

Decision 3

Environmental Education for Sustainable Development

The Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean,

Whereas environmental education is a key part of policies for sustainable development, to take care of the planet to understand the causes of environmental degradation processes and its consequences, to propose solutions and to transform values, behaviour and visions towards sustainable development, devoted to poverty eradication, peace, inclusion, respect for multiculturalism, gender equality, participation of youth, sustainable consumption and production, decent work, improving the quality of life and environmental protection;

Recognizing that public demand and social movements in environmental education have increased; however, this has not been accompanied by an equivalent contribution of resources (financial, human, institutional, among others) to meet this increasing demand;

Taking into account the importance of including traditional knowledge and ancestral wisdom in education and training processes to achieve sustainable development;

Considering the need to further expand and strengthen the operational mechanisms of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean, through the active participation of all countries in the region and strengthening the environmental education, public participation and communication units of the Ministries of Environment of the region¹; also promoting greater participation of civil society, academia and the private sector as well as social movements as well as new forms of social organization according to national realities;

Given the guidance on education for sustainable development in the document "The Future We Want" (June 2012) and the "Global Programme of Action for Education for Sustainable Development" coordinated by UNESCO (November 2012);

¹ See VII Iberoamerican Environmental Congress – Lima Declaration (2014): "4 Our will to strengthen the Environmental Training Network of Latin America and the Caribbean coordinated by UNEP and integrated by the Ministries of Environment..."

Given that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” includes the sustainable development goal (SDG) number 4 on "Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning" and its target 7 aims that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development² and that all SDGs are integrated with each other and environmental education is necessary to achieve these SDGs;

Taking into account the adoption of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change which will be applicable to the countries becoming Part and which highlights renewed and urgent commitments so that education and training contribute to enhance the capacity and ability of developing country Parties, in particular countries with the least capacity, such as the least developed countries, and those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, such as small island developing States, to take effective climate change action;

Recognizing that Latin America and the Caribbean is particularly vulnerable to climate change threats; due to, among other reasons, its rich biodiversity and high endemism and highly vulnerable populations living in the coasts, high altitude mountains ecosystems and ecosystems affected by droughts, among others;

Underlining the interconnection between climate change, biodiversity loss, soil erosion, rising sea levels and salinization of coastal areas and that the Convention on Biological Diversity and other multilateral environmental agreements promote the inclusion of these issues in education programmes;

Given that the current review of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development adopted in 2002 in the Plan of Implementation of Johannesburg (within the framework of the World Summit on Sustainable Development) has established “environmental education” and “training of human resources” with renewed goals under the guidance target 5 on "institutional aspects”;

Noting the progress in identifying indicators of environmental sustainability in universities by various countries in the region, the establishment and strengthening of new national university networks and fora on the environment and sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the elaboration of diagnosis on the integration of environmental and sustainability aspects in higher education institutions and their

² Target 7 of SDG 4: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

articulation with ministries of the environment and initiatives such as ARIUSA³ (for its acronym in Spanish) with GUPES⁴ MESCA⁵ initiative;

Whereas in recent years South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation have increased in Latin America⁶, intensifying collaboration, integration and alliances among countries, contributing to institutional and methodological capacities, in different sectors, including environmental education, participation and communication in various sectors of the Latin American and Caribbean population;

Whereas the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean is the only inter-governmental forum for exchange on environmental education at the regional level, formalized more than three decades ago for cooperation between the ministries of environment and other related-sectors, so it is important that decisions taken as commitments by their focal points and endorsed by the environment ministers are part of the institutional framework of each country to serve and strengthen environmental education.

DECIDE

1. **To request UNEP** to systematize the new experiences on environmental education which embrace comprehensive approaches and ascribing these experiences to the Network, for building the future Work Plan 2016-2018.

2. **To request UNEP as Secretariat of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean (ETN-LAC)**, and through the national focal points of the ETN-LAC in the environmental authorities to coordinate the development of the ETN-LAC workplan for the period 2016-2018, including the identification of responsible people, actions, timeline, indicators, necessary financial resources, as well as synergies with other programmes and regional and subregional initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean on environmental education. This Plan should be finalised at the latest within six months and it will include the following guidelines and actions:

a. Promote environmental education and training activities, including topics on sustainable lifestyles, climate change, greenhouse gases emissions, wildlife

³ Alianza de Redes Iberoamericanas de Universidades por la Sustentabilidad y el Ambiente

⁴ GUPES que impulsa el PNUMA significa Alianza Mundial de Universidades sobre Ambiente y Sostenibilidad (*Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability*)

⁵ *Mainstreaming Environment in Caribbean Universities*

⁶ See Report South South Cooperation in Iberoamerica of the General Iberoamerican Secretariat (2015)

- trafficking, solid waste management, chemicals and mercury pollution, disasters risk management, biodiversity, reforestation and forest regeneration, and air quality, sustainable consumption and production partners, amongst other;
- b.** Develop environmental standards and sustainability skills for public servants in all sectors; Strengthen regional dialogue, cooperation and exchange of experience develop common criteria on environmental standards and sustainability skills for public servants in all sectors.
 - c.** Develop attractive information and communication materials for various stakeholders and the public sector, including parliamentarians, decision makers, among others.
 - d.** Develop guidelines on environmental education for local or municipal plans;
 - e.** Deepen monitoring and evaluation systems of environmental education strategies, action plans or alike and on the design of indicators.
 - f.** Continue to promote the active participation of universities of the region in UNEP GUPES initiative, strengthening the relationship with ARIUSA and MESCA; continue the development of national diagnosis on the inclusion of environmental considerations in universities; promote the inclusion of environmental criteria in accreditation systems of higher education institutions, where they are in place; promote inter-faculty dialogues within universities and among national university networks on the environment and sustainability in the framework of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda;
 - g.** Joint actions with UNESCO to strengthen the capacity of educators, trainers and teachers to facilitate learning on the new challenges of sustainable development;
 - h.** Articulate actions with the water and environment-related centres of excellence in the region and the national systems of universities.
 - i.** Expand the scope of the Network to other productive sectors and private sector.
 - j.** Develop technical assistance for capacity building for sustainable development, more innovative approaches to sustainable living and appraisal of the implementation of education plans.
 - k.** Translate from Portuguese into Spanish, and adapted to the context of Latin America of the following courses: (i) sustainable lifestyles; (ii) The child and sustainable consumption; (iii) Sustainable Production and Consumption; (iv) environmental education, social participation and water management; and (v) Environmental Education and Climate Change. (Brazil)
 - l.** Elaboration of a draft South-South cooperation project, to submit to the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, aiming at raising funds for the realization of the educational process on environmental education and climate change (Brazil)

m. A publication on public policy and environmental education in Latin America and the Caribbean (Brazil)

3. To promote access and exchange of information, knowledge, experience and technical resources, as well as South-South cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the areas of environmental education, participation and communication, including intercultural dialogues and knowledge and participating, when applicable, and assisting technically and financially, when it corresponds, regional environmental education congresses. Within the framework of South-South cooperation to promote the establishment of regional working groups of the Environmental Training Network.

4. To strengthen cooperation between UNESCO, UNEP and other agencies and programmes of the United Nations on environmental education and training within the framework of the decisions of the meetings of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, with emphasis on the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) and the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean.

5. To ensure cooperation between the Environmental Training Network and the Regional Council of Government Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production, to identify synergies and jointly contribute to the Sustainable Development Objective number 12 “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns” and the goals of other related ensuring that people, including young people, have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.

6. Join efforts at the national and regional level, to mobilize financial resources, when it corresponds, that enables the implementation and dissemination of environmental education policies, prioritizing them in domestic budgets (ministries of environment, education, industry, planning and economics, among others), in credit operations of national, regional and multilateral banks, and also taking into consideration the relevance of building partnerships with the private sector, civil society, social movements and other forms of social organisation.

7. To identify opportunities for cooperation on environmental education between the Environmental Training Network and the Secretariats of the main multilateral environmental agreements.

8. To welcome initiatives in the region for the development of research programmes, capacity-building, environmental education, and knowledge networks on topics relating to decreasing deforestation and forests degradation, integrated forest management, disasters risk reduction and adaptation to climate change as well as biodiversity and environmental management.

9. To request UNEP a report on the functioning of the Trust Fund of the Environmental Training Network to enable its assessment and definition of strategies to strengthen it, for countries' consideration at the next meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment.

10. To ratify the importance of the annual contribution payment to the Trust Fund of the Environmental Training Network by all Latin America and the Caribbean countries and consider alternatives, like in-kind contributions to ensure the effective implementation of the Network's Work Plan.