Green Room Event 22: Sustainability Innovations and Solutions
Environmental Education for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Time 5:00pm - 6:30pm | Date: 26 May | Venue: UNoN Conference Room 14

Background
- The session which attracted over 200 participants, built awareness, interest and support for UNEP's role in building capacity for Environmental Education (EE), as a key driver to the achievement of a sustainable future, as articulated by the UN SDGs;
- The UNEA-1 President, GUPES Chair and speakers appreciated the UNEA2/3 Resolution: "*Investing in human capacity for sustainable development through environmental education and training*";
- The event recognised UNEP's **innovative approaches for disseminating knowledge** including massive open online courses (MOOCs); emphasized the **need for increased environmental education partnerships and networks** through the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES), increased South-South and South-North partnerships amongst Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and enabling conditions for academic exchanges and knowledge sharing; and the **need for Sustainability assessments** that take into consideration best indicators and methodologies.

Opening Session
- ➢ **Rui Zhang (*UNEP-EETU*)** congratulated member states for passing the UNEA resolutions "*Investing in human capacity for sustainable development through environmental education and training*" proposed by Mongolia and Georgia; and highlighted the need for integrated knowledge approaches coupled with innovative systems thinking to address SDG challenges;
- ➢ **Wu Jiang (*GUPES Chair and Vice President of Tongji University*)** stressed on the importance of EE as a driver to sustainable development (SD); and acknowledged UNEP's efforts in fast tracking environmental awareness in HEIs through GUPES;
- ➢ **Jane Nishida (*Assistant Administrator, US Environment Protection Agency - EPA*)** congratulated UNEA member states for passing the UNEA2 Resolution on EE; highlighted the need for youth to embrace sustainable consumption patterns and be actively engaged in ecosystem and wildlife protection; and emphasized the need for Government and Stakeholders partnerships on SDGs. She introduced the Global Environmental Education Partnership (GEEP) and invited delegates to launch of GEEP Africa at the University of Nairobi on 27th May, 2016 (GEEP Africa launch report);

Panel Discussions
- ➢ **Brian Waswala (*UNEP-EETU*)** gave opening remarks, welcome the panelists and opened the session:
Session 1: Innovations for mainstreaming environmental education
- ➢ **Peter Stoett (*Cambodia University, Canada*)** stressed the need for integrated waste management through innovative solutions and efficiency, as avenues of contributing to the SDGs;
- ➢ **Robert Beachemin (*KnowledgeOne CEO, Canada*)** reiterated the importance of innovative e-learning platforms such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS) as approaches of fast-tracking information dissemination the achievement of SDGs;

- **Simone Sandholz (*Cologne University of Applied Science, Germany*)** underscored the need for institutional linkages in addressing ecosystem management and disaster risk reduction, citing the first MOOC on Disasters and Ecosystems: resilience in a Changing Climate. The MOOC developed by CNRD and UNEP involved over 13,000 participants from 189 countries; and
- **Angus Mackay (*UN CC:Learn Secretariat, UNITAR*)** echoed the need for innovative learning approaches and partnerships as avenues of building capacity for SDGs. He cited the UN CC Learn platform which offers interdisciplinary education, training and public awareness on Climate Change.

Session 2 and 3: Partnerships for environmental education and Assessment of Sustainability
- **Mohamed Djelid (*UNESCO Regional Office for East Africa*)** stressed the need for measurement of learning outcomes towards achievements of the SDG including equity in education and its impact on developments of stainabilities. He called for the partnerships that would ensure articulation of SDGs in formal education starting at the primary level;
- **Ola Goransson (*UNDESA Division for Sustainable Development*)** advocated for achievements of SGDs through active stakeholder participation geared towards 2030 Agenda, and the role of HESI;
- **Judy Braus (*Executive Director, NAAEE*)** and **Ginger Porter (*US Environment Protection Agency*)** called for increased EE collaboration and partnership in the advancement of environmental literacy and civic engagement, prerequisites for a sustainable future, citing the North American Association for Environmental Education and the Global Environmental Education Partnership;
- **Anna Gorner (*Centre for International Postgraduate Studies of Environmental Management, TU Dresden, Germany*)** highlighted the UNEP/UNESCO/BMUB International Postgraduate-Program in Environmental Management for Developing and Emerging Countries;
- **Carteron Jean-Christophe (*SuLiTest Manager, KEDGE Business School, France*)** illustrated the Sustainability Literacy Test, a practical tool that evaluates levels of education performance by instilling entails knowledge and changing mindsets, essential for the achievement of the SDGs; and
- **Bob Jickling (*Lakehead University, Canada*)** stressed the need for EE and Ethics, as a core value.

Way Forward
- **Mahesh Pradhan (*former Chief of UNEP-EETU and currently with UNEP-IETC*)** provided a summary of the discussions, and provided a few pointers on the way forward:
- ✓ Need for better understanding of EE, to support sustainability solutions and the effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- ✓ Promotion of innovative approaches in mainstreaming EE; such as UNEP's new MOOC: Wicked Problems, Dynamic Solutions: The Ecosystem Approach and Systems Thinking;
- ✓ Increased exchange and sharing of information on upcoming training opportunities, e.g. UNEP, CIPSEM, UN:CCLEARN, GEEP, NAAEE, etc. through GUPES and other mechanisms;
- ✓ Strengthening national and regional University networks, and increased interaction amongst environmental education professionals, through UNEP's global GUPES network;
- ✓ Promotion of SuLiTest as a means to evaluate levels of sustainability thinking at Universities; and
- ✓ Enhancing partnerships for the effective implementation of the new UNEA2 resolution on EE.