



Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

**Batumi, Georgia
8–10 June 2016**

Report of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

Addendum

Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development

**adopted by the High-level Meeting of Education and Environment
Ministries of the region of the United Nations Economic Commission
for Europe**

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Economic Commission for Europe**Eighth Environment for Europe
Ministerial Conference**

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**Report of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial
Conference****Addendum****Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable
Development****adopted by the High-level Meeting of Education and Environment
Ministries of the region of the United Nations Economic Commission
for Europe**

We, ministers responsible for education and the environment from the countries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region meeting in the framework of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Batumi, Georgia,

Recalling the decisions of the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Belgrade in 2007, including the Declaration “Building Bridges to the Future” (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/8) and the Statement on Education for Sustainable Development (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/4/Add.1) made by the ministers of education and environment at the joint session on education for sustainable development, which called for the holding of future ministerial segments on education for sustainable development on a regular basis, preferably under the aegis of the Environment for Europe process, and urging countries to further strengthen efforts for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development at all levels by the end of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014),

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Reconfirming our vision for the future of our region, which embraces common values of solidarity, equality and mutual respect between people, countries and generations and is characterized by sustainable development, including economic vitality, justice, social cohesion, environmental protection and the sustainable management of natural resources,

Reaffirming the statements and commitments made by the ministers of education and environment at the joint session on education for sustainable development of the Belgrade Ministerial Conference and reflected in the Statement adopted there,

Welcoming the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the inclusion of education for sustainable development in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

Recognizing that 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs provide a more comprehensive definition to sustainable development, which education efforts will have to embrace,

Stressing that education is of primary importance for the achievement of the SDGs, to which the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development will substantially contribute,

Recognizing the importance of education for sustainable development as an essential tool for promoting the changes needed to achieve sustainable development, and more specifically in addressing the critical challenges of our region, including poverty eradication, the protection of human rights, disaster risk reduction, accelerating the shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns and addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and water scarcity,

Emphasizing the key role of education for sustainable development in implementing the green economy approach, by providing the necessary educational foundations to help shift mindsets towards sustainable development and addressing key issues for the transition towards a green economy (i.e., raised awareness, increased public participation and sustainable consumption and lifestyle changes), as well as training and reskilling the labour force,

Celebrating the success in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development, taking into consideration the findings of the third evaluation report of the Strategy (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2015/3), in particular, the considerable good practices generated by a wide range of stakeholders in the ECE region, as well as the achievements made on education for sustainable development indicators, whole-institution planning and teacher competences, the important advances made in integrating education for sustainable development in education policy and curricula, as well as aligning education objectives with national sustainable development visions and goals,

Recognizing the central role of the ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development in promoting education for sustainable development in the region through demonstrated successful cooperation between the environment and education sectors, and also recognizing the important contribution of other relevant sectors and stakeholders, especially educators, non-governmental organizations and networks, business, youth and the media,

Emphasizing the importance of continued cooperation between ECE and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in implementing the ECE future implementation framework for education for sustainable development and the UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development, endorsed by the UNESCO General Conference in 2013 (37 C/Resolution 12) as a follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development,

Appreciating the contributions to the Global Action Programme Launch Commitments made by a large number of stakeholders of the ECE region,

Supporting the efforts to strengthen synergies with other global and regional processes aimed at achieving education for sustainable development and sustainable development, including the Environment for Europe process, the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and its Action Plan, the Incheon Declaration of the World Education Forum 2015, the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Doha work programme on article 6, as well as the Paris Agreement adopted at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties, the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians and the 2014 decision by its Conference of the Parties on awareness-raising, education and public participation (COP4/9), and other relevant international, regional and national processes,

Welcoming the recently signed Memorandums of Understanding between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and ECE and between the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and ECE, with a view to providing coherent assistance to member States, reinforcing collaboration on environmental protection, supporting the shift to a green economy and promoting sustainable development, including the implementation of the UNESCO Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development in the region,

Also welcoming the adoption by the United Nations Environment Assembly in May 2016 of a resolution on investing in human capacity for sustainable development through environmental education and training,

Recognizing that the implementation of the Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development is a continuous, long-term, multi-stakeholder and cross-cutting process that provides for a better understanding and enhanced competencies with regard to all aspects of sustainable development,

Taking into account the challenges and needs identified by the ECE member States in their national implementation reports on the Strategy, and acknowledging that some countries, particularly countries with economies in transition, may continue to need support, including donor support, to carry out relevant activities,

1. *Strongly support* the continuation of the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development at the regional level beyond the first decade (2005–2015) of its implementation, aligning the work under the Strategy with the SDGs and the first five-year phase of the Global Action Programme, and its follow-up phases;

2. *Adopt* the framework for the future implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development;

3. *Commit* to continue advancing the three “vertical” priority action areas under the Strategy, taking into account the national or regional educational policies and education systems:

(a) Encouraging whole-institutional approaches by establishing education for sustainable development school plans,¹ or embedding education for sustainable development in existing school plans, for every school by 2019;

(b) Promoting the extension of education for sustainable development in teacher education and in the training of all educators;

(c) Strengthening technical and vocational education and training in support of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy;

¹ School plans or other relevant documents existing in a given national education system.

4. *Also commit* to continue advancing the three “horizontal” priority action areas under the Strategy:

(a) Strengthening the integration of education for sustainable development in both international and national education and sustainable development policies and other relevant processes;

(b) Enhancing synergies between formal, informal and non-formal education;

(c) Acknowledging the important role of networks, including those of local authorities, civil society, academia and science, non-governmental organizations, business and enterprises, in implementing education for sustainable development;

5. *Reiterate* the need to allocate and mobilize substantial national resources to ensure the continuation, development, consolidation and expansion of education for sustainable development, fostering national and local education for sustainable development processes for the implementation of the future framework;

6. *Recognize* the necessity to use education for sustainable development in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular to achieve Goal 4 dedicated to education, and more specifically target 4.7, but also recognizing education for sustainable development as a cross-cutting theme that serves as an efficient tool for the achievement of the other SDGs;

7. *Stress* the need to go further in monitoring the implementation process based on the experience from the previous monitoring and evaluation methodology, and to report on national progress. The future monitoring and evaluation work should be aligned with both the Global Action Programme and the SDG reporting schemes;

8. *Invite* ECE to further strengthen cooperation with UNESCO, the lead agency for the Global Action Programme, as a key partner in the Partnership Network for its implementation, in order to make use of all available synergies, as well as to strengthen cooperation with other relevant international organizations, inter alia, UNEP;

9. *Request* ECE to continue providing secretariat support to further advance education for sustainable development in the region by enhancing, inter alia, collaboration with the networks² in the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development;

10. *Decide* to extend the mandate of the Steering Committee until 2030 and request it to prepare, with the support of the ECE secretariat, a workplan and budget for the implementation of the Strategy for a period covering the next four years. This should include targeted assistance activities, taking into account the results of the final evaluation report on the implementation of the Strategy, as well as needs identified by the subregional and national capacity-building activities held in South-Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Mediterranean and those expressed by the member States;

11. *Invite* stakeholders as well as bilateral and multilateral donors to continue contributing to and supporting the implementation process;

12. *Reconfirm* that future ECE ministerial high-level meetings on education for sustainable development should be held on a regular basis, preferably at the Environment for Europe conferences, as appropriate, which provide a broad framework bringing together a wide range of stakeholders.

² European network of the Man and Biosphere Programme and the relevant sites of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the World Heritage Sites, the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Chairs and the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network.