



Arab States Regional Briefing Note

# TRANSFORMING EDUCATION SUMMIT

Analysis of National Statements of Commitments in the Arab States Region

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UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to "*ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*". The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



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## Introduction

On 16, 17, and 19 September 2022 and during the 77<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, the Secretary General of the United Nations convened the Transforming Education Summit (TES) as part of the key initiative of “Our Common Agenda”. The main goal of the TES is to elevate education to the top of the global political agenda and to mobilize action, ambition, solidarity, and solutions to recover pandemic-related learning losses and sow the seeds to transform education in a rapidly changing world.

The Arab States region hosts countries from a variety of economic backgrounds. In the region, there are six high-income countries, three upper-middle-income countries, seven lower-middle-income countries, and three low-income countries. This should be taken into account when viewing the commitments, and the respective follow-through on said commitments, as some may need additional technical and financial support to meet their National Commitments to Transforming Education and to work towards the realization of the SDGs as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the regional level, to ensure the full realization of National Commitments to Transforming Education and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, technical and financial support from Member States, the UN system and other key stakeholders will be vital.

There are 19 Member States within the Arab States region<sup>1</sup>:

 Algeria	 Bahrain	 Egypt	 Iraq
 Jordan	 Kuwait	 Lebanon	 Libya
 Mauritania	 Morocco	 Oman	 Palestine
 Qatar	 Saudi Arabia	 Sudan	 Syria
 Tunisia	 United Arab Emirates	 Yemen	

<sup>1</sup> This differs from UNICEF’s MENA region which excludes Mauritania and includes Djibouti and Iran.

In preparation for the TES, Member States: engaged in National Consultations, prepared Statements of National Commitments, and participated in the TES pre-Summit which was hosted by UNESCO in June 2022.

Country and income classification as per OECD	Submitted Report of National Consultations	Submitted National Statement of Commitment
Algeria (Lower Middle Income)	Yes	Yes
Bahrain (High Income)	Yes	No
Egypt (Lower Middle Income)	Yes	Yes
Iraq (Upper Middle Income)	Yes	Yes
Jordan (Upper Middle Income)	Yes	Yes
Kuwait (High Income)	Yes	Yes
Lebanon (Lower Middle Income)	Yes	Yes
Libya (Upper Middle Income)	No	Yes
Mauritania (Lower Middle Income)	No	Yes
Morocco (Lower Middle Income)	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>
Oman (High Income)	Yes	Yes
Palestine (Lower Middle Income)	Yes	Yes
Qatar (High Income)	Yes	Yes
Saudi Arabia (High Income)	Yes	Yes
Sudan (Low Income)	No	No
Syria (Low Income)	Yes	Yes
Tunisia (Lower Middle Income)	Yes	No
UAE (High Income)	Yes	Yes
Yemen (Low Income)	Yes	Yes

Of the 19 Member States in the region, 18 (95 percent) submitted TES supporting documents, with 5 providing a National Consultation Report (26 percent), 2 providing a Statement of National Commitment (11 percent), and 14 providing both the National Consultation Report and the Statement of National Commitment (74 percent). This analysis will solely focus on the Statement of Commitments made by the governments of the 16 Member States<sup>3</sup>. Notably, this analysis will review the same elements laid out in global “Analysis of National Statements of Commitment” (Annex 1) but through the scope of the 14 National Statements of Commitment.

“Of the 19 Member States in the region, 18 (95 percent) submitted TES supporting documents”

<sup>2</sup> PowerPoint presented and submitted in lieu of National Statement of Commitment

<sup>3</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, UAE, and Yemen

## Track 1:

## Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools



## 1. Covid-19 educational recovery

- **Addressing learning loss – Eight of sixteen**<sup>4</sup> States addressed learning loss with some focused on developing strategic plans, and also to increase the use of digital tools to enable students catch-up.
- **Ensuring re-enrollment and mitigating drop-out** – Enrollment and mitigating drop-out were one of the topics that over half of the Member States provided a commitment. In this effort, **eight of the sixteen**<sup>5</sup> States pledged to take steps that range from establishing new schools in remote areas to enhancing digital capacities for learning
- **Supporting mental well-being** – Several States recognized the need to support students' and teachers' mental well-being and the need for psychosocial support. To promote safe and healthy schools, **ten of the sixteen**<sup>6</sup> States made commitments to provide psychological and psychosocial support in schools. Some States went further and pledged to provide psychological support to the surrounding community as well.
- **Providing health services – Eleven of the sixteen**<sup>7</sup> States committed to providing health services within schools. These services would be in the form of further developing meal programmes in educational institutions, as well as other health services to increase the hygiene and well-being of learners.

<sup>4</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, UAE, and Yemen

<sup>5</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Mauritania, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates

<sup>6</sup> Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

<sup>7</sup> Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

## 2. Resilience to future shocks

→ Resilience to future shocks took several different forms within the **five of the sixteen**<sup>8</sup> the States that committed to working towards strengthening resilience. One such state committed to creating digital platforms to ensure resilience, while others focused on enhancing existing institutional frameworks focused on preparedness.

## 3. Addressing educational exclusions

→ **Economically vulnerable communities – six of the sixteen**<sup>9</sup> States made commitments to explicitly address the inclusion of economically vulnerable communities by ensuring that learners would be provided access to education, as well as needed educational materials.

→ **Learners with disabilities** – Notably, inclusive education for learners with disabilities can be considered a top priority within inclusive education, as **twelve of the sixteen**<sup>10</sup> States

made firm commitments to ensure access to education by implementing inclusive mechanisms within schools, ensuring that policies are reviewed and in place to reduce inequalities, and enhance outreach to persons with disabilities to ensure that their needs are being reflected.

→ **Gender equality – Nine of the sixteen**<sup>11</sup> States affirmed their commitment to ensuring political commitment to gender equality in education. Many highlighted their commitment to accelerate progress for gender equality under SDG 4, as well as within SDG 4 monitoring and evaluation.

→ **Legal and migratory status** – Within addressing educational exclusions, addressing legal and migratory status had the lowest amount of commitments by States, with **five of the sixteen**<sup>12</sup> including it in their National Statement of Commitments. Those States that did make commitments focused on ensuring access to education through policies and provision of educational services



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<sup>8</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Oman, Palestine, United Arab Emirates

<sup>9</sup> Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, United Arab Emirates

<sup>10</sup> Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

<sup>11</sup> Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, Palestine, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

<sup>12</sup> Iraq, Oman, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Yemen



## Track 2:

## Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development



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## 1. Curricula renewal

- **Prioritizing foundational skills** – **Two of the sixteen**<sup>13</sup> States explicitly noted commitment to prioritizing foundational skills, but **Nine of the sixteen**<sup>14</sup> States highlighted their commitment to ensure free universal education and that learners would have the necessary skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century job market.
- **Renewing pedagogical approaches** – There was a strong focus throughout the commitments to ensure that the skills being taught to learners were applicable to the job market with a high concentration on digital teaching and learning.
- **Greening Education** – **Eleven of the sixteen**<sup>15</sup> States highlighted their commitment to greening education. This would be accomplished by including climate change within the curricula.
- **Health education and citizenship** – Commitments made by **eight of the sixteen**<sup>16</sup> States noted the importance of including additional health education at the school level and to include global citizenship education in the curricula.
- **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** – While not included in the global level analysis, TVET was added to the Arab States regional analysis, as **eight of the sixteen**<sup>17</sup> States made commitments to improve or establish TVET programmes. The focus of the commitments was to ensure that TVET would be responding to the job market's needs. Additionally, **fourteen of the sixteen**<sup>18</sup> States committed to improving the overarching theme of employment and skills for work.

<sup>13</sup> Egypt and Kuwait

<sup>14</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria

<sup>15</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates

<sup>16</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates

<sup>17</sup> Algeria, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Syria

<sup>18</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

## Track 3:

## Digital learning and transformation



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## 1. Digital learning and transformation

- **Universal connectivity** – **Six of the sixteen**<sup>19</sup> States pledged to expand digital connectivity to ensure access to education for all learners. This was typically connected with the establishment or expansion of remote learning and providing digital tools for schools, teachers, learners and their families.
- **Learning content** – Of the **sixteen** States that provided commitments, **nine**<sup>20</sup> committed to digitizing learning content, with several others committing to adapt learning content through more traditional methods such as TV and radio to reach learners.
- **Digital skills and competencies** – Acknowledging the need for digital skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, **eight of the sixteen**<sup>21</sup> of States committed to enhance the capacity of learners and teachers' digital skills. There was a strong emphasis that the digital skills would be paired with distance learning.
- **Digital Platforms** – While not included in the global assessment, it is imperative to note that **thirteen of the sixteen**<sup>22</sup> States made commitments to create or further develop digital platforms for education and education management. It is noteworthy as this topic has the most commitments across the Arab States region.
- **Open access to information** – **Three of the sixteen**<sup>23</sup> of States highlighted their commitment to providing open access to information from learners. This would not only take place within schools but could also be found in other places of learning such as libraries. Furthermore, some States noted that information would be digitized to enhance access.
- **Development of digital laws, policies, and strategies** – **Five of the sixteen**<sup>24</sup> States shared their commitment to reviewing and reforming laws, policies and strategies to ensure strong support for digital learning.

<sup>19</sup> Egypt, Kuwait, Mauritania, Palestine, Syria, United Arab Emirates

<sup>20</sup> Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates

<sup>21</sup> Egypt, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria

<sup>22</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

<sup>23</sup> Algeria, Libya, Mauritania

<sup>24</sup> Iraq, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

## Track 4:

## Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession



### 1. Transforming the teaching profession

- **Teacher shortages** – **Six of the sixteen**<sup>25</sup> States noted the need to recruit additional teachers and have made commitments to take measures that would attract new teachers or formalize those that are already acting in a teacher's capacity.
- **Working conditions and social status** – **Five of the sixteen**<sup>26</sup> States committed to improving the lives of teachers, focusing on living conditions. The improvements have also been connected to the teacher shortages.
- **Supporting pre- and in-service training and professional development** – Signalling strong support for training and professional development of teachers, **fifteen of the sixteen**<sup>27</sup> States made commitments to provide learning and upskilling opportunities for teachers.

<sup>25</sup> Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Qatar, Syria, Yemen

<sup>26</sup> Algeria, Lebanon, Mauritania, Oman, Syria

<sup>27</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

Track 5:

Financing of education



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## 1. Financing education

- **Renewed commitment to the international benchmarks for domestic financing of education** – **Five of the sixteen**<sup>28</sup> States made commitments to meet the international benchmarks for domestic financing of education, with one country committing to exceeding the international benchmark for GDP portion.
- **Innovative and/or complementary financing of education** – **Ten of the sixteen**<sup>29</sup> States committed to mobilizing innovative and/or complementary financing for education, with some States suggesting new and additional public-private partnerships as well as public-public partnerships.
- **More efficient use of education budgets** – **Eight of the sixteen**<sup>30</sup> States committed to efficient budgeting which would be accomplished by streamlining administrative processes and exploring new modalities for financing education.
- **International aid and cooperation** – **six of the sixteen**<sup>31</sup> States expressed commitments to working with international partners to fund education activities and strengthening coordination.

## 2. Governing education as a common good

- **Whole-of-society** - Over half of the States made commitments to ensuring that all stakeholders in society would be included in the provision of education. The whole of society approach would encourage dialogue and ownership of education in society<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Yemen

<sup>29</sup> Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

<sup>30</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, Yemen

<sup>31</sup> Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen

<sup>32</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen



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