



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

May 2016 – December 2017



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I. INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the essential role of education as a driver of sustainable development, in 2015 the international community adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 4th of which is dedicated to education. SDG4, “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,” and its corresponding targets are at the heart of a unique and revitalized agenda for education that leaves no one behind and is simultaneously holistic, ambitious, transformative and universal. SDG4 continues to work toward the unachieved objectives of the Education For All (EFA) movement, as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to education, and reinforces the need to scale up efforts to increase access, equity, inclusion, quality and learning objectives to promote lifelong learning.

It is within this context that the Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030 in West and Central Africa (RCG4-WCA) was established on May 19th, 2016 at a meeting of the organizations active in supporting education in the West and Central African region. Participants at the meeting signed an inaugural agreement wherein they agreed to develop a Terms of Reference (TOR) for the RCG4-WCA and implement activities relevant to the Education 2030 Agenda throughout West and Central Africa, taking into account each country’s unique context and aspirations for development, and agreeing to collaborate with the Eastern and Southern African region.

This report presents the composition of the group and its working modalities, outlines the achievements of the RCG4-WCA up to December 2017 and stimulates reflection on the future direction of the group. The recommendations herein are derived from an analysis of the objectives the group has attained, with the goal of increasing the group’s functionality and its commitment to realizing the aspirations of its members.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE RCG4-WCA

Following the creation of the RCG4, its members created and ratified a TOR for the group (Plenary Meeting on 16 June 2016), and agreed on a common vision, participating members, key functions and the structure of the group, its management and the responsibilities and working modalities of each of its different components.

Vision for the RCG4-WCA

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.

Key functions of the RCG4-WCA:

1. Provide a regional space for dialogue and communication through regular meetings;
2. Facilitate exchange of knowledge, experiences, expertise and information, including by means of an online platform;
3. 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;
4. 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);
5. Ensure coordination and cross-fertilization with the (planned) Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) RCG4, as well as with other continents’ coordination mechanisms.

structure and visibility of the RCG4-WCA as a whole. A draft of the work plan for 2018-19 has also been proposed.

Through the physical meetings of the plenary group, or by way of its listserv, the focal points have shared information concerning their activities, in particular those of relevance to the larger RCG4-WCA group. They have also periodically mobilized the expertise and technical support of their respective organizations on specific thematic areas.

The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is composed of UNICEF, CAMES, CONFEMEN, FAWE and ANCEFA, together representing civil society and is chaired by UNESCO. Conceived of as a liaison between the plenary group and the Secretariat, the Steering Committee members were validated by the plenary group and their participation is of a voluntary nature. The RCG4's TOR does not specify the frequency of the Steering Committee's meetings, but stipulates that the Committee must be consulted at least once within the plenary group's meetings. On February 27th, 2017, the Steering Committee members decided to convene meetings every six weeks.

The Task Teams¹

A list of seven task teams, each aligned with the SDG 4 targets, was originally adopted by the plenary group. To date, six task teams have been established (there has not yet been any interest expressed amongst the RCG4 members to take charge of the seventh group, Education for Peace).

Each task team, led by one member organization, for an initial voluntary mandate of two years, and the possibility of adding a co-lead, has prepared a TOR within the parameters described by a guidance note. Multiple task teams then drafted and implemented their work plans and have since reported on their activities at plenary meetings. Additionally, though the majority of the member organizations participating in the task teams are members of the RCG4, other organizations may also participate in one of the six teams.

The task teams may encompass either a regional or continental scope and the evolution of the scope over time will depend largely on the teams' members and their activities.

The following is an outline of the working modalities of the task teams (further information regarding their activities can be found within the "Main Activities" section of this report):

	Name	Lead	Functioning and modalities
1	Education Systems Strengthening	UNESCO	The team had its first meeting in February 2017. Its work is concerned with the development of tools and analysis frameworks, as well as sharing of best practices. The strengthening of national capacities and support to countries in education sector planning are the upcoming activities set for implementation.

¹ Detailed reports submitted by the Task Teams are available in the annex

2	Teaching and Learning: Educators' Network for Transformation (TALENT)	UNESCO	The team, established in June 2016, is made up of member organizations and a steering group, which coordinates and plans its activities. The latter meets every 2 months to discuss logistical questions and even more frequently for technical meetings concerning teaching and learning. Hosted at UNESCO Dakar, the Secretariat of the steering group is responsible for day to day management of TALENT's activities. The remaining members of the task team participate in various regional activities and are active at the country-level.
3	Gender Equality and Inclusive Education	Save the Children	The team was launched in January 2017 and has since met on 11 occasions throughout the year. The meetings have provided the opportunity for member organizations to share knowledge, experience and best practices on gender equality and inclusive education in the West and Central African region and have led to members' capacity development and reinforcement. Beyond their meetings, the group frequently shares information via email.
4	Early Childhood Education	UNICEF	Based on a TOR proposal developed by UNICEF, 8 organizations participated in a preliminary meeting in December 2017. The objective was to define the scope of work for the team and to share interested members' activities in order to develop a future work plan.
5	Technical and Vocational Education and Training	BAD	The African Development Bank shared the team's TOR with the RCG4's members at the end of 2017 and its first meeting is scheduled for January 2018.
6	Higher Education	CAMES	The task team was created in June 2017 and a kick off workshop took place in July 2017 in Cotonou, Benin. A steering committee coordinated by CAMES was also established. Two focal points were established to ensure a strong connection between the team's plenary group and its steering committee.

The Secretariat

UNESCO Dakar leads the RCG4 Secretariat with the assistance of two part-time collaborators. UNESCO Dakar also facilitates the technical aspects of the RCG4's online platform with the help of interns as necessary.

The Secretariat coordinates the development, management and monitoring of the RCG4's work plan, as well as the organization of quarterly meetings, which entails the drafting of meeting agendas and reports. The Secretariat is tasked with the regular distribution of information regarding important events and

publications which intersect with the interests of the RCG4, the coordination of group activities and the communication of information via the RCG4's online platform, which is meant to facilitate the digital exchange of information within the group.

2) Resource mobilization for the group

Since the group's inception, the Secretariat, which devotes a portion of its own operating budget to the group, has often broached the question of the RCG4's funding. Following a number of discussions, the member organizations reached an agreement in October 2017 establishing a funding mechanism that defines members' individual contributions to the RCG4's work plan.

Contributions from members are to be collected for the following expenses: human resources and operating funds for the Secretariat, RCG4 plenary group and Steering Committee meetings, joint activities and promotion and communications.

Defined in a brief prepared by the Secretariat and validated by the plenary group, the essential parameters are simplicity, flexibility, transparency and accountability and the preferred method is direct funding or in-kind contributions by member organizations.

Based on this brief and the proposed 2018-19 work plan, the member organizations have been invited to take responsibility for budget items or to contribute in-kind based on their individual financial resource constraints.

III. MAIN ACTIVITIES

The 2016-17 work plan was drafted through a participatory and inclusive process; it was approved at the December 2016 retreat. The task teams each developed their own work plans, incorporating both members' individually planned activities and newly conceived joint activities.

Certain activities included in the RCG4's work plan were assigned to the relevant task team, especially in the case of the Education System's Strengthening task team. Other activities, including the planning of celebrations for various international holidays, were discussed several times but have yet to materialize.

The following is a list of each of the RCG4's main functions with a detailed explanation of the relevant activities performed by each of the RCG4's entities:

1) Provide a regional space for dialogue and communication through regular meetings (Function 1)

The seven quarterly plenary meetings of the RCG4 have facilitated mutual exchange and learning amongst member organizations, including the task team leads and the Secretariat, where both recounted their relevant activities, knowledge and experience, and shared updates on themes pertinent to the work of the larger group and the member organizations.

2) Facilitate exchange of knowledge, experiences, expertise and information, including by means of an online platform (Function 2)

In addition to the plenary meetings, the RCG4 has developed several means to enable dialogue, communication and knowledge management.

A regular listserv (rcg4-wca-pg@lists.unesco.org) serves as a means of information exchange amongst the group as a whole, as well as between its members. This form of exchange is also employed by several task teams, particularly the Gender and Inclusion task team.

The [Education 2030 in Africa](#) online platform is a virtual space that was developed to facilitate sharing of knowledge, resources and experiences with the objective of improving education in the region. Originally hosted within UNESCO's site under the name "Educ'Africa," the RCG4's members opted to increase the neutrality of the site by relinquishing any explicit ties to one member in particular and to equitably engage all of the group's members. As the principal source of both external visibility and internal communication amongst the group, the platform contains two areas for exchange, currently under construction; the first is reserved for member organizations and the second is dedicated to each task team. Members have contributed to the creation of a database of publications relevant to SDG4 and/or the region, which allows for research by theme and other criteria. The platform also contains a compilation of general information on the region's countries and information on education governance structures and ministries, education sector plans, independent education sector analyses and relevant data derived from different RCG4 member organizations. The Secretariat develops, manages and monitors the day to day updates of the site with the help of CONFEMEN and UNICEF. The platform has been operational since September 2017.

The **regional launch events for the GEM Report** have also served as occasions for dialogue and knowledge sharing among member organizations and other actors.

The regional launch of the 2016 GEM Report, on September 15, 2016, examined the role of education in the 2030 Agenda and the challenges posed by monitoring the ten SDG4 targets as well as other SDG targets which concern education. Several areas that could lead to further RCG4 joint have emerged from these discussions, particularly the interconnection between SDG4 and other SDGs in the region and the implications of the education objectives and targets in the planning and implementation of national education policies.

Coordinated by the RCG4-WCA, the regional launch of the 2017-18 GEM Report, organized on October 25, 2017, aimed to spread the report's main findings for the region and stimulate dialogue between different regional actors concerned with accountability in education. The event was financed with the help of UNESCO and UNICEF and the technical contributions of FAWE, ANCEFA, CONFEMEN and UNESCO. Convening more than fifty participants representing development partners, the event facilitated an exchange of ideas among different groups of actors concerning the joint responsibility to ensure the right to education. Driven by the conclusions and recommendations of the report, the discussion was principally concerned with collective action and shared responsibility, as well as a re-examination of the current education systems in place, the merits of partners' actions and their importance in ensuring a quality and inclusive education for all. In particular, participants discussed the necessity of exploring how different funding mechanisms could support SDG4 and the achievement of other SDGs.

In terms of external visibility, the Secretariat drafted nine online articles published on the UNESCO Dakar site, the UN Senegal site and the Education 2030 in Africa site in the last year. Group activities were also the subject of media coverage. With the development of the new platform, the need to define the group's visual identity is particularly pertinent. FAWE volunteered to develop several logo mockups and a banner for the platform in consultation with the Secretariat. In December 2017, the members decided on a logo amongst three choices. The new logo will be used on all RCG4 group and task team work products. A pamphlet presenting the RCG4-WCA was drafted to increase visibility and publicity, but several revisions, thematic and visual, are still necessary.

3) Develop joint regional programmes to support national education development in light of SDG4 and its targets (Function 3)

Certain joint activities the plenary group had originally agreed to put in place were later taken up by the task teams upon their establishment. The majority of the task teams advanced tool development and knowledge management activities, and began to fulfill their mandate to support country needs, beyond that which is already provided by each individual member organization.

The Gender Equality and Inclusive Education task team developed a policy brief on the theme “Promoting Girls' Right to Learn in West and Central Africa,” which will be employed in national advocacy activities.

TALENT managed several activities supporting the professionalization of primary school teachers in West and Central Africa and the systems of learning evaluation in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

More detailed information concerning the activities of the task teams is available in the annex.

4) Support linking global-level efforts, initiatives and discussions with country-level processes, challenges and evidence in alignment with pre-existing mechanisms (Function 4)

The RCG4 Secretariat communicates the activities of the group to the SDG4-Education 2030 coordination mechanism at the global level, the **SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee**, through briefing notes.

Briefing notes were also shared with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in West and Central Africa each trimester.

With regard to collaboration with African institutions, the African Union (AU) participated in discussions concerning generating greater synergy between the RCG4's task teams and the AU's thematic clusters in order to reinforce the linkages between Education 2030 and CESA 16-25.

As part of this rapprochement, the RCG4-WCA organized an event dedicated to “Regional Partnership in Support of Education 2030 and CESA 16-25” alongside the ADEA 2017 Triennial in March 2017 in Dakar. The objective of this event was to establish a platform for exchange on the creation of effective partnerships and regional collaboration meant to provide support on contextualization and implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda and CESA 16-25 at the country level. High level representatives from the African Development Bank, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the African Union, the Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA) and the RCG4-WCA participated in a panel discussion sharing their perspectives on the challenges of implementing these two Agendas. The panel highlighted convergence and the strong linkages between the CESA strategic objectives and the SDG4 targets, looking at the development of a common understanding of the education coordination mechanisms put in place in sub-Saharan Africa. This was also an opportunity to launch a dialogue around effective coordination for the implementation of the two education agendas in Africa. The African Union became a member of the RCG4-WCA following this event.

Finally, contact was made with the Regional Working Group for Education in Emergencies (EiE) (coordinated by UNICEF and Plan International) to explore the possibility of collaboration with this group which aims to improve the coordination of EiE and the transition from an EiE to a development response in the region. The exchange is set to continue in 2018.

Communication between global and regional (WCA) levels has been provided by the Secretariat, in particular with the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee.

5) Ensure coordination and cross-fertilization with the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) RCG4, as well as with other continents' coordination mechanisms.

Several exchanges have taken place with Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) partners, and the UNESCO personnel designated to coordinate the SDG4 in ESA have been copied on all the exchanges concerning the RCG4-WCA. In the absence of a formal coordination structure for the region, a discussion took place as to whether the coordination in WCA could be extended to ESA based on an analysis of the general implications and technical aspects. In the end, the RCG4 decided to continue to limit its presence to WCA until such a time when the ESA has its respective official coordination mechanism in place.

In regards to coordination efforts with other continents, thus far action has not yet been taken beyond a consultation regarding the development of the web platform, which took place between the Secretariat and the UNESCO Office in Beirut, which facilitates the SDG4 coordination for the Arab States.

IV. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

In order to construct recommendations, challenges and lessons learned were identified for each of the components of the RCG4.

Plenary Group

- Apart from an active core, member participation remains limited. In particular:
 - Member attendance at plenary meetings and response to email communication are relatively low. It was noted that individual follow-up with members by the Secretariat is paying off, but due to a lack of human resources, the Secretariat has been unable to systematize this practice
 - The location of plenary meetings was originally meant to rotate amongst the bureaus of the different member organizations, but to date the only members to finance or host a meeting have been UNESCO, UNICEF and CONFEMEN.
 - Member engagement in the web platform has been low.
- Joint events have generally been well received and have seen a strong level of participation among members of the group. However, the organization of such events has remained limited to a small number of members, who are often the same.
- Although the call for greater collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) has frequently been repeated in group discussions, little has materialized to date. Only ECOWAS has joined as a member since the end of 2017, but it has not participated actively in meetings or virtual exchanges.
- With the absence of a formal coordination structure in East and Southern Africa, African wide coordination of SDG4 has yet to take place.
- Engagement in **thematic topics** during each plenary meeting, though often suggested, has not occurred due to a lack of sufficient time in meetings. It is possible that such discussions could lead to greater member participation in meetings and group activities.
- Following the example of the inaugural agreement signed by the members present at the first RCG4-WCA establishment meeting, there is no process for formalizing the engagement of any

new member. Adapting such a process could strengthen the legitimacy of the group, and could in turn result in greater involvement of certain organizations.

Steering Committee

- The frequency of meetings, meant to occur every six weeks as agreed upon by the group, has not been respected: the group members have been consulted on only four occasions since the implementation of the Committee in September 2016.
- Meetings of the Steering Committee, set to take place before each plenary meeting and at least once per trimester, are important to guide the group's strategic direction. Ad hoc meetings could be arranged according to the needs of the group.
- Skype meetings have allowed for participation of a greater number of organizations but technical difficulties have often been encountered.

Secretariat

- Overall, the Secretariat has fulfilled its commitments, apart from "facilitating the development of tools and channels for advocacy and communication with relevant national education institutions, including local education groups."
- The lack of human resources has proven to be a limiting factor. Several avenues to reinforce the Secretariat's capacities have been strategized, though nothing concrete has been adopted.
- Members expressed their difficulty in directly funding a Secretariat staff member. Instead, they have been asked to support specific tasks financially or in kind, but there has been a low level of participation toward this commitment.

Task Teams

The following elements have been derived from the activity reports submitted by each of the task teams:

- The weak mobilization of funds to finance joint activities and the limited human resources to manage their implementation have been identified as the largest constraints to the implementation of the task teams' work plans.
- The members of each task team are occupied by their respective schedules and priorities. Some view the participation in the task teams as an additional task, rather than an avenue for collaboration and implementation of their mandates, or as a means to benefit from increased synergy between institutions.
- Although it has been easier thus far to include existing activities of member organizations in the work plans of the task teams, new, joint activities could increase the appropriation and the engagement of members.
- A limited number of members and a strong personal engagement in targeted joint activities could allow for the implementation of more dynamic and fluid working modalities, to overcome a fragmentation of efforts. Working on concrete deliverables and appointing one organization as the lead on each activity could maintain the engagement and dynamism amongst the teams and would make it possible to respect the deadlines for the implementation of activities.
- The element of "country-level support" has been difficult for the majority of the task teams to implement. It will be necessary to find concrete and relevant means to engage with country teams (beyond regional workshops).

- Certain task teams have not yet developed a systematic culture of information sharing or consultation through mailing lists.
- Despite several attempts, it has been challenging to reinforce links with CESA and the AU, as well as other regional and sub-regional institutions.
- A lack of communication and articulation was reported between the different task teams, and between the task teams and the plenary group.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the RCG4-WCA and each of its components has fulfilled their designated functions. Although the group's work plan was not implemented in its entirety, considerable achievements have been realized and the organizations have demonstrated a common drive to reinforce their synergy and coordination in order to attain the objectives of SDG4 in the region.

In this context, it is important to maintain the ambition of the group while simultaneously ensuring that the effective participation of all members, current and future, remains realistic. It is important to recognize that a coordination mechanism of such a nature takes time to implement.

In light of the current report, the RCG4-WCA's terms of reference were revised to better reflect the reality of the group's operation. In particular, a reformulation of the plenary group and Secretariat's functions was proposed by the group's members to this end (see the annex).

Based on the previously identified challenges and lessons learned and the group's existing terms of reference, the following recommendations have been proposed, accompanied by an implementation strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Identify the causes limiting the participation of certain members through a process of participative inquiry so as to increase the group's ability to function, as well as its general visibility (ownership, interest and expectations)

- Consult the group through the use of an online questionnaire (Secretariat).
- Develop a dynamic exchange outside of group meetings via email or the platform in order to reinforce interaction and participation between members.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Explore the possibilities of reinforcing the Secretariat with part-time support, allowing the Secretariat to fulfill its role in individually following-up with members when necessary.

- Recruit a UN volunteer or a volunteer from a different organization.
- Solicit in-kind support from members whenever possible.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Lead a discussion to reflect on how the RCG4 can best support its constituent countries, in particular how to employ Local Education Groups (LEGs) and the use of the web platform.

- Consultation with the LEGs to understand their expectations on how to leverage the RCG4-WCA coordination mechanism to their benefit.
- Transmission of information and targeted, localized messages at the country level, employing sufficient human resources (synthesis of reports, global recommendations and adaptation to the WCA context)
- Coordination of interactions between the LEGs and the group (Secretariat, task teams)

RECOMMENDATION 4

Further strengthen communication and collaboration with the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities in order to establish greater coherence with CESA 16-25.

- The Pan-African Conference on Education (PACE 2018), planned for April 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya, could facilitate such collaboration.
- Where there is an overlap of objectives, the RCG4 task teams could approach the thematic clusters created under CESA.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Reinforce communication between the two coordination groups in WCA and ESA to ensure that both these African regions can equitably benefit from the SDG4 structures already in place, including those at a global level.

- Better connections could be reinforced through the preparation and monitoring of the Pan-African Conference on Education (PACE 2018).
- A meeting of the plenary group could be organized in anticipation of PACE 2018 to better leverage the opportunities presented by the conference.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Systematize and reinforce collaboration and communication between different task teams and also between the task teams and the group.

- The cross-cutting task teams such as TALENT and ESST could represent themselves in the remaining task teams in order to better facilitate the development of joint activities.
- The Secretariat to reflect on the structure of the task teams.
- The web platform should be leveraged to achieve this objective.

ANNEXES

Reformulation of the plenary group's key functions

Previous functions	New functions
1) Establish a regional space for dialogue and communication through regular meetings	1) Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience, expertise and information, as well as collaboration
2) Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experiences, expertise and information, including by means of an online platform	
3) 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;.	2) Implement joint initiatives to support the development of education in countries, in alignment with SDG4, its targets and with CESA 16-25.
4) 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).	3) Support linking global-level efforts, initiatives and discussions with country-level processes, challenges and evidence at the country level.
5) Ensure coordination and cross-fertilization with the (planned) Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) RCG4 , as well as with other continents' coordination mechanisms.	4) Ensure coordination and cross-fertilization with other coordination mechanisms in the region and on other continents.

Reformulation of the Secretariat's key functions

Previous functions	New functions
1) Mobilize resources for the GRC4's activities	1) Manage GRC4's members' participation and mobilize their participation, and their financial and in-kind contributions
2) Organize a yearly retreat, convene quarterly meetings, and any other meetings of the RCG4-WCA as necessary	2) Organize a yearly retreat, convene quarterly meetings and all other necessary

3) Prepare notes for the record of all RCG4-WCA meetings and retreats	meetings of the RCG4, including the drafting of reports and monitoring progress
4) Coordinate the development, management, and monitoring of the RCG4-WCA annual work plans	3) Coordinate the development, management, review and monitoring of the RCG4's annual work plans and the RCG4's annual report
5) Identify strategic or emerging issues requiring RCG4-WCA's attention and/or action	4) Share strategic or emerging issues requiring RCG4-WCA's attention and/or action as well as pertinent information including key events, reports, etc.
6) Compile and disseminate information on key events and reports	
7) Communicate on and coordinate RCG4-WCA activities through the dedicated web portal and electronic information exchange	5) Facilitate communication between the different task teams, as well as between the teams and the plenary group , particularly through the use of the web platform and electronic exchange of information
8) Facilitate the development of advocacy and communication tools and channels with relevant national education institutions including local education groups	6) Support communication between global-level and country-level actors, including the Local Education Groups (LEGs) and the Development Partners
9) Support collaboration, coordination and communication with "wider" bodies, such as the SDG4 Global Steering Committee, the AU Commission, UNECA's Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), the R/UNDG Team, , as well as local education groups and Regional Economic Communities (RECs)	7) Facilitate a group effort toward linking the global level and the processes, challenges and evidence at the country-level, in accordance with the SDG4 coordination mechanism in ESA and on other continents.