



SADC Policy Framework on Care and Support for Teaching and Learning

November 2015

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Abbreviations

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AU	African Union
CSTL	Care and Support for Teaching and Learning
EFA	Education For All
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
OVCY	Orphans, Vulnerable Children and Youth
PSS	Psychosocial support
RISDP	Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC OVCY	SADC Strategic Framework and Programme of Action: Comprehensive Care and Support for OVCY

Definition of Terms

Barriers to education: factors, whether social, economic, cultural, pedagogic or other, that impede children's educational outcomes

Complementary services: essential priority services that are necessary for the effective realisation of educational outcomes, the responsibility for delivery of which rests with non-education sectors

Comprehensive response: an intervention or effort that meets the complete set of basic needs or defined minimum standards across multiple services, and that addresses the survival, development, protection and participation rights of children and youth, while addressing vulnerability

Core services: essential priority services that are necessary for the effective realisation of educational outcomes, the responsibility for delivery of which rests with the education sector

Holistic approach: a procedure for ensuring that different options or strategies are considered and applied flexibly in appropriate combinations that ensure comprehensive or optimal fulfilment of the wellbeing and development of the child

Policy harmonisation: a process of facilitating the adoption of similar policy directions across Member States, taking into account differences in Member States

Sustainability: the ability of implementing actors to continue human development efforts to achieve lasting improvement on the lives of children, youth and their families/carers and communities, and without causing any harm or compromising their wellbeing and that of others in the present or the future

Sectors: unless otherwise specified, both government and non-government role-players providing similar sets of services and support

(For example, the "health sector" refers to those providing health services and support.)

Vulnerability: a state of high risk of deprivation or, according to the World Bank, "an expected welfare loss above a socially accepted norm, which results from risky or uncertain events and the lack of appropriate risk-management instruments"

Section 1: Introduction

Universal access to quality education is key to attaining the vision of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to improve economic growth and development, alleviate poverty and enhance the quality of life of the people in the region, to support the socially disadvantaged through deeper regional cooperation and integration, and to achieve political stability, regional peace and security.

In order to fulfil its educational obligations, SADC is committed to implementing the global Education For All (EFA) targets and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and continental protocols and frameworks, such as the *African Union Second Decade of Education Plan of Action* and the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*. At regional level, the instruments that guide provision of education include:

- The SADC Treaty (1992)
- The *Protocol on Education and Training* (1999)
- The SADC *Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP)* (2003)
- The SADC *Protocol on Gender and Development* (2008)
- The SADC *Gender Policy* (2009)

In the SADC *Protocol on Education and Training*, Member States committed themselves to acting together as a community to realise the right to education for all people in the region, through the progressive development of education laws, policies and programmes. One area of focus is on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged sectors of the population. To address these needs, Member States require an integrated education agenda to harmonise their respective education and training policies and programmes. This is recognised as such in the *RISDP*, which prioritises implementation of the SADC *Protocol on Education and Training*.

SADC Member States have further committed to pursue the attainment of their collective education vision through a process of **policy harmonisation**. Policy harmonisation is a process aimed at ensuring comparability and standardisation of Member State's responses to common regional objectives and barriers to realisation thereof, as well as compliance with regional standards and principles. More specifically, Member States have agreed to the development and implementation of comparable and appropriate education policies and strategies to address common regional educational barriers and achieve common educational goals.

This SADC *Policy Framework on Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL)* has been developed to support Member States to strengthen and harmonise

their education policies and programmes so that they may ensure comparable and sustainable care and support for teaching and learning of vulnerable learners throughout the region. The formulation of the *Policy Framework* has been informed by and draws on the history and shared wisdom of Member States, a number of which have already taken steps towards systematisation of care and support for teaching and learning. The *Framework* seeks to formulate a “road map” for future action by Member States that draws on their past successes and the challenges that have promoted or inhibited care and support in the region; it provides a platform for future development of policies and laws premised on Member States learning from each other, emulating successes that have already been achieved, and avoiding challenges that have beset previous initiatives. In so doing, the *Framework* aims to act as catalyst for the development of a common education agenda, framed by a set of harmonised education policies across the SADC region. At the same time, the *Framework* recognises that the region is not homogenous, and it is formulated so as to allow for the development of policies suited to the specific needs of each Member State, while still securing similar overall outcomes.

This *SADC Policy Framework on CSTL* provides a basis for future action to be taken by Ministries of Education in promoting, protecting and fulfilling the right of all children to education. In particular, the *Framework* elaborates on the *SADC Minimum Package of Services for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children and Youth (OVY)* by highlighting the basic minimum service delivery priorities required for effective teaching and learning in the SADC region.

Crucially, the *Policy Framework* recognises the need for a **holistic approach** to education, in which the education sector facilitates the provision of comprehensive care and support services for learners and teachers as a *complement* to its traditional educational mandate/services.

This approach has been endorsed as key to effective service delivery, particularly for vulnerable children, by SADC Ministers of Education, as well as those responsible for vulnerable children, youth, health, and HIV and AIDS. This is articulated in the *Strategic Framework and Programme of Action 2008-2015: Comprehensive Care and Support for Orphans*, which was developed to highlight the basic services required for vulnerable children and youth in SADC, and to indicate how they can be provided in a holistic and comprehensive manner. Education and vocational skills are among the six core service areas of the Minimum Package of Services.

Section 2: Status of education in the region

Children across the SADC region face similar **barriers to education** that often co-occur among especially vulnerable groups of children, thus aggravating their educational exclusion. These are depicted in the diagram below.

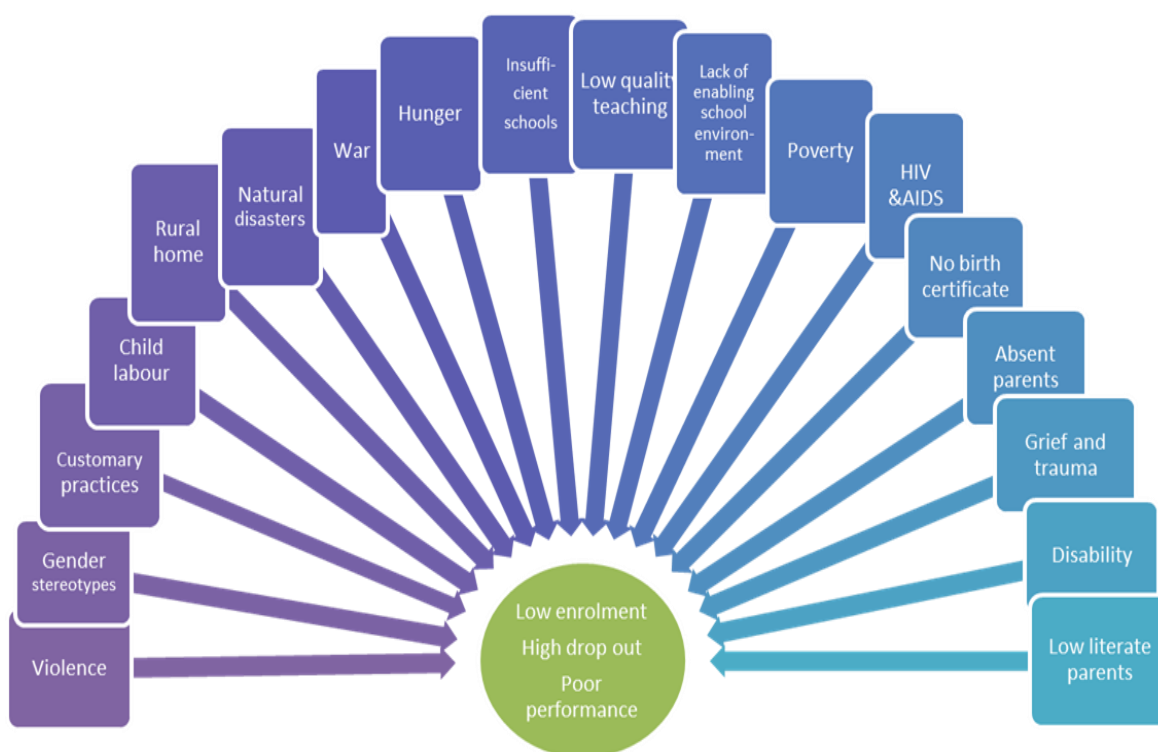


FIGURE 1: BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

The impact of these barriers affect enrolment, retention and success in school.¹

2.1 Enrolment

Despite the growing regional and international trend recognising pre-school as integral component of the basic education agenda, pre-school attendance rates are low. Although there is wide variation between Member States, according to statistics supplied by UNESCO in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011*, the average enrolment rate for the region is 41 per cent.

Net enrolment rates at primary school improved to an average of about 85 per cent (UNESCO, 2011), but progression through the primary grades and primary school completion remain key challenges in ensuring universal primary education.

¹ The key educational challenges enumerated below are drawn chiefly from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009, 2011; and UNICEF, *State of the World's Children 2010*, cited in the *AU Outlook on Education Report, 2012*, and produced by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Working Group on Education Management and Policy Support and the SADC Secretariat. Other sources summarising the status of education systems in the region are listed in Section 8: References, below.

Secondary enrolment rates are significantly lower than those for primary enrolment. The average regional secondary enrolment rate is 40 per cent, which is less than half the primary net enrolment rate (UNESCO, 2011).

2.2 Retention

Not all learners who enrol attend school regularly, and many drop out. At primary school level, more than 20 per cent of children do not complete their education (UNESCO, 2011).

The discrepancy (see above) between the 85 per cent net enrolment rate at primary school and the average secondary enrolment rate of 40 per cent indicates high drop-out between primary and secondary levels. UNESCO reports that in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, almost 20 million adolescents of lower secondary age are out of school.

Secondary school completion rates are also lower than at primary level. In the SADC region, three-quarters of the Member States have secondary completion rates lower than 40 per cent (UNESCO, 2011). For many Member States, secondary completion rates are lower for girls than boys.

2.3 Quality

Learners' success in school is in part dependent on the quality of the education system, and trends in grade repetition rates and low literacy and numeracy skills indicate the need for improved quality of teaching and learning. While a number of Member States have seen improvement in the last decade, in six Member States the average rate of repetition at primary school remains higher than 10 per cent. The 2007 Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) III study found that more than half of the Grade 6 children in the countries participating in the research had repeated a grade at least once.

Many children in the SADC region do not acquire basic knowledge and skills in primary school. Country-specific studies show that in a number of Member States, numeracy and literacy levels in Grades 2 to 6 are extremely low. According to SACMEQ data, only between 12 and 40 per cent of children in Grades 2 to 6 have grade-appropriate literacy and numeracy skills.

2.4 Inequity

The burden of poor educational enrolment, retention and outcomes is not shared equally amongst all children. The overwhelming majority of children who are excluded from school and/or perform poorly are economically and/or socially marginalised.

In particular, children in the following, often overlapping, categories are more likely than others to experience limited access to education, erratic school attendance and sub-optimal outcomes: children living in poverty; girls; those living in rural areas; children affected by HIV and AIDS; those with disabilities; children with a home language different to the official language of instruction; children living in conflict-affected countries; children deprived of pre-school education; children who enter the school system later than at the appropriate starting age.

2.4.1 Children in poverty

Poverty is the underlying cause of the **vulnerability** of most children. It creates both direct and indirect barriers to education. According to UNICEF's 2011 *State of the World's Children Report*, 70 per cent of the population in the SADC region live below the poverty line of US\$1.25 per day. Those living in poverty are less likely than others to enrol and remain at school. Poverty is also linked to early drop-out and poor educational outcomes.

The immediate barriers are school-associated costs, such as tuition fees, teacher salary-contributions, registrations and exam fees, along with other costs such as uniforms and transport. In addition, poverty underlies many other barriers to development that affect education, including lack of access to birth registration, health care, water and sanitation, and food and nutrition, as well as poor-quality teaching and learning infrastructure and materials. Moreover, poverty is often linked to risky behaviour such as child labour, child marriage and transactional sex—behaviour that impacts negatively on children's educational opportunities.

2.4.2 Girl children

Although gender parity has largely been achieved in learner enrolments at primary and, to a lesser extent, secondary levels, the same degree of equity is not evident in the case of retention rates and educational outcomes. When gender combines with other factors such as poverty and rural geography, the access, enrolment and achievement ratios for girls are considerably lower than for boys. For girls, the risks to their educational outcomes are associated with factors such as gender stereotypes, early marriage, teenage pregnancy and sexual abuse.

2.4.3 Rural children

As documented in 2009 by UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, more than 60 per cent of the population in SADC Member States live in rural areas. Children in these areas face a significantly higher risk than their urban counterparts of being excluded from education. In a number of Member States, the percentage of urban versus rural children enrolled at schools differs by between 5 and 20 per cent.

In rural areas, geography can intersect with gender, poverty and its associated factors, child labour and child marriages, to impact negatively on the number of years spent at school, especially for girls. For instance, in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010*, UNESCO states that in one SADC Member State, while 25.4 per cent of children have less than four years' education, this number rises by 31.6 percentage points to 57 per cent for rural girls from the poorest quintile.

Poverty, gender inequality and lack of child protection are worse in rural areas than in urban settings. Hunger and malnutrition are also more prevalent. UNICEF's 2011 *State of the World's Children Report* documents that children in rural areas are 1.7 times more likely to be underweight than their urban counterparts. UNICEF also notes that child protection statistics are worse in rural areas, where child labour, especially amongst girls, is higher, and where almost twice as many rural girls marry before the age of 18.

2.4.4 Children affected by HIV and AIDS

Southern Africa is the epicentre of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, having exceptionally high infection rates among both adults and children. Women and girls bear the brunt of the pandemic, with their infection rates being between 1.8 and 5.5 times higher than those for males of similar age. Life expectancy has declined in many Member States, in some instances decreasing from approximately 60 in 1990, to 45 in 2009. A further consequence of the pandemic, according UNICEF's *State of the World's Children 2011* report, is that the number of orphans in the region has burgeoned to more than 19 million.

In addition to the other impacts of orphaning and/or parental illness, a child's loss of parental support and supervision is especially harmful to their educational outcomes. Children who lose one or both parents are at least 12 per cent less likely to be in school and more likely to be working over 40 hours a week. Moreover, orphans are less likely than other children to be at the correct level of education. Further complications arise in the form of stigma and discrimination. These factors remain a reality in schools in the region, and contribute to poor enrolment, retention and outcomes.

2.4.5 Children with disabilities

In its 2011 *Global Education Digest*, UNESCO describes disability as "one of the least visible but most potent factors in educational marginalization." Children with disabilities are disproportionately represented in the out-of-school population. In certain Member States, having a disability doubles the probability that the child will never have attended school; in other cases, only small proportions of learners with disabilities are enrolled at school. The challenge is greater in rural areas and among

children living in poverty, where the numbers of affected children, as well as the severity of the disabilities, tend to be higher.

2.4.6 Children with different languages

A wide range of languages is in use across SADC Member States. Many children who speak a home language other than the official language(s) find themselves socially and economically marginalised. This situation increases the risk of early drop-out and poorer educational outcomes.

2.4.7 Children in conflict-affected countries

War and political conflict have a massive impact on children's educational opportunities, with a variety of factors serving to exclude children from schooling. These range from violence and trauma to the dissolution of families, the destruction of schools and the under-servicing of communities. In addition to the difficulty of drawing these highly marginalised children back into the system, conflict-affected Member States face resource-constraints in that, for instance, development partners will typically have invested less external aid in them than in unaffected countries.

2.4.8 Younger children

The first EFA goal that Member States have committed to realising is the expansion of access to early childhood education (pre-primary education) and improvement in the quality thereof, especially for the most marginalised children. Most SADC Member States do not have a strong track record in ensuring or expanding access to pre-primary education. UNESCO's 2010 *EFA Global Monitoring Report* documents that pre-primary enrolment rates range from two per cent in Zambia, to 25 per cent in Lesotho, to 100 per cent in the Seychelles.

While the average enrolment rate for pre-primary education is approximately 41 per cent (for those Member States for which statistics are available), this figure masks the inequity of access for children in the poorest households. This intervention (which has a unique capacity to overcome poverty-linked barriers to access, retention and performance at primary and secondary education levels) is inaccessible to those most in need of it—the poorest children in the region. For example, according to UNESCO's 2010 *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, children in the poorest households in Zambia are twelve times less likely to attend pre-school than their wealthier counterparts. This is even the case for children in Member States with lower poverty levels. For example, UNESCO reports that the poorest children in Botswana are ten times less likely to access pre-primary education.

Poverty makes up one of the two most dominant barriers to pre-primary education. The others are low levels of parental education, as well as distance and location. At the heart of the exclusion of poor and otherwise marginalised children is the lack of public provision of pre-primary education. The African Child Policy Forum 2011

observed that where pre-school education exists, it is primarily provided by private entities that operate in urban areas and that charge fees. The resultant cost and location places this important resource beyond the reach of many children, and this sustains and broadens inequality during school years and later in life.

2.4.9 Children entering schooling late

Older children who enter the schools system later than the anticipated starting age have a higher risk of exclusion from education. For these learners, the rate of repetition and drop-out is greater.

Section 3: Understanding CSTL

This section presents the CSTL response to the challenges outlined in the previous section. The CSTL programme has been embraced by SADC Ministries of Education as a meaningful way to address these barriers to education. This section sets out the CSTL concept, rationale and guiding principles. Notably, it enumerates the package of essential services that must be provided to all children to ensure that all barriers to their meaningful participation in quality education are addressed. This SADC *Policy Framework on CSTL* distinguishes between essential services for which the relevant Ministries of Education are directly responsible for delivering, and those that other supporting Ministries are responsible for delivering. However, the *Policy Framework* suggests that the Ministries of Education retain an overarching responsibility for the development of systems and supporting budgets to ensure coordination and facilitation of delivery of services through the education sector. The *Framework* also describes some of the policy gaps and implementation challenges facing national education systems.

3.1 The CSTL concept

The SADC Ministries of Education have the primary responsibility for ensuring, inter alia, that all children access education and that they acquire the skills, knowledge and competencies necessary to lead a healthy, safe and productive life. The fulfilment of this responsibility depends on the ability of the education system in collaboration with other sectors to recognise and respond to a variety of barriers to enrolment, retention and quality outcomes. Education sector policies should recognise and respond to the accumulative barriers faced by children in the various Member States through an appropriately designed comprehensive package of services.

3.1.1 The Essential Package of Services

CSTL is a powerful mechanism for tackling a nexus of challenges, solutions to which are key to the advancement of SADC's mission. CSTL is premised on the systematic

provision of an essential, comprehensive package of services *through* the education system, and embraces services falling both within and outside the traditional core mandate of the education sector that are necessary to address the underlying barriers to access, retention, regular attendance and quality educational outcomes.

The education system enjoys a unique capacity to address many of these barriers through the provision of a number of inputs falling within the traditionally-understood core mandate of the sector. However, disadvantaged children's access to education and their optimal performance depend on more than the provision of traditionally-mandated education services, such as teaching and learning infrastructure and materials, and an appropriate curriculum. But vulnerable children also rely on a host of services that fall outside the traditional education mandate, including: protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation; healthcare; food and nutrition; social assistance; access to enabling documents (such as birth certificates). Hunger, poor health, neglect, exploitation and/or grief and trauma in the wake of conflict are among the factors that drive absenteeism, drop-out and underperformance. If such factors are not addressed, it is difficult to foresee substantial and lasting improvements in education access and outcomes for vulnerable children in the region.

Education sector policies should recognise and respond to the accumulative barriers faced by children in the various SADC Member States by providing a comprehensive package of essential services providing care and support for teaching and learning. The essential and comprehensive package of care and support for teaching and learning is depicted in the diagram below. It comprises the provision of:

- Curriculum support
- Teacher development and support
- Infrastructure
- Safety and protection
- Psychosocial support (PSS)
- Social and welfare services
- Water and sanitation
- Health
- Nutrition
- Material support
- Community involvement
- Leadership and structures



FIGURE 2: ESSENTIAL PACKAGE OF CARE AND SUPPORT

The comprehensive set of services are all equally important for the realisation of the desired educational outcomes and must be afforded the same priority status in national educational sector initiatives to improve educational outcomes. However, they cannot all be delivered by the education sector alone.

CSTL envisages the participation of different sectors, all of which have different roles to play. This requires service delivery approaches that emphasise and enhance coordination, collaboration and referral systems, firstly between different departments and structures within the education sector, and secondly between the education sector and other relevant sectors.

The education sector has a direct service delivery role in respect of the services that fall within its core mandate—curriculum support, teacher development and support, infrastructure, and community involvement (**core services**).

Other sectors are responsible for the direct delivery of *essential* services within *their mandates*—safety and protection, social and welfare services, nutrition, health, material support, water and sanitation, and PSS (**complementary services**).

CSTL requires that the education sector also be mandated to coordinate the provision of both the essential services and associated services delivered through the core mandates of other sectors making up the comprehensive package of services. In other words, it requires the education sector to provide the leadership, and, where practical, the structures for the delivery of the comprehensive package of essential services.

In summary, in terms of the CSTL concept, schools are envisaged as sites of integrated and comprehensive care and support, such that each school is a portal through which children can access services that are necessary for achieving a sound education.

To conclude, while the *Policy Framework* requires the provision of a comprehensive package of services *through* the education sector, it does not envisage the education sector taking responsibility for the actual delivery of all of the services (such as health care) that fall outside of its traditional or core mandate. However, it does require Ministries of Education to develop appropriate and adequately resourced systems and mechanisms for the coordination and facilitation of delivery of these services by the responsible supporting Ministries through and/or in partnership with the education sector.

3.1.2 Primacy of the Ministries of Education

CSTL accords primacy to the Ministries of Education. Their role is the central one of providing an enabling educational environment through the development of appropriate policies, programmes and institutional arrangements that will strengthen systemic and coordinated responses to barriers to education.

Moreover, these policies, programmes and arrangements serve to facilitate collaboration between Ministries to ensure access to a comprehensive suite of essential services. The education system is directly responsible for the delivery of education services falling within the traditional core mandate of the sector, but it is required to act as a conduit for the delivery of the complementary services offered by relevant supporting Ministries.

3.2 The CSTL rationale

SADC recognises that education and socioeconomic development are closely interrelated and that, inasmuch as education drives development, education in turn depends upon improvements in social and economic living conditions. This recognition is reflected in various international and continental child rights and

development instruments, such as the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*, the *Dakar Framework of Action for Education for All* and the United Nations' MDGs. Collectively and individually, these instruments require the provision of a complex and interlinked range of services and support for children to guarantee access to, retention in, and achievement at, school.

For several years now, a number of Member States have responded to the heightened vulnerability of children by strengthening core elements of their education systems (such as infrastructure and the curriculum) and delivering suites of integrated complementary services to vulnerable children through schools. However, as noted in the *SADC Strategic Framework and Programme of Action: Comprehensive Care and Support for OVCY, 2008-2010* (SADC OVCY Framework), much of this support has been project-based, short-lived, fragmented and largely unsustainable.

Thus, while acknowledging the value of these initiatives, the *SADC OVCY Framework* emphasises the need for projects to be harmonised by the education sector to ensure **sustainability**, integration, resource allocation and effective realisation of the objectives of improved access, retention and educational outcomes.

The SADC Ministers of Education have committed to scaling up care and support for vulnerable children by using schools as central points for delivering core and complementary education services. This commitment has found expression in various SADC initiatives, beginning with the 2005 SADC Ministers of Education Swaziland Communiqué, in terms of which the Ministries of Education undertook to strengthen their education systems by ensuring that schools become inclusive centres of teaching, learning and support. In 2007, they reiterated the need for a comprehensive approach to the promotion of health in the education sector, and in 2008 the Ministers approved and adopted the *Care and Support for Teaching and Learning* initiative, one developed collaboratively by the SADC Secretariat and its partners.

The rationale for adopting the CSTL concept and developing it into regional policy is, therefore, based on the recognition of the interrelationship between education and socioeconomic development, which, importantly, is in alignment with the international and continental instruments that SADC and its Member States have endorsed. The CSTL concept arises from and improves upon a legacy of regional endeavour and experience. It is a consistent elaboration of the *SADC OVCY Framework*, building on and advancing prior regional agreements, and entailing a far more systematic and **comprehensive response** to barriers to education than previously has been the case.

Moreover, CSTL is an especially strategic mode of intervention. Schools and the education system offer a unique and effective vehicle for the design and delivery of integrated programmes providing comprehensive care and support to vulnerable children in furtherance of their education.

Many of the barriers to education can be addressed meaningfully only through the appropriate design and provision of systemic components over which the Ministries of Education enjoy exclusive control—for example, school buildings, teaching and learning materials, curriculum development and teacher training. In addition, however, schools are recognised as being ideal platforms for providing access to the complementary support necessary for overcoming indirect barriers to education. The use of schools serves to ensure a wide, well-targeted delivery vehicle capable of reaching into vulnerable communities in ways that few others can.

Generally, schools are physically accessible. In many parts of Southern Africa, especially in rural areas, the number and density of schools are much higher than other sites of service delivery, such as hospitals, or health-care providers. Moreover, schools have a wide reach into vulnerable communities, and can offer age-appropriate targeted services, given that age cohorts are arranged by grade. Schools also have already-existing infrastructure, afford long-term opportunities, are sustainable, and are one of the first services to be resumed in emergency situations. As such, routing services through schools can aid broader development objectives, as well as immediate educational ones.

Section 4: Challenges in CSTL provision in the SADC region

The movement towards a harmonised SADC CSTL regional agenda requires that Member States' Ministries of Education engage in a process of policy review and development. The objective of this process is to identify and address, where relevant, policy gaps and implementation challenges as measured against the guidelines provided by this *Policy Framework*. A number of Member States have already engaged in this process and are at an advanced stage in the development of enabling policies for CSTL. Their experience has provided information used in this document to guide others that are not yet at the same stage of development.

Common policy gaps that require attention include the following:

- Pre-primary education is often not regarded as an essential element of care and support for teaching and learning; consequently, it is not appropriately resourced and implemented to ensure universal access or to favour the most vulnerable of learners.
- Similarly, secondary education does not receive the planning, resourcing and coordination attention necessary to achieve development objectives.

- While Universal Primary Education initiatives have progressed well, with the majority of primary school-aged children accessing school, the most vulnerable 20 per cent continue to be out of school. Policies should be developed to address the multiple vulnerabilities that exclude them from education.
- In addition, the increase in the primary enrolment rates has, in many Member States, not taken into account the implications this has for the education system as a whole. Increasing the numbers of learners, without making provision for proper planning and adequate resourcing both of primary as well as secondary schools, has often compromised the quality of educational inputs and outcomes. Policies should be developed to equalise the imbalanced focus on primary education at the expense of the pre-primary and secondary levels.
- Policies concerning children affected by HIV and AIDS tend to target orphans, rather than approaching the issue of vulnerability more systematically.
- Many national education policies recognise disability as a key barrier to education. However, the translation of broad policy statements into funded and resourced programmes for ensuring inclusion and optimal outcomes for children with disabilities is markedly absent.
- Coordinating mechanisms in the education and related sectors tend to be inadequately systematised, leading to ineffective collaborative planning, resourcing and referrals.

Section 5: The SADC Policy Framework on CSTL

This section presents the rationale for, and a description of the steps taken to, develop the *Policy Framework*. The vision, mission, goal and objectives of the *Framework* are also presented. This is followed by its guiding principles, structure and key policy focus areas.

5.1 Rationale for the Policy Framework

Care and support for teaching and learning depends on a policy framework that not only legally enables education for all, but guarantees access to and retention within the system, and assures quality teaching and learning for optimal outcomes.

Both the *RISDP* and the *Dakar Framework of Action* recognise the importance of a close and explicit policy alignment between the attainment of EFA and national development objectives. Given the close link between socioeconomic development and education, it is important that education be integrated into overarching national

poverty reduction and development strategies, so as both to contextualise and focus national attention on educational development, and to secure the prioritisation of education budgets.

Conversely, it is equally important that overarching national education policies (which provide a common goal-directed unifying framework for development of the different components of the education system) reflect the link between social and economic development and improved access to quality education for all. Given the social and economic inequities that characterise the SADC region, it is equally important that national education frameworks adopt systemic measures to include the most marginalised and vulnerable groups of children.

This *SADC Policy Framework on CSTL* lays a solid foundation for the systemic integration of care and support for teaching and learning in the education system. It provides a comprehensive framework for harmonising and supporting the implementation of the *SADC Protocol on Education and Training* and the *SADC Indicative Strategic Development* plan, and other relevant policies such as the *SADC Gender Policy* and the *SADC Protocol on Gender and Development*. Ultimately, it will help re-vitalise education in the SADC region and promote the development of care and support for teaching and learning, increasing access to quality education and training, and supporting regional integration across the region. The *Policy Framework* is contextualised within the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training Article 2 (h), which allows that Member States may progress at a different rate to that achieved by other Member States, while taking all the necessary steps possible to act together in community.

5.2 Policy development process / methodology

This *SADC Policy Framework on CSTL* is an evidence-based product that results from extensive research and consultation with stakeholders within SADC's Member States.

An assessment of the policy environment was conducted through a review of care and support for teaching and learning-related policies and programmes in 13 SADC Member States. This took the form of a desk review, as well as country visits to four Member States, namely, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zambia.

In these Member States, interviews were held with various policy experts from a range of Ministries (including Education, Health, Welfare, Gender and Agriculture), international non-government agencies and national civil society structures. One-day meetings were held in each of the four countries to validate the information obtained from the desk review and interviews.

A review meeting took place in Botswana in November 2010. Two further regional consultative workshops were held on the draft *Policy Framework* in June 2011 and November 2012, to which Ministries of Education and other relevant Ministries within the then fourteen Member States were invited.

During the first workshop, participants provided comments on the National Policy Review and the draft *Policy Framework*. During the second meeting, the CSTL Regional Policy Review Report and the draft *Policy Framework* were presented, and recommendations for improvement of the *draft Framework* were made.

An extraordinary meeting of the CSTL Project Steering Committee was held in July 2013, at which further inputs were made on the draft *Framework*. It was also agreed that a task team be formed to finalise the *Framework*, and to circulate it to the Steering Committee members before submitting it to the SADC Ministers of Education for approval.

This underlying information matrix—regional policy reviews and consultations—is the source of the policy statements contained in this *Policy Framework*.

5.3 Goal and overall objective

The goal of the CSTL initiative is to realize the education rights of vulnerable children and youth in the SADC region by ensuring that schools are inclusive centres of learning, care and support where every learner, especially the most vulnerable, have access to quality education.

The purpose of this *SADC Policy Framework CSTL* is to provide a common understanding among Member States regarding the implementation of the initiative, and to guide efforts towards the realisation of the CSTL goal across the SADC region. This is particularly important to enable harmonisation of policies and programmes for the consistent delivery of CSTL across the Member States.

Specifically, the *Policy Framework*

- Identifies common educational barriers
- Identifies a comprehensive package of services that has been shown to address these barriers to achieve improved educational outcomes
- Provides policy options necessary to deliver the package of services
- Provides a benchmark against which Member States can measure their progress in delivering the package of services
- Defines the role of the education and other sectors in the delivery of comprehensive package of services that are necessary to achieve the desired educational outcomes

- Serves as an advocacy tool to strengthen education policies and programmes

5.4 Guiding Principles

This *SADC Policy Framework on CSTL* is premised on the following guiding principles of CSTL.

- i. **Integrated and comprehensiveness:** Efforts should be made at the level of policies, programmes and service delivery structures to ensure that different intervention efforts and essential services of CSTL are implemented in a holistic manner to deliver the package of CSTL services and address barriers to teaching and learning.
- ii. **A systemic approach:** Interventions for CSTL should consider the interrelationships, inter-linkages, interdependency and overlaps of the core essential services of CSTL and how they influence the achievement of the desired educational outcomes, and provide institutional and intervention approaches that promote and facilitate coordination, partnerships and effective referral systems that can ensure access to all essential comprehensive services.
- iii. **Inclusion and non-discrimination:** Interventions at policy, programme and service delivery levels should ensure that children and all those targeted by CSTL programmes receive equal attention and services regardless of sex, language, religion, socioeconomic status, geography, cultural group, ethnicity and disability, membership of a marginalised group, or other grounds.
- iv. **Participation:** Vulnerable children, schools, communities, various government sectors, civil society, the private sector and all other relevant stakeholders should be accorded the opportunity and a conducive environment to be involved, contribute and play a role in the delivery of CSTL at all levels—whether policy making, planning, implementation or monitoring and evaluation.
- v. **Transparency:** All stakeholders and institutions must operate in an open and accountable manner. Different service providers should share their efforts and experiences with one another to enable synergy.
- vi. **Sustainability:** Interventions and services should be continuous so as to provide long-term benefits and effectiveness, without bringing about any harm or negative effects, or compromising the wellbeing of children at present and in the future.

5.5 Key policy focus areas

This *SADC Policy Framework on CSTL* identifies the following two focus areas that require policy intervention to deliver the essential services of CSTL:

- Policy interventions required by the education sector to enhance the delivery of its core services
- Policy interventions by the non-education sectors that are required by the education sector to facilitate the delivery of the complementary services making up the essential package of CSTL

Ministries of Education are required to develop policies to ensure direct delivery by the education sector of services falling within their core or traditional mandate necessary to ensure:

- The availability of education
- Access, retention and regular attendance
- Quality learning and teaching

Ministries of Education are further required to develop policies that are able to secure the partnerships, referral mechanisms, coordination, collaboration and associated institutional arrangements necessary to guarantee delivery of complementary services by non-education sectors, including:

- Child health services
- Food security and nutrition
- Protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- PSS
- Social assistance
- Enabling documents

Section 6: CSTL policy statements

The nine key policy focus areas listed in the section above form the basis of the following policy statements.

6.1 The availability of education

Issue 1: Enrolment

Pre-school attendance rates are low. While primary school enrolment rates have improved, progression through primary school remains a challenge. Secondary school enrolments are less than half that for primary schools.

Policy Statement 1

Ministries of Education are required to develop, resource and implement policies that ensure sufficient numbers of pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in close proximity to the relevant communities, through the development of a comprehensive school expansion policies.

6.2 Access, retention and regular attendance

Issue 2: Attendance

Primary school attendance is a challenge, resulting in 20 per cent of enrolled children not completing their education.

Issue 3: Retention

The transition rate between primary and secondary levels is low in many Member States. Secondary school completion rates are lower than that for primary schools. Secondary completion rates are lower for girls than boys.

Policy Statement 2

Ministries of Education are required to develop, resource and implement policies that prohibit discrimination in educational settings and oblige affirmative measures to include children at risk of exclusion because of their often intersecting and multiple vulnerabilities.

Policy Statement 3

Ministries of Education are required to make primary education free, and pre-primary and secondary school more affordable, through comprehensive schooling policies that address all educational costs (including fees, transport and school uniforms), and that compensate schools adequately for the loss of fees and other income necessary for maintaining educational quality.

Policy Statement 4

Ministries of Education are required to establish a maximum age of entry into primary school, complementary parallel education primary institutions for older first-time learners, and grade-promotion policies that curb excessive grade repetition by balancing the need for maintaining quality standards with the need to eliminate unnecessary promotion requirements.

Policy Statement 5

Ministries of Education are required to develop policies to identify and include out-of-school youth in school and encourage their retention until they complete secondary education.

More specifically, with regards to out-of-school youth falling within the compulsory age of schooling, Ministries of Education are required to develop policies that are capable of finding and including them in school, and which support their retention until they complete their mandatory schooling.

With regards to children older than the compulsory schooling age limit, Ministries of Education are required to:

- Develop policies to provide support to ensure those in school stay in school and complete their secondary education by addressing causes that drive older children to drop out
- Develop policies that do not push older children out of school (e.g. eliminating excessively onerous promotion policies that result in excessive grade repetition or onerous/exclusionary admission policies governing the transition from basic to post-basic schooling)
- Work with other Ministries to develop education programmes as part of a holistic response to older out-of-school youth

Policy Statement 6

Ministries of Education are required to oblige teachers, as well as community leaders and structures, to monitor enrolment and attendance by all children in the relevant communities and schools. The same role-players are required to respond individually and collectively to cases of frequent unauthorised absenteeism through investigation and the provision of support necessary to address the causes underlying these cases.

6.3 Quality learning and teaching

Issue 4: Quality learning and teaching

Primary school grade-repetition rates remain high. Numeracy and literacy levels, even at primary school, are low. Once children gain access to school, meaningful learning and teaching has to take place so that they are equipped with the skills, knowledge and competencies necessary for a healthy, safe and productive life.

Policy Statement 7

Education systems are required to ensure the following learning outcomes:

- Literacy and numeracy skills, especially in the early and primary-school years

- Life skills, including knowledge of human rights, respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, citizenship education, health and reproductive health, and respect for the environment
- At secondary level, knowledge and skills in subjects like Mathematics, Science, Technology and others linked to the demands of modern societies and economies

Policy Statement 8

Ministries of Education are required to develop, resource and implement policies that ensure the equitable provision of teaching and learning resources that are adequate and necessary to create an enabling learning environment.

Policy Statement 9

Ministries of Education are required to provide sufficient qualified teachers, quality and sufficient teaching and teaching time, especially in marginalised areas.

Policy Statement 10

Ministries of Education are required to provide support to teachers to identify and support vulnerable children.

Policy Statement 11

Ministries of Education are required to provide personal and professional support to teachers to enhance their overall wellbeing, improve their status, and strengthen their professionalism.

Policy Statement 12

Ministries of Education are required to strengthen learners' employability, creativity, entrepreneurship and civic responsibility by ensuring the adequacy, relevance and responsiveness of the curriculum.

Policy Statement 13

Ministries of Education are required to ensure support for parental and community involvement in teaching and learning.

6.4 Child health

Issue 5: Inequity

Poor and marginalised children are more likely to suffer poor education outcomes. Poverty creates direct and indirect barriers to education.

Policy statement 14

To secure access to the health, nutrition, water and sanitation support and services through schools, Ministries of Education are required to develop an overarching, multisectoral school health policy that identifies the direct health-promotive and

curative services that schools will provide, as well as the additional health services that other role-players will provide through the school setting, and to establish the necessary partnership and coordination mechanisms to facilitate delivery of these services by the relevant Ministries through the school setting.

6.5 Protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation

Issue 6: Child protection

Poor enforcement of child protection laws inhibits the protection of children in their homes and communities, thus limiting the impact of school protection programmes. Children, particularly in rural areas, are less likely to be protected from hunger, malnutrition and child labour.

Policy statement 15

To secure the protection of children from abuse, neglect and exploitation, Ministries of Education are required to:

- Develop a comprehensive education sector child protection policy that obliges and guides the development of school policies and practices that protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation at school, at home and in the community
- Develop policies and supporting partnerships and coordination arrangements to ensure the delivery of support and services to children by other relevant sectors and Ministries to minimise the educational impact of violence, abuse, neglect and economic and domestic exploitation of children

6.6 Psychosocial support

Issue 7: Psychosocial needs

The social and economic pressures and the high levels of violence, abuse and trauma experienced by children in the SADC region impact on their psychological wellbeing, which in turn impacts on their educational attendance, participation and achievements. Children have a recognised right to rehabilitation under these conditions, which includes the right to receive PSS. The evidence indicates that PSS is likely to reduce the negative impact of violence and trauma on children's educational access and outcomes.

Policy statement 16

Ministries of Education are required to develop and/or strengthen their policies to ensure the systematic provision of PSS to learners through a range of strategies, including employment of professional school-based counsellors, trained teachers, peers and/or referrals to external counsellors.

6.7 Social assistance

Issue 8: Material social assistance

Poverty is a key driver of educational exclusion. Addressing immediate school costs through fee waivers is a critical but insufficient intervention to break the cycle of poverty and poor education. The widespread reach of poverty and its very high levels in the region require a more systemic approach to addressing this underlying cause. A key mechanism for doing this is the provision of material social assistance to families in need. There is strong evidence linking improved educational outcomes with receipt of social assistance.

Policy Statement 17

Ministries of Education are required to:

- Advocate for stronger national social security policies to ensure the sustained provision of material support to all poor households with children
- Develop structures, partnerships and coordinating institutional arrangements within the education system to facilitate the identification and provision of social assistance services to children of school-going who are in need of the service age by the relevant Social Security Ministry

6.8 Enabling documents

Issue 9: Enabling documents

Many children in the region do not have enabling documents such as birth certificates and other identity documents because of the cost and distance involved in obtaining them, or because they are refugees from other countries. This prevents them from enrolling in and completing school, and from accessing other benefits and protection necessary to address barriers to education.

Policy Statement 18

Ministries of Education are required to:

- Develop education policies that prohibit all forms of discrimination against children lacking prescribed documentation, and oblige the enrolment of children who do have the necessary documents
- Develop structures, partnerships and institutional arrangements within the education system to facilitate the identification of children lacking documents, and to provide documents to them by the relevant Ministry through schools

Section 7: Implementation mechanisms

This section deals with establishing an environment and the structures necessary to support the operationalisation of CSTL. The successful implementation of this *SADC Policy Framework on CSTL* requires a high level of political support, at both regional and Member State levels. It is acknowledged that not all Member States are presently at the same stage of CSTL implementation and therefore the principle of variable geometry and targeting in implementation of the *Policy Framework* is allowed. Many Member States will require strengthening of the existing structures that deal with care and support for teaching and learning.

7.1 Supporting the delivery of CSTL policy

The operationalisation of CSTL requires that all schools provide access to a range of essential comprehensive services and support necessary to secure the conditions for quality teaching and learning and to overcome social and economic barriers to education.

In turn, this requires that care and support for teaching and learning be mainstreamed within the education systems of Member States. It requires, in addition, that the education and other sectors work together to provide a package of services through schools as coordinated sites of service delivery. As custodians of care and support for teaching and learning, Ministries of Education are required to lead the coordination of the efforts of stakeholders, including other Ministries and Departments, development partners, civil society, and community-based partners. The effective inclusion of the full diversity of role-players requires that they all not only know, but commit to, and account for, the fulfilment of their respective roles and responsibilities.

In order to operationalise CSTL sustainably and effectively, the mainstreaming and coordination imperatives must be supported through an appropriate enabling legislative and institutional framework that is adequately framed and resourced to secure the necessary levels of integration, advocacy, implementation and coordination within and across the education and other sectors.

In order to secure the environment and structures necessary to support the operationalisation of CSTL, Ministries of Education are required to strengthen their policies, budgets and plans, to enable them to achieve the following.

Secure coordination:

- By establishing a national care and support for teaching and learning coordinating structure led by the Ministry of Education
- By supporting the replication of coordination structures at not only national level, but also at regional and local levels

Secure cross-sector competencies:

- By promoting inclusive representation from the different divisions within the education sector as well as representatives from other Ministries, development partners, NGOs and civil society, including teacher associations and unions within the coordination structures
- By adequately mandating, capacitating and resourcing all relevant coordination structures (including those at local level) to coordinate and facilitate shared planning, synergised budgeting, coordinated implementation and collective monitoring and evaluation of all care and support for teaching and learning interventions
- By promoting partnerships with other sectors, resulting in the delivery of services falling outside of the traditional education mandate by the relevant Ministries through schools

Promote referral networks:

- By securing the development, maintenance and resourcing of referral networks to link children at school with an extended network of service providers

Promote advocacy:

- By mandating and capacitating the education sector to advocate for more expansive and stronger services to be provided by relevant non-education sectors through improved sectoral laws, programmes and budgets

Provide capacity building:

- By promoting clarity about the roles and responsibilities of each role-player in the education and other sectors, as well as establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure accountability to shared care and support objectives and outcomes

(This may be achieved through the development of a shared monitoring and evaluation framework against which each role-player is expected to report.)

- By ensuring the capacitation of all relevant role-players within the education sector to be able to provide effective leadership, advocacy, coordination, implementation and evaluation of the objectives and outcomes of care and support for teaching and learning

7.2 Implementing structures

The main structural players in policy implementation will include:

The SADC Council of Ministers

- To provide direction and leadership in the implementation of the policy and monitor the implementation of the *Policy Framework* at regional level

Committee of Ministers of Education and Training

- To oversee and monitor the implementation of the *Policy Framework*
- To provide leadership to ensure that provisions of the *Policy Framework* are domesticated in the national CSTL policies
- To report progress to the SADC Council of Ministers on the implementation of the *Policy Framework*

SADC Parliamentary Forum

- To popularise and implement the *Policy Framework* within SADC Member States' Parliaments
- To strengthen linkages with national assemblies and to ensure that members of parliaments take full responsibility to promote the implementation of the *Policy Framework* at national and local levels

SADC Secretariat

- To play a facilitative role to ensure that Member States domesticate and implement the *Policy Framework* provisions

The Secretariat will be responsible to the SADC Ministers of Education through the senior officials by ensuring that policy implementation achieves its objectives in line with priorities of Member States.

Specifically, the SADC Secretariat will provide overall leadership and technical oversight in the implementation of the *Policy Framework*. To deliver the *Framework*, the following strategic actions are proposed:

- Facilitate implementation of the *Policy Framework* at Member State level through capacity building of relevant office bearers
- Coordinate, supervise, monitor and evaluate implementation of policy frameworks at Member States level
- Mobilise resources for effective implementation of the *Policy Framework*
- Report on implementation progress to the Committee of Ministers of Education and Training

Member States

- To spearhead implementation of the *Policy Framework* through broad based participation and report on progress to the SADC Secretariat through period reports

Member States will establish national coordinating mechanisms.

National Coordinating Committees

- To oversee development and implementation of CSTL programmes at national level and to ensure wide participation and representation of public and private sectors including the civil society organisations in the process of programme implementation

SADC Technical Committee on CSTL

- To provide strategic guidance, technical support and oversight to ensure that the objectives of the *Policy Framework* are achieved

(This committee is to be established.)

Other government sectors and relevant stakeholders

- To support government efforts in the implementation of the *Policy Framework*

7.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting are critical processes for assessing the achievement of Member States in strengthening the policy environment and delivering the essential package of care and support services as described in the sections above, so that children and youth realise their rights to education, safety and protection, and care and support.

Progress by Member States in delivering the essential package of services and securing educational outcomes will be monitored through a revised *CSTL MER Framework* and through existing SADC monitoring and reporting systems. The monitoring of the CSTL should be supported by EMIS units at national and regional levels. Reporting on progress will follow a similar reporting flow that applies to all SADC programmes and is depicted in the diagram below.

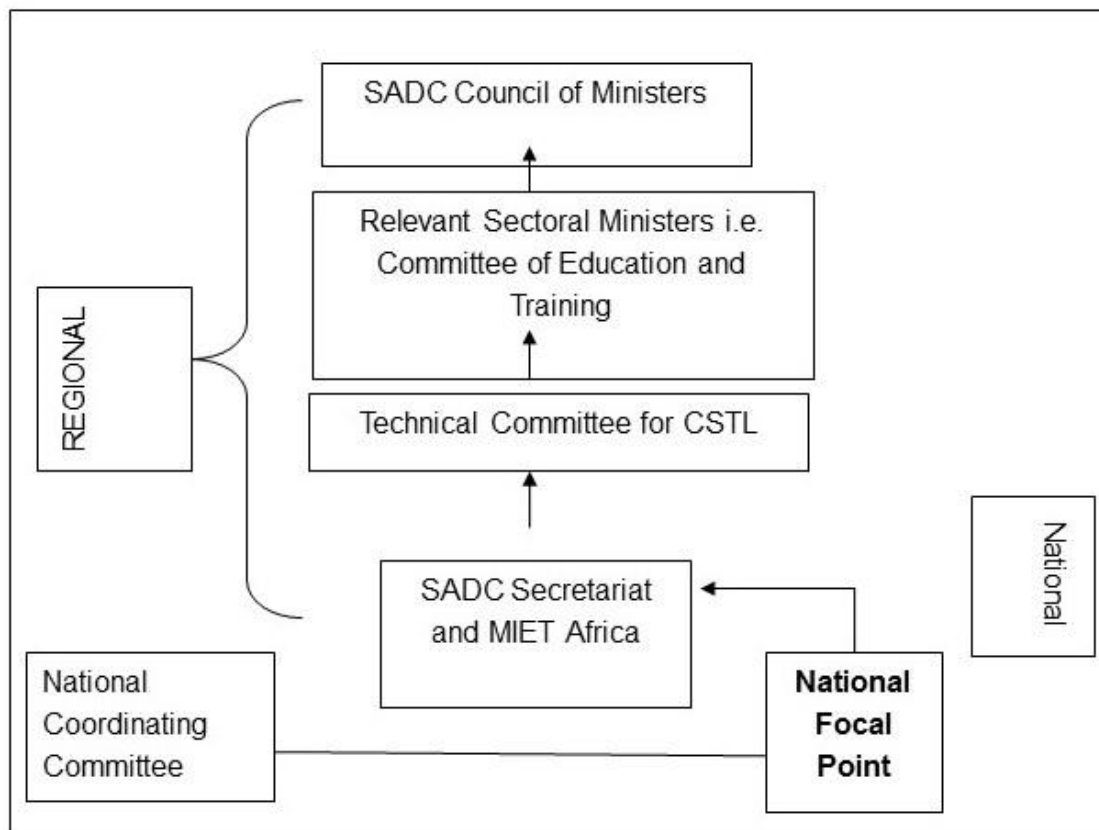


FIGURE 3: REPORTING FLOW AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

Roles and responsibilities

Member States will:

- Collect data and information on school-level implementation of CSTL as part of their annual school survey and through special surveys, as necessary
- Analyse the data and information as per the indicators in the *CSTL MER Framework* to inform decision making at national level and produce annual national progress report on CSTL
- Submit national Annual Reports to SADC Secretariat on agreed indicators

The SADC Secretariat will:

- Coordinate periodic review meetings with relevant stakeholders to assess progress
- Produce the Annual Regional Report on implementation of CSTL and submit it to the Committee of Ministers of Education and Training, and disseminate it on the SADC website
- Conduct periodic external evaluation on the implementation of the *Policy Framework*

The outcome of the evaluation will form the basis for remedial action and incorporation of emerging trends.

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