaching and Learning: Educators' Network for Transformation
- Gender equality and inclusive education
- Early Childhood Education
- Education for peace, citizenship and sustainable development
- Post-basic education and technical and vocational education and training
- Higher education

Using the above options as reference, task teams will be gradually created upon the initiative of a member organization or group of member organizations and if the majority of member organizations endorse such an initiative.

Task team members: Each member organization of the RCG4-WCA can decide to be represented in one or several task teams. Confirmation of participation implies a clear commitment from task team members to actively contribute to the activities of the task team on behalf of the organization represented. Depending on its theme and scope, a task team may be open to countries, individuals and organizations that are not members of RCG4-WCA. However, all leads and co-leads should be members of the plenary group.

Key responsibilities of RCG4-WCA task teams include:
- Act as RCG4-WCA focal point for requests in a specific thematic area;
- Provide support to national education ministries and institutions, local education groups, and key national and regional partners in areas of expertise;
- Develop, implement, monitor progress and report on an agreed work plan;
- Conduct and/or organize research, knowledge sharing and capacity development activities in thematic areas;
- Support in the strategic and thematic area to country and regional partners through flexible mechanisms;
- Brief and disseminate relevant information on policy changes, recent findings, etc. to keep RCG4-WCA members updated;
- Flag emerging issues of importance to the rest of the RCG4-WCA;
- Consult with key regional partners to seek guidance on areas where more joint support by the RCG4-WCA is needed.

Working Modalities:
- Each task team develops a bi annual work plan that focuses on a manageable number of joint actions;
- The facilitators and co-facilitators will ensure the team meets (in person or virtually) on a regular basis and keep all team members informed. Frequency of meetings will be determined by each task team in order to ensure effective and efficient development, implementation, and monitoring of their work plan as well as information sharing;
- Regular updates (during quarterly RCG4-WCA meetings) as well as one annual progress report to be presented during the annual RCG4-WCA retreat;
- Each task team will design its activities and organize its work plan under four key working modalities: (1) analytical work & tools development, (2) knowledge management, (3) in-country support, and (4) capacity development.

RCG4-WCA SECRETARIAT
UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar will act as the coordinator and secretary of the group, with the guidance and support of the steering team.

RCG4-WCA STEERING TEAM
This team, comprised of five voting members (the coordinator and four focal points of member organizations, e.g. a UN organization, a civil society organization, a regional multilateral organization, etc., chosen by respective constituencies) acts as liaison between the RCG4-WCA Plenary Group and the Secretariat, giving directions to and supporting the Secretariat in the planning and implementation of RCG4-WCA activities between the plenary group meetings.

VI. MANAGEMENT

Under the guidance of and with support from with the Steering Team, the Secretariat of the RCG4-WCA will discharge the following key functions:

- Supporting collaboration, coordination and communication with "wider" bodies, such as the SDG4 Global Steering Committee, the African Union Commission, UNECA's Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), the R/UNDG Team, , as well as local education groups and Regional Economic Communities (RECs);
- Organising a yearly retreat, convening quarterly meetings, and any other meetings of the RCG4-WCA as necessary;
- Preparing notes for the record of all RCG4-WCA meetings and retreats;
- Coordinating the development, management, and monitoring of the RCG4-WCA annual work plans;
- Identifying strategic or emerging issues requiring RCG4-WCA's attention and/or action;
- Compiling and disseminating information on key events and reports;
- Facilitating the development of advocacy and communication tools and channels with relevant national education institutions including local education groups;
- Communicating on and coordinating RCG4-WCA activities through the dedicated web portal and electronic information exchange;
- Mobilizing resources for RCG4-WCA activities;
- Facilitating the review of RCG4-WCA's structure, TORs, biannual work plans and reports.

Annex: List of Current Member Organizations of the WCA-RCG4

1. UNESCO (Dakar, Abuja, Yaoundé, UNESCO Institute for Statistics-Dakar and Pôle de Dakar/IIEP-UNESCO)
2. UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO)
3. UNFPA
4. UNHCR Regional Bureau for West Africa
5. ILO Regional Office for West Africa
6. UN Women in West and Central Africa Region (WCARO)
7. The World Bank Regional Office
8. Global Partnership for Education (GPE)
9. Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)
10. Save the Children International for West and Central Africa Regional Office
11. Conférence des ministres de l'Education des Etats et gouvernements de la francophonie (CONFEMEN), including Programme d'analyse des systèmes éducatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC)
12. Conférence des Ministres de la Jeunesse et des Sports (CONFEJES)
13. Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES)
14. Réseau pour l'excellence de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique de l'Ouest (REESAO)
15. Handicap International
16. The Africa Network Campaign on Education For All (ANCEFA)
17. Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)
18. Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA)
19. Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)
20. Plan International West Africa
21. African Development Bank (AfDB) – tbc
22. African Union Commission: Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology - tbc