

Brief report on the national consultation and preparation of the Cambodia National Statement of Commitment for the TES

As part of the Transforming Education Summit (TES), Heads of State and Government are requested to present their National Statement of Commitment (NSC) at the Summit in September 2022. Governments are encouraged to submit their National Statements of Commitment as part of a broader report on national consultations to the Summit Secretariat by 15 August 2022.

In Cambodia, national consultations towards the preparation of the National Statement of Commitment have been undertaken through existing policy dialogue and sector planning platforms and mechanisms.

Government existing platforms and mechanisms

1. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) organized an annual education sector review called “Education Congress” in March 2022, which presented an opportunity for a variety of education stakeholders, including all relevant ministries, development partners, civil society organizations, teachers and school directors, to come together to discuss sector achievements and challenges and identify concrete policy actions particularly in the context of post-Covid19 learning recovery. The Education Congress was organized at both national and sub-national levels and generated rich sets of recommendations for national level policies as well as direct provision of education services. The Congress discussed a variety of emerging issues and priorities in the education sector, ranging from early childhood education to higher education. Cross-cutting issues such as health and education, education system resilience, and digital education were also discussed, in particular in response to the challenges brought about by the COVID19 pandemic. Outcomes and strategic priorities identified in the Congress fed into the NSC preparation. These priorities include early grade learning, teacher development reform, digital education, promotion of school health, and increased financing for education and skills.
2. The MoEYS also undertook a mid-term review (MTR) of the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2019-2023 in order to: (1) assess progress of the ESP 2019-2023 in meeting planned outcomes in its first two and a half years of implementation; (2) assess the relevance and effectiveness of the reforms and strategies implemented in the first two and a half years; (3) revise priorities, strategies, indicators and targets of the ESP in the light of the results of the Mid-Term Review and emerging issues and priorities, including the impact of Covid-19 pandemic; and (4) update the financing plan in light of revisions to the ESP and updated macroeconomic framework. Together with government stakeholders, development partner and civil society representatives were actively involved in a series of consultation workshops organized by the MoEYS and provided strategic inputs and recommendations. The ESP Mid-Term Review report was finalized in July 2022 which summarized short- and medium-term policy priorities and recommendations for the education sector, particularly in the context of learning recovery. The identified priorities for the remaining years of the ESP are consistent and concur with those identified through the Education Congress above which include: digital education, foundational skills and assessment, teacher development including continuous professional development and teacher career pathway, health education, STEM education and 21st century skills, and inclusive education.
3. The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) organized a budget consultation workshop with line ministries including MoEYS in June 2022 which involved key development

partners as well. In the workshop, key priorities for 2023 and beyond were discussed. MoEYS and relevant development partners reiterated the policy priorities identified through the Education Congress and ESP MTR above and requested increased budget for education which had experienced substantial reduction in 2021 and 2022 due to Covid-19. The budget negotiation process has been ongoing.

Education Sector Working Group (ESWG)

4. The ESWG is a forum for development partners within the education sector to discuss and reflect upon education issues and priorities and provide harmonized recommendations for the government. The draft National Statement of Commitment was circulated and consulted with the ESWG for feedback in July 2022. ESWG comments and inputs were integrated into the final statement. ESWG emphasized the importance of government's continued and greater financial commitment and investment in education to tackle the learning loss and other negative impacts on education caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. ESWG also emphasized equitable access to quality education, including increased opportunities for education among ethnic minority children and children with disabilities.

NGO Education Partnership (NEP)

5. The NEP is a civil society organization network which is composed of 144 membership organizations (92 Local NGOs and 52 International NGOs) working in the education sector. The draft NSC was consulted with civil society groups through NEP. NEP organized a consultation workshop on 18 July 2022 with its members. Outcomes of the consultation included the importance of inclusive education and further investment and development of remedial, adaptive learning programs and materials. The consultation also recommended MoEYS further strengthen STEM education and promote 21st century skills among learners.

Youth Consultation

6. Youth consultation on the draft NSC was also conducted through the Cambodian Council for Youth Development facilitated by the MoEYS. The consultation took place in the form of online focus-group discussion to gather youth's voices on the NSC. Youth views and opinions about the Covid-19 impact on learning as well as their asks for future education in Cambodia were also collected through U-Report, which fed into the NSC preparation.

Endorsement Platform

7. The final NSC was endorsed at a high-level decision-making forum called the Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) chaired by the Minister of Education, Youth and Sport and participated by senior MoEYS officials and key education development partners on 9 August 2022. The JTWG is an established platform for the MoEYS and development partners including civil society representatives to discuss policy issues related to education. It aims to facilitate sound policy dialogue, to enhance sector harmonization and coordination, and to provide context-specific solutions and recommendations to the sector.