

International Standard Classification on Education (ISCED):

Expert Group meeting on International economic and social classifications, UNSD

Rosario Garcia Calderon
4 September, 2009



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

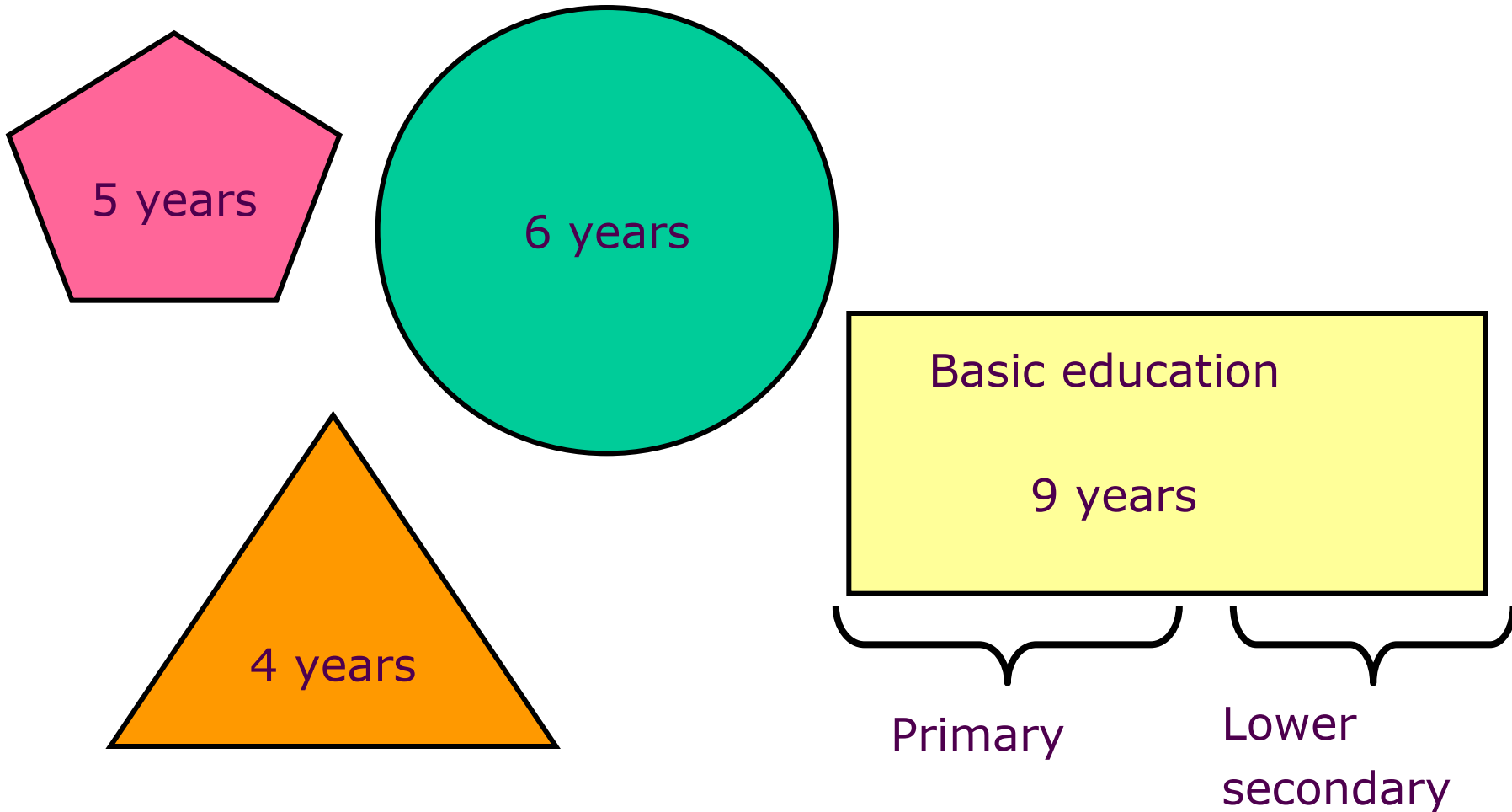
UNESCO
INSTITUTE
for
STATISTICS

Presentation outline

- What is ISCED? What for?
- Issues leading to the review
- Review strategy (2007 – 2011)
- Progress until now
- UIS welcomes your comments on any of the above

Different countries, different education systems

Primary education



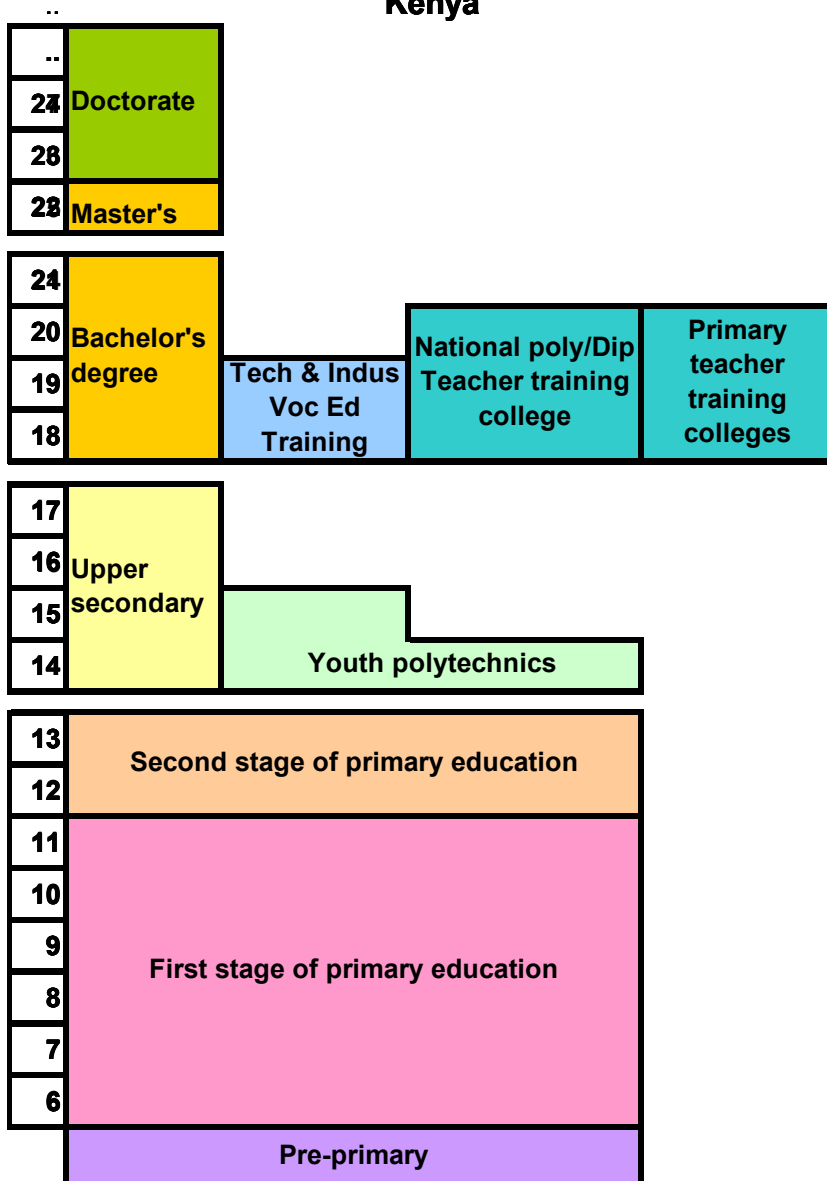
Kenya

27	Doctorate			
26				
25	Master's			
24	Bachelor's degree		National poly/Dip Teacher training college	Primary teacher training colleges
20				
19		Tech & Indus Voc Ed Training		
18				
17	Upper secondary			
16				
15				
14		Youth polytechnics		
13	Second stage of primary education			
12				
11	First stage of primary education			
10				
9				
8				
7				
6	Pre-primary			

Senegal

26				
25			
24	Ens. uni (2eme cycle)			
23	Ens. uni (2eme cycle)	Grande ecoles d'ingenieurs		
22				
21	Ens. universitaire (1er cycle)		Ens. tertiare non uni.	Capacite en droit
20				
19	Ens. sec. general (2eme cycle)	Ens. sec. technique (2eme cycle)	Formation professionnelle cycle long	Form. prof. cycle court
18				
17				
16	Enseignement moyen (1er cycle)		Ens. moyen prof.	
15				
14				
13				
12	Enseignement elementaire			
11				
10				
9				
8				
6/7				
Education prescolaire				

Kenya



ISCED

6

5A 5B
4A

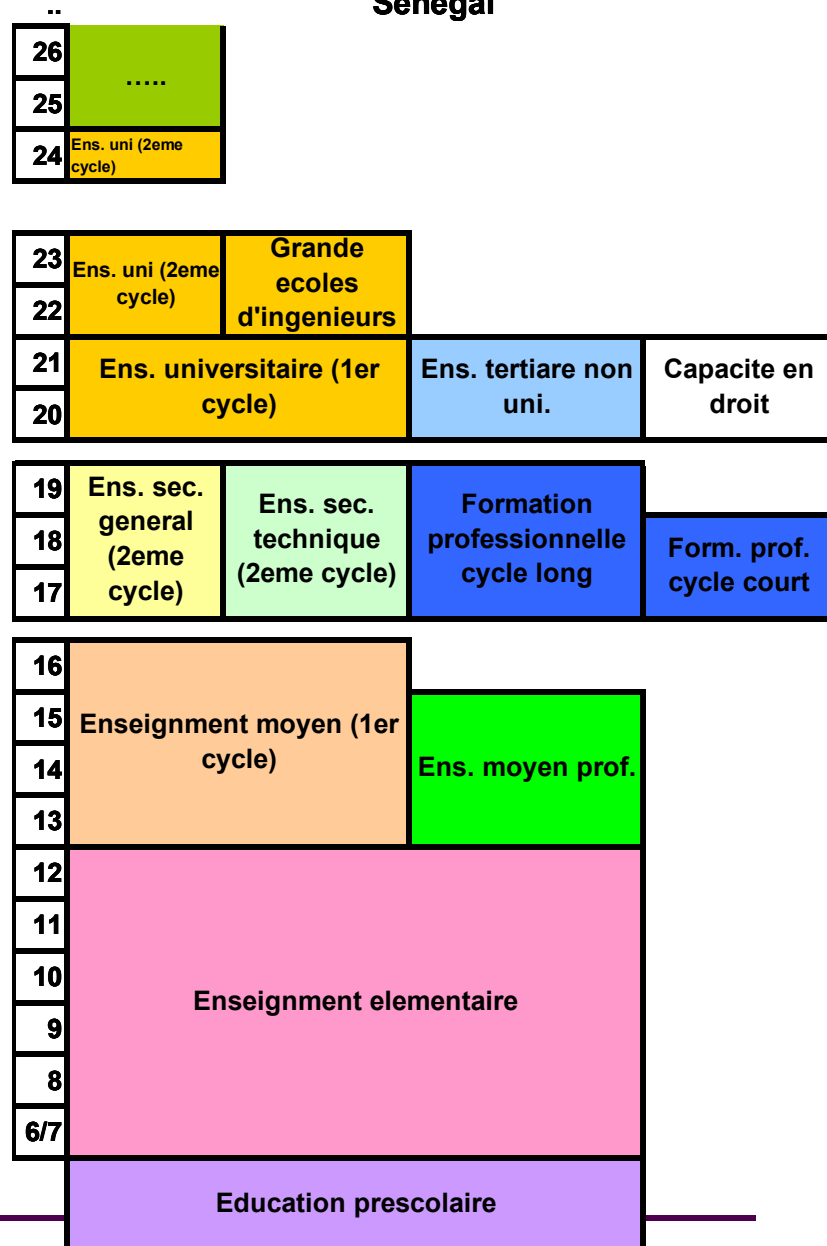
3A 3B
3C

2A 2B

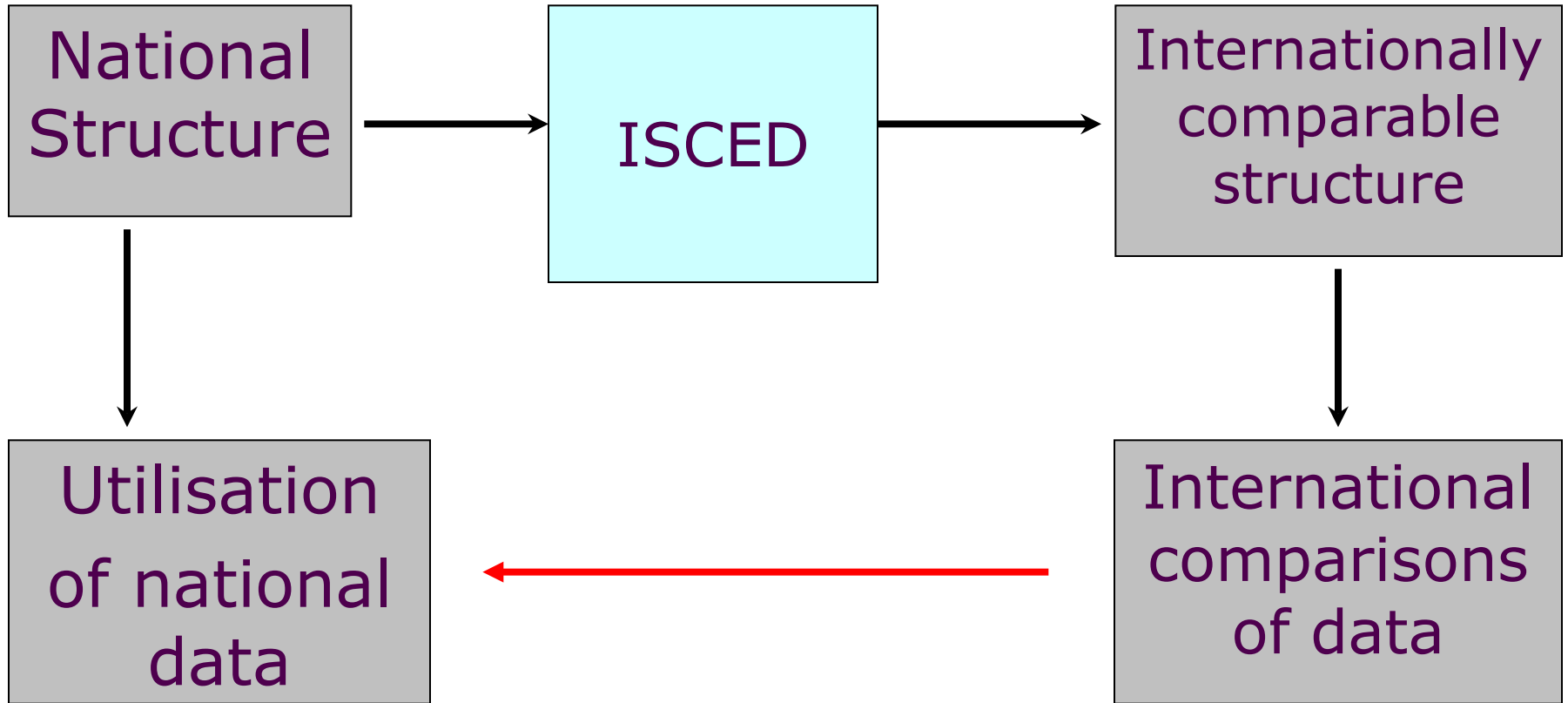
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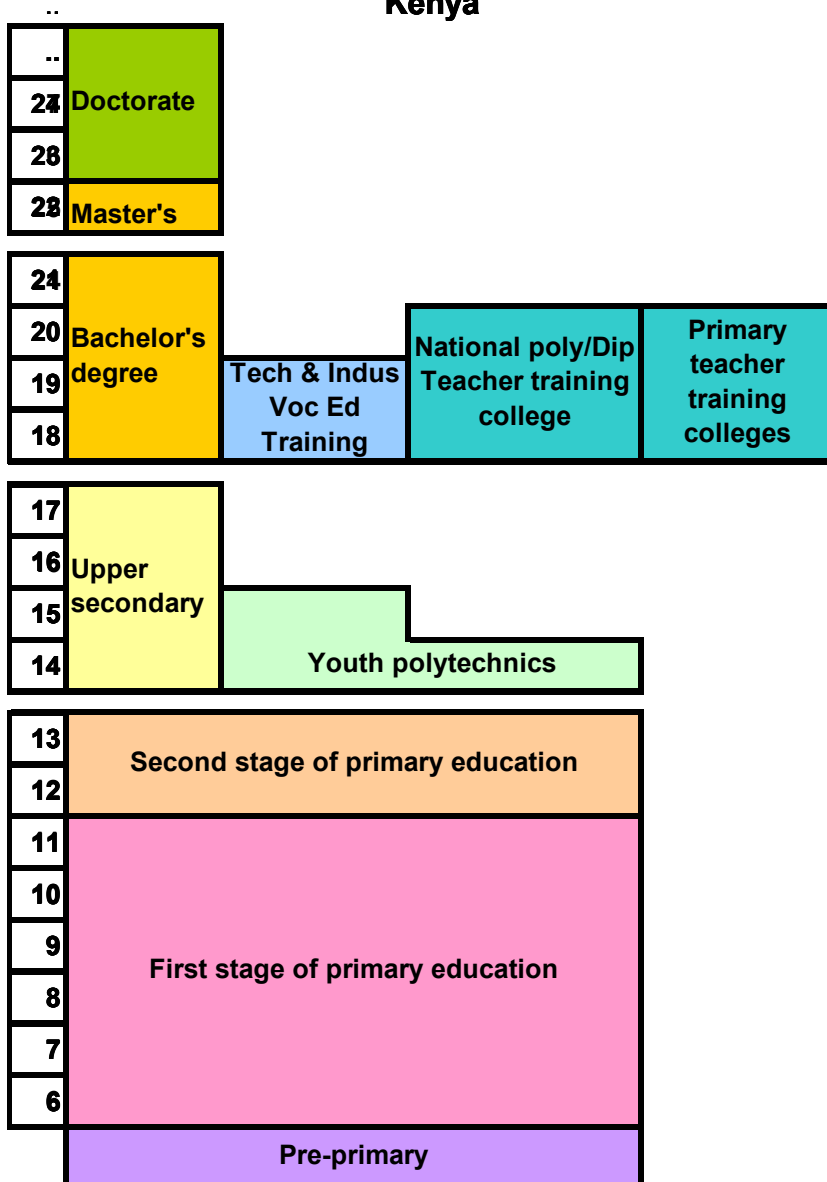
Senegal



Use of ISCED



Kenya



ISCED

6

5A 5B
4A

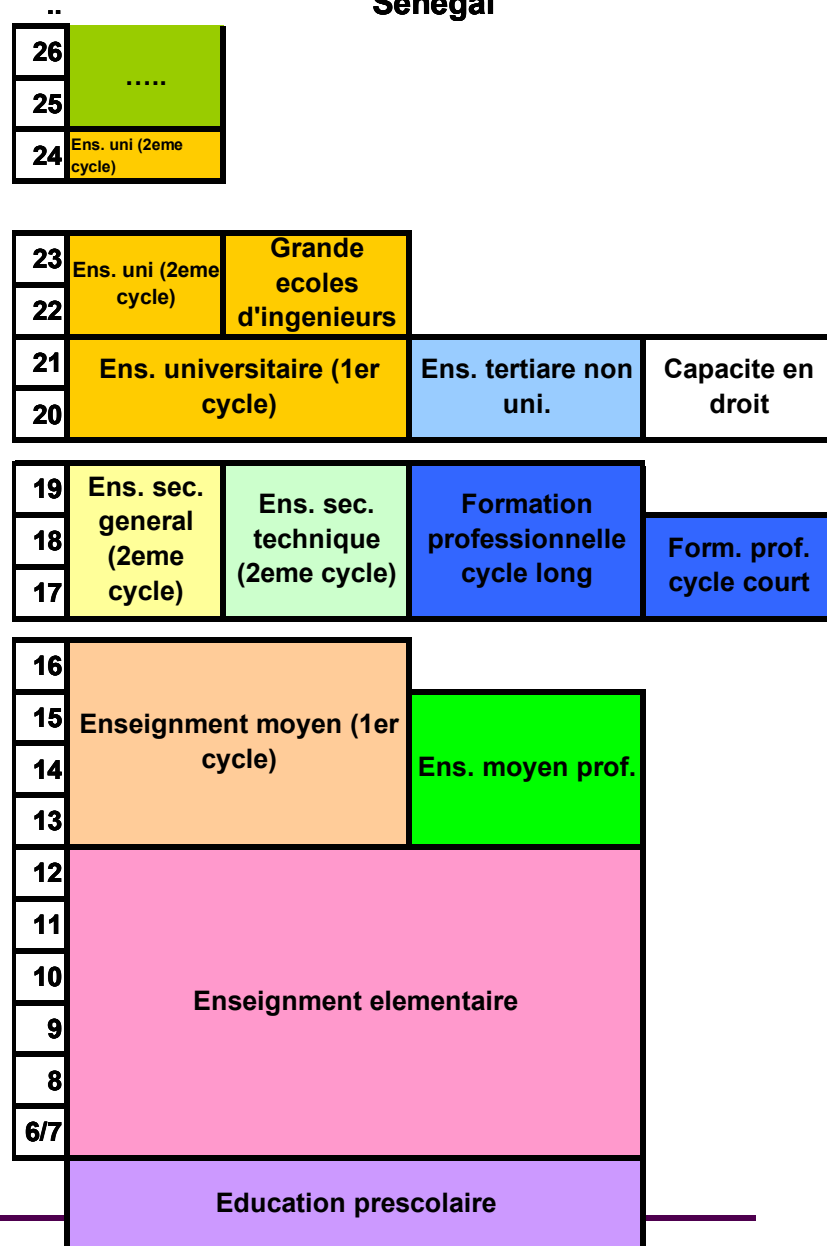
3A 3B
3C

2A 2B

1

0

Senegal



What is ISCED? - a Summary

- Framework created to facilitate comparisons of education indicators across countries
- Instrument for assembling, compiling and presenting statistics of education nationally and internationally
- Unit of analysis is the educational programme
- Has 7 levels (preprimary to tertiary education)
- Classification criteria per level and complementary dimensions
- Fields of education (9 broad fields; 25 detailed – two-digit level)

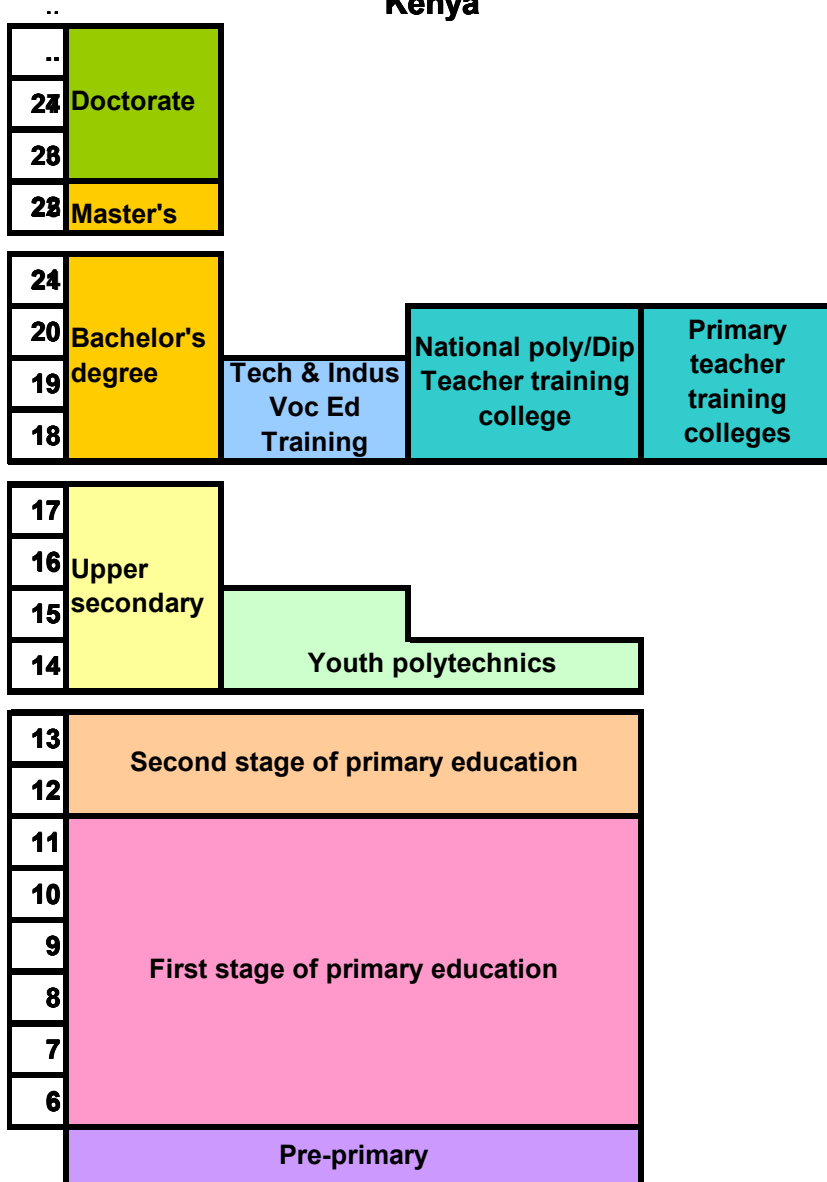
What do we classify in ISCED?

- Educational programme consists of:
 - **curriculum content**
 - **pre-determined objective**
- Usually by using **proxy criteria**

Classifying an educational programme

- Main and Subsidiary criteria (proxy criteria):
 - Entrance age
 - Duration of the programme
 - Teaching staff qualifications
 - Entry requirements

Kenya



ISCED

6

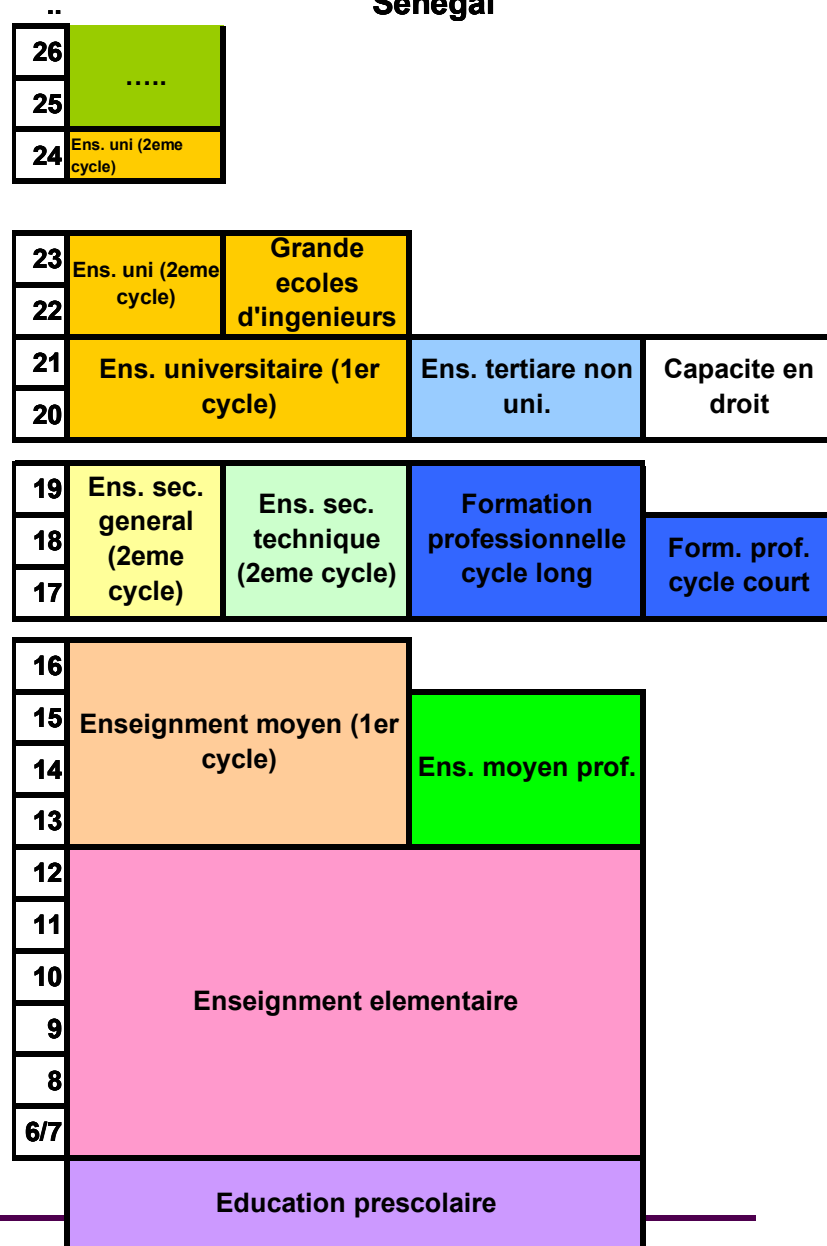
5A 5B
4A

3A 3B
3C
2A 2B

1

0

Senegal



Structure of ISCED

The **7 LEVELS** of education are:

- **ISCED 0** = Pre-primary
- **ISCED 1** = Primary
- **ISCED 2** = Lower secondary
- **ISCED 3** = Upper secondary
- **ISCED 4** = Post-secondary non-tertiary
- **ISCED 5** = First stage of tertiary education
(not leading directly to an advanced research qualification)
- **ISCED 6** = Second stage of tertiary education
(leading to an advanced research qualification)

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Orientation
General,
Tech/Voc

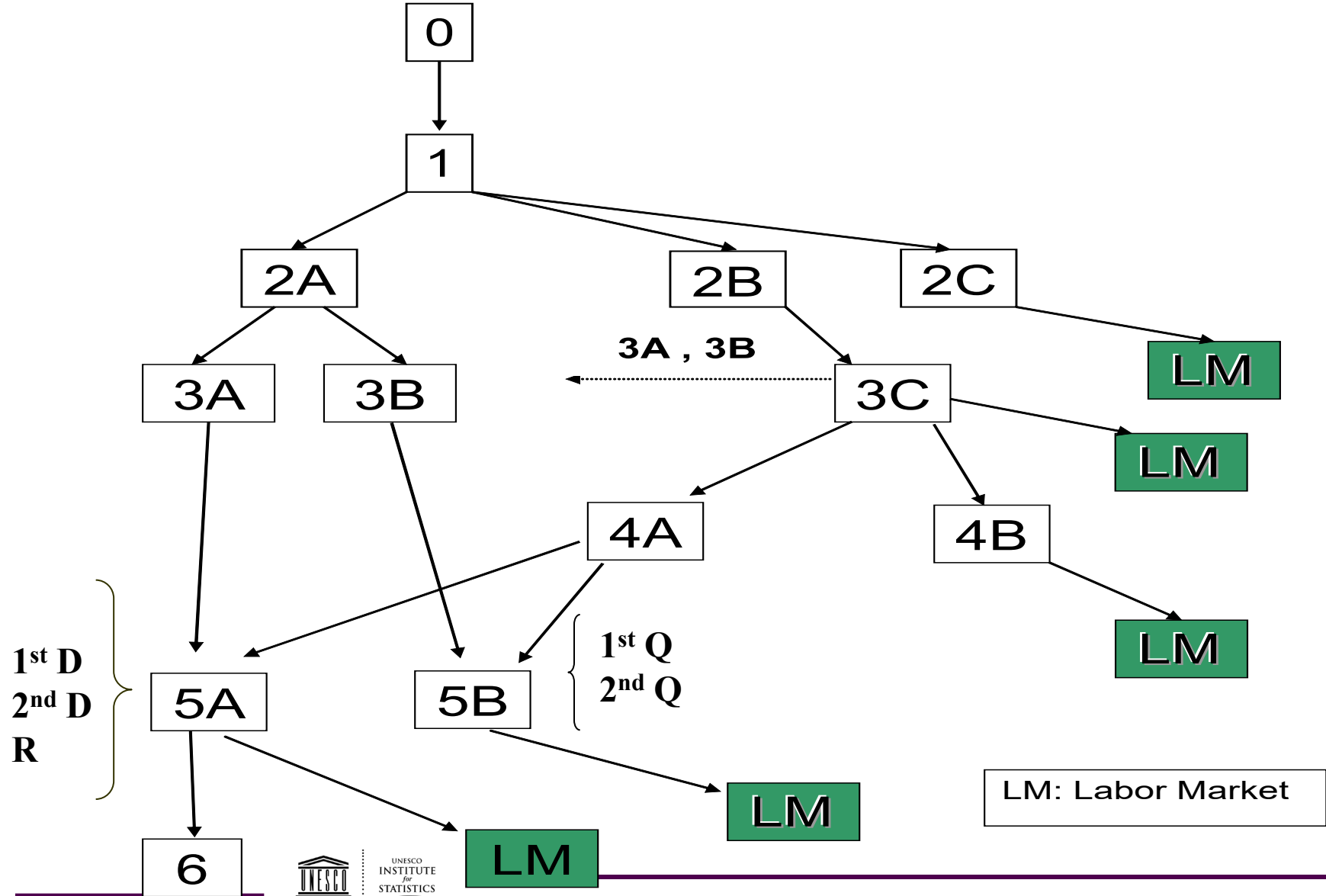
Destination

A

B

C

Transition Pattern – in theory



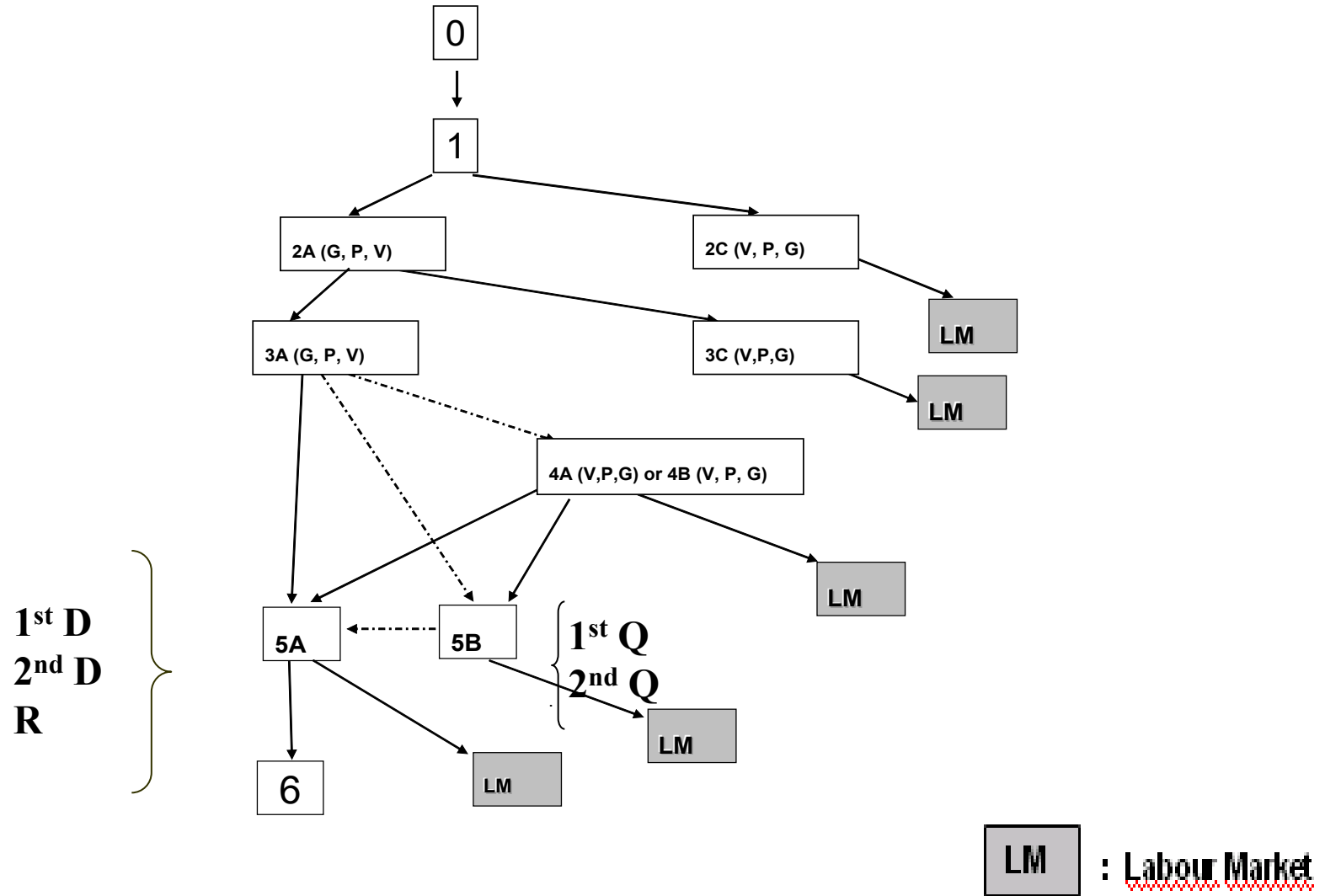
1st D
2nd D
R

3A, 3B

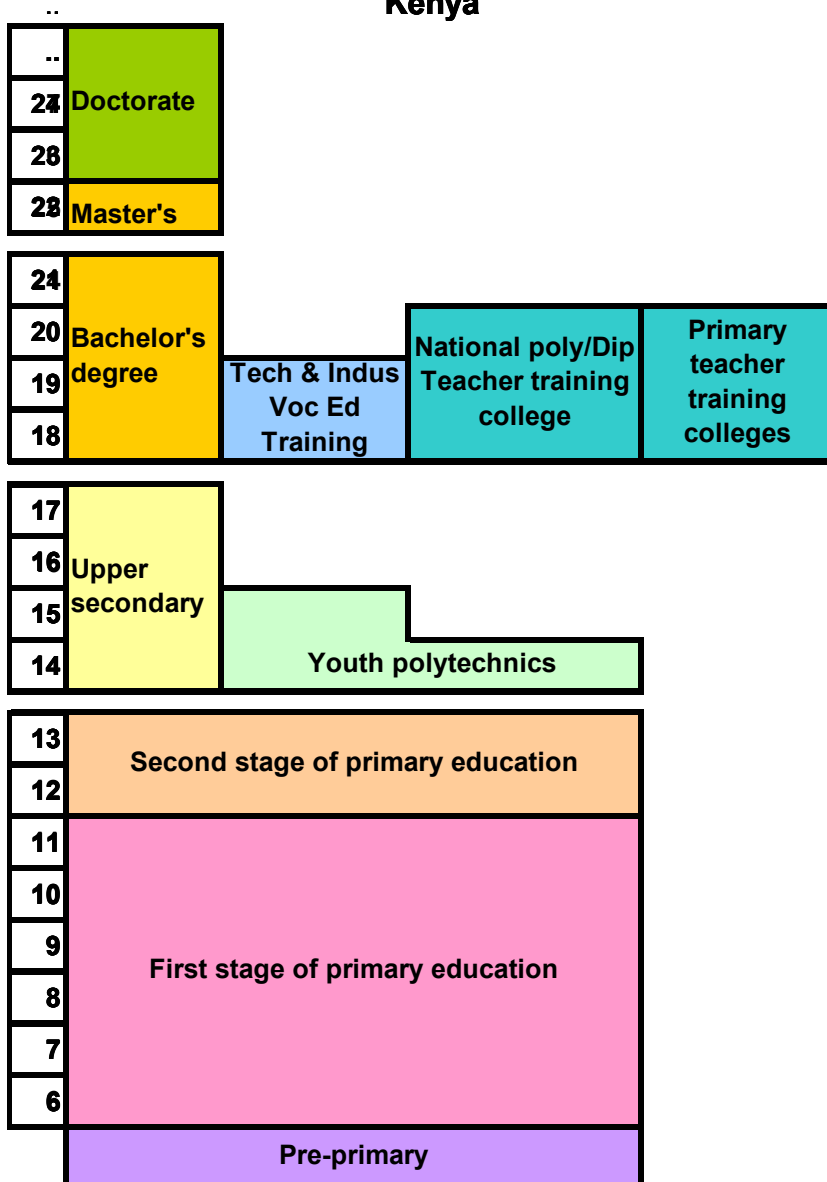
1st Q
2nd Q

LM: Labor Market

Transition Pattern – in reality



Kenya



ISCED

6

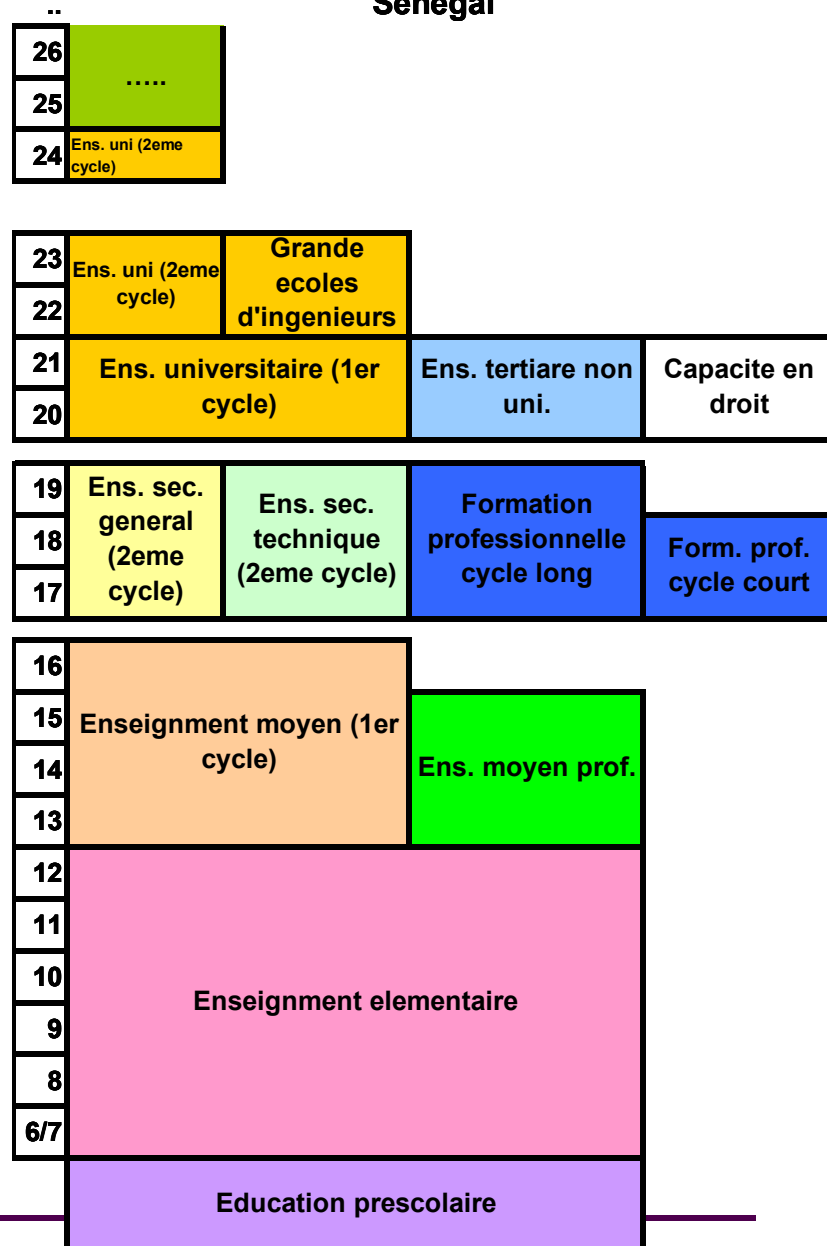
5A 5B
4A

3A 3B
3C
2A 2B

1

0

Senegal



Classification issues

Results from a classification exercise in April during a UIS training for regional staff:

1. We found it very difficult to distinguish between the academic and the professional **streams** in the **national** higher education programmes (ISCED 5A and 5B categories – tertiary education)
2. How to apply destination categories (A, B,C) in the same level; cross-over with orientation unclear as they seem to be the “same”
3. Main problem related to ISCED 4 or 5B (programmes of duration: 2 years; minimum entrance requirement is an ISCED 3 programme)

ISCED review

- 2007 UNESCO GC approved a review for 2011
 - To reflect changes in the education systems since the last revision in 1997
- Address issues identified through:
 - UIS regional meetings
 - Joint work with OECD and Eurostat
- Conceptual and Implementation Issues

ISCED review: implementation issues

Common problems faced by countries in mapping their system into international standard.

Some examples:

- Classifying institutions instead of programmes
- Classifying based on the name of the programmes, not the content

ISCED review: conceptual issues

Range of conceptual issues, further clarification of existing definitions

Some examples:

- Differentiating ISCED 4 and 5B programmes
- Current definition of ISCED 4 is vague
- Changes in structure of education systems, for example:
 - Restructuring of early childhood education programmes or Higher education

ISCED Review strategy: 4 main activities

- Determine the scope of the review
 - Technical Advisory Panel (TAP)
- Conduct regional and expert consultations for the production of draft recommendations
- Formal consultation with Member States and adopt recommendations at General Conference in 2011
- Communicate results

Outputs and timelines

2008

- A document summarizing all issues was produced

2009

- TAP meeting in Montreal and Paris
- Interim progress report to be presented at the UNESCO GC
- Regional technical meetings on ISCED
- Compile draft recommendations

Outputs and timelines

2010

- Formal world-wide consultation among Member States and partner organizations
- Production of final recommendations
- Validation of the final recommendations by ISCED Technical Advisory Panel

2011

- Submit for approval to UNESCO General Conference
- Communication of recommendations to Member States

Where are we thus far?

Proposals to solve the issues are under discussion and regional meetings will be under-way soon but before we go into details...

Coffee break

ISCED Review: progress thus far (1)

- Technical Advisory Panel has met twice: January and July 2009
 - January results:
 - endorsed review strategy – focus on solving conceptual issues
 - Identified core areas of work
 - July results:
 - Discussion of proposals on core areas
 - Prioritization of topics for 2011

ISCED Review: progress thus far (2)

- Regional ISCED meetings
 - Asia: 15-16 October – Bangkok
 - Europe – OECD: October – Berlin
 - Africa: 22-23 November – Nairobi
 - Arab States: February 2010
 - LAC: February- March 2010
- Objectives
 - Integrate regional views on proposals
 - Identify emerging classification issues, if any
- Participants profile
 - Experts on core areas and familiarity with ISCED

ISCED Review: proposals main points (1)

- ISCED 0 and ECCE
 - Operationalize the ‘educational properties’ of a programme
- Redefinition of ISCED 4-5-6
 - Delineate borders clearly
 - Distinguish between BA and MA
 - Key criteria: programme duration and position in the national structure
 - Label: Post-secondary or tertiary education?
 - How to include the notion of “vocational” in “tertiary” education

ISCED Review: proposals main points (2)

- ISCED 2 -3
 - Structure depends on results of higher levels (“new” ISCED 4, 5, 6)
 - Orientation and destination dimensions will be simplified
- Educational Attainment
 - Review of the definition
 - Better comparability internationally
- TVET and NFE
 - Review definitions for 2011
 - Further work planned for after 2011 (better coverage of TVET and classification of NFE)

UIS welcomes your comments

- ISCED current structure (pre-primary to tertiary education – 7 levels)
- Review classification issues
 - Overlapping criteria
 - Better programme distinction at higher levels
 - Operationalization of current criteria (e.g. educational properties in ISCED 0)
- ISCED review activities

Useful Links

UIS website: www.uis.unesco.org – education -
ISCED

ISCED Mappings:

www.uis.unesco.org/publications/iscedmaps

Contact:

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Thank you!

Gracias

Merci

Obrigado!

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