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▶ **United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession**

Recommendations and summary of deliberations

Transforming the teaching profession

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Preface

> Teachers are central to nurturing every country's greatest resource: the minds of its people.

Our world has entered a period of dramatic change — a period of climate crisis, digital revolution and rising inequalities. Now more than ever, people need the high-quality and relevant skills and knowledge that only well-resourced, accessible and transformed education systems can provide.

Above all, they need the very best teachers possible.

Yet today, we face a dramatic shortage of teachers worldwide, and millions of teachers lack the support, skills and continuing training they need to meet the demands of rapidly changing education systems.

This simple truth was the driving force behind the creation of the High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession — a key follow-up to the UN's Transforming Education Summit in 2022. This broad-based, expert Panel developed recommendations to ensure that every learner has access to a professionally trained, qualified, and well-supported teacher.

This report from the Panel represents a powerful global call to action. It outlines a series of practical recommendations, including establishing professional teaching standards, reflecting teachers' voices in policy decisions, and creating national commissions to tackle teacher shortages.

I urge all Member States to consider these recommendations carefully and find ways to bring them to life in their countries.

Just as teachers support us all, we must support teachers.

Together, we can ensure they have the support, recognition and resources they need to provide quality education for all and shape a stronger, more sustainable future.

António Guterres
United Nations Secretary-General

Foreword

Beginning in July 2023, we had the honour to co-chair and lead the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession, which was established following the United Nations Transforming Education Summit in 2022. The Panel convened government ministers of education and labour, representatives of teacher unions and employers' organizations, academics, civil society leaders, and teachers and students representing every continent. We met virtually three times and then face-to-face in New York in September 2023 to adopt the Panel's Recommendations, which set out a road map for the global transformation of the teaching profession in order to reach the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4.

The challenge facing the Panel remains urgent. There is an ongoing and worsening crisis in teaching, marked by a global shortage of teachers. These shortages are driven by multiple factors, including teacher attrition, reliance on contract and unqualified teachers, the lack of professional development, poor working conditions and low salaries.

To address this pressing problem, the Panel called for a comprehensive transformation of education systems in order to enable teachers to work collaboratively to actively transform teaching and learning.

The Recommendations set out in this document build on the work of the Transforming Education Summit and call for decisive action to invest in education; develop national teacher policies; support the evolving role of the teacher; ensure decent work for teachers; and promote the use of digital technology to augment – but not replace – the critical human relationship that is the foundation of teaching.

The Recommendations also cover a wide range of other areas, including policies for equity and diversity in the teaching workforce; support for teachers in crisis contexts, including refugee teachers; the integration of sustainability in education; and fostering leadership in teaching.
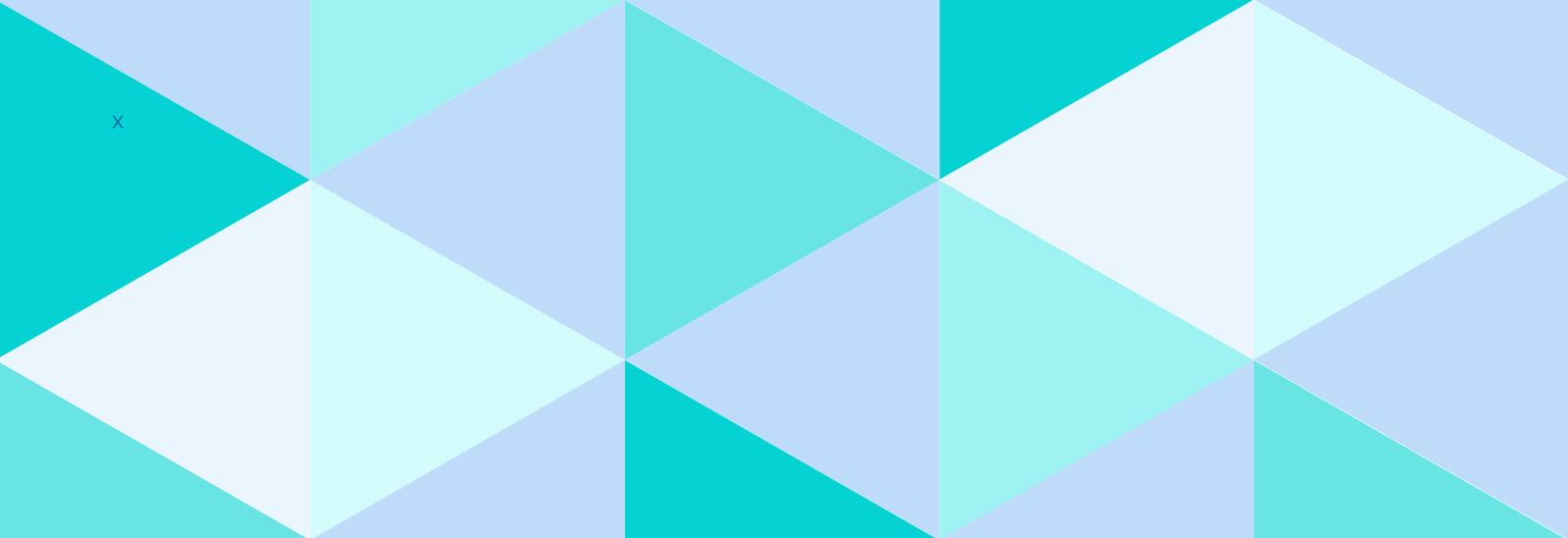
How will these Recommendations be translated into action?

Among other measures, the Panel calls on the United Nations system to adopt an up-to-date international instrument, including a convention or a revision of existing instruments, in order to mobilize international action to address the urgent contemporary challenges facing the teaching profession.

We are grateful to United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres for convening the Panel and to United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed for her guidance and support. We are also indebted to all the members of the Panel for their dedicated and passionate work on this initiative, and to the joint International Labour Organization-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization secretariat of the Panel.

Teachers are our best hope for building a more sustainable and socially just world. We hope you will find our work valuable and be inspired to take the urgent steps needed to support our teachers.

Kersti Kaljulaid
former President of Estonia

Paula-Mae Weekes
former President of Trinidad and Tobago

Introduction

In September 2022 during the seventy-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly, global education leaders met at the Transforming Education Summit to discuss the critical challenge of transforming education to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. The Summit recognized that education faced a double crisis – one of equity and inclusion, and one of quality and relevance – and it therefore urged world leaders to reimagine and transform educational systems to be fit for purpose.

Upon the conclusion of the Summit, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres laid out a bold vision for transforming education, stressing the importance of ensuring a learning environment that supports the development of all learners and harnessing the digital revolution for the benefit of public education. He called for investing more, more equitably and more efficiently in education.

The Secretary-General also focused on the people at the very heart of the transformation of education – teachers. He recognized that teachers are the backbone of all quality education systems, and that in order to transform education it was essential to reshape how societies view and value teachers. It was also important to transform how teachers work and fulfil their responsibility, and to enable teachers to transform themselves into agents of change.

To address this challenge, the Secretary-General convened the High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession, with the task of setting out a clear plan of action on how the teaching profession can be supported and transformed to play its essential role in creating a better world.

The Panel was co-chaired by Ms Kersti Kaljulaid, former President of Estonia, and Ms Paula-Mae Weekes, former President of Trinidad and Tobago. Supported by a joint International Labour Organization (ILO)-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) secretariat, the 18-member Panel drew on expertise from ministries of education and labour, employers' organizations, teachers' unions, teachers, students, civil society and academia.

During the third quarter of 2023, the Panel met several times virtually, culminating in a face-to-face meeting held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 14 and 15 September. The Panel held a final meeting on 4 December 2023.

Drawing on the discussions and output of the Transforming Education Summit, the Panel addressed the challenges facing the teaching profession, including four challenges highlighted by the Summit: teacher shortages; the lack of professional development for teachers; the low status and working conditions of teachers; and the lack of capacity to develop teacher leadership, autonomy and innovation. The Panel organized its discussions around six core imperatives that it considered relevant to the future of the teaching profession: humanity; dignity; equity, diversity and inclusion; quality; innovation and leadership; and sustainability.

This document presents the Recommendations of the Panel and a summary of its deliberations, which drew on the Panel members' personal expertise, relevant literature and the preparatory work of the Transforming Education Summit, in particular action track 3 on teachers, teaching and the teaching profession.

▶ Further steps

As the global education apex body, the SDG 4 – Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC) has been tasked with ensuring effective follow-up to the United Nations Transforming Education Summit.[1] At their December 2022 meeting, the HLSC Leaders agreed on roles and responsibilities going forward, captured in a set of targeted decisions for Summit follow-up. A set of indicators has been defined for the follow-up of country commitments, and a dashboard has been built to serve as a monitoring and accountability tool for how countries translate their national commitments into actions.

The Recommendations of the High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession were presented to the HLSC at its meeting held on 8 November 2023 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. The HLSC welcomed the Recommendations of the Panel and encouraged Member States and partners to support and monitor their implementation through existing coordination and monitoring mechanisms, including the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel, UNESCO's *Global Report on Teachers* and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030. Further steps to promote and implement the Recommendations are being developed by all relevant partners.

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1   UNESCO, "SDG4-Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee".

Transforming the teaching profession: Recommendations of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession

▶ **An urgent call to action**

The United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession met at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 14 and 15 September 2023.

The High-Level Panel notes with alarm the persistent and increasing teacher shortages around the world. These shortages are exacerbated by the continued attrition of teachers, the use of contract and unqualified personnel to fill teacher gaps, the lack of professional development and support, inadequate working conditions and salaries, and the enormous hardships faced by teachers working in crisis contexts. All these factors drive talented young people away from the single most important element in education systems – the teaching profession – thereby imperilling global progress towards all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To tackle this challenge, education systems and the teaching profession must be transformed, from outside and within. Societies need to actively invest in public services such as education; value public workers such as teachers; and create

conditions in which teaching and learning are supported by communities, parents and learners. Teachers need to work in a climate of security, support, well-being and decent working conditions. At the same time, governments, learning institutions, teacher organizations and other stakeholders need to work together within the profession to develop teachers that can give learners the best chance to succeed in life.

The Vision Statement of the Secretary-General on Transforming Education (2022) and the International Commission on the Futures of Education (2021) set out a new social contract for education, in which teachers not only impart skills and knowledge but also act as knowledge producers, facilitators and guides in the comprehension of complex realities. They must be trained and empowered to work collaboratively with learners to actively transform teaching and learning. They must be able to promote learning based on experience, enquiry and curiosity, and to develop the capacity, joy and discipline for problem-solving. They must be able to prepare learners for citizenship, life and work, and to contribute to the sustainability of the planet and their communities. A whole-of-society approach to education and learning can enable teachers to transform into agents of change, so that they can work together with all stakeholders in trust to build a world based on social justice and sustainability.

The High-Level Panel affirms that education is a human right and a public good and that teachers play a central role in achieving SDG 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. The High-Level Panel recalls the continued relevance of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997), and the importance of international standards on education, human rights and labour for the teaching profession.

In view of the above, the High-Level Panel adopts the following Recommendations and calls upon all relevant stakeholders – governments at the national and subnational levels, teachers' organizations, employers' organizations, school and higher-education systems, teacher education institutions, civil society, students, international youth organizations, international finance institutions and others – to implement them to transform the teaching workforce into a high-status, highly qualified, well-supported, properly remunerated and highly respected profession, which is capable of guiding and promoting inclusive, effective and relevant learning.

These Recommendations apply, as relevant, to all levels and streams of education, from early childhood through tertiary education, including special education, vocational education and training and non-formal education. They apply to all relevant levels of government. While teachers in public, private or community institutions are the focus of these Recommendations, the High-Level Panel also recognizes the key importance of education support personnel.

We firmly believe that investments in the humanity, dignity, quality, innovation and leadership, and sustainability, as well as the equity, diversity and inclusion, of the teaching profession are the key to unlocking the transformative potential of education.

The success of education systems is directly tied to the success of the teaching profession. When we begin with transforming education systems, we can transform the conditions of work in schools, transform the practice of teaching, transform learning and transform lives.

▶ Enabling the transformation of the teaching profession

1. Teachers are the central element in the transformation of education systems. Yet teachers do not work in a vacuum. To be effective, they require an enabling environment and holistic social support for their work. Governments should develop economic and social policies that support teaching and learning through adequate and equitable funding for education and lifelong learning. Such policies should ensure that parents and families have the time and capacity to support learners, that learners have access to adequate nutrition and healthcare services, that learning spaces are safe and inclusive, that learning institutions have adequate infrastructure and connectivity, and that the teaching profession enjoys high status and support.

2. Governments should fully implement enabling rights for education and decent work for teachers, in line with international standards, including freedom of association and collective bargaining, freedom of expression, freedom of thought and academic freedom.

3. Education goals should aim to promote varied and well-supported learning pathways for success in life. Learning should be based on principles of cooperation and solidarity, not exclusion and individualistic competition, and should foster relationships, empathy, compassion, ethics and environmental and social consciousness, no matter which learning pathway is undertaken. Teachers should be able to support multiple pathways to life success, and should not be rigidly bound to assessments and pedagogies that fulfil narrow criteria for learning success.

4. All governments should adopt, implement and regularly revise, as needed, comprehensive and holistic national teacher policies, aligned with national priorities and the overall education strategy and plan, through social dialogue with representative teachers' organizations and in consultation with other stakeholders. National teacher policies should cover attraction to the profession and recruitment; initial training; deployment; career pathways; in-service training and professional support; employment; and working conditions, including retention, reward, recognition and remuneration commensurate with qualifications. National policies should also address teaching standards; governance; management; well-being; assessment of teachers and monitoring of quality; and strategies for inclusion and diversity, including policies aimed at gender equality, such as attracting male teachers at the early childhood and primary levels, ensuring career development and upward mobility for female teachers, and attracting women into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Such policies should be based on an analysis of current research and disaggregated data on teachers.

5. Governments should establish national commissions or other mechanisms, which should include relevant financial authorities, representatives of teachers' organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to assess and tackle shortages of adequately trained teachers. Such commissions or mechanisms should address labour market analyses, recruitment, teacher migration, attrition and retention, compensation, status and rights, workload and well-being, equity (including the ratio of qualified teachers to students), equality and infrastructure.

6. Governments should develop and maintain a Teacher Management and Information System aligned to education management information systems in order to strategically predict and manage demand for teachers, track their professionalization and career development, and ensure the equitable deployment of qualified teachers across all regions, all levels of education and all sectors of society, especially the marginalized and most vulnerable.

▶ Investing in teachers

7. Quality education is not possible without adequate financing. Funding for public education should be guaranteed at a level of at least 6 per cent of gross domestic product and 20 per cent of total government expenditure, as set out in the Education 2030 Framework for Action, and should allow for increasing investment per capita in education. Such spending should be transparent and shielded from austerity measures, including in policies promoted by international financial institutions. Tax revenue should allow for sustainable education financing.

8. Long-term funding for well-qualified and well-supported teachers is an investment in the quality and sustainability of education systems and is more efficient than short-term measures to fill teacher gaps, which result in high turnover and attrition. Governments should invest in teachers through competitive salaries and incentives; high-quality, accessible and affordable teacher training; and continuing professional development (CPD) and quality teaching and learning materials; as well as through the provision of qualified education support personnel.

9. At the same time, the efficiency and efficacy of education funding and spending on teachers needs to be monitored and evaluated. Schools and tertiary education institutions need a degree of financial autonomy, so that they can invest funds in the improvement of quality in ways that respond to teacher needs. Education budget tracking and evaluation mechanisms and analysis should ensure transparency and accountability for spending. Where needed, institutions should receive training and support for financial management.

▶ Promoting equity, diversity and inclusion

10. Governments should develop policies and measures to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in the teaching workforce, in particular for vulnerable and marginalized groups, beginning with workforce planning. Targeted policies should attract marginalized groups into the profession and ensure they are supported to remain in teaching. Such policies should include provisions to promote women and marginalized groups into leadership positions; protect teachers from all forms of violence and harassment, including gender-based violence; and ensure social protection. Policies should also guarantee freely available pathways to high-quality training for teaching, adequate compensation and working conditions, and an inclusive environment for teachers in all their diversity, including those with disabilities, and should address the need for child and family care for teachers.

11. Bonuses and incentives, such as transport and housing, should be accorded to teachers working in rural, indigenous and tribal, remote and hardship settings to encourage experienced teachers to serve in these areas.

12. Governments should develop clear policies to support all teachers who are working in crisis-affected regions, refugee camps and local areas prone to violence such as gang activity. Such policies should aim to provide adequate support and access to professional development; promote the well-being of teachers by addressing their physical, emotional and psychosocial needs; and raise the status of all teachers working in contexts of crisis and displacement. Education funding needs to be managed to ensure continuity in case of disruptions due to crisis. There should be consideration for hazard pay. Teachers working in crisis-settings must receive timely, adequate and regular salaries.

13. Refugee and displaced teachers should be provided entry pathways into the education workforce of host communities, in line with national teaching standards. Governments should facilitate the recognition of teachers' qualifications and experience acquired across borders, including through dedicated procedures based on the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, to facilitate retention and continuity in the profession through local integration, repatriation and resettlement. Employment of teachers in camps for refugees and displaced persons should be provided under conditions guaranteeing fundamental principles and rights at work.

▶ Elevating the status and dignity of the teaching profession

14. The status and dignity of the teaching profession need to be protected and elevated. This can be achieved through policies that recognize human relationships as the fundamental basis for the teaching profession, including the teacher-student relationship.

15. Teacher status and dignity are also directly related to teachers' ability to influence policies regarding their work, including curricula and pedagogical practices. Policies should ensure teacher agency and autonomy based on knowledge, competence and responsibility within education goals, and should foster a climate of trust and respect between school authorities, communities, learners and teachers. Governments should also ensure that teachers and their organizations can engage in social dialogue, including collective bargaining, and policy dialogue on all matters affecting the profession.

16. Within the transformation of education, the sources of identity, dignity and respect for teachers also must change. Teachers are no longer solely providers of knowledge but now also have the essential role of guiding learners through the process of self-discovery by promoting inclusive, effective and relevant learning. Governments should develop educational policies that promote this cultural change.

17. To inspire and attract young people into the profession, countries should promote public recognition of the teaching profession through advocacy and coherent policies, messaging that acknowledges teachers' social importance and professional expertise, and recognition of outstanding teachers.

18. Violence, harassment and intimidation or threats from whatever source undermine the status and dignity of teachers and their educational functions. Adequate resources must be provided to ensure security and freedom from intimidation or outside interference for teachers and schools. Governments should develop policies that deter future threats by holding perpetrators accountable.

19. Governments should immediately begin phasing out the use of contract teachers and the hiring of unqualified personnel to fill teacher shortages. Policies should seek to train persons working under such arrangements to become qualified teachers, including through recognition of previous experience and accreditation of the necessary skills and competencies for effective performance in educational work.

▶ Improving quality and fostering innovation in teaching through training and lifelong learning

20. High-quality initial teacher education and training should be publicly funded for all prospective teachers, including through stipends and other monetary and non-monetary incentives.

21. Teachers at all levels should at minimum have a first-level higher-education degree, and ideally a master's degree or equivalent. Higher-education institutions should be coordinated, regulated and monitored to ensure coherence, comparability and quality in teacher education. Private providers of teacher education should be appropriately regulated to ensure quality.

22. Initial teacher training should integrate theory and practice in order to foster teaching skills and enable teachers to fulfil their roles.

23. Initial teacher training and CPD need to be transformed to prepare teachers to be leaders in a new learning environment and in new roles. Teachers should be prepared to be not only providers of information but also active and innovative guides and leaders of their students' learning and social development process, in order to support the development of higher-order thinking skills, problem-solving and the ability to learn independently and cooperatively.

24. Teacher training should prepare teachers to provide learner-centred quality education that is holistic, transformative, inclusive, effective and relevant, including through mother-language based education, where appropriate. It should be aligned to serve national development and wider sustainable development goals. Such preparation will develop teachers to be leaders and lifelong learners.

25. The capacity for educational leadership must be enhanced through high-quality CPD, including exchange programmes and research initiatives, which should be an integral part of teachers' careers. To support teachers in their needs, CPD should be designed and determined in dialogue with the teaching profession. Opportunities for CPD should be equitable, free of charge and part of official duties. Elements of quality CPD include sustained duration, focused content, active learning, a collaborative nature, modelling of effective practice, and the provision of coaching and expert support and opportunities for feedback and reflection.

26. New teachers should be provided with adequate induction and mentorship under experienced and suitably qualified teachers, with reduced workloads and adequate resources in initial years designed to allow for development of their skills. Mentorship should be provided for several years, and mentors should be trained, supported and compensated.

27. Policies should promote teaching as a collaborative profession, with adequate space, time and resources for collaborative planning, communities of practice, and reflective and reflexive practice by and among teachers, within and beyond their education institution. Such efforts can be supported by education authorities. Teachers should be encouraged to use interdisciplinary teams to teach core curricula content through thematic units.

28. To strengthen collaboration further, governments should foster local, regional and international teacher collaboration through partnerships between educators and schools to share best practices and resources; develop repositories of open digital educational resources; create exchange programmes for teachers and foster research collaboration; and develop and maintain digital platforms that connect teachers, researchers, policymakers and organizations.

29. Governments should develop policies that set out clear career pathways and include resources and staff dedicated to teacher professional development and lifelong learning within defined vertical and horizontal career paths.

30. Governments should implement accountability measures and robust evaluation systems for teaching. Methods of assessing teacher performance that consider the complex role of teachers in diverse settings should be established, with the aim of developing and improving the quality of teaching and its effective impact on learning through formative support. Teacher and student organizations should take the lead in defining and demanding quality teaching. Methods should also include tools for learners to provide constructive feedback to their teachers.

31. Teaching also prepares learners for work. The private sector can support this dimension of education by implementing learning partnerships between enterprises and schools and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, including internships and apprenticeship experiences for learners, and by offering work experience exchanges for teachers.

▶ Ensuring sustainability, peace and democracy

32. In view of the urgent planetary environmental crisis, education for sustainable development, including climate and ocean literacy, should be integrated into curricula and teaching as a cross-cutting issue from early childhood through tertiary education. Teacher training and professional development should be developed accordingly, and teachers should have access to free, quality and up-to-date teaching and learning materials on these topics.

33. Teachers should be trained to prepare learners to be active and responsible global citizens in their own communities, in their countries and in the world in order to advance human rights. Teachers should guide learners in their understanding of social justice, respect for diversity and global solidarity. In this way, teachers can sow the seeds of a culture of peace.

34. Adaptation and contingency strategies should be developed, sufficiently funded and implemented in order to make educational institutions more resilient to the negative impacts of climate change, natural disasters and other emergencies.

▶ Fostering humanity in teaching through decent work

35. Secure employment and decent working conditions for teachers are foundational for recruitment and retention in the profession. Employment conditions should be determined through social dialogue, including collective bargaining. Teacher unions must be able to take industrial action as a last resort to ensure decent working conditions.

36. Teachers should receive salaries and benefits at the same level as compared to other professions with similar educational requirements. Gender pay equity should be ensured, and there should be commensurate fairness between salaries at different levels of education, including early childhood education and TVET.

37. Working conditions should also provide for stable contractual forms; a safe and healthy workplace; manageable teacher-to-student ratios; support structures for managing problematic student behaviour; balanced workloads; safe, affordable and adequate housing; relevant, quality and accessible training and professional development opportunities; equitable access to technology and other resources; adequate social protection and pensions; and working-time arrangements (including duties beyond classroom teaching such as lesson preparation, marking and out-of-class student and parent engagements) that allow for adequate rest and work-life balance.

38. Working conditions should promote teachers' mental health and holistic well-being. Educational jurisdictions, in collaboration with teachers and their organizations, should develop systemic teacher well-being policies that are reflected in teachers' conditions of service.

39. Education support personnel are key workers in education who should work interdependently with teachers and enjoy commensurate working conditions as teachers. Adequate support for teachers should be provided, so that they can focus on teaching and spend less time on non-teaching tasks, which should be handled by dedicated and specialized professionals.

▶ Developing leadership in teaching

40. Strong and collaborative school leadership is a key strategy for making the profession attractive and bolstering recruitment and retention. Like teachers, school leaders should benefit from mentoring and CPD, as well as opportunities for collaboration and reflective and reflexive practice.

41. Clear and purposeful distributed leadership should encourage teachers to lead within their schools and should be an integral part of fostering quality teaching and innovation.

42. Governments should develop and implement effective policies with clear goals to promote women and marginalized groups into leadership positions. This should include targeted, free and accessible professional development opportunities and leadership training, and fair and transparent promotion procedures.

▶ Advancing human-centred education technology

43. Technology is a transformative force in education. The digital revolution and artificial intelligence must be pedagogically harnessed by teachers and integrated through active and human-centred teaching and learning methods and practices. Such tools should not become a substitute for teachers, but rather should empower teachers to guide their learners' quest for inquisitive, critical, creative and lifelong learning.

44. Teachers need autonomy and pedagogical choice in how they use technology to ensure that a given technology improves learning. Where technology is used, teacher and student data and privacy protections should be safeguarded.

45. Teacher training and practice should ensure that teachers and learners can be both creators and autonomous users of technology, not just passive consumers.

46. Governments should develop policies through social dialogue around the use of education technology. Such policies should ensure sustainable and equitable procurement and deployment of technology; autonomy with respect to content; and the involvement of the teaching profession and student organizations in the design, piloting and evaluation of artificial intelligence tools considered for use in education. The development of such tools should be informed by pedagogical practice, curricula and context considerations, and should respond to the needs of teachers and learners. At no point should technology replace the human relationship with the teacher.

47. Technology in the classroom can change the teaching process towards supported learning and can facilitate lifelong learning. Technological learning practices should be supplemented by special attention to developing social and emotional skills of learners.

▶ Transforming teaching through a new social contract for education and social dialogue

48. Coordinated and institutionalized social dialogue between governments (at the appropriate level), representative teachers' organizations and relevant employers' organizations should be the principal means for developing policies on education, teaching and the teaching profession. In addition to issues related directly to employment and working conditions, social dialogue should also cover wider education policy issues, in particular in relation to technology and the transformation of education, just transitions and teaching for entry into the world of work. Collective bargaining should be used to determine conditions affecting teachers.

49. Teachers' organizations, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, should develop, implement and monitor professional standards for teachers in order to hold the profession accountable to the highest standards and to build a sense of profession that brings teachers together around a common ethos, body of knowledge and know-how.

50. Teachers and their organizations should engage in research and dialogue with education systems and teacher training institutions in order to ensure that teachers can play a leadership and innovation role in relation to new subject matters, pedagogies and technologies within a learner-centred approach. Part of this work should be the creation of strong partnerships between innovative schools and teacher preparation programmes that enable prospective teachers to learn in practice as well as in theory.

51. Employers' organizations should engage in active social dialogue with representative teachers' organizations and ensure decent work in private education establishments. They should also engage in wider policy dialogue on education matters, particularly in relation to technology, the regulation of private education providers, and the transformation of education and teaching for entry into the world of work.

52. Student engagement and the meaningful participation of students in the co-creation and evaluation of teaching and learning should be regarded as a fundamental value and integral building block of educational quality.

▶ Next steps for international action

53. In view of the Recommendations made above, the United Nations system should adopt an up-to-date international instrument, including a convention or a revision of existing instruments, on the teaching profession. Such an instrument should build on the principles set out in the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) and other relevant standards and tools. The application of such an instrument should be monitored through a strengthened mandate for the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel or a similar body.

54. The international community should establish a Global Fund for Teachers' Salaries to provide time-bound support for the sufficient, timely and regular payment of salaries of teachers working in crisis-affected contexts or similar situations of threat or vulnerability.

55. International financial institutions should end all public-sector wage-bill constraints and austerity measures that impact education spending, in particular on teacher recruitment, retention and wages. Similarly, debt relief and forgiveness measures need to be developed to ensure education financing.

56. The international community, in collaboration with social partners and relevant stakeholders, should promote professional standards for teachers, including the UNESCO/Education International Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards, and the use of standard classification systems, such as UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Teacher Training Programmes (ISCED-T 2021), to monitor the length, quality and relevance of teacher education.

57. The international community, in particular donors, should foster global development cooperation to support institutionalized social and policy dialogue mechanisms in the education sector, in particular by strengthening the capacity of social partners to engage in policy development on the transformation of education, in line with international labour standards and principles of freedom of association.

58. The ILO and UNESCO should collaborate to strengthen data collection and country reporting on teachers and their working conditions, as well as research on good practices in transforming the teaching profession.

59. The Recommendations of the High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession should be taken up by the relevant bodies in the global education architecture for follow-up, namely the SDG 4 – Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee and the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism, relevant bodies of the ILO, the United Nations Development Programme, UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other agencies, and relevant technical initiatives such as the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030.

Summary
of the deliberations
of the panel

▶ I. Humanity

Context and trends

Humanity in the context of the teaching profession has been framed around the notion of teacher well-being – a wide-ranging concept that encompasses several general principles: respect and social status; remuneration and conditions of work; employment status; professional autonomy and agency; and healthy and safe work environments. As these principles are interrelated, addressing issues of teacher well-being will require the employment of holistic policies and approaches.

While teachers play a vital role in preparing learners for work and society, their social relevance is increasingly overlooked in a changing society and economy. The acknowledgement of the importance of teachers and the teaching profession during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic appears not to have been sustained. The perceived prestige and attractiveness of the teaching profession is continually being eroded due to inadequate wages, poor professional and working conditions, restrictions on freedom of association and academic freedom and declining public investments. These factors have too often resulted in teaching being seen as a "profession of last resort". The decline in prestige and attractiveness is evidenced by the challenges faced in retaining the existing workforce and recruiting new talent. Globally, approximately 44 million teachers are needed to ensure universal primary and secondary education by 2030, with the greatest need being in sub-Saharan Africa followed by Southern Asia.[2] Given that this projection does not take into account the shortages at the early childhood and tertiary education levels, the actual number of teachers needed across the sector is much larger. Disparities in perceptions of social relevance vary across education levels, with higher status

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2   UNESCO and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF), "The Teachers We Need for the Education We Want: The Global Imperative to Reverse the Teacher Shortage", fact sheet, 2023.

accorded to those teaching in higher-education institutions and at the secondary level.[3] These public perceptions could reflect gendered norms, as women are disproportionately represented in early childhood and primary education. Women are also not well represented in STEM disciplines, which are subject areas that tend to carry higher social prestige and remuneration.[4] The changing societal perceptions of the teaching profession are affecting teacher well-being, with implications for learning and classroom dynamics.

Decent teacher salaries and working conditions are positively correlated with teacher well-being and professional status. Teachers generally earn less than those in professions that require similar training and qualifications. Recent data from UNESCO show that globally, approximately half of all countries pay primary teachers less than other professions with similar levels of qualifications.[5] A survey conducted with unions representing teachers at all levels of education found that only 21 per cent of unions considered that their members were earning salaries comparable to those of other professions with similar educational qualifications. Furthermore, only 19 per cent of all unions agreed with the statement that "salaries provide adequate and sustainable living standards". Teachers in early childhood education (ECE) and TVET experience the greatest disparities in salaries and living standards.[6] Research indicates that lower salaries often contribute to higher levels of staff turnover, which is a major issue given that stability plays an important role in shaping learning outcomes. Competitive salaries can improve teacher motivation and retention, increase the status of the profession and improve overall well-being.[7] In addition to salaries, other factors such as decent working conditions, career development opportunities, enhanced possibilities for collaboration and a culture and environment of respect also play a significant role in teacher well-being and student performance.

A positive work environment that is conducive to teacher well-being and morale is just as essential as decent salaries. Examples of poor working conditions include work intensification, high student-to-teacher ratios, lack of job security, loss of professional autonomy and limited or insufficient resources. Conditions of work vary according to social, economic, national and regional contexts, with those teaching in the most vulnerable contexts, including in rural and remote settings and in conflict contexts, experiencing more detrimental conditions. Global and national agendas, along with changing cultural expectations, have seen an intensification of the pressures on teachers to take on wider classroom and administrative responsibilities. However, this has not come with additional supports and resources or training and professional development for teachers to realize new and expanding expectations, indicating significant gaps in teacher policies. Workload has been highlighted as one of the major reasons for high teacher attrition within the first year of being in the classroom. High workloads, including through unpaid overtime, negatively impact teacher work-life balance and contribute to stress, exhaustion and job dissatisfaction. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many

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3   While this is an overall trend, national variations have been noted.

4   ILO, *Report for the Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in the Education Sector in the Context of Lifelong Learning for All, Skills and the Decent Work Agenda*, TMDWA/2021, 2021; UNESCO and TTF, "Women in Teaching: Understanding the Gender Dimension", 2023.

5   UNESCO and TTF, "The Teachers We Need for the Education We Want".

6   Nelly P. Stromquist, *The Global Status of Teachers and the Teaching Profession* (Education International, 2018).

7   OECD, *Education at a Glance 2022*, 2022; Desiree Carver-Thomas and Linda Darling-Hammond, "The Trouble with Teacher Turnover: How Teacher Attrition Affects Students and Schools", *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 27, No. 36 (2019).

teachers experienced stress and burnout from being inadequately prepared and resourced to teach remotely, while also dealing with the socio-emotional needs of students.[8] New research on teachers in crisis contexts has drawn attention to the importance of developing the socio-emotional competencies of teachers to both support students and sustain their own well-being. To counter these tendencies, socio-emotional skills should be integrated into initial and ongoing teacher training and development.[9] Poor working conditions can result in individual and collective conflict with administrators and employers, which can lead to losses of learning time and negatively impact retention and morale.

In many countries, the COVID-19 pandemic also reinforced that low job security is another major stressor for teachers without permanent contracts. A study of countries in Eastern Africa indicated that during the pandemic teachers in the private sector experienced the suspension and termination of employment contracts, and in some cases even the suspension of benefits. Some of these teachers turned to other income-generating activities, which raised concerns about possible teacher shortages once schools reopened, while others continued to maintain their employment without remuneration.[10] More generally, recent trends in education policy have seen an increase in the use of temporary and short-term contracts due to declining education financing and the urgent need to address teacher shortages. The use of such contracts has implications for teacher well-being, ranging from undermining their ability to organize and engage in collective bargaining to affecting their access to social protection and compromising their livelihoods.[11] Employment status can also impact access to training and professional development opportunities for teachers, with notable impacts on teacher well-being, particularly in terms of their feelings of preparedness to teach effectively.[12] In some instances, teachers on temporary and short-term contracts lack the appropriate educational qualifications and pedagogical training. As skill levels and educational qualifications are directly linked to professional prestige, recruiting underqualified or unqualified personnel to fill teacher vacancies can diminish professional status, salaries and conditions of work, and thereby negatively impact student learning.

Teacher autonomy and agency are also important factors of job satisfaction, commitment and professional status. Teacher autonomy refers to the decisions over pedagogical approaches and curricula based on knowledge, competence and responsibility within education goals. Teacher well-being is influenced by the degree of perceived work autonomy and directly relates to job satisfaction.[13] While evaluation is central to promoting effective teaching and learning, management strategies that emphasize detailed control over the work of teachers through performance metrics and that promote competitive attitudes can devalue teacher collaboration and the social elements of teaching, and may thereby undermine teacher agency and professional autonomy.[14] These strategies often involve higher degrees of administrative surveillance, which further compromise teacher

8   ILO, *Report for the Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in the Education Sector.*

9   UNESCO, "Supporting Teachers and Education Personnel During Times of Crisis", 2020.

10 ILO, *Digitalization in Teaching and Education in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania: Digitalization, the Future of Work and the Teaching Profession Project*, 2021.

11 ILO, *Report for the Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in the Education Sector.*

12 OECD, *Teachers' Well-Being: A Framework for Data Collection and Analysis*, OECD Education Working Paper No. 213, 2020.

13 OECD, *Teachers' Well-Being*.

14 ILO and UNESCO, *Final Report: Fourteenth Session – Joint ILO–UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel*, CEART/14/2021/10, 2021.

autonomy.[15] According to the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey, one in six primary and secondary school teachers indicated feeling considerable stress in their work. Teachers experiencing stress are more likely to leave the profession. Work environments that are supportive of teacher autonomy and agency, including possibilities for collaboration and opportunities to engage in decision-making at the school level, can enhance teacher well-being and support retention in the profession.[16] Teacher autonomy is also enhanced by providing opportunities for professional development, which create capacities to practice the profession more effectively.

Protecting teacher safety, health and well-being is a foundational condition for decent work and effective learning environments. The intellectual, physical and emotional nature of teachers' work can have psychosocial effects that negatively impact their capacity to work and the quality of their lives outside of work. In this regard, teachers require greater support to take on the multiple demands of the profession and enhanced professional development to deal with changing societal expectations.[17] Globally, political polarization, technological advancements and changing societal expectations have challenged teacher well-being, creating additional pressures to accommodate conflicting demands and to maintain relevancy. Teachers also face a variety of risks to their physical well-being, ranging from verbal abuse and sexual harassment to exposure to life-threatening situations. The ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and Recommendation (No. 206), 2019, recognize the need for appropriate measures for sectors or occupations in which violence and harassment are more likely, including in education. Violence and harassment in the workplace can lead to physical and psychological harm, job dissatisfaction and increased attrition rates. As an element of humanity, well-being needs to be a shared responsibility of teachers, teacher representatives, administrators, employers and governments, and not the sole responsibility of the teacher.

Summary of discussions

The members of the Panel emphasized the importance of improving material conditions for teachers to sustain the humanity of the profession. The Panel identified the need for adequate wages; decent working conditions; stable contractual forms; manageable teacher-to-student ratios; balanced and healthy workloads; safe and adequate housing; relevant, quality and accessible training and professional development opportunities; fair evaluation strategies; and equitable access to technology and other resources. These conditions should be reinforced through holistic and comprehensive policies to improve and sustain the material conditions for teachers, with specific attention needed for teachers working in the most vulnerable circumstances.

15 Kathleen Lynch, "New Managerialism: The Impact on Education", *Journal of Contemporary Community Education Practice Theory* 5, No. 3 (2014).

16 OECD, "Building Teachers' Well-Being from Primary to Upper Secondary Education", *Teaching in Focus* 42, 2021.

17 ILO, *Report for the Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in the Education Sector*.

Inseparable from those material conditions are the intangible and symbolic conditions essential to the profession, including respect and social recognition for the work of teaching and assurances of professional autonomy and agency. In this regard, special attention needs to be drawn to the relational and interactive aspects of teaching, particularly the ways in which these dimensions of teachers' work are in need of transformation in order to develop a new and deeper form of respect on the part of students, parents and societies. This requires a shift away from traditional authoritative approaches to teaching and education towards preparing teachers for a more learner-centred, facilitative and guiding role in enhancing the critical and creative potential of students. Remaining attached to traditional authoritative roles that view teachers as "holders of knowledge" compromises genuine and relevant connections with new generations of students, undermining a positive classroom environment for both students and teachers. Such transformations may also involve a movement away from an overemphasis on standardized examination-driven approaches, which undermine teacher innovation and narrow the education process.

In order to realize this new role for teachers, new and different forms of training and professional development are required. Such training and professional development is also needed to respond to diversified classrooms and changing student needs, as well as to prepare students to address the challenges of climate change and sustainability and to navigate uncertain futures. Professional development should also prioritize strategies for supporting the mental health and psychosocial well-being of students. Transformations to teacher development need to begin with initial training and should be followed by a meaningful induction period and supported by access to mentoring. Opportunities for professional development should be provided on a continuous basis in support of relevant, effective and quality practice, which translates into respectability in the classroom and beyond. Collaborative practice should be promoted, including by providing training to school heads and administrators to support and encourage collaborative workplaces, which will reinforce efforts to foster humanity and dignity for teachers. Training and development need to be complemented with fair evaluation strategies and adequate teacher autonomy and agency so that teachers can act as agents of change to effectively respond to education challenges. As part of this, teachers should have input into decision-making at both the school and policy levels, including through their representative organizations.

Adequate financing of education systems is key to sustaining improved material and symbolic conditions of teachers and enhancing the well-being of the teaching profession. In this regard, a range of proposals were discussed, some of which included putting an end to public-sector wage-bill constraints globally and providing debt relief in less and least developed countries so that funds allocated to education and teachers are not compromised. Building on the outcome of the United Nations Transforming Education Summit, some Panel members also suggested investing more in education by increasing investment per capita and by widening the fiscal space through tax reform so that governments have adequate and sustainable funds to invest in education. Improved material and symbolic conditions and adequate financing should be treated as inseparable to be conducive to the humanity of teachers.

▶ II. Dignity

Context and trends

The ILO's Declaration of Philadelphia (1944) asserts that "all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity" (Art. II(a)). The dignity of work relates to material conditions such as pay and working time, as well as issues of meaningful work and personal time outside of work. The dignity of teachers is closely linked to the conditions that support humanity in the teaching profession, including freedom of association, fair and adequate wages, decent working conditions, limits on the working day and secure terms and conditions of employment. To ensure the dignity of teachers, these conditions require the support and protection of legal frameworks and policy instruments. Such efforts will improve the social status and respect for the teaching profession, which are themselves essential to ensuring dignity for teachers.

Social dialogue plays an important role in sustaining dignity in the teaching workforce; however, meaningful social dialogue is uneven in its presence and implementation across countries. One of the key elements of social dialogue is freedom of association, which supports the right to collective organizing and representation and the right to collective bargaining. In terms of public education, collective bargaining, which creates legally enforceable contractual obligations, is a common approach to establishing working conditions for teachers. This is particularly the case in Africa, the European Union and the Americas and less so in Asia and the Arab region. Little information on freedom of association in the private education sector is available.[18] Collective rights endow teachers with the capacities to secure better conditions of work that strengthen the dignity of their labour. They also ensure that teachers have a voice in the broader decisions that shape and impact the education sector, effectively ensuring that representation and participation is genuine and sustainable, which can sometimes be compromised when decisions are made unilaterally, such as the introduction of public-sector wage bills without social dialogue.[19] Social dialogue was also challenged in some countries during the COVID-19 pandemic, as policies governing school closures and remote and distance teaching were not always made in consultation with teachers and their representatives.[20]

Staff salaries, including those of teachers, are the single biggest expense in education sector budgets. Salaries and allowances average 75 per cent of education sector expenditures and often exceed 90 per cent of those expenditures. Adequate salaries are key to ensuring quality education, including by supporting the recruitment and retention of quality and skilled education personnel and reinforcing the status of the teaching profession.[21] Despite being the most significant cost in education sector budgets, many teachers do not receive sufficient salaries to support their livelihoods. This can impact their morale and motivation, and can also result in many teachers having to take on secondary employment to supplement

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18 ILO, *Report for the Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in the Education Sector*.

19 ILO, *Handbook on Social Dialogue in Education*, forthcoming.

20 ILO, *Report for the Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in the Education Sector*.

21 United Nations, United Nations Transforming Education Summit – Thematic Action Track 5: Financing of Education, 2022.

their incomes.[22] Secondary employment raises concerns over teacher absenteeism, which undermines the quality of learning, reduces public confidence in education systems and impacts student morale and attendance.[23] Receiving timely monthly salary payments and having to travel long distances to pick up payments are also a concern in many contexts, reinforcing teachers' insecurity and compromising the quality of learning.[24]

Providing teachers with decent conditions of work and adequate career paths supports their dignity within and beyond their working lives. Under-resourced teaching and learning environments, including the lack of infrastructure and limited and inadequate instructional material, negatively impact teachers' capacities to effectively perform their work and derive job satisfaction. High student-to-teacher ratios, often resulting from educational policies, teacher shortages and financial cutbacks, intensify teacher workloads and decrease effective instructional time. In addition to teaching responsibilities, teachers often perform administrative, managerial, counselling and care duties. Overcrowded classrooms increase not only teaching activities but also non-teaching activities and expectations. Despite a heavy and growing workload, teachers often do not receive the same supports as other professions.[25] In Canada, for example, a recent survey by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) indicated that teachers and students often do not have access to education support personnel such as social workers. The majority of teacher respondents stated that educational assistants (61 per cent), social workers (56 per cent) and child and youth workers (53 per cent) were available only some of the time, rarely or never when needed.[26] Multiple and increasing responsibilities can impede teachers' abilities to conduct their work in meaningful ways, which can compromise the dignity of their profession.

Overcrowded classrooms and multiple responsibilities can intensify and expand working time for teachers, which can significantly impact their work-life balance. A healthy work-life balance results in benefits for both workers and employers. In terms of workers, research indicates that work-life balance can support increased job satisfaction and can positively impact the psychological and physical health of employees. Work-life imbalances, on the other hand, can result in social and health consequences for workers. In terms of employers, those that have implemented work-life balance policies experienced increased retention of existing employees, improved recruitment rates, lower rates of absenteeism and higher productivity. Given the increasing demands placed on teachers, implementing work-life balance policies could improve the dignity of work in the profession.[27]

Although technology is being used to support teachers in their work, in some cases it has also had a negative effect on teachers' working time. The increasing presence of technology in education, which accelerated during and following the COVID-19 pandemic, resulted in the practice of contacting teachers outside normal working hours, whether on the part of students, parents, staff or administrators,

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22 David K. Evans and Fei Yuan, *The Working Conditions of Teachers in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*, background paper for World Bank, *World Development Report 2018 – LEARNING to Realize Education's Promise*.

23 UNESCO, "Teacher Absenteeism", 2022.

24 Evans and Yuan.

25 Evans and Yuan.

26 ETFO, "ETFO Member Survey Shows Violence Pervasive in Schools", 15 May 2023.

27 ILO, *Working Time and Work-Life Balance Around the World*, 2022.

which increased experiences of work-life conflict.[28] In this regard, some countries (for example, Belgium, France and Portugal) have introduced and others (for example, Kenya) are in the process of introducing legislation to protect "the right to disconnect" or "the right to rest" to facilitate work-life balance for workers.[29] Examining how other countries and sectors have addressed issues of work-life balance, including in relation to technology, may prove beneficial to furthering the dignity of teachers.

Security of employment is a fundamental condition of exercising work-related rights and experiencing dignity in the profession. Teacher shortages and constrained education budgets have led many countries to place greater reliance on temporary and fixed-term teaching contracts. Although the use of contract teachers provides a greater level of flexibility to administrators and allows for teaching absences and shortages to be addressed, it may also have serious consequences for teachers' entitlements to leaves, pension and health benefits. Teachers on contracts also often lack the appropriate training and certification for working in the profession, which can undermine education quality.[30] Although the potential exists to develop the skills of these teachers, providing adequate training is often not prioritized for those on contracts in the way that it is for those in full-time positions.[31] Quality is further undermined when teachers are employed on short-term contracts, as students lose continuity and schools are unable to engage in longer-term education planning. At the tertiary level, temporary and fixed-term employment contracts are a common feature in both developing and developed countries. Some of the challenges faced by teachers on such contracts include job insecurity, a lower degree of control over their work, exclusion from institutional governance and academic decision-making, exclusion from leave and other benefits, a lack of promotional opportunities and an inability to apply directly for research funding.[32] Teachers on temporary and fixed-term contracts may also be more reluctant to report violations of employment laws, further amplifying their already precarious situation.[33]

Summary of discussions

Ensuring dignity in the teaching profession requires the guarantee of rights in relation to salaries, working conditions, and the terms and conditions of employment. When the dignity of teachers is protected, students and countries are also provided dignity through access to quality education, which is paramount for building prosperous economies and societies. Countries must set the legal framework to guarantee these rights, including by enacting laws that support teacher unionization and empower teacher unions to protect and improve working conditions that sustain dignity. The scope of union activities should also be expanded to include inputs in the development, implementation and monitoring

28 ILO, "Teaching and the Teaching Profession in a Digital World: COVID-19 and Beyond", country studies for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Rwanda and Zambia, 2023; ILO, *Digitalization in Teaching and Education in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania*; Nathan D. Jones et al., "Teachers' Time Use and Affect Before and After COVID-19 School Closures", *American Educational Research Association* 8, No. 1 (2022): 1–14.

29 World Economic Forum, "Right to Disconnect: The Countries Passing Laws to Stop Employees Working Out of Hours", 3 February 2023.

30 TTF, *Effective Approaches to Attract and Retain Teachers and Ensure Equitable Deployment*, 2023; TTF, *A Review of the Use of Contract Teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2020.

31 ILO, *Report for the Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in the Education Sector*.

32 ILO, *Employment Terms and Conditions in Tertiary Education*, GDFTE/2018, 2018.

33 American Association of University Professors, "Higher Education at a Crossroads: The Economic Value of Tenure and the Security of the Profession", The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2015–16, 2016.

of education reforms. International cooperation between education stakeholders on a broad scale can support these processes, including through the promotion of professional standards in teaching. A concerted effort must be made against the politicization of the teaching profession, which creates conflict between the teaching workforce and other stakeholders.

In addition to strengthening national legislation and regulation, the Panel recommended developing an internationally binding convention on the teaching profession, with a robust monitoring and reporting framework, in order to ensure that countries are accountable for guaranteeing the rights and responsibilities of teachers. The Panel also recognized the continuing relevance of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997), although it considered that both instruments did not adequately cover a number of emerging issues facing the teaching profession.

Promoting the regularization of employment contracts and firmly standing against precarity in the profession is essential to ensuring the dignity of teachers. Contractual instability, temporary and fixed-term contracts and the use of underqualified personnel have a negative impact on both the attractiveness of the teaching profession and the quality of teaching and learning. Such conditions can also result in a loss of investment. For example, in the United States teachers hired on temporary contracts tend to leave at two to three times the rate of qualified and permanent teachers. The lack of stability experienced by the teaching workforce can affect student outcomes, which may be more expensive to address in the future. Countries can develop pathways for contract and underqualified teachers to obtain the necessary qualifications and certifications toward accessing permanent contracts. This should include expanding access to opportunities for formalized teacher education. Decreasing teacher workloads by providing access to necessary supports and resources, including relevant and current technologies, can create healthy working environments that support the dignity of the profession. Healthy working environments should also extend to safe and healthy living conditions, which are currently lacking in many developing countries, particularly for those teachers working in rural areas. In this regard, adequate, long-term public investments are an imperative.

To further dignity in the profession and sustain learning, the Panel recognized the importance of guaranteeing adequate salaries, including in crisis and emergency contexts, in which the sufficient, timely and regular payment of teachers is a major challenge. Given that donor funding is often not available for recurrent costs in such contexts, the Panel agreed that a new mechanism would be needed so that teachers can continue teaching. A recommendation was put forward for the international community to establish a Global Fund for Teachers in Emergencies in this regard. Dignity can also be advanced through promotions and the development of clear career pathways for teachers, not only within the profession but also in the wider education system. Opportunities for continuous professional development and lifelong learning support teachers to perform their work effectively within a changing context. Such opportunities can enrich careers in the education sector and promote job satisfaction and meaningful work. Receiving public recognition and acknowledgement of accomplishments can also contribute to these outcomes.

▶ III. Equity, diversity and inclusion

Context and trends

Equity, diversity and inclusion are fundamental principles that need to be upheld not only in education systems but also in broader society, in support of human rights and the SDGs. In education specifically, measures that support equity, diversity and inclusion promote the quality and relevance of education, including by addressing pervasive social and economic disparities. They may also improve teacher retention and counter the economic and social costs of school dropout.[34] Such measures emphasize representative teaching workforces; work-life balance; relevant professional training and adequate supports; incentives to address educational disparities; equity-based policies and practices; and adequate financing.

Ensuring gender balance in teaching at all levels of education is essential for inclusion and diversity within the profession. Globally, women are over-represented in teaching positions in lower-levels of education and under-represented in upper-levels of education. In 2020, 94 per cent of pre-primary, 67 per cent of primary, 57 per cent of lower-secondary and 50 per cent of upper-secondary school teachers were female. Women are particularly under-represented in tertiary education, where only 44 per cent of the teaching workforce is female.[35] Women also continue to be under-represented in certain fields of study, including technical TVET and STEM fields.[36] Gender disparities in the education sector are partly the result of wider social norms that reproduce gender inequalities. In education, a major cause of women's over-representation in early childhood and pre-primary levels may be cultural beliefs that view this form of work as an extension of the maternal role, which contributes to the devaluation of the teaching profession and has consequences for the salaries and career and professional development opportunities of female teachers. These norms and the resulting conditions also discourage or prevent men from entering the profession, which contributes to gendered occupational segregation.[37] Research has also indicated that raising teacher salaries on a par with professions requiring similar qualifications can support gender balance in the teaching profession.[38] At the tertiary level, one of the reasons why women are under-represented in senior academic positions is recruitment and promotion practices that favour linear, full-time, uninterrupted academic trajectories and do not sufficiently take into account women's care responsibilities, which can interrupt such career trajectories.[39] When gender intersects with other markers of social location, such as race, class, ability, sexual orientation, religious identity and/or citizenship status, the inequities and barriers can be compounded. Gender equity policies in hiring, promotion and parental leaves in both education and wider society are needed to address these disparities.

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34 OECD, "Equity".

35 UNESCO and TTF, *Women in Teaching*.

36 UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Gender Report – A New Generation: 25 Years of Efforts for Gender Equality in Education*, 2020.

37 ILO, *Women at Work: Trends 2016*, 2016.

38 Sheelagh Drudy, "Gender Balance/Gender Bias: The Teaching Profession and the Impact of Feminisation", *Gender and Education* 20 (2008): 309–323.

39 UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020*.

Work-life balance is another key component of ensuring equity, particularly gender equity, in the profession. On average in both low- and high-income countries, women perform at least two and a half times more unpaid household and care work than men. When both paid work and unpaid work are considered, women work longer hours per day than men, which can negatively impact women's well-being.[40] The combined pedagogical, administrative and social responsibilities of teaching can often produce heavy workloads and extend the working day. Coupled with care responsibilities, this can lead to work-life conflict, which may see women taking extended breaks from the teaching profession or leaving the profession altogether, further exacerbating gender disparities at the management and leadership levels. It can also impact women's income-earning potential. New teachers are among the most likely to leave the profession. A difficult start in the profession can also reduce teachers' feelings of self-efficacy, which can impact their effectiveness in the long-term. The cost of teacher attrition is high for both students and teachers. It is therefore vital that new teachers benefit from additional supports, including reduced teaching loads, access to coaching and mentorship programmes and the availability of adequate infrastructure and resources.[41] More broadly, education systems need adequate funding as strained budgets can contribute to increased workload pressures and limited supports.

In order to address systemic and attitudinal forms of discrimination, teachers themselves require appropriate and adequate professional development, adequate planning time and access to resources. Pedagogical training needs to be reformed so that teachers are prepared to deliver an inclusive, learner-centred and gender-transformative pedagogy in order to create classrooms that are respectful of difference and that help students to challenge biases and discriminatory practices.[42] These principles must also be wholly integrated into teacher training institutions and into the cultures of schools. The demographic compositions of schools and societies are changing, including as a result of migration, displacement and changing family forms. Adequate investments are needed to ensure that professional training and supports are available to teachers so that they can respond to the diversity of their classrooms in ways that are inclusive, respectful and attentive to the backgrounds of student populations.[43]

Ensuring that the teaching workforce is representative of student populations is a challenge; but doing so is beneficial in terms of providing role models for students, bridging the gap between families and communities and schools and introducing new perspectives into classrooms. Implementing equity-based hiring practices and non-discrimination policies and recognizing alternative pathways into the profession can attract teachers from vulnerable and marginalized groups.[44] Free initial teacher training is as a key measure for attracting diversity into the profession and making it more accessible. This measure is supported by the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, which calls on the competent authorities, as far as possible, to "seek to establish a system of free teacher-preparation institutions". Equity measures need to move beyond establishing initial access to the profession to implementing practices that ensure equity across the career trajectory.

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40 ILO, *Women at Work*.

41 OECD, "Teacher Initial Education".

42 United Nations, United Nations Transforming Education Summit – Thematic Action Track 1: Inclusive, Equitable, Safe and Healthy Schools, 2022.

43 Hannah Ulferts, ed., *Teaching as a Knowledge Profession: Studying Pedagogical Knowledge Across Education Systems* (OECD, 2021).

44 OECD, "Teacher Employment".

Education quality strongly influences social mobility, employment opportunities, income and health. However, in many disadvantaged communities and regions, including rural and remote areas, students lack access to qualified teachers. Addressing this disparity requires not only making the profession attractive to recruit and retain adequate numbers of teachers but also ensuring that the deployment of qualified teachers is equitable. Research demonstrates that even in cases in which enough teachers are deployed to disadvantaged schools and regions, many of these teachers tend to be less qualified and/or experienced, particularly in certain subject areas such as science and mathematics. These areas are also disproportionately affected by teacher attrition, including due to inadequate living and working conditions and lack of access to social services and social networks. Establishing teacher deployment systems that can account for the allocation of teachers across regions and their conditions of work is the first step towards ensuring equitable deployment. One example of such a system is the Educational Management Information System (EMIS). Another practice in support of equitable deployment involves providing teachers with incentives to work in disadvantaged areas, such as hardship allowances, housing allowances, additional opportunities for professional development, additional leave time and accelerated career mobility. Developing long-term commitments in disadvantaged areas could include strategies such as recruiting teachers locally or implementing systems of teacher rotation across regions, as well as ensuring ongoing supports from educational authorities.[45] Any equity measures, whether for recruitment, retention or deployment, require working spaces that are free of violence and harassment in order to be fully meaningful and effective.

Summary of discussions

The Panel affirmed that systemic efforts are needed to address institutional barriers and multiple forms of discrimination that prevent vulnerable and marginalized groups from entering and staying in the teaching profession. Measures that support equity must also ensure fair treatment and access to mentorship, coaching and professional development opportunities, career advancement and resources to support pedagogy. Education, in partnership with public authorities, must tackle the intolerances and systemic barriers that are embedded in social norms, which prevent certain groups from entering the profession and/or accessing education. In addition to changing mindsets, adapting infrastructure and modifying the physical environment also plays a vital role in ensuring inclusion and diversity in both the teaching workforce and the student body. Schools should be well resourced and should provide all the support that is necessary for teachers to effectively meet the needs of diverse classrooms. Curricula must be responsive to the needs and reflective of the realities of students. Systemic change requires legal, normative and policy frameworks that ensure that equity is being effectively implemented. Equity can be further advanced through awareness campaigns and advocacy on the part of all stakeholders, including governments, civil society, international organizations and financial institutions.

Gender equity in the teaching profession requires wage parity across different levels of education, equitable career advancement and access to care services. To encourage women to live and work in rural and remote areas, support measures such as the construction of decent housing and the provision of quality transportation should be provided. Targeted programmes should be designed to

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45 TTF, *Effective Approaches to Attract and Retain Teachers and Ensure Equitable Deployment*; OECD, "Equity".

improve gender balance in the teaching profession, including by attracting more men into ECE and more women into TVET and leadership positions. Gender equity in ECE will require improvements to conditions of work and salaries, while special support measures to enable women to access leadership positions are needed to promote gender equity in education systems more broadly. Teacher policies and accompanying implementation plans need to be properly costed using an equity-based and gender-sensitive perspective. Policies should also address well-being through a gendered lens, including by accounting for experiences at different life stages such as pregnancy and menopause. In order to provide protection against gender-based violence and harassment in education and beyond, the members of the Panel called for countries to ratify the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

In support of more equitable classrooms, deliberate efforts should be made to recruit teacher candidates from vulnerable and marginalized communities so that the workforce is representative of the students and communities in which they teach. Representation is important, because teachers are key role models not only for their students but also for the relevance and contextualization of education. In crisis and emergency contexts, teachers with foreign qualifications should be provided with avenues to access full professional status so that they can enjoy the same rights and privileges as teachers with national certification. All equity measures must be supported through adequate and sustained financing.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the disparities and consequences in access to technology for teaching and learning. Equity strategies must ensure connectivity, access to devices and digital learning opportunities for both teachers and students, including those living and working in rural and remote areas. The introduction of new technologies can, however, also exacerbate inequities beyond the digital divide, with systemic inequities and discriminatory practices being reflected in digital tools and spaces. Equity strategies must provide teacher training in the pedagogical uses of technology, including in ways that take into account the social impacts of technology, as well as the dimensions of equity and inclusion. This includes supporting learners to develop the relational and socio-emotional skills that may be neglected with the deployment of technology. Given the advancement of technology, training should be relevant and offered on a continuous basis. It is also important to provide parents with opportunities to enhance their digital skills so that they can play a more active role in their children's learning.

▶ IV. Quality

Context and trends

Research demonstrates that, regardless of the education sub-sector, teacher quality is key for the effective learning of students. Quality has multiple meanings in relation to teachers as it relates to differences in conceptualizations of the teaching-learning process, professional knowledge, professional development and education, commitment, professional autonomy and agency, and the overall objectives of education.[46] In attempting to understand and define quality, many countries have developed professional standards for teachers that capture "expectations about teacher knowledge, competences and attributes and the desirable level of performance [and] … describe clearly and concisely what constitutes good teaching in a particular context, and what teachers need to know and be able to do to implement such good teaching".[47] Professional standards can serve as a framework for teacher professional development and accountability, and support the professionalization and status of the teaching profession. Standards can also aid in the development of consistency across teacher policies, including in relation to teacher training and development, recruitment, promotion and incentivization, among other things. To ensure the effectiveness of standards, they should be negotiated, implemented and monitored in collaboration with teachers and their representative organizations. Developing standards in this way will avoid a top-down approach to standards and protect against de-professionalization, especially given that professionalization requires some measure of autonomy, discretion and voice. It is important to ensure that standards maintain a strong connection to student learning objectives, aim to improve teaching and remain open to review and adequate evaluation in order to be reflective of changing education contexts and realties.[48]

Ensuring accountability is a significant and important feature of maintaining professional standards on teachers and teaching. Accountability mechanisms are essential for ensuring strong teacher performance, and for thereby ensuring quality learning outcomes and high professional status. As part of this, regular formative assessments of teacher performance should be undertaken to help teachers better understand their practice and shape their professional development, and for education systems to ensure that overall education objectives are being met in the best interest of learners. Performance assessments should be systematic, rigorous and formative in their orientation; should be designed in consultation with teachers; should be connected to an institutional strategy; should involve holistic criteria that include but are also more comprehensive than rigid learning performance metrics; should be developed and applied in ways that are transparent, equitable and fair; and should take into account the context in which the teacher being assessed practices. The positive aspect of performance assessments can be reinforced through incentives, including financial and non-financial rewards, as well as opportunities for career progression in support of teacher motivation and quality. It is important to ensure that those carrying out the assessments are themselves trained and competent professionals and that they perform their duties in ways that are free from discrimination and bias. Assessments should also take into

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46 Yusuf Sayed, "Quality Teachers and Effective Teaching", background report for the High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession (unpublished).

47 UNESCO and TTF, *Teacher Policy Development Guide*, 2019, 68.

48 UNESCO and TTF, *Teacher Policy Development Guide*; Education International and UNESCO, *Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards*, 2019; Sayed.

account the voice and perspectives of the learners themselves. While accountability is strongly linked to teacher performance, it should also maintain connections to wider policies that shape teaching and education. Not following an inclusive, holistic and respectful approach to performance assessment can negatively impact teacher motivation and efficacy, which can be detrimental to student learning.

Just as teachers need to be accountable to students, education systems and communities overall, teachers themselves require accountability from the system. This involves providing decent working conditions, including sustainable workloads, work-life balance, appropriate class sizes, adequate infrastructure and resources, professional autonomy and agency, and safe and healthy working environments. More broadly, a decent work environment is developed in relation to guaranteeing fundamental teacher rights, including freedom from discrimination and violence, freedom of expression, equity, social justice and social dialogue. An appropriate teacher salary that takes into account their professional status and is comparable to other professions with similar qualifications is an essential component of quality performance. Appropriate compensation should also include social security, leave entitlements, health benefits and pensions. It is essential that accountability mechanisms are not premised on assigning to teachers the responsibility for wider system or societal issues.[49]

Teacher preparation and development are foundational elements of preparing quality teachers and building quality education. Efforts can be directed at three stages of the teaching career: initial or pre-service teacher preparation; an induction period for newly qualified teachers prior to receiving teaching credentials; and continuous professional development or in-service education and training. Initial or pre-service teacher preparation should begin with an emphasis on recruiting the strongest candidates and should include a comprehensive focus on preparation that involves subject matter, pedagogy, experiential practice, and diversity and inclusion. In support of accessibility and in order to broaden the pool of teacher candidates, some countries have implemented cost-free initial training. While not all countries have an induction period for newly qualified teachers, the evidence increasingly demonstrates its importance for both teacher satisfaction and effectiveness and retention. The induction period should be meaningful and supported, including through guided and structured opportunities that involve a qualified and experienced mentor, so that newly qualified teachers can exercise and refine their knowledge and skills. The period should include personal, social and professional supports and opportunities to collaborate with other teachers. The induction period is an initial step in a lifelong approach to professional development. Maintaining ongoing opportunities for quality continuous professional development is key to ensuring that teachers remain abreast of current development, subject knowledge, pedagogical techniques and education policies. Continuous professional development supports more effective and motivated teacher practice. It should be integrated into regular work practices and strategies for career progression and should be aligned with wider education standards and policies.[50]

49 UNESCO and TTF, *Teacher Policy Development Guide*; Sayed.
50 UNESCO and TTF, *Teacher Policy Development Guide*; Sayed.

Summary of discussions

The members of the Panel affirmed that the only way to improve quality in education is to continuously invest in teachers and foster their professional autonomy, beginning with initial teacher education and continuing throughout their career. Such efforts, including by ensuring academic freedom for teachers, translate to improvements in both teacher effectiveness and learning outcomes for students and contribute to the overall dignity of the profession. De-professionalization, including through the use of unqualified and underqualified personnel, the erosion of professional autonomy and the lack of teachers' voices in decisions impacting the profession, was highlighted as one of the main challenges impacting quality in the profession. Greater government investment in initial teacher training and continuous professional development, as well as strategies to counteract the use of unqualified and contract teacher positions, are essential for having highly prepared and trained teachers. It is vital to also develop systematic assessments of the quality of initial teacher training institutions and programmes and ensure that teachers have a say in their professional development so that it is responsive to their needs and directly supports their practice.

The Panel noted the important correlation between initial high-quality teacher training and teacher retention, citing the example from Singapore, where the Ministry of Education monitors the progress of candidates in training institutions, and ensures that the training is of high quality and free of cost and that students are provided a stipend so that all have access to the same quality of preparation. Initial teacher preparation requires a comprehensive approach that includes substantial clinical practice under the guidance of a mentor. Mentorship programmes, which have been recognized as key to developing a quality and sustainable workforce, as well as reduced workloads, are vital supports for newly qualified teachers. Singapore provides all newly qualified teachers with a mentor and reduces their workload to 80 per cent during the initial teaching period. Beyond initial training, professional development for teachers should be free of cost, during working hours and career-long and could include opportunities for experiential learning and work experience exchanges so that they can exercise their profession effectively. Moreover, professional development should be needs-driven, with the profession having a say on the themes addressed. Staff dedicated to teacher development should be standard, while opportunities to undertake quality external training and coaching, including opportunities organized by the private sector, should be supported. Pursuing such measures may require some financial autonomy for schools. Professional development should also support career progression, including by providing access to different career tracks within the education sector and not only up the leadership track.

Teachers need to be viewed as professional experts who are part of a professional community that is constantly updating its skills and working together collaboratively with full professional autonomy. This requires developing and maintaining professional standards for teaching and ensuring that teachers can exercise academic freedom as part of their professional autonomy. The construction of teaching standards is an exercise of social dialogue and collegiality among education stakeholders, including governments and teacher representatives. The Education International/UNESCO *Global Framework for Professional Teaching Standards* is a useful global resource that can be used by policymakers, as well as teachers and their representatives as they seek to develop standards for the profession. There is also a need for teacher policies at the national level, including in areas related to teacher qualifications and training, recruitment, retention and deployment,

which were identified as lacking in many countries. The UNESCO *Teacher Policy Development Guide*[51] can aid education stakeholders in the development of a comprehensive national teacher policy. Developing mechanisms for assessment and accountability is an important dimension of maintaining professional standards and could be integrated into teacher policy frameworks to contribute to quality within the profession. An essential element of accountability is the measuring of teachers' performance, which requires the development of comprehensive means of performance measurement and the provision of professional development opportunities for teachers whose performance is below expectations. As outlined above, performance assessment should be rigorous and formative in its orientation in order to promote teacher development and collaborative work. Promoting work-life balance, reducing administrative burdens, ensuring decent working conditions and addressing factors that contribute to unhealthy workplaces should also be prioritized in support of quality teaching and learning.

It should also be recognized that societies will rely heavily on teachers to prepare learners to deal with the enormous transitions facing the world – demographic, digital, environmental, social and others. Teacher training and development will need to prepare teachers with the necessary skills and provide continued support, including through the community, to address these critical topics, which have far-reaching social implications.

51   UNESCO and TTF, *Teacher Policy Development Guide*.

▶ V. Innovation and leadership

Context and trends

Innovation can be understood as the development and implementation of new knowledge, practices and products in response to challenges or opportunities, and it offers a new way of doing things in the context into which it is introduced. Innovation plays an important role in ensuring that education systems are responsive and adaptable to societal needs, challenges and goals, and can lead to new and better ways of doing.[52] The COVID-19 pandemic demanded and showcased a variety of innovations led by teachers and education systems. Some innovations are responsive to the crisis at hand, while others may involve long-standing transformative practices. The OECD notes that most countries have an innovation policy for the business sector to incentivize and create conditions for innovation, which is often overlooked in education policy – or where present, it is not implemented system-wide. While innovation in the business sector is often in support of business growth, the importance of innovation in education must lie in promoting education as a human right and public good, with quality teaching and effective learning at the core. It is also notable that innovations can have negative results; for example, innovations that are focused solely on reducing costs can undermine the quality of education or conditions of work.[53]

Advances in technology and artificial intelligence are typically associated with innovation throughout society, including in the education sector. For education, the innovative potential of technology, particularly digital technology, relates to new capacities for data collection, which can then support policy and practice development; the creation of opportunities for teachers and learners with disabilities through accessible technology and universal design; the substitution and complementing of traditional education during times of crises and for hard-to-reach populations; increasing access to teaching and learning resources; facilitating new ways of communicating and collaborating; and prompting new ways of doing. However, as demonstrated in a recent UNESCO report, there is little definitive evidence on the added value of digital technology in education.[54] Where evidence does exist, most of it comes from the proprietors. Moreover, although countries are developing digital skills standards for curricula and assessment, in some countries these have been defined by private, commercial actors. Despite the potential for technology to address inequalities, technological innovations can also result in new inequities, including in relation to accessing relevant technologies and connectivity. Technology can also negatively impact learning when used in excess or when used inappropriately.[55] Many countries lack the training initiatives and capacities needed to develop the digital skills of teachers so that they can meaningfully and effectively use technology in teaching and learning. In some cases, teachers do not have access to the technologies needed to deliver the expected outcomes or to innovate.[56] Adequate protection of teachers' and learners' data and privacy

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52 TTF, *Innovation in Teacher Policy and Practice in Education Recovery*, Final Report of the 13th Policy Dialogue Forum (UNESCO, 2022); Andy Hargreaves, *Innovation and Leadership*, background report for the High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession (unpublished).

53 Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin, ed., *Measuring Innovation in Education 2023: Tools and Methods for Data-Driven Action and Improvement* (OECD, 2023).

54 UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2023: Technology in Education: A Tool on Whose Terms?*, 2023.

55 UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report* 2023.

56 ILO, *Digitalization in Teaching and Education in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania*.

is often not ensured. Europe and North America dominate the production and distribution of digital education content, reflecting the lack of diversity in and relevance of content. Technology can also undermine efforts for sustainability, as such technological advancements and uptake of technology should account for environmental impact.[57] Technological advances require the adoption of new policies and approaches to governance in order to account for the changing conditions and environment. Digital teaching and learning resources must be used critically and integrated through active and learner-centred teaching and learning methods and practices, so that they are used in ways that support teachers in guiding the inquisitive, critical and creative learning of students.[58]

Innovation can take many forms that are not related to technology. It is therefore important to recognize and create space for multiple ways of innovating in education. Teachers play a central role in generating and implementing innovation in education, the realization of which is built on teacher autonomy and agency to exercise professional judgement related to student needs and contextual circumstances. Top-down approaches in innovation, including rigid curricula, as well as inflexible teacher standards, compromise teachers' professional judgement and growth. Teacher innovation also requires appropriate enabling conditions such as decent working conditions, fair salaries, relevant supports and guidance, adequate time in the working day, access to appropriate resources, and opportunities for collaboration and professional development. Embedding an openness and orientation to innovation in pre-service teacher training and enabling collaborative professionalism, which allows teachers to benefit from the experiences and knowledge of colleagues to engage in pedagogical innovation, also holds great significance. It is also important that teachers' innovative practices are properly assessed and recognized and that opportunities are provided to share good practices, knowledge and experiences. Innovations should be meaningful to both teachers and learners, and should include balance between local and decentralized approaches as well as more coordinated directives. Policy frameworks designed to support innovation in education should be developed through social dialogue in support of policy relevance and responsiveness and in recognition of the importance of teachers' voices. As demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that education systems are adaptable, responsive and sustainable depends on teacher innovation and engagement.[59]

Innovation can best develop in environments of collaboration and professional autonomy. Professional autonomy is not synonymous with self-governance or working in isolation but is increasingly seen as a collaborative endeavour. Collaboration is most successful when it happens at all levels, from policy to pedagogical matters. Leadership plays an important role in enabling and supporting collaboration and innovation. A change from a managerial approach to leadership towards engaging in collaborative decision-making with teachers and learners would lead in that direction. Providing teachers with dedicated hours in the working day and allowing teachers to collaboratively generate and lead innovations requires embedding a focus on leadership in the teaching profession.[60] Leadership should also account for opportunities for upward mobility, particularly for women and minority and disadvantaged groups. Women are still under-represented in leadership and management positions in education and other professions.

57 UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2023*.

58 United Nations, "Transforming Education: An Urgent Political Imperative for our Collective Future", vision statement of the Secretary-General, 2022.

59 TTF, *Innovation in Teacher Policy and Practice in Education Recovery*; Hargreaves.

60 TTF, *Innovation in Teacher Policy and Practice in Education Recovery*; Hargreaves.

This is particularly evident in tertiary education, where few women reach senior and leadership positions.[61] The presence of women in leadership positions can contribute to the changing of social and gender norms, including through the development of legislation and policies and through representation, which can positively impact girls' education.[62] More pathways to leadership are needed to improve representation at all levels of education.

Summary of discussions

The members of the Panel agreed that an enabling environment needs to be created for teachers to innovate, including by ensuring decent working conditions, professional autonomy and agency, and training and professional development that are conducive to positive and constructive innovation and collaboration. Some members noted that higher-education institutions do not prepare teachers to innovate or to be lifelong learners; that education systems are often too prescriptive or limit teacher autonomy and agency in practice; that teacher training institutions are too rigid in practice and pedagogical approaches; and that teachers' unions are not meaningfully involved in policymaking and teacher development in matters concerning innovation and leadership. Innovation can be supported by teacher training institutions by providing more opportunities for work-integrated learning for teacher trainees. Teachers require time, tools and trust to innovate. They need to have decision-making power both in the classroom in order to enable them to introduce innovative pedagogies and at the policy level to ensure that policy development reflects their interests and experiences. Teachers also need to have opportunities to participate in research and academic networks, which in turn requires that they enjoy academic freedom. Highlighting teacher innovations and organizing opportunities to share innovations are part of an enabling environment. Innovations should be put through trial processes, and if successful should be made

61 Victoria Galán-Muros, Mathias Bouckaert and Jaime Roser, "The Representation of Women in Academia and Higher Education Management Positions", Policy Brief (UNESCO, 2023).

62 UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020*.

known by all actors in the education sector. The teaching profession needs to be re-envisioned as a highly committed and collaborative profession in support of teacher innovation and leadership. Capacities for leadership need to be developed in order to better support innovation and learning, including through pathways to leadership that are clear and structured. School leadership has the responsibility to foster a collaborative environment for teachers. Developing networks and forums in which teachers can share best practices and learn from each other can support collaboration.

In many countries, career mobility for teachers is constrained. More opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles and responsibilities are needed, especially for female teachers, who are globally under-represented in leadership positions. Governments should identify the multiple obstacles that women face in entering and staying in leadership positions and should develop targeted policies to provide opportunities for female leadership. It is vital to also improve working conditions, work-life balance and childcare provisions so that leadership is compatible with family responsibilities, as well as to ensure a fair and transparent process for promotion and appointments into leadership positions. Also, when considering innovation, it is important to develop contextually relevant strategies, keeping in mind the availability of resources and local needs and priorities. The availability of funding impacts both effective leadership and possibilities to innovate, as demonstrated in contexts in which funding for schools is inadequate or is not received on time.

Technology and artificial intelligence offer new ways to innovate in teaching and learning. They have the potential to enhance training for teachers and support communities of practice. To capitalize on its positive potential, teachers must have access to technology and must be adequately prepared in its use. Ensuring connectivity for both teachers and learners is a prerequisite and should be supported by adequate public financing. Technology should be integrated into every subject; however, teachers should have the autonomy to determine how it is used in the classroom. Digital educational content for teaching and learning should not be left to the market but should be treated as a global public good, so that it is open and publicly accessible. Teachers and their representative organizations should be involved in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the use of artificial intelligence tools that are considered for use in education. Similarly, they should be involved in the development of any policies on the use of technology in education. Technology should not violate teachers' privacy and intellectual property or their professional autonomy or leadership. UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence[63] is a useful resource in this regard.

Technological innovation must also be integrated and balanced with other forms of innovation such as green and blue innovation, including by opening schools to communities and extending learning beyond the classroom into innovative learning environments such as oceans or other natural environments, which can foster emotional connectedness with nature.

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63 UNESCO, *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*, 2021.

▶ VI. Sustainability

Context and trends

Sustainability in education is understood as education systems that can function effectively and equitably; are accessible, including through the provision of free public education and the maintenance of an ample, qualified and diverse teaching workforce; and are able to be maintained over time. Given the current social, economic and environmental challenges, it also necessitates that education systems develop sustainability competencies for both teachers and students. These sustainability efforts must be part of a broader approach to implement system-wide change in order to ensure the realization of a more sustainable future.

The conclusions of an ILO 2021 technical meeting on the future of work in the education sector affirm that "[e]ducation is not a commodity; it is a fundamental human right, a public good and a public responsibility".[64] The growing presence of non-state actors in education is shifting the context in which education is provided as a public good. Changes in the role of the state in terms of both funding and provision, which result from the increasing demand for education at all levels as well as reductions in government expenditures on education, include the private provision of education, the private sector supply of education resources and various forms of public–private partnerships. Governments play an important role in developing and enforcing education standards to ensure accountability and quality, while in this changing context, non-state actors are increasingly shaping practices and policy directions.[65] Furthermore, in some contexts, the public funding of private schools and public–private partnerships in education are becoming more common, and by extension private institutions are becoming an increasingly significant site of employment for teachers.[66] Although non-state actors are playing a growing and important role in the provision of education, their presence can also undermine the principle of education as a public good. As such, efforts to promote sustainability in education, especially in support of the principles of quality and of equity, inclusion and diversity, require adequate and consistent government investment in order to sustain education as a public good and maintain its appeal to teachers and learners.

To maintain education as a public good and ensure the quality of education, sustaining the supply of qualified and motivated teachers is essential. The current teacher shortages challenge the possibility of providing a quality education for all. Addressing these shortages will require improving the material and symbolic conditions for teachers; eliminating the systemic barriers and biases that prevent many from entering and staying in the profession; and providing both adequate institutional resources to support teaching and sufficient infrastructure to meet the demand. It will also require developing and implementing workforce planning policies that ensure a sustained supply of teachers that is equitably distributed. Recruitment, retention and deployment strategies must be evidence-based and should account for both current and projected future needs. It is important to have access to up-to-date and accurate data on the existing teaching workforce. Education sector human resource information systems, such as the Teacher Management Information System and the EMIS, enable teacher workforce monitoring, including

64 ILO, *Conclusions of the Technical Meeting on the Future of Work in the Education Sector in the Context of Lifelong Learning for All, Skills and the Decent Work Agenda*, TMDWA/2021/7, 2021, para. 9.

65 Barbara Daviet, "Revisiting the Principle of Education as a Public Good", Education Research and Foresight Working Papers (UNESCO, 2016).

66 Canadian Union of Public Employees, "Sector Profile: Education", 28 September 2022.

in terms of teacher supply and shortages. Such systems allow for informed decision-making and effective and strategic workforce planning.[67] Involving teachers and their representatives in the development of any workforce planning policies is key to obtaining buy-in and ensuring effective implementation.

To become sustainable, education systems themselves should not only transform but also integrate education for sustainable development (ESD) into school curricula, teacher training and pedagogy and the learning environment. Climate change, biodiversity loss, the unsustainable use of resources and persistent poverty increase existing global inequities and threaten life on the planet. Climate change results in social and educational disruptions that disproportionately impact students, teachers and families who are already in disadvantaged situations. Natural disasters with connections to climate change can contribute to teacher shortages in affected communities due to population displacement and may also compromise education infrastructure if school buildings are damaged or used for alternative purposes in disaster areas. ESD supports students to develop the knowledge, skills, values and agency to adapt to, mitigate and reverse climate change, as well as to understand and address economic disparities and unsustainable consumption. As part of this, curricula must be reoriented to capture the impacts of climate change and other inequities on communities, the world and the most marginalized and disadvantaged in support of meaningful action.[68] To support learners to think and act in transformative ways, teachers themselves require the knowledge, skills and values needed to effectively impart ESD. This will require embedding ESD into teacher education, training and professional development, including by enabling a shift in the teacher's role from purveyor of knowledge to facilitator of learning. Policy frameworks at the national and international levels are also needed to support the acceptance and adoption of ESD.[69] Students and teachers are often not included in discussions on global inequities, including climate change, and their effects on education. How decisions are made at both the policy and school levels needs to be examined to ensure that decision-making reflects the principles of cooperation and collaboration. Involving students and teachers, as well as their representative organizations, is essential for reorienting education systems and learning environments in support of a more just, equitable and sustainable world.[70]

Summary of discussions

Adequate salaries, decent working conditions, job security, manageable workloads, formative assessments, autonomy and agency, access to training and development and involvement in decision-making are essential for the sustainability of the teaching profession. In rural and remote contexts, these conditions, in addition to adequate infrastructure and sanitation facilities and sufficient essential learning and teaching support materials, are vital. In crisis contexts, ensuring that teachers are paid their salaries is a priority. The use of underqualified individuals and the hiring of contract teachers as a solution to teacher shortages should be avoided as it erodes the teaching profession and negatively impacts the quality of education; instead, investments in highly qualified teachers on permanent employment contracts are needed. National commissions or other mechanisms should be established by governments to address teacher shortages and engage in workforce planning. Teachers and their representatives must be appreciated and respected by

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67 UNESCO and TTF, *Teacher Policy Development Guide*.

68 UNESCO, *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education*, 2021.

69 UNESCO, "ESD for 2030 Toolbox: Priority Action Areas".

70 UNESCO, *Reimagining Our Futures Together*.

education ministries, including through their involvement in decisions that impact the profession and the development of policies that prioritize teacher support, as well as through legislative protections. Legislation to support teachers should include the right to collective bargaining, which is crucial for teachers to protect their working conditions, workload and well-being. While communities and societies should ensure teacher accountability with respect to their commitment and quality of work, they must also acknowledge and celebrate teachers' achievements and contributions through awards and social recognition. Equitable access to qualified teachers must be ensured within and between countries, and international organizations should work with and support states to achieve progress in this direction. Sustainability requires that teachers be recruited from diverse social, economic, regional and linguistic backgrounds.

Education systems are vulnerable to various disruptions, including environmental crises, health crises, wars and political instabilities. These disruptions disproportionately impact vulnerable and marginalized communities. Technology can contribute to sustaining teaching and learning during such disruptions. Technological advances can support a more sustainable future; however, keeping up with technological advancements can be overwhelming for teachers. As such, investing in professional development programmes and quality digital educational resources so that teachers can enhance their digital skills and use technology effectively is essential. Technology can be used to develop virtual communities of practice in support of teacher collaboration on issues of sustainability and can also be used as an interactive tool to learn about sustainability.

Providing meaningful and ongoing professional development that equips teachers with the attitude, skills and knowledge to effectively teach sustainability, peace and democracy is crucial. Sustainability – including climate and ocean literacy, social justice and global citizenship – must be integrated into initial teacher training and must be framed as a lifelong learning endeavour. In the face of the current planetary crisis, these imperatives must be considered as cross-cutting and should be integrated across different subjects and grade areas, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches, which will require careful curriculum design and coordination as well as resources. Teachers must be supported and resourced to embed sustainability, including climate and ocean literacy, social justice and global citizenship, in their own teaching practices. ESD should be tailored to take into account the cultural and contextual backgrounds of diverse student populations. Sustainability efforts must emphasize the positive long-term effects for society at large, whereby teachers can guide learners in social justice and respect for diversity and prepare learners to be active and responsible global citizens. Experiential learning, including through field trips, outdoors education and community engagement, can provide opportunities for students to connect with real-world sustainability issues.

The collective shift towards a sustainable future can only be achieved through school collaborations with local businesses, non-governmental organizations and community organizations, which can provide access to resources, expertise and practical experiences. Education for sustainability can also be supported by collaborations between teachers, researchers and the social sector to develop evidence-based approaches to education and materials for school curricula. Collaborations at the international level can be pursued to share best practices, resources and experiences. Teacher representatives should also be involved in the promotion and support of sustainability for a more just and equitable future.

Adequate financing, highly prepared teachers and opportunities to expand the competencies of teachers are vital for sustaining public education. The commitment to publicly funded education should be reflected in the proportion of national incomes and public budgets allocated to education and should allow for increasing per capita investments in education. Adequate financing is particularly important for ensuring that the education sector is competitive enough to recruit qualified graduates into the profession. Public-sector wage-bill constraints and policy guidance from multilateral agencies, in particular the International Monetary Fund, should not be applied to the education sector as they undermine sustainability and exacerbate teacher shortages. Financial oversight, budget tracking and monitoring mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that education finances are being used equitably and effectively. Initiatives and activities for sustainability education should be prioritized in national education budgets.

Members of the panel

▶ Co-Chairs

H.E. Ms. Kersti Kaljulaid (Estonia)

Kersti Kaljulaid, former President of Estonia (2016-2021), is a prominent figure in Estonian and European politics. Her career includes roles as a Member of the European Court of Auditors, advisor to the Prime Minister, and in the energy and banking sectors. She played a key role in Estonia's digital transformation, was named in Forbes' 100 Most Powerful Women, and has advocated for women's and children's health globally.

H.E. Ms. Paula-Mae Weekes (Trinidad and Tobago)

Paula-Mae Weekes served as the first female President of Trinidad and Tobago (2018-2023) and has had a notable legal career. After being called to the bar in 1982, she practiced criminal law for 14 years, followed by a two-decade tenure in the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago, culminating as a Justice of Appeal. Weekes also served on the Turks and Caicos Appellate Court and is a respected judicial educator.

▶ Members

Ms. Ligia Deca (Romania)

Ligia Deca is Minister of Education of Romania. In this role she has passed new legislation on education in Romania. Previously she served as Presidential Adviser, during which she led the "Educated Romania" project. A former Head of the Bologna Secretariat, she has also contributed to the European Higher Education Area and is a published author in education policy.

Ms. Angelina Matsie Motshekga (South Africa)

Angelina Matsie Motshekga is Minister for Basic Education and has been a key figure in South African education policy in various educational and political capacities. Her contributions span from grassroots activism to high-level policy development, with a strong focus on women's development and educational reform.

Ms. Jutta Urpilainen (Finland/EU)

Jutta Urpilainen is European Commissioner for International Partnerships. She previously served as Finland's Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, Member of Finnish Parliament, and leader of the Social Democratic Party. She has been instrumental in promoting sustainable development and international cooperation, including through the advancement of education and youth agendas.

Mr. Jaime Perczyk (Argentina)

Jaime Perczyk is Rector of the National University of Hurlingham and former Minister of Education (2021-23) in Argentina. He has an extensive background in teaching and education policy, and his 25-year career has included various roles, from classroom teaching to policy formulation focusing on university education and social sciences.

Ms. Ida Fauziyah (Indonesia)

Ida Fauziyah is Indonesia's Minister of Manpower and has had a long involvement in education and politics. Her career includes teaching, legislative work, and women's advocacy. She has been recognized internationally for her efforts in promoting inclusive employment and women's rights.

Mr. Sebastian Berger (Austria)

Sebastian Berger is Executive Director of the Global Student Forum and has been a prominent advocate in student movements. His involvement includes roles in the European Students' Union and in United Nations education and academia groups, focusing on policies affecting students globally.

Mr. Gerhard F. Braun (Germany)

Gerhard F. Braun is a business leader and education advocate. He chaired the German Employers' Association Education Committee and was involved in various roles focusing on employment and education policy, with a strong commitment to linking education with the business sector.

Ms. Linda Darling-Hammond (United States of America)

Linda Darling-Hammond is Professor Emeritus at Stanford University and President of the Learning Policy Institute. Her work has substantially influenced education policy and practice, with a focus on equity and quality in education.

Ms. Manal Hdaife (Lebanon)

Manal Hdaife is a Lebanese education leader, a school principal and chair of the Education International Arab Countries Cross Regional Structure Committee. She is a dedicated advocate for teachers' rights and improving educational standards in Lebanon.

Ms. Susan Hopgood (Australia)

Susan Hopgood is President of Education International and former Federal Secretary of the Australian Education Union. She began her career as a mathematics teacher and has been a pivotal figure in advocating for teachers' rights and educational reform, both in Australia and internationally.

Mr. Tiago Pitta e Cunha (Portugal)

Tiago Pitta e Cunha is Chief Executive Officer of Oceano Azul Foundation and has been a global advocate for ocean governance and sustainability. His roles have spanned the UN, EU, and Portuguese government, focusing on maritime policy and environmental sustainability.

Mr. Mamadou Cellou Souaré (Guinea)

Mamadou Cellou Souaré is a Guinean educational entrepreneur and founder of the University of Nongo Conakry in 2007. He represents private universities on the Board of Guinea and serves as Vice-President of the General Confederation of Guinean Enterprises. Mr. Souaré is also the president of CRESUP, a conglomerate of private universities in Guinea.

Mr. Gorgui Sow (Senegal)

Gorgui Sow is an independent consultant from Senegal specializing in education policy and advocacy. He was the first regional coordinator of the African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA) and a board member of the Global Campaign for Education. Currently, he coordinates the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development's program for out-of-school children, focusing on basic education access and retention.

Mr. Mike Thiruman (Singapore)

Mike Thiruman is General Secretary of the Singapore Teachers' Union and has over 20 years of experience as a teacher-unionist and over 25 years in education research and teaching. He plays a key role in teacher professional development in Singapore, advocating for teacher agency and professionalism.

Ms. Denise Vaillant (Uruguay)

Denise Vaillant is the Dean at the ORT University Institute of Education in Uruguay and chairs the Joint ILO-UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel. A professor and consultant, she has authored numerous works on public policies and educational change.

Ms. Andria Zafirakou (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Andria Zafirakou, a UK-based author, school leader, and arts teacher, won the 2018 Global Teacher Prize for her innovative work in inclusive education. She founded Artists in Residence to advance arts education and holds titles such as "Culture Leader" from the World Economic Forum and an honorary degree from the University of Worcester.

▶ Ex-officio members

Mr. Gilbert F. Houngbo (ILO)

Gilbert F. Houngbo was elected Director-General of the ILO in 2022. Before this role, he served as the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development from 2017 to 2022. He also held the position of Prime Minister of Togo from 2008 to 2012. Prior to this, he held various posts at the UNDP, including Chief of Staff, Assistant Secretary-General, and Regional Director for Africa following several years in the private sector.

Ms. Audrey Azoulay (UNESCO)

Audrey Azoulay has been Director-General of UNESCO since 2017. Under her mandate, the Organization launched new transformative programs for the education of girls and women, for environmental education and digital education. In 2020, she created the Global Education Coalition which supports education professionals in crisis situations. She is the former French Minister of Culture.

Mr. Leonardo Garnier (UN)

Leonardo Garnier was the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Transforming Education and is currently a lecturer at the University of Costa Rica. He previously served as Costa Rica's Minister of Planning and Economic Policy, and Minister of Education, and has published extensively on development and education topics.

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The High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession was established by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres following the Transforming Education Summit held in 2022. It was tasked with setting out a clear plan of action on how the teaching profession can be supported and transformed to play its essential role in creating a better world.

The Panel was co-chaired by Kersti Kaljulaid, former President of Estonia, and Paula-Mae Weekes, former President of Trinidad and Tobago. Supported by a joint International Labour Organization (ILO)/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) secretariat, the 18-member Panel drew on expertise from ministries of education and labour, employers' organizations, teachers' unions, teachers, students, civil society and academia.

This document presents the Recommendations of the Panel and a summary of its deliberations.

ilo.org/global/high-level-panel-on-teaching-profession