



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
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Third International Congress on  
Technical and Vocational Education and Training  
Shanghai, People's Republic of China, 14-16 May 2012

# SHANGHAI CONSENSUS

# Transforming

Technical and Vocational Education and Training



Building skills  
for work and life

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# **SHANGHAI CONSENSUS**

Recommendations of the  
Third International Congress on  
Technical and Vocational Education and Training  
'Transforming TVET: Building skills for work and life'

Shanghai, People's Republic of China

14 to 16 May 2012

## PREAMBLE

We, the participants in the Third International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), met in Shanghai, People's Republic of China, from 14 to 16 May 2012, and reviewed the major trends and policy developments in TVET since the Second International Congress held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in 1999. We discussed challenges faced by TVET systems and explored appropriate responses aimed at building a better understanding of the contribution of TVET to sustainable development and at defining strategic directions for cooperation among countries and with the international community to support TVET for all, within the framework of the overall efforts in favour of access, inclusion and equity, education for sustainable development and a culture of peace. We express our sincere gratitude to the Government of the People's Republic of China for hosting the Congress and for their warm welcome and generous hospitality,

**RECALLING** the recommendations of the International Congress on the Development and Improvement of Technical and Vocational Education (Berlin, 1987), the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989), the Recommendations of the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education (Seoul, 1999), the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (2001), the Bonn Declaration on Learning for Work, Citizenship and Sustainability (2004), the Bonn Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development (2009), the G20 Action Plan on Development (Seoul, 2010), the Declaration of the Least Developed Countries' (LDCs') Ministerial Meeting at the 13th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Doha, April 2012), the outcomes of the two regional consultations organized in preparation for the Shanghai Congress (Oman Declaration and Montego Bay Declaration) and the outcomes of the 2012 triennale of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA),

**STRESSING** that TVET is expected to contribute actively to the achievement of the Education for All (EFA) goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the target date of 2015 approaches, and that its importance is being increasingly recognized on the threshold of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (20-22 June 2012) and in the international discussions on the post-2015 international education and development agendas,

**NOTING** the significant achievements made in developing national TVET policies and improving coordination since the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, in particular regarding the articulation between education and training and the role of TVET in lifelong learning,

**ALSO NOTING** the ongoing conceptual debate around the definition of TVET, including the use of other terms such as “technical and vocational skills development (TVSD)”,

**RECOGNIZING** the new development and societal challenges linked to the emergence of knowledge societies, the rapid spread of information and communication technologies, the effects of the global financial crisis and the implications of climate change and demographic trends, and the emergence of new and often higher-level TVET skills,

**ALSO RECOGNIZING** that TVET can play an active role in addressing concerns related to the context, such as unfavourable socio-economic conditions including under-employment and unemployment – in particular of young people and women – poverty and deprivation, urban-rural disparities, food insecurity and limited access to health services, the particular challenges faced by the LDCs, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and countries affected by conflict and disaster,

**BEARING IN MIND** the role of TVET in promoting cultural diversity and in ensuring the transmission of local knowledge and skills between generations, thus fostering human-centred development, and the need to consider TVET in relation to the specific country context, while recognizing its universal dimension,

**RECOMMEND** that governments and other TVET stakeholders in UNESCO's Member States consider implementing the following actions in response to the challenges identified during the Congress:

## 1. Enhancing relevance of TVET

- Update and develop mechanisms and tools to identify current and future skills needs, to ensure the relevance of TVET programmes to rapidly-changing labour markets, economies and societies
- Include education for 'green' economies and 'green' societies as a part of TVET qualifications and programmes, and advance the 'greening TVET' agenda towards low carbon and climate-resilient growth and development
- Promote the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in TVET to reflect the transformations taking place in the workplace and in society at large
- Pay particular attention to professions suffering from a deficit of skilled personnel
- Give more consideration to local needs and demands
- Develop frameworks and incentive mechanisms to promote the active involvement of relevant stakeholders in planning, governance, curriculum, qualifications development and assessment, as well as school-enterprise cooperation and workplace learning

## 2. Expanding access and improving quality and equity

- Develop effective policies aimed at improving teaching and learning processes. Specifically, develop policies and frameworks for professionalizing TVET staff, and develop and strengthen teaching standards for all levels
- Make efforts to enhance quality across the various types of TVET and in the multiple settings where it takes place, including through the definition of quality standards and benchmarks
- Promote cross-cutting skills such as problem-solving and critical-thinking, entrepreneurial skills and the capacity to adapt behaviour, in order to equip learners with skills for sustainable living and livelihoods
- Take innovative measures to provide quality and inclusive TVET, especially to disadvantaged groups including learners with disabilities, marginalized and rural populations, migrants and those in situations affected by conflict and disaster
- Improve gender equality by promoting equal access of females and males to TVET programmes, particularly in fields where there is strong labour market demand, and by ensuring that TVET curricula and materials avoid stereotyping by gender

## 3. Adapting qualifications and developing pathways

- Support flexible pathways and the accumulation, recognition and transfer of individual learning through transparent, well-articulated outcome-based qualifications systems; reliable measures for assessment, recognition and validation of qualifications, including at the international level; exchange



of information and development of trust; and partnerships among all relevant stakeholders. Quality assurance mechanisms should be integrated into all parts of the qualifications system

- Link TVET with general education to ensure flexible pathways at all levels and facilitate the progression of TVET learners to higher levels of education as part of lifelong learning strategies. Ensure that all pathways provide young people with skills that are relevant to the labour market, along with good levels of literacy and numeracy and transferable skills, values and attitudes
- Develop career guidance systems to assist learners in choosing appropriate pathways, including by provision of up-to-date labour market information and self-assessment tools to identify aptitudes and interests, and promote the acquisition of career management skills

#### **4. Improving the evidence base**

- Reinforce frameworks and instruments to improve collection of quantitative and qualitative evidence relevant to the formulation of the national policy agenda, including data on teachers and trainers, and its monitoring and evaluation. This should include the development of tools to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of policies
- Enhance national capacities to use evidence effectively in the policy cycle, including the capacity of social partners and civil society to contribute to this process
- Strengthen research into TVET, with a view to developing the information base and promoting more evidence-based policy-making
- Ensure coherence between national data collection and international standards and initiatives

## 5. Strengthening governance and expanding partnerships

- Create, as appropriate, approaches and frameworks that involve representatives of enterprises, workers, learners and civil society, including young people
- Develop partnerships for TVET in the framework of regional cooperation initiatives and areas

## 6. Increasing investment in TVET and diversifying financing

- Recognize TVET as an investment in human capital that produces a high return benefiting a broad range of actors including individuals, enterprises and the state, and give it high priority
- Diversify sources of funding by involving all stakeholders, in particular through the use of appropriate incentive mechanisms
- Promote targeted funding schemes to facilitate access of disadvantaged groups to TVET and to jobs, including 'green' jobs

## 7. Advocating for TVET

- Underline the essential role that TVET plays in promoting economic prosperity and social cohesion
- Raise the public profile and attractiveness of TVET among learners, families and all other stakeholders, including through the media, and inform them on the possibilities for progression, employment and self-fulfillment that TVET can offer;

**RECOGNIZE** that the active engagement of the international community, including multi- and bilateral actors as well as private institutions and civil society, is of vital importance to addressing the policy challenges for TVET, and **RECOMMEND** that it:

- Recognize the essential role played by TVET in tackling youth unemployment and underemployment
- Ensure better visibility and support for TVET as an integral part of the post-2015 international education and sustainable development agendas
- Give particular priority to the development of research and analysis to provide a valid and robust evidence-based foundation for policy-making and the efficient and fair allocation and steering of resources
- Align international cooperation with national needs in TVET and cross-sectoral strategies to enhance ownership of development programmes and encourage further support in this area
- Give special priority to LDCs, SIDS and countries affected by conflict and disaster
- Draw concerted attention to Middle Income Countries (MICs), in view of the particular challenges they are facing
- Provide adequate platforms for international exchange on policies, instruments and approaches, hence supporting and benefitting from South-South and North-South-South cooperation;

**INVITE** the Director-General of UNESCO to seek to implement the following actions:

- Facilitate the debate on the place of TVET and skills for the world of work in the post-2015 international education and development agendas, drawing lessons from the implementation of UNESCO's Strategy for TVET (2010-2015)
- Strengthen the role of TVET in holistic and inclusive human development
- Collect and disseminate evidence demonstrating the multiple and diverse policy approaches for transforming and expanding TVET, using the UNESCO-UNEVOC Network and UNESCO Chairs active in the field
- Expand and enhance the capacities of the UNEVOC Network to play a key role in developing the capacities of decision-makers and practitioners, and facilitate the involvement of all stakeholders
- Consider the relevance and currency of UNESCO's Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989) and the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (2001), with a view to the possible development of new or revised normative instruments adapted to a changing world
- In consultation with Member States and other concerned organizations, explore the possibility of setting up an international task force to develop international guidelines on quality assurance for the recognition of qualifications, based on learning outcomes, and identify a set of world reference levels, to facilitate the international comparison and recognition of TVET qualifications

- Building on the work already undertaken by the Interagency Group on TVET, in particular the Working Group on Indicators, and on the initiatives of the Human Resources Development Pillar of the G20 Multi-Year Action Plan on Development, provide, with the technical support of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the basis for developing cross-national statistical frameworks and data platforms for both regional and global monitoring
- Further expand UNESCO's cooperation with relevant United Nations and multilateral partners, as well as with regional development banks and organizations, including through strengthening the Organization's engagement in the Inter-Agency Group on TVET and its Working Groups
- Undertake appropriate regional and international follow-up actions. Acting in cooperation with development partners active in this field, build on and extend the outreach of the Shanghai Consensus.



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