

United Arab Emirates National Statement of Commitment on Transforming Education August 12, 2022

Preamble

Excellent education is one of the key pillars of the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) Centennial Plan 2071. This pillar includes a focus on certain areas including advanced science and technology, space science, engineering, innovation, and health sciences. Other educational priorities include methods of teaching students and mechanisms for discovering their individual talents early. On the institutional level, educational institutions are encouraged to be incubators of entrepreneurship and innovation and to be international research centers. Additionally, the National Strategy for Higher Education 2030 initiated the direction for the country to achieve an internationally competitive quality of higher education.

In reviewing the progress toward the UAE's SDG 4 national targets, the UAE has made notable progress in transforming its education sector and successfully overcoming COVID-19 impacts. By embedding SDG 4 goals in related priority initiatives, the participation rate in general education reached 99% throughout the years. Additionally, all schools in the UAE now include basic facilities, allowing the UAE to achieve 100% on this indicator. A focus on higher education contributed to UAE universities being included among the top-ranked universities globally. Based on these indicators, the UAE continues to offer high-quality education for all its residents equally and is working towards sustaining these results and further enhancing its global position as a major contributor to the SDG 4 fulfillment.

We, participants from governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, international and regional organizations, youth, private sector, civil society, charity organizations, and the academic and education community convened online on June 24, 2022, and in-person on August 3, 2022, through a series of national consultations and dialogues organized by the Ministry of Education of the UAE in preparation for the Transforming Education Summit (TES), adopt this commitment.

Our Commitment

We, within our respective mandates and in our areas of responsibility, considering our national goals and priorities, and available resources, commit to:

1. Ensure that education is a core and integral component in the UAE's national agenda at all levels and is well-positioned within the country's national and priorities.

Recovery from COVID-19 disruption

2. Accelerate the pace of digital transformation in the education sector by designing, integrating, and updating digital learning policies, procedures, and resources and leveraging partnerships with the private sector.
3. Further develop and monitor the adoption of the National Framework for Operating Educational Establishments in light of any future disruptions to the education sector, including protocols for safety, support services, transportation, human resources, parental engagement and responsibilities, student affairs, and curriculum delivery.

4. Provide agile, adaptable, and comprehensive educational platforms, learning facilities, and learning resources in addition to technical helplines to support maximum learning gains and promote educational continuity.
5. Continue to provide equitable access to internet connection and computer devices to all students and staff across socioeconomic status, gender, nationality, age, and disability status.
6. Focus on conducting rigorous research to measure the impact of COVID-19 and other similar pandemics, disasters, and situations on socio-emotional skills, well-being, learning losses and gains to inform policy and practice.
7. Promote equitable provision of services and solutions to improve the nutrition and physical and mental health of students, parents, teachers, social workers, and education administrators in the post-COVID 19 era.
8. Build effective tools that ensure positive student behavior management and engagement during distance learning by enhancing self-regulation, self-learning, and healthy peer-to-peer interactions.

Transforming Education

9. Examine the potential for a new (business) model for education that dismantles the hierarchal structure of schools and promotes flexibility and agility in the process of learning.
10. Mobilize and activate collaborative strategic coalitions in education, between students, teachers, parents, schools, civil society, and higher education institutions with local authorities to advance the national education agenda.
11. Institutionalize best practices in teaching and learning by employing formal and informal structures like national experience exchange campaigns and online Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).
12. Continue transforming curricula while placing a strong emphasis on climate change, technology, innovative design, health sciences, career guidance, entrepreneurship, business management, and critical thinking skills.
13. Foster, promote, and implement inclusive education in the whole education sector.

Review of national education targets and benchmarks

14. Continue to monitor and review the national education targets and benchmarks outlined in the early childhood and K-12 education sector strategic plans, including SDG 4 components, with emphasis on ensuring equitable opportunities in:
 - A. Access to quality education, including early childhood
 - B. Student care and empowerment,
 - C. Learning and life skills,
 - D. Technology and data for a competitive knowledge economy,

- E. Life-long learning and the continued promotion of cognitive and non-cognitive advanced skills,
 - F. Quality of teachers and school leadership,
 - G. Sharing UAE best practices in education and the implementation of appropriate models.
15. Continue to monitor and review the higher education targets outlined in the national strategies for higher education, that aims to deliver high quality education in both academic and vocational tracks, while also producing world-class research outcomes. Key emphasis is placed on:
- A. Quality - Core institutions recognized as regional and global leaders through rigorous quality standards and incentives, distinctive faculty and empowered Higher Education Institutions (HEIs),
 - B. Relevance - HEIs that produce graduates relevant to the current and future labor market and the needs of the nation,
 - C. Innovation – HEIs that deliver high quality education in both academic and vocational tracks, while also producing world-class research outcomes,
 - D. Efficiency - Highly productive HEIs with high student completion, optimized academic programming and streamlined financial mechanisms.

Ensuring sustainable public funding

- 16. Maintain the Government's current strong commitment to positioning education as a top priority for the country through sufficient public funding on education both from the federal and the local governments.
- 17. Ensure the sustained and effective allocation of resources to education in alignment with the policies to transform education.
- 18. Develop and adopt a new governance framework for private sector investment in education.
- 19. Continue to fund research and innovation initiatives in vital sectors in an effort to expand the country's economy by stimulating the collaboration between higher education institutions and the private sector.

Way Forward

- 20. We will continue to work collaboratively at the national and local levels towards meeting the commitments made in this statement.
- 21. We commit to taking this statement and its provisions forward through our engagement in relevant global and regional education transformation processes.