

African Environmental Education & Training Action Plan (AEETAP) Review Meeting

Room 10, UNEP HQs, Gigiri
13-14 May 2013



- **Akpezi Ogbuigwe**, Coordinator, Ecosystems Management Sub-programme, welcomed participants and highlighted UNEP’s enhanced engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), focusing on education, training and networking;
- **Mahesh Pradhan**, Chief of UNEP’s Environmental Education and Training Unit, stressed the significance of environmental education for sustainable development, with regards to the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). He highlighted the importance of HEIs to be at the forefront of generating and sharing environmental knowledge to ensure sound environmental management, economic growth and social welfare;
- **David Ombisi**, Regional Office of Africa (UNEP), gave a brief on African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN). He emphasized AMCEN’s decision for a regional environmental education and training action plan as per Para 17 of the Arusha Declaration. Strengthening EE&T initiatives will help implementation of the 5 AMCEN Regional Flagship Programmes (RFPs) in the context of green economies, sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation goals;
- **Charles Sebukeera**, Regional Office of Africa (UNEP) highlighted the sustainability challenges for Africa. Presently, the African environment sustains about 26% of the overall per capita “wealth” in Africa’s low income countries. Increased environmental degradation will lead to increased disease burden and intrastate conflicts and thereby hamper sustainable development. EE was thus fundamental in addressing negative impacts of rapid urbanization, climate change, unsustainable development choices and weak governance on the environmental and social aspects;
- **Gerald Cunningham**, Division of Early Warning and Assessment (UNEP), gave an overview of Mentor – Africa (a Pan African e-learning) platform. The Mentor program has 8 inter-linked work packages which focus on clusters of project outputs. It is presently assessing needs in order to develop comprehensive information, education and communication strategies emphasizing the Rio conventions at national levels across the environment sector; developing strategies to foster collaboration between environment and education sectors (e-learning); enhancing capacity-building and technology support; developing EE content and sharing platforms; and strengthening existing sub-regional hubs and establishing new hubs as appropriate;
- **Heila Lotz-Sisitka**, Murray & Roberts Chair, Professor on Environmental Education and Sustainability, Rhodes University (South Africa) highlighted the need for Mainstreaming EE&T in Africa, building on the MESA platform. She presented a ‘draft zero’ of the EE&T Action Plan, as a follow-up to the Arusha Declaration (AMCEN, September 2012) which agreed to “strengthen EE&T and develop an action plan for Africa”. She noted that the first consultation had taken place in Addis Ababa during the MESA Review Workshop in November last year; this was therefore the second consultation. She mentioned that education budgets often made up some of the largest budget allocations in African countries, with little emphasis on environment and sustainable development issues and concerns.
 - **AAETAP Goal:** *“to strengthen the capacity of African education and training systems, policy makers and citizens to respond to and pro-actively reduce environmental issues and risks and maximise development and poverty alleviation opportunities offered by sustainable development on the African continent”.*
 - **AEETAP Vision:**
 - to strengthen the capacity of formal education institutions and actors to integrate environment and sustainable development concepts, values and action learning approaches into their practices;
 - to strengthen life-long learning and community social learning systems to respond to environmental issues and risks in ways that maximise potential for sustainable development and poverty alleviation;
 - to strengthen the capacity of policy makers, leaders and decision makers to meaningfully integrate ESD concerns into their planning, strategies, policy making and budgeting frameworks;
 - to strengthen networks, technology enhanced learning and other social learning approaches that can further develop the systems of EE&T innovation; and
 - to strengthen the capacity of environmental education, training and social learning facilitators, networks and institutions to support and further develop an expanding system of EE&T on the African continent;

- **Satishkumar Belliethathan**, Coordinator of the Horn of Africa – Regional Environment Centre/Network, Addis Ababa University (Ethiopia) provided an update on Mainstreaming of Environment and Sustainability in Ethiopian Universities (MESE). The multi-faceted program was successful in advocating for sustainable natural resources management in Ethiopia such as Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM), Addis Ababa University (AAU) greening, etc.;
- **Pablo Fuentenebro**, Associate Program Officer, Environmental Education and Training Unit UNEP, shared information on the “Eye on Earth” programme. This has 8 Special Initiatives, one of which was on Environmental Education.

Panel Discussions: Suggestions for Environmental Education Initiatives for Africa included the following:

EE Areas	Potential Activities
Education (formal) – human capital pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Early Childhood Development; Increase development of Early Childhood education centers and include ecological literacy in their programmes ✓ Basic Education; curriculum and policy development; teacher education ✓ Further Education; curriculum and policy development; teacher education ✓ Higher Education; curriculum innovation; professional development; materials contextualisation
Technical Vocational Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Youth development and career guidance programs ✓ Vocational training; including Green Economy transition centres and Training of Trainers ✓ Workplace re-skilling (greening existing economic activities) ✓ Catering for gender, vulnerable communities and groups
Life-long learning and Community Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adult Basic Education and Training ✓ Community education (Communities of Practice development involving NGOs, CBOs and other social learning facilitators) ✓ Life –long learning system opportunities, including e-learning platforms ✓ Mobilisation of Indigenous Knowledge where relevant for sustainable development practices ✓ Promotion of green economy conversion centres at community level
Capacity Building and Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policy Makers short course programme ✓ Strengthening of network structures and processes & Social Learning in Communities of Practice ✓ South-South / South-North co-operation ✓ Research and transfer of knowledge ✓ Monitoring and Evaluation ✓ Infrastructure – universities ✓ Embrace modern and relevant technology ✓ Workplace environmental policies

To achieve these potential activities, the following cross cutting system elements were suggested: Educational policy development and implementation; Curriculum and programme design; Training of trainers and facilitators; Materials and EE content development; Technology enhanced learning; and Periodic assessment of practices.

Implementation Modalities:

- To build on and expand existing practices and share knowledge of these across regions and sub-regions (within Regional Economic Community structures);
- Inventory and baseline information on EET programmes and institutions and creation of a database of stakeholders involved in providing EE&T programmes within member states (commencing in 2014);
- Enhancement of EE & Training, Informal/Community development and Capacity Building/Networking within a timeline of 10 years (2015-2025);
- Active policy formulation and compulsory mainstreaming training courses for environment and natural resource managers (implementation of national white papers / policies for environment and sustainability programs);
- Promotion of national/regional EE synergies i.e. environment, health, agriculture, climate change and attitude change;
- Increased EE content, network information hubs, e.g. MENTOR – Africa and exchange trainings/programs and universities;
- Creation of more EET Centres of Excellence and associated e-learning centres and centres which demonstrate implementation of green initiatives / economy concepts;
- Enhanced private sector engagement and professional development;
- Mobilisation and use of relevant EE indigenous knowledge (IK) and early childhood development programs for non-formal / informal institutions to enhance environmental resilience;
- Expand and upgrade existing good practices;
- Promotion of EE and ESD Training of Trainer models for increased multiplier effect;
- Increased South-South and North-South co-operation on EE and ESD.

*The AEEETAP Review Meeting was attended by nearly 30 participants.
The next consultations in preparation of the AEEETAP will take place on the margins of the
7th World Environmental Education Congress, scheduled during 9 – 14 June 2013 in Marrakesh, Morocco.*