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Analysis of National Statements of Commitment
October 2022

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Introduction

Purpose: This analysis identifies patterns in commitments and actions to transform education as articulated in 133 National Statements of Commitment submitted at the Transforming Education Summit (TES) as at 23 October 2022 (see Annex 1).

Nature of the statements: It is to be noted that Statements vary widely in the nature and level of commitments and actions articulated. While some include declarations of commitment to principles and outline strategic policy priorities, others also articulate goals, targets, strategies, and measures to reach them.

Articulation with national consultations: National Statements of Commitment were to be informed by national consultations organized as part of the TES process. Most countries (90%) that submitted written Statements of Commitment also submitted national consultations reports. Nearly half of all Statements referenced TES national and/or targeted youth consultations. In many other cases, Statements drew on consultations associated with national reform processes initiated prior to TES.

Scope of analysis: The analysis covered nine themes including those proposed in the TES guidelines for national consultations, as well as the Summit thematic action tracks. Other themes thought to be important for any discussion of the transformation of education, such as curriculum renewal, as well as higher education, research and innovation were also examined:

1. Covid-19 recovery
2. Resilience to future shocks
3. Addressing educational exclusions
4. Transforming the teaching profession
5. Renewing curriculum content and methods
6. Higher education, research and innovation
7. Digital learning and transformation
8. Financing education
9. Governing education as a common good

Note on methodology: Note that the analysis pertains to National Statements of Commitment submitted in writing and does not account for Statements that were only delivered orally at the Summit. Themes were analyzed on the basis of keywords and descriptors for the themes above (see Annex 2). Only references to categories of keywords are accounted for. The number of occurrences of keywords was not weighted: a single contextually relevant occurrence of a single search term in each Statement served as an indication that the issue was considered relevant in the National Statement. It is important to note that the absence of evidence of a particular theme in National Statements of Commitment does not necessarily imply absence in national policies and/or strategies.

1. Covid-19 recovery

Almost all National Statements (92%) renewed commitment to mitigating the impacts of the Covid-19 educational disruption. Nearly half of the countries (47%) expressed concerns about Covid-related **learning losses.** Measures to mitigate learning loss included accelerated or catch-up programs designed on the basis of diagnostic assessments of foundational literacy and numeracy skill levels. Interestingly, over half the countries (57%) highlighted the need to support the **psycho-social and mental well-being of both students and teachers**. It is to be noted, however, that very few articulated concrete measures to do so.

2. Resilience to future shocks

Over a third of the countries (37%) underlined the need to strengthen diverse aspects of education system resilience to withstand future crises and shocks. Among them, a quarter indicated aspirations or plans to leverage digital learning solutions to prepare for future crises. Six[1] prioritized the need to strengthen emergency preparedness through capacity-building in disaster-risk reduction and climate-change adaptation within the education sector, while a few others outlined the need for greater budget elasticity to leverage emergency funds.

3. Addressing educational exclusions

The majority of National Statements (87%) underscored the importance of **ensuring more inclusive education systems** that meet the needs of the most vulnerable learners and communities. The analysis of educational inclusion below examines various determinants of exclusion as they relate to socio-economic status, gender, disability, rural residence, displacement status, as well as cultural/linguistic status.

Educational exclusions in their multiple dimensions
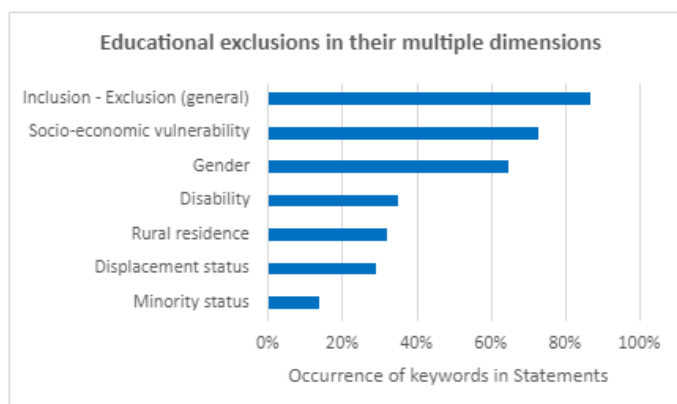
Three quarters of National Statements (73%) acknowledged **socio-economic vulnerability** as a key barrier to educational access. A third indicated that **rural residence** remains a persistent challenge for access to educational opportunity. Statements referenced various measures to offset the direct and indirect costs of education for socio-economically vulnerable communities. Nearly a third of all countries, for instance, committed to expanding school-feeding/nutrition programs, while a quarter advocated for free or affordable early childhood care and education. Among other measures cited were scholarships and/or tuition fee exemptions in higher education.

Two thirds of the countries (65%) also recognized persistent challenges related to **gender equality** in education and/or the need for gender-specific or gender-sensitive education policy, programs, and

approaches. Having said that, the Statements rarely proposed specific or innovative measures to improve gender equality in/through education, although several did mention measures such as incentives to steer girls and young women into STEM, or gender-sensitive teacher training programmes and curricula.

A third of all countries (35%) acknowledged the need to better adapt education to the needs of **learners with disabilities**, highlighting gaps in access, lack of specialized teachers, and/or appropriate teaching/learning resources and school infrastructure.

The countries that engaged with TES processes collectively host over 200 million **internally displaced, refugee, migrant, or stateless populations**. Close to a third of those countries (29%) indicated that policy, programme adaptations or systematic response mechanisms were essential in order to provide education to large populations of displaced persons.

Finally, fewer than 15% of Statements addressed educational inclusion from the perspective of **cultural or linguistic minorities**. It is noteworthy that no countries addressed the question of mother tongue instruction as a cultural right and as a means of improving foundational learning outcomes.

4. Transforming the teaching profession

Most countries (94%) highlighted **pre- and in-service training and professional development of teachers** as a key determinant to improve the quality of learning, including by improving teacher motivation and retention. Learning opportunities that support teaching as a collaborative profession through exchange programs, communities of practice, and peer mentoring were highlighted. Many of these Statements also underlined the need to increase teachers' qualification requirements to university level in order to elevate both teacher capacity and professional standing.
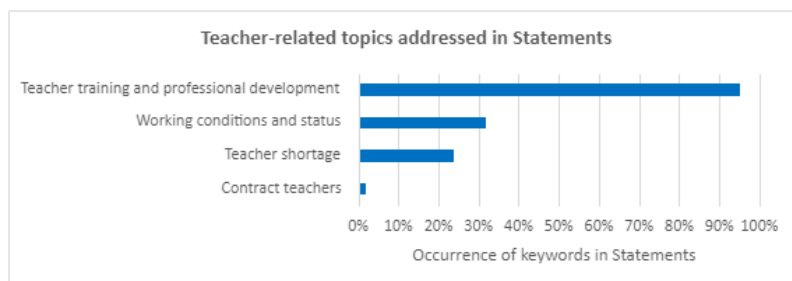
A third of Statements acknowledged the need to improve the **working conditions and social status** of teachers as strategic priorities to attract qualified candidates and strengthen the quality of the teacher workforce. Yet only four countries offered significant commitments to salary increases.[2]

A quarter of all Statements recognized **teacher shortage** as a core issue. However, concrete measures to address the challenge were almost entirely absent, and this even in countries where there is increasing pressure on demand for teachers due to high population growth. While many of these countries highlighted the need to incentivize more equitable distribution of teachers across regions where learners were in greatest need, only one country[3] forecasted the number of recruitments needed to respond to the shortage of teachers.

The issue of **contract teachers** and the professional needs of the significant and invisible unappointed teacher workforce that frequently serves the poorest or most marginalized learners in low-middle income communities is almost entirely absent.[4]

5. Renewing curriculum content and methods

Rethinking curriculum content and methods was at the heart of over two-thirds of all National Statements of Commitment (69%).

Renewing pedagogical approaches was central to these conversations with countries placing strong emphasis on competency-based approaches, as well as on interdisciplinary teaching and learning methods that are seen as developing capacities for systems thinking. Countries often noted the continued prevalence of rote learning methods, and further underlined the value of project-based learning, collaborative methods, problem solving, critical thinking and research on contemporary issues. Some 20% of countries specifically called for renewal of **assessment methods** that focus on critical and independent thinking.

Curriculum-related topics addressed in Statements
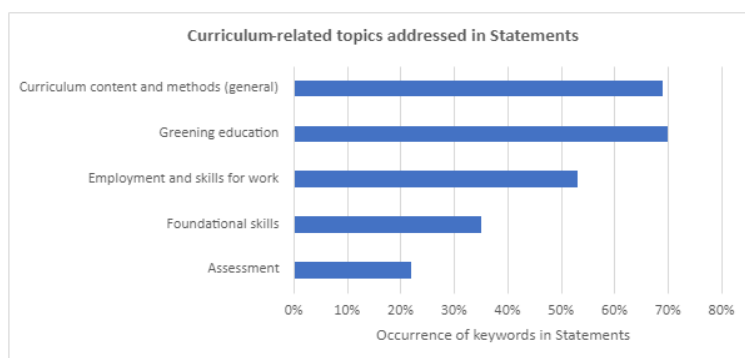
Beyond pedagogical methods, 70% of Statements outlined the need to integrate **climate-change education** into curricula and ensure school infrastructure exemplify carbon-neutrality.

More than a third of Statements (35%) specifically mentioned commitments to improve **foundational learning** in basic education, including by redoubling efforts to address inadequate levels of literacy and numeracy skills among disadvantaged learners. Among the many Statements (over 60%) that recognized the important role of **early childhood care and education**, seven countries[5] specifically outlined early learning as key to narrowing literacy achievement gaps in primary grades.

Half of all countries highlighted the need for education systems to better prepare learners for future jobs and the importance of **technical and vocational skills development** to deliver an adaptable workforce prepared for nationally relevant employment opportunities. A third of these Statements indicated the need to strengthen partnerships with local private industry to improve the relevance of vocational and professional skills development programmes.

## 6. Higher education, research and innovation

While higher education was not an area of particular focus of TES consultations, some 40% of countries referenced the important role of higher education institutions as **spaces of ideation, innovation, and experimentation** that serve both the entire education system and wider sustainable development goals.

Some of these indicated that university research and teaching personnel are best placed to drive innovation, including through applied research directed at improving access to, and learning outcomes in, basic education, technical education, and STEM research and application. Public investment in higher education to drive economic growth in countries where budgets for basic education are insufficient was

cited as a conundrum by nearly all LMICs, where the goals of equity and inclusive access for marginalized populations are challenged by the privatization of tertiary education. Recognizing the growing transnational nature of education in today's world, Statements referencing higher education frequently pointed to the need for strengthened knowledge and intercultural exchange and cooperation.

7. Digital learning and transformation

As can be expected for a Summit devoted to the transformation of education, close to 90% of National Statements of Commitment highlighted one or more aspects of digital learning. Lower income countries were most likely to suggest that digital solutions would help solve endemic learning deficits for out-of-school, rural, or crisis-affected populations. This was true even in the many countries that reported severe limitations in access to public digital learning, and who recognized that deployment of digital learning during the pandemic exacerbated educational inequities.
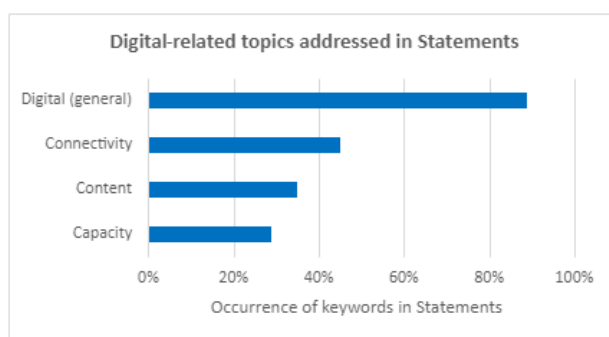
Close to half of all countries (45%) raised concerns about **connectivity** gaps and inequitable access to devices for disadvantaged learners and schools. Countries where aspirations to broadband internet coverage represent significant financial challenges frequently committed to establishing or strengthening public-private partnerships with technology providers.

Building on post-pandemic initiatives, a third of all countries (35%) endeavored to create or further extend open, free, and curriculum-aligned **digital learning content** and strengthen platforms. Lower income countries were frequently focused on offline resources that do not rely on connectivity, including traditional broadcast technologies such as radio and TV.

A quarter of all countries (29%) committed to strengthening **digital skills** among learners and teachers. Some countries highlighted the capacity of teachers to create digital content and to ensure that they are able to leverage digital tools for pedagogical innovation and not simply for knowledge dissemination and use. Interestingly, beyond technical skills. Others also emphasized the need to strengthen the capacity of learners and teachers to understand technology in reflexive and critical ways. Training programs that address the issues of safety, privacy, online bullying, and misinformation were considered key to developing digital citizenship.

Only a handful of countries committed to reinforcing **e-governance** in education through the progressive digitization of management and administrative processes in order to inform decision-making at policy and school levels.[6]

8. Financing education

Over one third of countries (35%) set time-bounded targets to maintain or increase the share of **domestic public education spending** in line with international commitments and benchmarks of 4-6% of GDP and 15-20% of public expenditure. A number of these also mentioned possible measures to strengthen public budgets for education, for example by redirecting part of the revenues from extractive industries into social sectors, through inheritance taxation, or value-added taxation on luxury and/or climate-intensive consumption goods. It is important to highlight that three low- or lower-middle income countries[7] noted that their **debt burden** restricted possibilities to increase domestic financing of education.

Some 20% of countries also committed to better leveraging **private sector contributions** to strengthen public investments in education. Some lower middle-income countries proposed complementary sources of financing, such as special saving banking products[8], and cash transfers from diaspora communities, acknowledging that all or part of the costs of education falls on households.

Greater efficiency in public education spending was a priority for close to 30% of countries. Some of these indicated that efficiency gains could result from decentralization reforms. Where there is sufficient institutional capacity, local administrations and financially autonomous schools were entrusted to allocate resources adjusted to local needs. Eight countries[9] also indicated that well-trained civil servants skilled in program-based budgeting and results-based management would be key to monitoring and accounting for efficiency.

While low-income and conflict-affected countries called for sustained technical and financial assistance, only two donor countries[10] expressed commitments to increasing **aid flows** to support education in emergencies, as well as girls' education.

9. Governing education as a common good

The principle of education as a common good implies a new social contract for education as a collective responsibility to be forged through more inclusive public dialogue and policy making.

Over a quarter of all countries (28%) recognized that the transformation of education systems requires **broader social dialogue and more horizontal collaboration** across a broad range of stakeholders, with five countries specifically calling for a **new social contract** for education.[11] Having said this, only a handful of countries committed to explicitly including teachers and educators[12], and youth and students[13] in decision-making and legislative processes. Several countries envisaged offering communities and families the possibility of recourse to legal measures in order to hold public authorities accountable.

While frequently referenced in national consultations reports, **whole-of-government** approaches were almost not very visible in National Statements of Commitment. Only nine countries[14] identified inter-ministerial dialogue as a strategic lever for policy alignment and/or increased public funding of education.

Annex 1: List of countries that submitted National Statements of Commitment

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Commonwealth of Dominica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Federated States of Micronesia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea Conakry, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Holy See, Honduras, Iceland, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan (Kyrgyz Republic), Lao PDR, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Madagascar, Mauritania, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan (on behalf of G77 and China), Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Rwanda, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Korea, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Yemen.

Annex 2: Keywords and Descriptors

Covid-19 recovery

Learning loss	learning/knowledge loss, learning mitigation loss, educational loss, learning gap, lost learning/knowledge, recover*, missed educational content, missed learning opportunities, remedial, catch up, accelerated learning program; perte apprentissage, retard, rattraper; recuperación de aprendizaje
Mental health	mental health, psycho*, well-being, wellness, counsellors, therap*; santé mentale, bien-être; salud mental, bienestar; saude, bem-estar
Resilience	resilien*, future shock, choc futur, future crisis(es), future interruptions, future disasters

Inclusion / Exclusion

Inclusion / Exclusion (general)	inclusi*, exclu*, [left] behind
Socio-economic vulnerability	poverty, poor*, pobre*, pauvre, modeste, vulnerab*, disadvan*, marginali*
Free public education	free, gratuit; gratuita
Scholarship and cash incentives	stipend; scholarship, bourse, beca, bolsa, incentiv*, exemption
School meals	meals, nutrition, school feeding, breakfast, food, alimentación escolar, alimentation scolaire, alimentação escolar
Rural / Remote	rura*, remote
Gender	gender, girl, boy, genre, fille, garçon; género, gênero, niñ*, menina; wom*, empowerment, female, sex*, femme, parit*
Disability	disab*, special needs; handicap, besoins spécifiques; necessidades especiais, desventaja; deficiência
Cultural and linguistic minority	minor*, language, linguistic, cultur*, indginuous; idioma, linguís*, indígen*, autochtone, nativ*, ethn*, vernac*, vernác, English Language Proficiency, Kalinago
Displacement status	migra*, displac*, stateless; déplac*, réfug*, apátri*, refug*, deslocad*, desplazad*, apatri*, confli*, guerr*, war

Teachers

Teacher shortage	teacher shortage, déficit enseignant, teacher supply / demand; recruit*, hir*, recruit*, recrut*, reclutar
Working conditions and status	working conditions; statu*; estatus; salar*, wage, salaire, pago, retribution, remunara*, pay*, paid, retain, incentive, retención
Teacher training and professional development	train*, pre-service, in-service, teacher education, teacher college, qualification, qualified, professional development, capacity; formation, former, formation initiale, formation continue, qualifié; capacitación, capacitar; formação continua
Contract teachers	contract teachers, contractuel

Curricula renewal

Curricula content and methods (general)	curricul*, currícul*; plan de estudio*, program; content, contenu, contenido; pedagog*, method*, métod*

Climate education and ESD	green, vert, verde, clim*, ESD (education for sustainable development), sust*, durab*; sostenible, ambient*; renewable; renouvel*; carbon neutral
Assessment	Assess*, formative, summative; eval*, examination; outcomes; avaliação, resultados de aprendizagem
Foundational learning	Foundational, basic, literacy, numera*; fondamentauxcompétences ; écri*, lecture, lire, calcul, math*; fundaci*, básic*, alfabeti*, literat*, aritmétic*
Early childhood education	ECE / ECD (early childhood education/development), pre-school, early, preschool, universal pre-K, preescolar, primera infancia ; Pré, pré-escolar, petite enfance, prescolaire, maternelle
Employment and skills for work	TVET, vocational, profiss*, profes*; emplo*, travail, chômage; empleo, emprego;*; labor; labour, travail, trabajo, trabalho; work; econo*; internship, stage, práctica

Higher education and research

Higher education	higher education, tertiary, universit*, tertiaire

Digital learning and transformation

Digital (general)	digital, technolog*, numérique
Content	digital/online content, repository, digital/online resources, open education resources (EOR), open source, resource hub, resource center, ressources, recursos, platform*, plataforma*, portal; portail
Capacity	digital capacity, digital skills, digital/ICT competenc*, digital training, digital/ICT literacy, alphabétisation numérique, alfabetización tecnológica, formation (numérique), renforcement capacité, capacitiación, savoir-faire (numérique)
Connectivity	connectivity, connection, connexion, internet (access), broadband, digital infrastructure; equipamiento; device, tablet, computer, electri*

Financing education

Domestic resources (international benchmarks)	4-6% GDP; 15-20% public expenditure / national budget / dépenses / presupuesto; Incheon declaration
Private sector	private sector, secteur privé, sector privado; bank, banque, banco, saving product, épargne; PPP (public-private partnership), colaboración entre sector público-privado, partenariat public-privé
Efficiency	efficien*, efficac*, eficient* efectivo
Decentralization	decentrali*, school autonomy*
International aid and cooperation	international aid, aide publique au développement (ADP), international cooperation, Official Development Assistance (ODA), donor, assistance, international community, loans, donations, solidarity

Governance

Whole-of-society	whole-of-society, whole-of-nation, entire society, social contract, common good, bien commun, participation (in decision-making), participación, dialogue, diálogo, governance, gouvernance, gobernanza horizontal, community engagement, involv*, debat*, communité, comunidad, consensus, shared solution, shared vision, various actors, divers acteurs, parties, varios actores, stakeholders, parties prenantes, constituencies, civil society, société civile, sociedad civil, teacher council, students govern*, student parliament
Whole-of-government	whole-of-government, cross-sectoral, inter-sectoral synergies ministr*, other ministr*, sister ministr*, interministériel

Endnotes

[1] Six countries (Cambodia, Liberia, Senegal, South Africa, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan) prioritized the need to strengthen emergency preparedness through capacity building in disaster-risk reduction and climate-change adaptation within the education sector.

[2] Brazil: +33% salary increase for basic education teachers in 2022. Croatia: teachers' salaries have cumulatively increased since 2017 by 27%. France: +10% salary increase for basic education teachers in 2023. Latvia: +11% and +8.4% salary increase of lowest wages, respectively for pre-primary (40h work/week) and primary teachers (30h work/week).

[3] Egypt committed to "increasing the supply of adequate and professionally high-quality educators through appointing a targeted number of 150,000 new teachers in the coming five years".

[4] Three countries (Central African Republic, Guinea Conakry, and Niger) explicitly addressed the need to regularize the situation of contract teachers.

[5] Seven countries (Kiribati, Montenegro, Nigeria, Samoa, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Tajikistan) outlined the important role of early childhood care and education in the acquisition of foundational skills.

[6] For instance, "the Government of Guyana commits to digitizing the Education Management Information System (EMIS) to support policy development".

[7] Three countries (Honduras, Malawi, and Pakistan on behalf of 'G77 and China') referenced their debt burden, and Malawi specifically "wishes to see the foreign debt burden reduced, or written off, through debt swaps or debt conversions".

[8] Algeria proposed the creation of special saving banking products for education.

[9] Eight countries (Algeria, Cambodia, Egypt, Guyana, Honduras, Kiribati, Mongolia, and Tajikistan) outlined the virtues of results-based budgeting in improving efficiency in public education spending, and Tajikistan specifically committed to strengthening capacity of civil servants in financial planning.

[10] France aimed to remain "one of the world's leading donors in education", and over the next five years, the country committed to allocating more than 2 billion euros to education cooperation through the French Development Agency (AFD). Switzerland also committed to re-directing part of its Official Development Aid (ODA) to education through multilateral cooperation mechanisms such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) or Education Cannot Wait (ECW).

[11] Five countries (Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Spain, and Timor Leste) called for 'a new social contract for education'.

[12] Twelve countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Chile, Ecuador, Egypt, Eswatini, Jamaica, Singapore, South Africa, and Turkmenistan) committed to sustained participation of teachers and educators in decision-making. Only one concrete initiative was mentioned to reach that goal: Antigua and Barbuda committed creating a "Teaching Service Commission and/or Teaching Council" to support the governance, monitoring, and evaluation of education systems.

[13] Fourteen countries (Albania, Argentina, Australia, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Federated States of Micronesia, Jamaica, Mongolia, Portugal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, The Philippines, and Turkmenistan) committed to amplifying youth and student voices in decision-making. Only two concrete initiatives were mentioned to reach that goal: Albania committed to strengthening the role of "Students Government and Students Parliament for accountability in the system", and Sierra Leone recalled the 2022 creation of a "Youth Advisory Group" in the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education.

[14] Nine countries (Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Commonwealth of Dominica, Georgia, Lao PDR, Portugal, and Serbia) referenced cross-sectoral synergies between Ministries.