



G20

SOUTH AFRICA 2025



G20 Education Ministers' Meeting **Chairs' Statement**

Skukuza, Mpumalanga, South Africa, 22 October 2025

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Introduction

The Ministers of Education from G20 member and guest countries, and international organisations, gathered in Skukuza, South Africa, on 22 October 2025, to reaffirm the vital role of safe, inclusive, equitable and quality education as a human right. The meeting supported a clear vision of education and training for all as the cornerstone of solidarity, equality, and sustainability in line with the theme of the South Africa's G20 Presidency.

The meeting recognised the necessity of building resilient education systems supported by education and training pathways and educator continuing professional development, focused on the three priorities of the Education Working Group (EdWG): (i) Quality foundational learning: The role of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to improve the quality of foundational learning (ii) Mutual Recognition of Qualifications and Skills in a global context, and (iii) Education professional development for a changing world.

The discussions on these priority areas were substantive and inclusive, involving a vast variety of stakeholders. Although we were unable to find consensus on the Ministerial Declaration, the Presidency has chosen to release a four-volume compendium reflecting on the work of the G20 EdWG, covering the role ECCE in improving the quality of foundational learning, Mutual Recognition of Qualifications and Skills in a Global Context and Education Professional Development for a Changing World.

These priorities of the EdWG broadly align with our shared commitment to the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and support the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063.

The following summary of the discussions, which reflects an agreement of the majority of G20 member and guest countries is, therefore, released under the Chairs' responsibility and issued without prejudice to the national positions of G20 member and guest countries.

Summary

The meeting supported advancing discussions on expanding access to quality education and training through promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all e.g. peer learning, professional learning communities, with particular attention to persons with special educational needs and those in vulnerable situations;

The meeting encouraged improving financing for educational development, ensuring that quality education is made available for all, subject to national or domestic priorities and budgeting process. This includes public funds from each G20 member country, the protection of traditional forms of development finance and embracing innovative financing models leading to quality learning outcomes;

Priority 1: Quality foundational learning: The role of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to improve the quality of foundational learning.

The meeting regarded equitable access to quality ECCE for all children regardless of their background as a vital investment for a country's social and economic future and access to quality ECCE, taking into account children's rights, including to reach their full potential and development, that supports children's early learning and development, while recognising that different countries may adopt varying approaches to ECCE based on their unique contexts and priorities. Thus, the meeting advocated for a comprehensive approach to ECCE policy development and implementation that engages both government and society, including shared values and cultures;

The meeting emphasised the urgent need to accelerate quality learning outcomes, with focused attention on children's wellbeing, social and emotional development, and foundational learning, especially literacy and numeracy through evidence-based, scalable, inclusive interventions that take into account gender and are child-centred ensuring minimum standards and educational pathways;

The meeting recognised the importance of diverse pathways to develop a skilled and increasingly professionalised ECCE workforce, able to support all children especially those living with disabilities. This takes into consideration the varied backgrounds and contexts of practitioners, especially in developing countries where many lack formal qualifications, and benefit from the validation of their skills and the recognition of prior learning. Enhancing governance, improving working conditions and expanding continuous professional development are critical elements in building a well-prepared professional workforce that is valued and capable of delivering quality ECCE;

The meeting acknowledged that access to quality ECCE is a vital component of the interconnectedness among the care economy, where women undertake much of the paid and unpaid care work including domestic work. The meeting recognised that gender imbalance contributes to persistent decent work deficits, including disparity in remuneration, access to training, and professional development opportunities for women within the sector. The Tashkent Declaration underscores the importance of valuing ECCE personnel and addressing inequality to advance gender equality and empowerment, particularly women's economic empowerment and inclusive social and economic development.

Priority 2: Mutual Recognition of Qualifications and Skills in a Global Context

The meeting supported enhancing implementation and cohesion of the existing regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications, as well as the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, and promoting cooperation among signatory countries, and processes facilitated through the 2025-27 work plan for the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education where appropriate and subject to national or domestic standards, frameworks and processes;

The meeting recognised the universal value of education and vocational training, as well as lifelong learning as fundamental enablers of human development, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for meaningful participation in evolving labour markets. The meeting further acknowledged its transformative nature that provides a wide array of equitable, inclusive, social, cultural, and economic development, which enables countries to build highly skilled populations who can obtain the necessary knowledge, competencies and qualifications required for employment, decent work, career advancement, personal development and recognition of professional development;

The meeting acknowledged that targeted mobility may attract talent where needed. Proactive, inclusive and evidence-based policies, particularly in sectors experiencing critical skills shortages or where domestic skills routes have been fully utilised, should ensure the right balance between sustainable labour mobility, worker protection, equitable access to higher education, skills development, research and employment opportunities. Such evidence-based policies should recognise links between labour mobility and skills development, while reinforcing the importance of fair, transparent, and mutually beneficial systems for the recognition of qualifications and competencies

across borders, supported by competent authorities and respectful of national or domestic regulations;

The meeting acknowledged the importance of cooperation and sharing best practices and knowledge amongst the G20 member and guest countries to foster a shared understanding of emerging trends in qualifications and skills recognition and development, as well as education, vocational training, quality assurance, and qualifications frameworks and/or systems. This includes the potential opportunities and challenges of online learning, transnational education, artificial intelligence, digitisation and the exploration of ways to incorporate micro-credentials through applicable national and regional qualifications frameworks and/or systems.

Priority 3: Education Professional Development for a Changing World

The meeting recognised that learners deserve access to quality teaching, and learning environments, supported by professional educators who engage in continuing professional development;

The meeting recognised the global gap, particularly for those in vulnerable situations, in the availability of qualified educators and support for effective governance, workforce planning, recruitment, deployment and incentives for long term careers in teaching which are critical to: (i) achieving effective pupil-educator ratios; (ii) promoting learning outcomes; and (iii) increasing the attractiveness of the teaching profession. Educators' retention is anchored on addressing job satisfaction, improving teacher well-being, career progression, improved working conditions, and economic competitiveness;

The meeting recognised that developing education professionals for the 21st century involves integrating educators' abilities to equip learners for an evolving society. It further emphasised the necessity to equip educators with digital, pedagogical, creative thinking, social and emotional skills while also addressing issues related to inclusive digital access, technology infrastructure, and connectivity, to overcome the digital divides for all;

The meeting recognised that the safety and well-being of educators is essential for delivering effective teaching and ensuring quality education for all. It underscored the importance of strengthening the central role of resilient, welcoming, and inclusive school environments in promoting students and educators' safety and wellbeing and combating academic distress, dropout and improve conditions of safety, security and dignified spaces.

Global Cooperation and partnerships

The meeting recognised the need for inclusive, multi-stakeholder dialogue, enhanced international cooperation, and coherent policy development to ensure that emerging trends in education and skills recognition support equal access to quality education, training, and lifelong learning opportunities;

The meeting further recognised the importance of innovative and sustainable investments and international cooperation among countries, development financing institutions, and the private sector to promote quality education and training;

The meeting encouraged all G20 member countries, guest countries, international organisations, and other relevant stakeholders to enhance international cooperation in supporting the efforts of developing countries towards the realisation of the full potential of education and training for sustainable development;

The meeting acknowledged the Nelson Mandela Bay G20 Youth Target to reduce the rate of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) among 15–29-year-olds by a further 5% by 2030. The three priorities of the EdWG will contribute positively to achieving the target;

The meeting reaffirmed the commitments made in the 2024 Fortaleza Declaration, not only as a pathway to achieving SDG 4 through multi-sectoral actions, but also as a shared pledge to place education at the centre of global cooperation and development financing, especially among G20 members.

Way Forward

The meeting: (i) supported establishing resource delivery mechanisms to ensure equitable access to inclusive and contextually relevant quality ECCE services for all children, prioritising those in vulnerable situations; (ii) acknowledged the global financing gap to support quality, accessible and affordable ECCE for children and families;

The meeting further supported: (i) the steps taken towards developing comprehensive human resource strategies by employers in the ECCE sector to elevate the working conditions of the ECCE educators workforce, including expanded training and qualification pathways with accessible entry points, improved in-service development opportunities and continuing professional development; and (ii) strengthening ECCE

data collection, monitoring and evaluation systems to improve inclusive pedagogy, curricula, and quality assurance frameworks;

The meeting recognised the importance of cooperation in the field of qualifications recognition to facilitate the learning mobility and the flow of students, graduates, academics, and workers, exploring ways to incorporate micro-credentials validated skills, and professional practice, established by the relevant authorities to enhance mobility. It further acknowledged the importance of sharing common mechanisms for the recognition of qualifications and validated skills, including through micro-credentialing, where appropriate and in accordance with national or domestic contexts, qualifications frameworks and recognition systems;

The meeting acknowledged the importance of working towards the ratification of the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, as well as relevant regional conventions. This will promote international mobility, and strengthen communication and cooperation on fair, timely, transparent, and non-discriminatory recognition procedures, as well as on quality assurance and academic integrity in higher education at a global level where appropriate in line with national or domestic context;

The meeting committed to ongoing and continued collaboration among G20 member and guest countries, and international organisations to promote the professional development of educational professionals for solidarity, equality, and sustainability with an appropriate methodology that meets the reality of these professionals. This includes sharing inclusive, accessible, and contextually relevant best practices to support new educators and those working with learners in vulnerable situations or in rural and traditional communities, including learners with varied learning needs;

The meeting supported building a community-responsive education workforce through recruitment, skills development and vocational training aligned with system needs, including addressing geographic, linguistic, technological, digital, and subject-area shortages;

The meeting affirmed that inclusive digital transformation is an essential tool to build future-ready education systems and emphasize its role in enhancing foundational learning, enabling recognition of qualifications through digital credentials and systems, and enhancing educators' professional development through technology-driven training and infrastructure;

Member and guest countries will continue to advance the three priorities of the 2025 South African Presidency under the G20 Education Track in the spirit of its theme: educational professionals for solidarity, equality, and sustainability;

The meeting reaffirmed its commitment, as member states, and guest countries to the importance of the Education Working Group and our dedication to educator professional development in building resilient, future-ready education and training systems;

The meeting extended its gratitude to the South African Presidency for its leadership in 2025 and look forward to continuing engagements in 2026 and beyond, under the guidance of future G20 Presidencies, as we continue to highlight the role of education in advancing sustainable economic growth and innovation.