Eye on Environmental Education Special Initiative (EoEESI) Breakout Session
Education for Sustaining the Planet
Date: 8 October | Time: 11:00hrs – 12:30hrs | Abu Dhabi

Background: The session focused on enhancing better use data for decision making through education and training programs.

Summary: The session which attracted over 100 participants, provided overview of global trends in education as a cross-cutting pillar and how it relates to sustainable development and data driven decision-making, especially SDG 4, target 7 (environmental education); the achievements of the EoEESI through its seed-funded projects; showcased the In-Service ICT Training for Environmental Professionals (ISEPEI); and charted a future vision of the EoEESI, based on a variety of stakeholder perspectives, from a range of geographical areas and across a range of sectors.

➢ **Viktor Lagutov (*EoEESI Chair; Central European University*)** gave opening remarks urged the SI to actively engage in training and cooperation to better use data for decision making;

➢ **Mahesh Pradhan (*UNEP*)** highlighted the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES) network and its role in championing environmental education, training and networking;

➢ **Emily Nilson (*Central European University*)** showcased the ISEPEI initiative, science-policy interphase between environmental practitioners and data developers. She highlighted capacity building water security technologies such as remote sensing and GIS applications;

➢ **Gayatri Raghwa (*EAD*)** challenged higher education institutions (HEIs) to actively generate data essential for decision making as an avenue to address sustainability challenges. She presented EAD's Sustainable Schools Initiative in which students conducted green school audits in the UAE;

➢ **Ashoka Finley (*Ecocity Builders*)** challenged participants and the global community to use every available platform to make actual positive changes in their communities;

➢ **Ed Parsons (*Google*)** called for increased capacity development for citizens to utilize ICT devices as platform for data supply, which in turn can help in problem solving;

➢ **Marcos Silva (*CITES*)** urged participants to bridge information technology with traditional learning-by-doing through human interaction;

➢ **Brian Waswala (*EoEESI Facilitator; UNEP*)** underscored the need for behavior change and developing training material on environmental data demand, especially for developing countries.

Panel discussion: Participants emphasized on the roles of academic institutions, especially HEIs in creating '*enabling conditions interfaces*' between data demand and supply for sustainability; the need to promote and instill environmental best practices and behavior change; active research increasing the global knowledge base across every aspect of sustainability; and use data to instill agency for behavioral change.

Way Forward

i. Use HEIs and citizen science to fill environmental and social sustainable development data gaps;
ii. Launch the Arab States Greening Universities Network (ASGUN) in June 2016;
iii. Develop a sustainability dashboard for green university campus;
iv. Design and develop MOOCs to support the UNEP and Eye on Earth work programs; and
v. Increase collaboration and membership into the GUPES network and the EoEESI