



United Nations  
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UNESCO

# Roadmap

for Implementing the Global Action Programme on

**Education for Sustainable Development**



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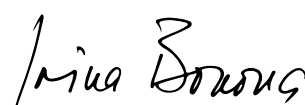
# Foreword

Today's interconnected global challenges demand responses that are rooted in the spirit of our collective humanity. I believe that the risks and opportunities we face call for a paradigm shift that can only be embedded in our societies through education and learning. The role of education as a catalyst for building a better and more sustainable future for all has gained increasing recognition, leading to the declaration of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in 2005. This commitment gained further strength when Member States pledged to promote Education for Sustainable Development beyond the end of the Decade at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development – Rio+20.

To build on achievements and create new momentum when the UN Decade closes in 2014, UNESCO, as the lead agency of the Decade, has developed a Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development. Based on broad consultations and input from a wide range of stakeholders, the Programme was endorsed by the UNESCO General Conference in 2013. It comes at a time when the international community is charged with proposing a new set of sustainable development goals that are action-oriented, global in nature and universally applicable. As a follow-up to the Decade, the Global Action Programme is also designed as a concrete, tangible contribution to the post-2015 development and education agendas.

The Global Action Programme comes with a detailed implementation Roadmap. It is intended for all stakeholders – Governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, media, the academic and research community, intergovernmental organizations and other relevant institutions that facilitate and support learning and training, all the way to individual teachers and learners. The Roadmap explains the Programme's goal, objectives and priority action areas in order to enable strategic focus and stakeholder commitment, together with implementation and monitoring strategies.

I hope that the Global Action Programme, to be launched at the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan (November 2014), will succeed in mobilising the community of stakeholders for Education for Sustainable Development and provide practical guidance for its effective implementation. We all have a deep stake in its success.



Irina Bokova  
Director-General of UNESCO

# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
A Better Tomorrow Begins Today	8
From the Decade of ESD to the Global Action Programme	9
Charting a Common Vision	10
Understanding ESD	12
<b>Roadmap</b>	<b>13</b>
Goal and Objectives	14
Priority Action Areas	15
Strategies	26
Mechanisms	27
Resources	28
Monitoring and Evaluation	29
<b>Annex:</b>	
Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development as follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development after 2014 (UNESCO 37 C/Resolution 12)	<b>31</b>

# Introduction

A photograph of a sandy beach with waves breaking in the distance under a clear blue sky. The foreground shows the texture of the sand, and the background features the ocean and a bright, clear sky.

# A Better Tomorrow Begins Today

Rapid, sweeping, and long-lasting change is altering our planet's environment in an unprecedented manner, while societies are undergoing profound shifts in their demographic makeup and social and economic fabrics. Political agreements, financial incentives or technological solutions alone do

*Political agreements, financial incentives or technological solutions alone do not suffice to grapple with the challenges of sustainable development.*

not suffice to grapple with the challenges of sustainable development. It will require a wholesale change in the way we think and the way we act – a rethink of how we relate to one another and how we interact with the ecosystems that support our lives. To create a world that is more just, peaceful and sustainable, all individuals and societies must be equipped and empowered by knowledge, skills and values as well as be instilled with a heightened awareness to drive such change. This is where education has a critical role to play. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is about shaping a better tomorrow for all – and it must start today.

# From the Decade of ESD to the Global Action Programme

In 2005, the United Nations (UN) Decade of ESD was launched to enhance the role of education in promoting sustainable development. It has generated many success stories to be scaled up, with many intergovernmental agreements on sustainable development now duly recognizing the importance of education. At the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio+20), the international community agreed to “promote education for sustainable development, and to integrate sustainable development more actively into education beyond the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development” (paragraph 233). UNESCO, as the designated lead agency for the Decade, has played a major role, along with its partners, in bringing about the key achievements of the Decade.

There is now a growing international recognition of ESD as an integral element of quality education and a key enabler for sustainable development. Both the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global Education For All Meeting (GEM) in 2014 and the proposal for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the Open Working Group of the UN General Assembly on SDGs (OWG) include ESD in the proposed targets for the post-2015 agenda.

In 2013, the 37th session of the General Conference of UNESCO endorsed the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD as the follow-up to the Decade (37 C/Resolution 12, see Annex). Building on the achievements of the Decade, the GAP aims to generate and scale up concrete actions in ESD. The present Roadmap communicates the GAP endorsed by UNESCO Member States to decision-makers, stakeholders and actors, and provides suggestions for the implementation of the GAP, as well as details on UNESCO’s role.

*There is now a growing international recognition of ESD as an integral element of quality education and a key enabler for sustainable development.*



# Charting a Common Vision

Education for Sustainable Development is closely tied into the international discussions on sustainable development, which have grown in scale and importance since 'Our Common Future' appeared in 1987, providing the first widely-used definition of sustainable development.

## International commitments relevant to ESD

1987

**'Our Common Future'** (Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, also known as the Brundtland Report) defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

1992

The **United Nations Conference on Environment and Development** (Rio Summit, Earth Summit)

Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 consolidated international discussions on the critical role of education, training and public awareness in achieving sustainable development.

2002

**World Summit on Sustainable Development** (Johannesburg Summit, Rio+10)

A proposal for the **Decade of Education for Sustainable Development** was included in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The United Nations General Assembly, at its 57th session in December 2002, adopted a resolution to start the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) from January 2005.

2012

The **United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development** (Rio +20)

The international community resolved to "promote education for sustainable development and to integrate sustainable development more actively into education beyond the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" (paragraph 233 of the Future We Want).

2013

The **Global Action Programme on ESD**

endorsed by the UNESCO General Conference as a follow up to the DESD.

2014

ESD included as a target in the **Muscat Agreement** adopted at the Global Education For All

Meeting (GEM) and in the proposal for **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) adopted by the Open Working Group (OWG).

2014

**UNESCO World Conference on ESD**

launches the Global Action Programme on ESD.

2015

The **World Education Forum** (Incheon, Republic of Korea) is expected to take into account the outcomes of the 2014 World Conference on ESD.

To date, ESD has been integrated into many global frameworks and conventions related to key areas of sustainable development.



### **Climate change**

Article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and its work programmes



### **Biodiversity**

Article 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and its work programmes



### **Disaster risk reduction**

Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015:  
Building the Resilience of Nations and  
Communities to Disasters



### **Sustainable consumption and production**

Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme of  
the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable  
Consumption and Production 2012-2021

# Understanding ESD

ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning, and is an integral part of quality education. ESD is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society.

## Dimensions of ESD



**Learning content:** Integrating critical issues, such as climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and sustainable consumption and production (SCP), into the curriculum.



**Pedagogy and learning environments:** Designing teaching and learning in an interactive, learner-centred way that enables exploratory, action-oriented and transformative learning. Rethinking learning environments – physical as well as virtual and online – to inspire learners to act for sustainability.



**Learning outcomes:** Stimulating learning and promoting core competencies, such as critical and systemic thinking, collaborative decision-making, and taking responsibility for present and future generations.



**Societal transformation:** Empowering learners of any age, in any education setting, to transform themselves and the society they live in.

- Enabling a transition to greener economies and societies.
  - Equipping learners with skills for 'green jobs'.
  - Motivating people to adopt sustainable lifestyles.
- Empowering people to be 'global citizens' who engage and assume active roles, both locally and globally, to face and to resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to creating a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world.

# Roadmap

An aerial photograph of a winding road through a dense forest. The road is a light gray color, curving from the bottom left towards the top right. The surrounding forest is a mix of green and brown, suggesting a mix of tree types and possibly some dry areas. The overall scene is captured from a high angle, looking down on the road and the surrounding landscape.

# Goal and Objectives

The GAP contributes to achieving the vision put forward by the Decade of ESD: “a world where everybody has the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation”.

The overarching goal of the GAP is “to generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education and learning to accelerate progress towards sustainable development”.

The GAP will deploy a two-fold approach to multiply and to scale up ESD action: (1) integrating sustainable development into education and (2) integrating education into sustainable development. Corresponding to this overall approach, the Programme has two objectives.

**Objective 1** “to reorient education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development”

**Objective 2** “to strengthen education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development”

The GAP is intended as a concrete, tangible contribution to the post-2015 agenda. The implementation of the GAP will be fully aligned with the implementation of the post-2015 agenda.

The GAP will devote special emphasis to groups that are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and unsustainable development.

**Girls and women** play an important role as drivers of sustainable development. They must be fully engaged in making decisions, shaping policy, and creating programmes on ESD. Targeting girls and women through the GAP will also contribute to the post-2015 agenda, which aims to tackle their persistent exclusion and inequality through their empowerment, while promoting inclusive and sustainable growth and decent employment.

**Small Island Developing States** (SIDS) are among the countries hardest hit by climate change. These countries are dealing with rising sea levels and climate extremes, such as more powerful hurricanes that endanger tourism, fishing, and other livelihoods. Effective ESD in SIDS must consider not only enhancing disaster preparedness and instilling sustainability values through education, but also increasing the economic participation of working-age students and graduates. Unemployment rates remain high across many SIDS, especially rates for youth, which is of great concern.

**Africa** is one of the continents most vulnerable to climate change. The continent is expected to face more frequent droughts, desertification, and more intense storms. Sea levels are rising in low-lying coastal areas, where large numbers of poor people tend to live, areas considered the most susceptible to climate change impacts. ESD can help address several major needs in the region, especially by developing greater synergies between school and community and re-aligning education with local contexts.

# Priority Action Areas

To enable strategic focus and foster stakeholder commitment, the GAP has identified five priority action areas to advance the ESD agenda.

## **PRIORITY ACTION AREA 1**

**Advancing policy:** Mainstream ESD into both education and sustainable development policies, to create an enabling environment for ESD and to bring about systemic change

## **PRIORITY ACTION AREA 2**

**Transforming learning and training environments:** Integrate sustainability principles into education and training settings

## **PRIORITY ACTION AREA 3**

**Building capacities of educators and trainers:** Increase the capacities of educators and trainers to more effectively deliver ESD

## **PRIORITY ACTION AREA 4**

**Empowering and mobilizing youth:** Multiply ESD actions among youth

## **PRIORITY ACTION AREA 5**

**Accelerating sustainable solutions at local level:** At community level, scale up ESD programmes and multi-stakeholder ESD networks

## Advancing policy

Whether it's reducing greenhouse gas emissions or charting a national green skills development strategy, more often than not current policy approaches are not comprehensive enough to have real impact. Bringing about systemic change will only happen with relevant and coherent policies designed by ministries, coming together and engaging with the private sector, local communities, academics, and civil society. At present, efforts to develop policies on ESD based on cross-sector and multi-stakeholder approaches have shown early promise, but these efforts need to be further coordinated and bolstered.

### Examples

- ▶ National governments include ESD in national quality standards and indicator frameworks that establish standards for learning outcomes
- ▶ National governments, development banks, international NGOs, and UN agencies include ESD in global agreements on sustainable development



**Actions** in this Priority Action Area include integrating ESD into international and national policies on education and sustainable development. The Ministries of Education around the globe have an important responsibility to ensure that education systems are prepared for, and responsive to, existing and emerging sustainability challenges. This includes, among others, integrating ESD into curricula and national quality standards, and developing relevant indicator frameworks that establish standards for learning outcomes. ESD needs to be seen as an important contributor to educational quality, and included in national education system measures of quality.

ESD is not simply about strengthening the education sector response to sustainable development. National and international strategies dealing with the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, ranging from disaster management plans to low carbon development strategies, should include ESD as a means of implementation. ESD should also become a systematic part of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation frameworks.



**Expected outcomes** include ESD integrated into sub-national, national, sub-regional, regional and international policy frameworks, plans, strategies, programmes and processes related to education and to sustainable development.



**Main stakeholders** in this Priority Action Area are policymakers in both the education and the sustainable development sectors.

First and foremost, stakeholders in education need to set out policies and agendas to integrate ESD into the various processes and structures of the sector. These education stakeholders need to allocate and to mobilise resources to translate these policies into actions, especially building necessary capacity at national and sub-national levels.

Policymakers working in climate change, disaster risk reduction, sustainable consumption and production, biodiversity, and other sustainability challenges are invited to recognise and to adopt ESD to tackle these issues. They can invest their efforts in supporting inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder coordination and collaboration, where education is an integral part of discussions on sustainable development.

Civil society organisations, such as community groups, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), associations, unions, and foundations, also have an important role to play in advancing ESD policy. They can urge governments to take the necessary actions, or they can pursue their own initiatives to complement the actions of the public sector, bridging the gap between policy and practice.

Last but not least, inter-governmental bodies, agencies and institutions working at sub-regional, regional or international level are also crucial for this Priority Action Area. They should integrate ESD into their agendas and mandates on sustainability. They should also encourage their Member States to do their part in efforts at country level.



## PRIORITY ACTION AREA 2

# Transforming learning and training environments

ESD is about much more than preaching and teaching on sustainable development. It is also about practicing sustainable development. Sustainable learning environments, such as eco-schools or green campuses, allow educators and learners alike to integrate sustainability principles into their daily practice. Transforming learning and training environments concerns not only managing physical facilities more sustainably, but also changing the ethos and governance structure of the whole institution. The second Priority Action Area calls for promoting whole-institution approaches to ESD in schools and all other learning and training settings.

### Examples

- ▶ Schools develop a school sustainability plan in partnership with the broader community
- ▶ Universities incorporate sustainability into campus operations, governance, policy and administration



**Actions** in this Priority Action Area include developing a vision and a plan to implement ESD in the dedicated learning and training environment, in partnership with the broader community. Institutional leaders are prompted to take a holistic view of ESD, focused not only on transferring content about sustainable development, but also on participating in sustainable development practices, including taking actions to reduce the institution's ecological footprint. Collaboration between the learning and training institution and the host community is important.



**Expected outcomes** include sustainability plans or strategies implemented by schools and other training institutions, and public and private sector organizations.



**Main stakeholders** in this Priority Action Area are the leaders and the managers of all types of learning and training institutions such as school principals, directors of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres, presidents of universities and community colleges as well as those of private companies. Community leaders, parents, learners and trainees are important partners for these main stakeholders.

## Building capacities of educators and trainers

Educators and trainers are powerful agents of change for delivering the educational response to sustainable development. But for them to help usher in the transition to a sustainable society, they must first acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. To address sustainable development issues, they must also develop the requisite motivation and commitment. The third Priority Action Area is about building the capacity of these change agents to facilitate ESD.

### Examples

- ▶ Teacher education institutions deliver pre-service and in-service training on ESD
- ▶ National TVET agencies build the capacity of TVET teachers and trainers to address ESD



**Actions** in this Priority Action Area include integrating ESD into pre-service and in-service teacher education, and into training for early childhood, primary and secondary schools and TVET institutions. At post-secondary level, higher education institutions can also integrate ESD into faculty training, to improve the ability of the faculty to teach sustainability issues and to conduct and supervise related research. Another useful action area is introducing a sustainability lens to the professional development programmes for educators, trainers and staff members of various private institutions.



**Expected outcomes** include, among others, ESD integrated into pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes (such as training certification and accreditation standards aligned with the ESD concept, and ESD incorporated into TVET training programmes); and the capacity of education and training institutions for teachers and trainers (such as professional ESD workshops for faculty) enhanced.



**Main stakeholders** in this Priority Action Area are first and foremost the educators and trainers who deliver ESD to learners and trainees. Another important group is the educators and trainers working in education and training institutions for teachers and trainers. Training personnel or managers of human resources working in public or private organisations, civil society, and other institutions also need support. They must be given opportunities to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to design and deliver education and training programmes for their staff based on ESD principles.

Faculties of colleges and universities are also important stakeholders, especially professors of business, journalism, public policy, development studies, international relations or other relevant specialties. They play an vital role in making professionals in these areas aware of sustainability issues, and ultimately in guiding their decision-making processes to support sustainable development.

## Empowering and mobilizing youth

Central to envisioning and shaping a more sustainable future is youth – the generation that must not only cope with the consequences of unsustainable development today, but also bear the brunt of unsustainable development tomorrow. Youth in many emerging countries are now clamouring for a greater say in how their societies are being configured. Youth also make up an important group in consumer societies, and the habits they develop now will have a major impact on future consumption patterns. The young have the potential to propel sustainable development more widely and urgently.

### Examples

- ▶ Public-private partnerships develop free smart phone apps that provide information on ESD and sustainable lifestyles
- ▶ Youth organizations build a global coalition for youth on sustainable lifestyles



**Actions** in this Priority Action Area include providing young people with opportunities to harness the enormous benefits of information and communication technologies including social media, not only for learning, but also for networking. Promising approaches include e-learning on ESD and on-line platforms where young people can share their own ideas and actions on sustainable consumption and sustainable lifestyles. Mass mobilisation of youth towards sustainable development requires empowering youth with information on the impacts of their daily choices and actions, while tapping into their creativity and determination to find workable and innovative solutions and alternatives.



**Expected outcomes** include more quality e-learning opportunities for youth; youth participating in and contributing to ESD advocacy, policy development and implementation at local, national and international levels; and more youth-led ESD activities.



**Main stakeholders** are youth between 15 and 24. Today more than one billion people fall within that age bracket, the largest group ever to make the transition to adulthood. Youth, including activists and leaders, are both *beneficiaries* and *drivers* of this Priority Action Area. Stakeholders include youth-focused and youth-led organizations, as well as institutions that serve youth in the public and private sectors, ranging from mass media and faith-based organisations to local and national governments.

## Accelerating sustainable solutions at local level

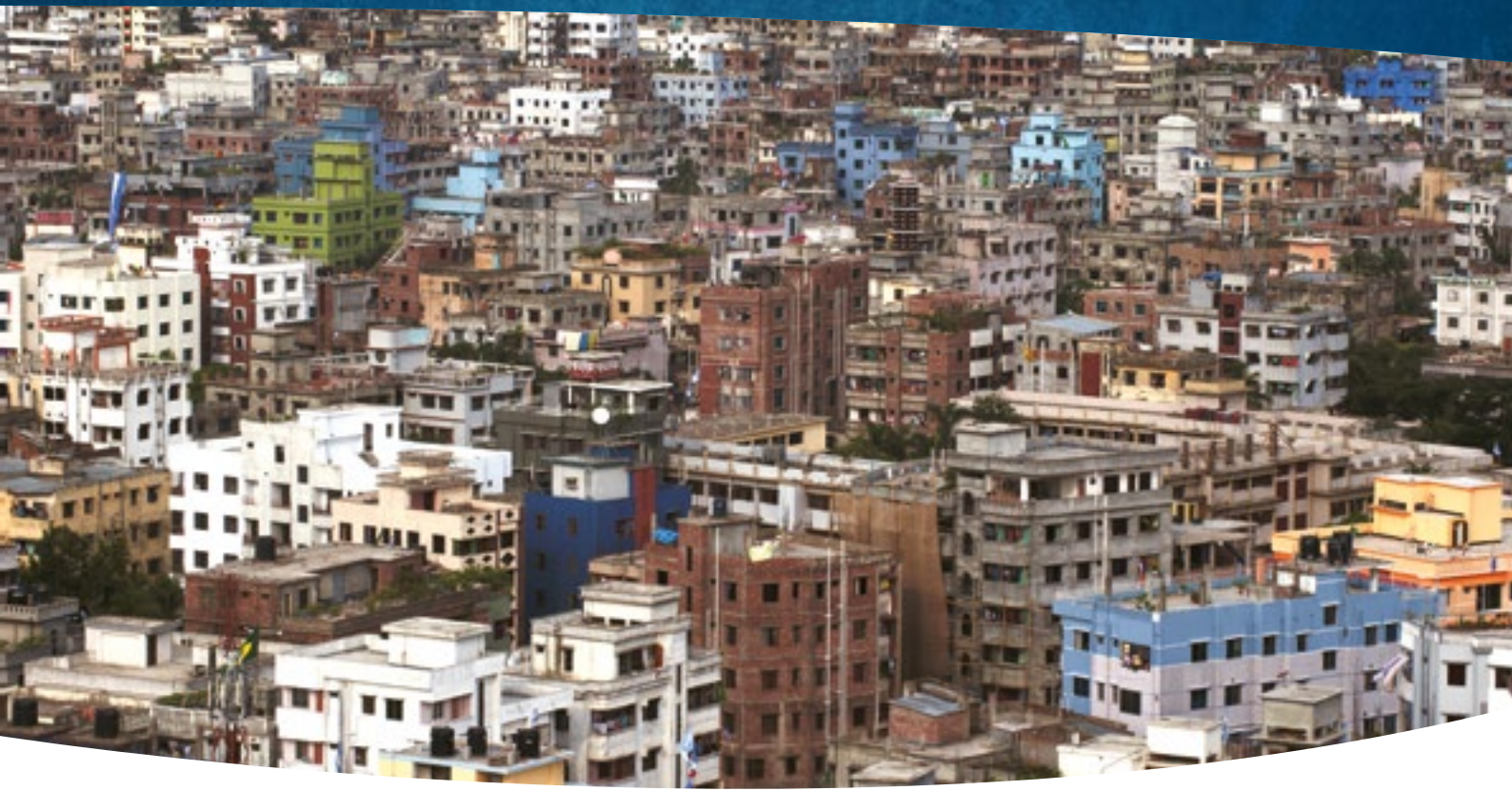
Major phenomena challenging sustainable development – be it climate change or persistent poverty – are all around us. As home to half the world’s population and poised to absorb most of future population growth, cities will increasingly hold the key to addressing sustainability challenges. At the same time, many important sustainability solutions can be found in rural communities. Local communities, both urban and rural, are one of the critical drivers for sustainable development, and their efforts merit greater support.

### Examples

- ▶ Local authorities set up local ESD centres
- ▶ The local business sector integrates ESD in corporate social responsibility activities



**Actions** in this Priority Action Area include strengthening multi-stakeholder networks at local level, and improving the quality of local platforms for learning and cooperation. Mobilising many new stakeholders to involve as large a stakeholder population as possible is an important objective. Local authorities and local leaders are called upon to increase and strengthen learning opportunities for the community through formal, non-formal, and informal venues. Empowering and increasing the capacity of civil society as critical agents of change is essential. Most of all, these concerned members and stakeholders will develop measures and mechanisms to resolve the sustainable challenges facing their communities.



**Expected outcomes** include the integration of ESD programmes and ESD perspectives into the planning and decision-making processes of the community. The number of multi-stakeholder networks at local level should be increased, and their networks expanded, through involving a wider range of stakeholders.



**Main stakeholders** include public authorities (such as governors and mayors), local education stakeholders such as school board members and the leaders of education institutions (school principals, presidents of universities), managers of private companies, and civil society representatives, NGOs, associations and groups for the disadvantaged and the marginalised, as well as individuals. Local media has an important role to play in mobilising communities and disseminating information and knowledge. The private sector also has a crucial role to play in developing locally-based sustainable enterprises.



# Strategies

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## Building New Momentum

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Through an open call for **Launch Commitments**, all stakeholders are invited to make initial voluntary commitments to implement activities for the GAP. These Launch Commitments will help establish the baseline commitments to kickstart implementation of the GAP. UNESCO will also build on some of these commitments to develop its flagship programmes for the GAP to keep up the new momentum of global ESD implementation.

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## Harnessing Partnerships

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Stakeholders with extensive outreach and political influence, or key partners, will be invited to join **Partner Networks**. Each Priority Action Area will form a Partner Network. The key partners will interface with UNESCO to spearhead implementation of activities, using their technical expertise, outreach capacity or financial resources.

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## Fostering a Global Community of Practice

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A **Global Forum** will give stakeholders the chance to meet regularly and exchange ideas, experience and information. The Forum will serve as an important platform for debate on emerging issues, trends and ideas on ESD as well as for launching advocacy efforts on ESD. An **Online Clearinghouse** will also be established for stakeholders to map information and knowledge, identify gaps, develop joint initiatives, raise funds, and build capacities.

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## Showcasing Good Practice

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Innovative and effective initiatives, practices, approaches, and processes that support implementation of the GAP will be identified, given visibility and shared widely for scaling up. For maximum visibility and recognition these works will be featured on the GAP website and reports will be delivered to their audiences and governing structures. A **UNESCO Prize for ESD**, to award the best of these good practices, is under consideration.

# Mechanisms

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## National

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Each Member State is encouraged to set up an appropriate ESD coordination mechanism and designate a **National Focal Point for ESD**. The Focal Point will interface with UNESCO, monitoring and reporting on country performance in implementing the GAP. UNESCO encourages governments to set national targets for ESD as appropriate, based on national requirements and aspirations. These should be in keeping with the targets set within the post-2015 agenda. The four strategies established at the global level – creating momentum through a call for commitments, harnessing partnership synergies, setting up platforms to exchange information and ideas, and recognising and awarding good practices and initiatives – can also be adopted at national level to spur national initiatives. The National Commissions for UNESCO will play an important role in implementing the GAP.

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## Global, regional and sub-regional

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A **GAP Secretariat** will be set up by UNESCO at its Headquarters in Paris to provide overall management and coordination of the GAP at global level, which includes providing strategic guidance for the implementation of the GAP. UNESCO's global field network will provide regional and sub-regional coordination, liaising with relevant bodies and institutions. The GAP Secretariat and the UNESCO field network in the regions and sub-regions will work closely with other UN agencies and partners, seeking their advice and support and forging partnerships with them. The Secretariat will also be responsible for monitoring and reporting progress in implementing the GAP at global level.

In 2015, UNESCO will ensure that ESD is fully taken into account for developing the post-2015 'Framework for Action' to be adopted at the World Education Forum 2015 in Incheon (Republic of Korea). UNESCO will also help ensure that linkages are established between the monitoring and reporting processes on the post-2015 agenda and on the GAP.

The key partners comprising the Partner Networks of the five Priority Action Areas will be important allies of UNESCO, and can identify others to work with them. Key partners are expected to undertake activities in the chosen Priority Action Area. UNESCO will integrate their activities into its ESD reporting. The key partners will also launch fund-raising efforts for their individual activities and for those with their partners and contribute to research on ESD to support advances under each Priority Action Area.

# Resources

Stakeholders will provide their own resources for their activities initiated to support the GAP, whether the stakeholder is a government, civil society organization, private company or individual. Given that ESD is not an add-on agenda, but cuts across educational and sustainable development concerns, stakeholders are encouraged to identify opportunities to raise funds for their initiatives through making use of existing funding mechanisms and opportunities for education or sustainable development, such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Other existing mechanisms to tap include financial mechanisms established by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (such as Special Climate Change Fund, Least Developed Countries Fund, Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund) and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

UNESCO will make available regular and extra-budgetary resources to support the GAP Secretariat and its flagship ESD programmes. Existing UNESCO networks, in particular ASPnet, UNESCO Chairs, centres under the auspices of UNESCO, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage sites, will be mobilized to support the implementation of the GAP.

# Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress in implementing the GAP will be monitored and reported regularly at global level. Targets and benchmarks will be created in consultation with concerned stakeholders and experts, based on the 2014 World Conference on ESD in Aichi-Nagoya (Japan). An integral part of the GAP, these indicators will build on the strategic objectives of the GAP that were approved by UNESCO Member States at the 37th session of the General Conference.

In developing global targets and indicators for each of the five Priority Action Areas, emphasis will be placed on:

- increase in the number of countries that have integrated ESD into education and sustainable development policies and strategies (Priority Action Area 1);
- increase in the number of training and education institutions that have adopted the whole-institution approach (Priority Action Area 2);
- increase in the number of training and education institutions for teachers and trainers that have integrated ESD into their programmes (Priority Action Area 3);
- increase in the number of youth-led initiatives on ESD (Priority Action Area 4); and
- increase in the number of local ESD initiatives (Priority Action Area 5).

Global monitoring and evaluation of progress in implementing the GAP, including indicators and quantitative and qualitative reporting, will be aligned with the monitoring and evaluation of the post-2015 agenda. In this context, UNESCO and its partners will aim at improving the evidence base on effective ESD.

Monitoring and evaluation at country level will be the responsibility of the national government. The National Focal Point is encouraged to help align the national target-setting processes with global targets, as appropriate. The Focal Point is also encouraged to extract national data and information to feed into the global analysis.

There are seven major milestones to be reached towards achievement of the GAP goal over the next five years until 2019: Global monitoring framework finalised; Partner Networks formed; Online Clearinghouse launched in 2015; first Global Forum organised; mid-term report prepared in 2017; second Global Forum organised; and final report for the first phase published in 2019.

# Annex



# Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development as follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development after 2014

(Endorsed by UNESCO Member States through the adoption of 37 C/Resolution 12)

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## Introduction

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1. Sustainable development cannot be achieved by political agreements, financial incentives or technological solutions alone. Sustainable development requires changes in the way we think and act. Education plays a crucial role in bringing about this change. Action at all levels is therefore required to fully mobilize the potential of Education for Sustainable Development and enhance learning opportunities for sustainable development for all. The Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) intends to generate this action. The present document provides the framework for the Global Action Programme.
2. The important role of education in sustainable development has long been recognized. Improving and reorienting education is one of the goals of Agenda 21, which was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, and whose Chapter 36 is dedicated to “Promoting Education, Public Awareness and Training”. Reorienting education towards sustainable development has been the focus of many initiatives under the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), which was declared following the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002. Education is, furthermore, part of the major three so-called Rio Conventions, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992), the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (1994).
3. In *The Future We Want*, the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012, Member States agreed “to promote education for sustainable development and to integrate sustainable development more actively into education beyond the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development”. The Global Action Programme on ESD responds to this agreement and provides the follow-up to the United Nations Decade. It has been developed on the basis of broad consultations and input from a wide range of stakeholders. As a follow-up to the United Nations Decade, it is at the same time intended as a concrete, tangible contribution to the post-2015 agenda.
4. The United Nations Decade has been successful in raising awareness regarding ESD, has mobilized stakeholders across the globe, has created a platform for international collaboration, has influenced policies and contributed to the coordination of stakeholders at the national level, and has generated large amounts of concrete good practice projects in all areas of education and learning. At the same time, considerable challenges remain: successful activities in ESD often merely operate within fixed time-frames and with limited budgets; ESD policies and practices are often not properly linked; ESD has yet to complete its integration into the mainstream of

the education and sustainable development agendas. Furthermore, sustainable development challenges have acquired even more urgency since the beginning of the Decade and new concerns have come to the fore, such as the need to promote global citizenship. Consequently, a scaling-up of ESD actions is required.

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## Principles

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5. The Global Action Programme encompasses policies and practices on ESD. ESD in the context of this Global Action Programme is understood to adhere to the following principles:
  - (a) ESD allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development and take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations.
  - (b) ESD entails including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning and requires innovative, participatory teaching and learning methods that empower and motivate learners to take action for sustainable development. ESD promotes skills like critical thinking, understanding complex systems, imagining future scenarios, and making decisions in a participatory and collaborative way.
  - (c) ESD is grounded in a rights-based approach to education. It is concerned with the provision of quality education and learning that is relevant today.
  - (d) ESD is transformative education in that it aims at reorienting societies towards sustainable development. This, ultimately, requires a reorientation of education systems and structures as well as a reframing of teaching and learning. ESD concerns the core of teaching and learning and cannot be considered an add-on to existing educational practices.
  - (e) ESD relates to the environmental, social and economic pillars of sustainable development in an integrated, balanced and holistic manner. It equally relates to a comprehensive sustainable development agenda as contained in the outcome document of Rio+20, which includes, among others, the interrelated issues of poverty reduction, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, and sustainable consumption and production. It responds to local specificities and respects cultural diversity.
  - (f) ESD encompasses formal, non-formal and informal education and lifelong learning from early childhood to old age. It therefore also encompasses training and public awareness activities within wider efforts towards sustainable development.
  - (g) ESD, the term used for this Global Action Programme, is intended to encompass all activities that are in line with the above principles irrespective of whether they themselves use the term ESD or – depending on their history, cultural context or specific priority areas – environmental education, sustainability education, global education, development education, or other.

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## Goal and objectives

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6. The overall goal of the Global Action Programme is to generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education and learning to accelerate progress towards sustainable development. This goal is further declined into two objectives, the first relating directly to the education sector and the second going beyond this sector:
  - (a) to reorient education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development; and
  - (b) to strengthen education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development.

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## Priority action areas

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7. The Global Action Programme focuses on five priority action areas in order to enable strategic focus and stakeholder commitment. These action areas, which build on successes, challenges and “unfinished business” of the United Nations Decade, are considered as key leverage points to advance the ESD agenda. While ESD action at all levels and in all areas of education and sustainable development is encouraged, action under this Global Action Programme focuses in particular on the following areas and the following strategic objectives:

### Policy support

8. Integrate ESD into international and national policies in education and sustainable development. An enabling policy environment is crucial for mobilizing education and learning for sustainable development and the scaling up of ESD action in formal, non-formal and informal education and learning. Relevant and coherent policies should be grounded in participatory processes and designed through interministerial and intersectoral coordination, also involving civil society, the private sector, academia and local communities. Creating an enabling policy environment, which must be properly linked to implementation, requires in particular the following:
  - (a) ESD is systematically integrated into education policies that cover the education sector as a whole or a subset of the sector. This includes the integration of ESD in curricula and in national quality standards and indicator frameworks that establish standards for learning outcomes. It also includes integrating ESD as an important element of international education agendas.
  - (b) ESD is systematically integrated into policies relevant to key sustainable development challenges. This includes reflecting the role of education and learning in national policies related to the three Rio Conventions, in line with the important role the Conventions ascribe to communication, education, training, and public awareness. It includes integrating ESD into relevant international agendas in sustainable development.
  - (c) ESD is a systematic element of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation frameworks.



## Whole-institution approaches

9. *Promote whole-institution approaches to ESD at all levels and in all settings.* Whole-institution, or institution-wide, approaches require not only the reorientation of teaching content and methodology, but also campus and facility management that is in line with sustainable development as well as the cooperation of the institution with sustainable development stakeholders in the community. Particular successes in this regard can be found in the areas of higher education and secondary schools. These need to be scaled up and expanded to other levels and types of education, including early childhood care and education, technical and vocational education and training and the non-formal education of youth and adults. The promotion of whole-institution approaches requires in particular the following:
- (a) An institution-wide process is organized in a manner that enables all stakeholders – leadership, teachers, learners, administration – to jointly develop a vision and plan to implement ESD in the whole institution.
  - (b) Technical and, where possible and appropriate, financial support is provided to the institution to support its reorientation. This can include the provision of relevant good practice examples, training for leadership and administration, the development of guidelines, as well as associated research.
  - (c) Existing relevant inter-institutional networks are mobilized and enhanced in order to facilitate mutual support such as peer-to-peer learning on a whole-institution approach, and to increase the visibility of the approach to promote it as a model for adaptation.

## Educators

10. Strengthen the capacity of educators, trainers and other change agents to become learning facilitators for ESD. Educators are one of the most important levers to foster educational change and to facilitate learning for sustainable development. There is therefore an urgent need to build the capacity of educators, as well as trainers and other change agents, on relevant issues related to sustainable development and appropriate teaching and learning methodologies. This requires in particular the following:
- (a) ESD is integrated into pre-service and in-service education and training for early childhood, primary and secondary school teachers, as well as teachers and facilitators in non-formal and informal education. This may start with the inclusion of ESD in specific subject areas but will ultimately lead to the integration of ESD as a cross-cutting issue. It includes ESD training for head teachers.
  - (b) ESD is integrated into the pre-service and in-service education and training of teachers and trainers in technical and vocational education and training. This includes building capacities on sustainable consumption and production modalities as well as skills for green jobs.
  - (c) ESD is integrated into faculty training in higher education institutions to enhance capacity in teaching sustainability issues, conducting and supervising solution-oriented interdisciplinary research, and informing policy-making on ESD and sustainable development.
  - (d) Sustainable development perspectives – including, for example, resource efficiency and social and corporate responsibility – are integrated in an enhanced manner in post-graduate education, capacity-building and training of decision-makers, public sector personnel, members of the business sector, media and development professionals, and other sectoral

and thematic specialists relevant to sustainable development. This includes, among others, “train-the-trainers” ESD programmes, the integration of ESD into executive education, as well as aligning in-house training programmes of private company staff with ESD.

## Youth

11. Support youth in their role as change agents for sustainable development through ESD. Youth have a high stake in shaping a better future for themselves and generations after. Moreover, youth are today increasingly drivers of the educational process, especially in non-formal and informal learning. Supporting youth in their role as change agents through ESD requires in particular the following:
  - (a) Learner-centred non-formal and informal learning opportunities in ESD for youth are enhanced. This includes developing and enhancing e-learning and mobile learning opportunities for ESD.
  - (b) Participatory skills that empower youth to act as change agents in global, national and local sustainable development processes become a specific focus of formal and non-formal education programmes within and outside of ESD.

## Local communities

12. *Accelerate the search for sustainable development solutions at the local level through ESD.* Effective and innovative solutions to sustainable development challenges are frequently developed at the local level. Multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation play a key role in this, for example, between local governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, media, education and research institutions, and individual citizens. ESD supports multi-stakeholder learning and community engagement, and links the local to the global. The full mobilization of education and learning for sustainable development calls for enhanced action at the local level. This requires in particular the following:
  - (a) Local networks that facilitate multi-stakeholder learning for sustainable development are developed, operationalized and enhanced. This includes the diversification and expansion of existing networks, so that new and more stakeholders are integrated, including indigenous communities.
  - (b) Local authorities and governments enhance their role in providing learning opportunities for sustainable development. This includes, as appropriate, supporting, at the local level, the integration of ESD in formal education, as well as the provision of, and support to, non-formal and informal learning opportunities in sustainable development for all members of the community.

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## Implementation

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13. The Global Action Programme is expected to be implemented at international, regional, sub-regional, national, sub-national, and local levels. All relevant stakeholders are encouraged to develop activities under the five priority action areas. Responsibility lies in particular with: Member States’ governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, media, the academic and research community, education and other relevant institutions that facilitate and

support learning, individual teachers and learners, as well as intergovernmental organizations. Contributions are expected both from education and sustainable development stakeholders. Responding to requests for a light organizational structure at the international level and flexibility regarding implementation and target-setting at the national level, the Global Action Programme will mainly be implemented in a decentralized manner.

14. In order to facilitate the implementation, key partners for each of the five priority action areas of the Global Action Programme will be identified and commitments will be solicited regarding specific activities under each priority action area. These activities, which should have concrete timelines and targets, are expected to serve as catalysts for further activities by other actors. A coordination forum for key partners under each priority action area will be established. Research on ESD will be mobilized to support advances under each priority action area. This includes research on innovative approaches to ESD.
15. Building on the experiences of the United Nations Decade of ESD, the establishment of national coordination mechanisms is encouraged, or, as appropriate, the continuation of successful mechanisms that were put in place under the Decade. Each Member State is invited to designate a national focal point. A coordination mechanism among United Nations agencies will be maintained. Through interagency and further relevant mechanisms, full coherence with other relevant international processes and agendas will be sought in implementing the Global Action Programme.
16. A secretariat will be maintained by UNESCO, to be confirmed by the United Nations General Assembly, whose major functions will be: facilitating the implementation of the Global Action Programme through partnerships; monitoring of progress at the global level; providing a clearinghouse of key actors and successful practices.
17. There exists a recognized need to properly resource activities on ESD. At the same time, and given that ESD is not an add-on agenda but cuts across education and sustainable development concerns, there is considerable potential to mobilize funding for ESD from existing funding mechanisms in education and sustainable development. Donors are encouraged to consider the compatibility of ESD with existing funding mechanisms. ESD stakeholders are encouraged to fully and systematically use the existing potential. Furthermore, considerable potential exists in the development of new partnerships, including with the private sector, to support the implementation of the Global Action Programme.
18. The implementation of the Global Action Programme will be regularly monitored. A reporting mechanism will be developed that takes into account the need for evidence-based monitoring, including specific targets and benchmarks, the need for impact-oriented reporting, the different nature of activities that are expected under each action area, as well as the decentralized implementation of this Global Action Programme that concerns a wide range of stakeholders. The development of evaluation mechanisms at the national, sub-national and local level will be encouraged, as appropriate, and the development of indicators will be sought. Reporting on the Global Action Programme may include alternative monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
19. The Global Action Programme is expected to be launched at the World Conference on ESD in 2014 (Aichi-Nagoya, Japan). The Global Action Programme will be established for an initial period phase of five years, after which it will be reviewed for eventual extension. At this time, the priority action areas may be revised, depending on evolving needs.

The Global Action Programme on ESD was endorsed by the following resolution adopted by the 37th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

### 37 C/Resolution 12

#### **Follow-up of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development post-2014 – Global Action Programme**

*The General Conference,*

Taking note of 190 EX/Decision 9 and 192 EX/Decision 6,

*Also taking note* of the strong support expressed by the Executive Board for the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and its five priority action areas,

*Having examined* the proposal for a Global Action Programme on ESD as follow-up to the United Nations Decade of ESD after 2014 (37 C/57),

1. *Endorses* the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development;
2. *Recognizes* the need for strong political support for the successful implementation of the Global Action Programme on ESD;
3. *Encourages* ministers of Member States and heads of United Nations agencies to participate in the UNESCO World Conference on ESD, which will review the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and discuss further promotion of ESD;
4. *Requests* the Director-General to bring the Global Action Programme on ESD to the attention of the United Nations General Assembly at its 69th session (2014) for consideration and appropriate action;
5. *Also requests* the Director-General to mobilize all UNESCO programme sectors and networks to enhance their contribution to ESD and engage with the preparations for the implementation of the Global Action Programme;
6. *Emphasizes* the need for collaboration and partnership with other relevant United Nations agencies and especially the 10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production;
7. *Invites* Member States to support the adoption of the Global Action Programme by the United Nations General Assembly as a concrete contribution to the post-2015 development agenda.

*(Resolution adopted on the report of the ED Commission at the 16th plenary meeting, on 19 November 2013.)*

UNESCO

# Roadmap

for Implementing the Global Action Programme on  
**Education for Sustainable Development**

To create a world that is more just, peaceful and sustainable, all individuals and societies must be equipped with and empowered by knowledge, skills and values as well as be instilled with a heightened awareness to drive such change. There is now a growing international recognition of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as an integral element of quality education and a key enabler for sustainable development. Both the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global Education For All Meeting in 2014 (GEM) and the proposal for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the Open Working Group of the UN General Assembly on SDGs (OWG) include ESD in the proposed targets for the post-2015 agenda.

In 2013, the 37th session of the General Conference of UNESCO endorsed the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD as the follow-up to the UN Decade of ESD (2005-2014). Building on the achievements of the Decade, the GAP aims to generate and scale up concrete actions in ESD. The present Roadmap communicates the GAP endorsed by UNESCO Member States (37 C/Resolution 12) to decision-makers, stakeholders and actors, and provides suggestions for the implementation of the GAP, as well as details on UNESCO's role.

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