

Committee of the Permanent Representatives  
Subcommittee meeting  
Nairobi, 2 May 2024  
09:00 – 12:00 and 13.00 – 16:00 (GMT+3)  
Hybrid meeting  
Conference Room 2 (in person)  
and Microsoft Teams (online)

**Agenda item 7: Briefing on the new UNEP Youth and Education Programme.**

This background document has been developed by the Secretariat to brief the Committee on UNEP's four-year cross-divisional education and youth programme that seeks to enhance knowledge and build mindsets and skillsets of young people through formal and non-formal environmental education systems as well as through youth reaching entities.

Following the presentation, the Committee is invited to hear about the plans for the coming years, to share feedback and join a discussion around how this could support Member States' needs, and, how to support the scale up of this work at the request of Member States.

## **Background Document: A briefing on the new UNEP Youth and Education Programme.**

### ***1. Objectives***

- Brief the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s youth work and education work.
- Share feedback and join a discussion around how this could support Member State's needs, and, how to support the scale up of this work, at the request of member states.

### ***2. Background***

This background document has been developed to present the Committee with the content of the new UNEP Youth and Education Project (2024-2027) that seeks to enhance knowledge, build mindsets and skillsets of young people through formal and non-formal environmental education systems as well as through youth reaching entities.

The new Youth and Education programme was formulated off the back Education Programme 319.1 and was the result of 28 consultations across all divisions and regions, with external inputs from other UN agencies and partners. It is a cross-divisional programme that is hosted in the Ecosystems Division and sits under the Finance and Economic Programme.

### ***3. Relationship to UNEP's Programme of Work***

With the global youth population projected to increase to 1.3 billion by 2030 and UNEP's mission "*to inspire, inform, and enable nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations,*" the new project is a critical addition to enable successful implementation of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2025. It also seeks to support the following:

- 1) The achievement of SDGs 4, 8, 10, 12, 13 and supports partners in doing the same. It also contributes to multilateral agreements, such as the Global Biodiversity Framework target 16 on sustainable consumption choices and improving education.
- 2) It directly contributes to the implementation of UNEA 2/3 resolution to 'invest in human capacity for sustainable development through environmental education and training' and resolution 6/11 of UNEA 6 on sustainable lifestyles.
- 3) It aligns with UNEP's new Delivery Model Policy that enhances strategic focus towards the SDGs and integration across UNEP's strategic objectives around nature, climate and pollution.
- 4) It supports the corporate requirement to improve UNEP's compliance with the Secretary General's UN-system wide Youth 2030 Strategy, UNGA 76/306 resolution on the UN Youth Office, Our Common Agenda, and the Policy Brief 3 on meaningful youth engagement.
- 5) It responds to the interest from some member states and increasing demand from youth for meaningful engagement and quality environmental education. It should also be noted that while this work will support the objectives of the Children and Youth Major Group accredited observers and engaged across many of UNEP projects and programmes already, it is the programmatic intervention of UNEP and does not include their work and will seek to have a focus on young

women and girls who are likely to be more severely affected because of a lack of access to education opportunities, skills and vocational training.

#### **4. Programmatic overview**

Across the organisation, there are more than 30 on-going youth related initiatives and activities that include publications, campaigns, resource creation, training initiatives and engagement in UN-wide processes. Through its engagement and empowerment of youth via formal and non-formal education, youth reaching entities (sport, video games, music, fashion and film / TV), as well as in environmental projects and policy processes, the goals of this programme include the following:

- **Goal 1:** Inspire education systems to improve green education and skills building for youth. This includes:
  - **Green Jobs and Skills:** UNEP will be working to accelerate the green transition through commitments under the new [Green Jobs for Youth Pact](#), which will include regional efforts through [GO4SDGs](#) and the imminent launch of Green Skills and Learning initiatives in countries across the world.
  - **Greening Education systems:** UNEP will collaborate with UNESCO and other UN agencies and partners to build out the [Greening Education Partnership](#), which seeks to accelerate the greening of schools, curriculum, teacher training and communities.
  - **Engaging Higher Education:** Working with the [Nature Positive Universities Network](#) of 1500 universities to reduce the drawdown on nature, the Race to Zero for Universities to support decarbonisation and testing behaviour change outcomes with the [Little Book of Green Nudges](#) pilot campuses.
- **Goal 2:** Promote sector alliances to advocate for enhanced youth action to tackle the triple planetary crisis by engaging audiences in places where they spend their time. This includes:
  - **Sport:** Transforming the drawdown of sports on nature through the [Sports for Nature](#) initiative which has already seen 55 sports organisations committing to act with [the French and Kenya Governments' seeking to take this agenda forward](#) ahead of Paris 2024.
  - **Tech:** Reaching over 3 billion people, UNEP has been facilitating the video games industry to decarbonise and engage their players to act for the environment through the [Playing for the Planet](#) Alliance which works with some of the biggest studios in the world.
- **Goal 3:** Enhance youth engagement in UN policy processes and increase youth leadership in interventions addressing biodiversity loss, pollution and climate change. This includes:
  - **Showcasing youth leadership:** Platform and showcase youth leadership and the actions they are taking through the [UNEP's Young Champions of the Earth](#) programme and the Changemakers Network.
  - **Meaningful youth engagement:** Other youth facing programmes are being hosted in other Project Documents, such as the [Tide Turners initiative](#) which has seen nearly 950,000 young people from entities such as the Scouts, Girl Guides and other youth movements engaging in a plastic pollution programme in 50 countries around the world.
  - **Meaningful youth engagement:** Expand further on the engagement and participation of the [Children and Youth Major Group](#) across UNEP programmes, which also effectively facilitated the self-organized second [global Youth Environment Assembly \(YEA\)](#) preceding UNEA 6. This culminated in the drafting and submission of the Youth

Declaration to UNEA, underscoring the proactive involvement and advocacy efforts of young voices in environmental matters at the international level.

- **UN coordination:** Continuously exchanging and engaging with Children and Youth Major Group at UNEP and exchange with the UN Youth Office to streamline youth efforts across the wider UN system.
- **Youth engagement:** Scale up Pro-Environmental Youth Engagement at any level of society by undertaking advocacy, communication and outreach activities such as events, social media campaigns and capacity building workshops, often through MEA processes.

The project will actively assist national and sub-national governments, youth reaching entities, higher and further education institutions, private sector to integrate and mainstream youth engagement and advocacy efforts through capacity building and mentoring. Partnerships with other UN entities such as UNICEF, UNESCO and ILO have been built into the design of the work so that those with mandates and capacity to work on this agenda are collaborated with.

The current budget for this programme is US\$5 million, in the coming four years a further US\$6 million will be required to meet the goals of the programme with further funding sought from extra-budgetary sources and thematic funds with the aim of strengthening this portfolio in the next MTS.

#### ***5. Recommendations/relevance for the CPR***

The Committee is invited to take note of the presentation on the Youth and Education Programme with the following shared objectives:

- 1) How can this programme support the needs and interests of member states?
- 2) At member states request, how could the ambition of this work be scaled up?