

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday 23 April 2020
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Online meeting

Background Document for Agenda Item 3:

Implementation of UNEA resolution 2/3 - Investing in human capacity for sustainable development through environmental education and training

This note serves as a background document for consideration under Agenda Item 3: Implementation of UNEA resolution 2/3 - Investing in human capacity for sustainable development through environmental education and training. It provides a progress update on the implementation of [UNEA resolution 2/3](#) entitled “Investing in human capacity for sustainable development through environmental education and training”.

Member States are invited to provide guidance and feedback on progress report, including with regard to the planned future priorities.

Environmental Education with Formal and Non-Formal Education Partners

Background Note for the meeting of the CPR subcommittee on 23 April 2020

Introduction:

Outlined below is a short background briefing for members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on the current state and proposed future direction of the Environmental Education portfolio of work within the UN Environment Programme, which is targeting both formal and non-formal education partners. The aim of the background briefing is to update member States on the progress of the work, particularly relating to the [UNEA resolution 2/3](#), and to outline the next steps around this initiative. The work of this Unit is hosted in the Ecosystems Division, but is carried out in collaboration with colleagues in the Governance Affairs Unit, Science Division, the Economy Division and the Communications Division.

Objectives of the discussion at the meeting of the subcommittee:

- 1) **To outline the status of this programme:** To provide an update on the implementation of this stream and provide the opportunity for Member States to provide feedback / guidance.
- 2) **To explore how to best provide adequate support to member States within the programme:** To understand how UN Environment can best support member states on the delivery of Education for Sustainable Development, particularly in the domain of Higher Education and Non-Formal Education.

Alignment with the strategic objectives:

This area of work on Environmental Education is aligned to the following UNEA resolutions, Sustainable Development Goals and to the UNEP Programme of Work 2018-2021, as follows:

- UNEA 2/3 resolution which asks UNEP to ‘invest in human capacity for sustainable development through environmental education and training’.
- Sustainable Development Goal target 4.7 which calls on the need to “ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development” and 12.8 “by 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature” as well as circular economy and ecosystems related SDGs, namely, SDG 6, 8, 12, 14, 15 and 17.
- UNEP Programme of Work, Sub-programme 3 - “Healthy and Productive Ecosystems” and 6 – “Resource Efficiency”, with two specific implementation indicators related to integration of ecosystems approach into education frameworks and promotion of sustainable lifestyles.
- In addition, the [UN Youth Strategy](#) calls on the UN to support Member States and other partners in enhancing the capacity of the green economy to create more and better employment opportunities for young people, in wage and self-employment.

Cooperation with UNESCO in response to the Coronavirus pandemic:

As a result of Coronavirus, over 1.5 billion youth are unable to access school or higher education. In response to this crisis, UNEP will be working with UN Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in joining their [Global Education Coalition](#) alongside 70 governments who have engaged in this initiative together with some of the biggest technology platforms and partners in education and communications.

There is a significant concern that the social and economic impact of the Coronavirus will lead to many girls being forced to leave schools and Universities, as educational institutions may have to cut back on their teaching and their sustainability commitments. As an immediate response, UNEP will be launching a project called “Earth School” in partnership with networks such as TED.Ed, WWF, National Geographic, IUCN and others that will offer a range of lessons for 30 days running from April 22 (Earth Day) to June 5 (World Environment Day) which will aggregate some of the best environmental education content for teachers, parents and pupils to engage in. UNEP would welcome the support of the CPR in supporting this initiative.

Decade for Delivery:

By 2030 it is estimated that nearly 380 million students will be enrolled in higher education worldwide, with the most significant growth in student population occurring in developing countries, especially China and India. In Latin America and the Caribbean higher education rates are also increasing rapidly although completion rates are low in the region due to prolonged studies and high drop-out rates. Working with youth

movements, NGOs and the video gaming industry is an opportunity for UNEP to reach billions of young people and contribute to the delivery of SDG 4.7 and UNEA resolution 2/4 to support youth in acquiring the skills for Sustainable Development.

Planned future priorities for the programme:

1) Policy and convening:

- **Policy Dialogue:** Facilitate inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral dialogue on climate, education and labour market policies with partners such as UNESCO, with a focus on [Education for Sustainable Development 2030](#), and with UNFCCC on implementing their work on [Action for Climate Empowerment](#) programme to secure actions on education as part of the COP26 Nationally Declared Contributions;
- **Advocacy for Green Jobs for Youth:** Make greener jobs attractive to young people, particularly around green infrastructure, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and ecosystems restoration through major technology partners in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the Programme of Action for the Green Economy (PAGE) as well as with information technology/social media partners such as LinkedIn;
- **Meaningful Engagement for Youth:** Together with the Governance Affairs Office Civil Society Unit, support meaningful youth engagement for young people at high level meetings such as the High Level Political Forum, the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly and the 26 Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC.

2) Formal Education

- **Advocacy for Environmental Education:** Facilitate and work with student associations and environmental student clubs to improve the integration of environmental education as a crosscutting discipline;
- **The Little Book of Green Nudges on Campus:** In 2020, UNEP will provide new guidance for universities to trigger behavioral changes through “green nudges” (e.g. Sustainable diet, food waste, plastic use);
- **Greening Campuses:** Establish a Normative Green Campus Framework to help higher education institutions to create new networks to promote greener campuses in Kenya, India and in other developing countries;
- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with key universities and youth networks (Youth and Education Alliance and beyond) to deliver innovative joint activities that meet the priorities of UNEP and to scale them up with networks representing about 2,300 Universities, and share best practices and lessons learned with the “[Higher Education Sustainability Initiative](#)” which is chaired by UNEP.
- **Higher Education Climate Action:** UNEP is [working with networks representing 17,000 higher education institutions](#) to support climate change research and skills creation, to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest and to expand the delivery of environmental and sustainability education across curriculum, campus and community outreach programmes.

3) Non-Formal Education

- **Collaborating with the Scouts, Girl Guides and Junior Achievement:** Working with large youth networks with a total membership of 90 million, to integrate the SDGs and Environmental Education into their curriculum and value propositions with a new “Earth Tribe” platform which will aggregate all of their environmental badges and curriculum on one platform for 2020.
- **Playing for the Planet:** UNEP has facilitated the creation of the [Playing for the Planet Alliance](#) of video gaming companies to support the decarbonization of gaming platforms for consoles and mobiles, integrate “green nudges” in games. For example through a new “Green Game Jam” currently being run with 10 major gaming companies and support on specific initiatives (e.g. ecosystem restoration). In total, UNEP is partnering with 25 major gaming companies that reach 980 million gamers, with the aim to improve environmental awareness among their audiences and clients. This programme is being supported by Finland.
- **Tide Turners Plastic Challenge Badge:** Supported with funds from the UK and Sweden, [this programme has empowered 100,000 youth to be grow their knowledge](#) and shift behaviors and practice around plastic pollution by training young people in Scouts, Girls Guides, Junior Achievement and other youth associations to take actions around plastics in 15 developing countries around the world.