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Items for information: education statistics

Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute of Statistics on education statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request made by the Statistical Commission at its forty-third session (see E/2012/24, chap. I.A), the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute of Statistics on education statistics, which is presented to the Commission for information. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2013/1.



I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to a request made by the Statistical Commission at its forty-third session, held in 2012, addresses five items: (a) the implementation of the newly adopted International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011; (b) the progress made towards an ongoing revision of the fields of education classification; (c) a regional education data-collection approach that has been implemented in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean; (d) a modular data-collection approach at the global level that will be launched in 2013; and (e) the first results of a new global initiative, the Learning Metrics Task Force, related to the measurement of learning outcomes. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

II. Implementation of ISCED 2011

2. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS) and its education data collection partners, Eurostat and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), are adapting their education surveys to the new ISCED and working with countries to remap their education programmes and qualifications to ISCED 2011. The first international education surveys will be launched in 2014.

3. UIS has provided training and support to assist countries in adapting their education data reporting systems to the new ISCED in time for the first international surveys in 2014. Since November 2011, regional workshops have been held for countries in the Arab region, Central Asia, East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, South and East Africa and South and West Asia. The remaining developing regions will be targeted in 2013. Eurostat and OECD have taken the lead in providing support and advice to their member States and partner countries.

4. In addition, the UIS teams of regional and cluster statistical advisers based in Africa, the Arab region, Asia and Latin America have been providing in-country support to statisticians and national counterparts in their respective regions as part of their regular work with countries.

5. UIS is developing an operational manual to provide further guidance and examples to countries. Eurostat and OECD are also producing similar materials for the surveys undertaken by their respective member States.

III. Revision of the ISCED fields of education classification

6. In parallel with activities to support the implementation of ISCED 2011, work has begun on a revision of the fields of education classification contained in ISCED 1997. A new technical advisory panel was established to guide the revision and held its first meeting in Montreal, Canada, in May 2012. Members of the panel are classification or education experts nominated by partner agencies (Eurostat, OECD and the International Labour Organization) or bodies (the Expert Group on International Classifications) and experts from developing regions (Asia, Africa and Latin America).

7. A three-level hierarchical classification based on the ISCED 1997 fields of education classification and Eurostat's 1999 fields of education and training classification has been developed and reviewed extensively by members of the panel. A final draft will be ready by the end of 2012 for a global consultation among all UNESCO member States similar to that conducted in 2010 on the revision of the levels of education classification. Ministries of education and national statistical offices will be consulted, as will the Expert Group on International Classifications.

8. Following the global consultation, which is expected to take place at the beginning of 2013, a final revised framework, ISCED-F, will be prepared, ideally in time for submission to the thirty-seventh session of the General Conference of UNESCO for adoption at the end of the year.

IV. Update on UIS regional indicators programme

9. UIS has improved the policy relevance of its data by producing regional indicators that reflect the specific data needs at the regional level. The initiative is designed to create a sustainable public good that includes indicators that address the pressing needs of national Governments and regional organizations for information that may not be collected by UIS at the global level.

10. In 2012, UIS analysed the results of regional collections of data in Latin American and Caribbean countries (on adult education) and in sub-Saharan Africa (on school conditions) and produced two information notes, fact sheets and web resources providing data visualizations. Regional data for Africa were published in the UIS *Global Education Digest 2012*, in the *Outlook* report prepared for the fifth ordinary session of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union, and in other reports.

11. UIS conducted the African regional module for a second year, extending it to include six new countries in North Africa, four of which have already submitted data. By September, 30 (65 per cent) of the 46 countries that use the module had reported data for the 2011 reference year. The overall response rate will increase as a result of workshops in South and East Africa and the Arab region.

12. In Latin America, a series of new internationally comparable indicators were conceptualized and created, and later tested with data reported by countries. In September, the preliminary results of the module were presented at the UNESCO office in Santiago to experts and stakeholders, including the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (Germany), the National Institute for Adult Education (Mexico), the Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (Brazil), the Organization of Ibero-American States and other regional organizations.

13. A regional expert was commissioned to produce the first regional report on adult education, drawing on the regional module data as well as on research regarding the provision of educational opportunities to adults and youth. In addition, the material on the UIS website presents the results, documentation and other resources of the new indicators and related work in the area of adult education.

V. Global modules for UIS annual education survey

14. Since the end of 2011, UIS has been working with the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE) to elaborate on the concepts and definitions for the international collection of data on intended annual instructional time. From April to July 2012, a draft questionnaire was piloted in 15 countries in the following regions: the Arab region, Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Feedback from the pilot was used to fine-tune the questionnaire, which will be integrated into questionnaire A of the Institute's 2013 education survey. The module will collect the most recent data on intended annual instructional time for each grade in primary and general secondary education (ISCED 1997 levels 1, 2 and 3) and pre-primary education (ISCED 1997 level 0) where such information exists. UIS will continue collaborating with IBE on the analysis of these data.

VI. Update on the Learning Metrics Task Force

15. UIS and the Brookings Institution have jointly established the Learning Metrics Task Force to investigate the feasibility of identifying common learning goals to improve learning opportunities and outcomes for children and youth. On the basis of recommendations from technical working groups and input from broad global consultations, the Task Force will propose a set of learning competencies for children and youth at selected points across their educational lifespan, make recommendations for how these competencies should be measured and elicit best practices for how countries could implement these measures.

16. The Task Force held its first formal meeting in New York in September 2012, at which members reviewed the inputs from the global consultation on learning standards and validated the resulting proposal, which will be the subject of a working paper. This paper will be published in December 2012. The standards paper will highlight seven domains of learning and corresponding subdomains, from early childhood to lower secondary education, thereby extending through the transition to work and life.

17. The Measures and Methods Working Group, convened from October 2012 to February 2013, will propose a framework for measurable learning goals for early childhood, primary and post-primary education. Two types of goals will be proposed: (a) global goals, which would be measured in all countries, although not necessarily using the same tools; and (b) national goals, which would be measured only in countries that determine these domains to be a priority.

18. The Measures and Methods Working Group will expand the framework for measurement, which will be sent out for consultations in December 2012/January 2013. The secretariat will then use the input from the technical working groups and the global consultations and propose recommendations for measuring learning to the Learning Metrics Task Force late in February 2013. The third and final working group on implementation will convene in March 2013 to make recommendations on how the learning metrics proposed by the Task Force can be implemented and used to improve learning outcomes.