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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Committee on Environmental Policy

#### United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development

##### Thirteenth meeting

Geneva, 3 and 4 May 2018

### Report of the Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development on its thirteenth meeting

#### I. Introduction

1. The thirteenth meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development was held on 3 and 4 May 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland.

##### A. Attendance

2. Delegations from 21 ECE member States attended the meeting: Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, the Netherlands, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and Ukraine.

3. A representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and a representative of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) also participated in the meeting.

4. In addition, representatives of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and educational institutions attended the meeting: the COPERNICUS Alliance, ECODEMIA; Learning For A Sustainable Future, Legacy17, the National Coordination Centre for Education for Sustainable Development Methodologies in the State Ecological Academy of Postgraduate Education and Management (Ukraine); Planèt'ERE and the University of Gibraltar.

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## **B. Adoption of the agenda**

5. The Steering Committee adopted the agenda for its thirteenth meeting (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2018/1).

## **II. Implementation of the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development**

### **A. Sustainable Development Goals**

6. A representative of the Office of the Executive Secretary of ECE briefed the Committee on the main developments at the global and regional levels with regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and, specifically, on the ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD), the regional review mechanism for implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. The Forum provides the ECE region's contribution into the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the main United Nations body for follow-up to and review of progress towards the Goals, which meets annually in New York under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council; its third meeting will be held in July 2018. Its current programme of work, ending in 2019, includes thematic review of an agreed set of Goals for each year. The primary focus of its meetings is discussion of voluntary national reviews, in which United Nations Member States report on their implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national, subnational and local levels.

7. The RFSD serves as a multi-stakeholder platform for follow-up to and review of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in the ECE region. Preparations for meetings of the Forum are made in cooperation with member States and their agendas are aligned with the high-level forum's thematic priorities. The Committee was informed that the previous Regional Forum, held in Geneva on 1 and 2 March 2018, had focused on the implementation of Goals 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15. Peer learning and interactive discussions had been facilitated by the presentation of case studies with practical solutions and approaches taken in specific areas. The Forum had also provided an opportunity for a wide range of stakeholder to exchange views on a variety of issues and to address transboundary issues.

8. The next meeting of the Forum, to be held in March 2019, will focus on Goals 4 (quality education), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 13 (climate action), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals). The Steering Committee will have an opportunity to highlight the potential role of the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (CEP/AC.13/2005/3/Rev.1) in supporting countries' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, and particularly Goal 4, by sharing good practices and encouraging other countries to adopt them.

9. The Committee's members were invited to consider efficient options for contributing to the Regional Forum in 2019, e.g. by organizing a side event, participating in peer learning round-table discussions, exchanging good practices or preparing background information.

10. During the ensuing discussion, the speakers addressed a number of important issues that the Steering Committee's national focal points will need to consider during preparations for the Regional Forum. Among the problems identified were: (1) the need for national governments to ensure that the right person represents them in the Forum; in order to ensure that reporting on the implementation of Goal 4 includes all relevant information

on education for sustainable development (ESD), the national representative should have experience in a related field and be in contact with the government official or structure responsible for policymaking and reporting on progress towards the Goals; and (2) parallel reporting channels at the national level; it is not always clear how the information on progress in implementing the ECE Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development at the national level finds its way from the national reporting system to regional and/or international forums. RFSD meetings might provide an opportunity to address this challenge by urgently educating the officials who represent their governments and report to the Forum on implementation of their national ESD strategies.

11. The Secretary of the Regional Forum said that she recognized the issues raised by the Committee during the discussion and agreed that it was important to identify the main challenges to implementation of the Strategy in the region and the subregions and to discuss possible solutions, perhaps at a peer-learning round table. The ECE secretariat team responsible for organizing the Forum stood ready to work closely with the Strategy team and the Environment Division in coordinating the preparatory process with a focus on the achievements of the Strategy and implementation of the ESD agenda by other international organizations, e.g. UNESCO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The meeting would provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to consider solutions and decide on the way forward.

12. The Committee requested the secretariat to make the customary preparations for the 2019 meeting of the Regional Forum and to keep the Chair and the Bureau informed with a view to facilitating participation in its events.

13. The secretariat encouraged the Committee members and country focal points to coordinate with the relevant authorities and stakeholders at the national level in order to incorporate ESD considerations into the national contributions to regional and global events such as RFSD and the high-level political forum.

## **B. Progress in implementing the Strategy**

14. The Chair recalled the objectives and the priority action areas of the framework for the future implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/11), adopted at the High-level Meeting of Education and Environment ministries, held in Batumi, Georgia, on 8 June 2016 (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/2/Add.2, paragraph 2), with an emphasis on promoting whole-institution approaches, as an important vehicle for achieving holistic and structural implementation of ESD at all levels of education.

15. The secretariat presented an overview of the informal country reports on activities over the past year, submitted in advance of the meeting by 15 countries and 1 NGO in response to a questionnaire contained in Information Paper 1: Proposed topics for reporting on progress in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.<sup>1</sup>

16. The secretariat noted that many countries had made progress under priority action areas (a) (Encouraging whole-institution approaches by establishing education for sustainable development school plans, or embedding education for sustainable development in existing school plans, for every school by 2019) and (b) (Promoting the extension of education for sustainable development in teacher education) of the framework.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=48053>.

17. Most of the reporting countries in the ECE region had adopted a whole-school approach and introduced new measures in a majority of their schools over the past year. The participants emphasized the importance of continuing to share good practices, raise governments' awareness of the issue and provide capacity-building assistance in order to reach the objective of embedding ESD in existing school plans for every school by 2019.

18. With regard to the extension of ESD in teacher education, it was emphasized that, as in the past, many countries said that they had placed the necessary legislative framework and political leadership for its systemic inclusion in teacher education. Some countries had developed new policies and others had established new structural units in order to address sustainable development issues. All of the reporting countries were paying greater attention to in-service teacher education or training.

19. Most of the countries had made progress in priority action area (c) (Strengthening technical and vocational education and training in support of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy), including by adopting new legislation, reforming their technical and vocational education systems, introducing specific programs or projects, revising curricula, introducing courses that met the new training standards, introducing ESD in "profile" (subject-specific) colleges, developing "reference" (planning) frameworks linking specific European Union competences to the relevant scientific fields and expanding technical and vocational school networks.

20. The questionnaire included a subsection on monitoring progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality education) and targets 4.7 and 4.a. Most countries in the region had established a stand-alone policy, plan, law or framework using sustainable development language. All of the reporting countries stated that ESD was reflected, albeit to varying extents, in their current education policies and frameworks through specific regulations, action plans, lifelong strategies, guidelines, national or regional curriculum frameworks and at various levels of their current school curricula through a mandatory or elective subject, cross-curricular topic or extracurricular activities. Most respondents had introduced ESD into their pre- and/or in-service teacher training curriculum through specific modules or courses or planned to do so; however, few of them were using a systematic, nation-wide approach.

21. The reports showed that while countries had made considerable progress in implementing their national ESD strategies, further efforts were needed in order to address all of the framework's priorities nation-wide through a whole-institution approach.

22. During the ensuing discussion, the representatives of Cyprus, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Malta and Slovakia gave presentations or made statements on their activities and initiatives since the previous meeting of the Steering Committee.

23. The Steering Committee took note of the presentations made by the countries and the secretariat and thanked the countries that had submitted informal reports.

### **C. Outcomes of capacity-building activities**

24. The secretariat reported that a national workshop (Yerevan, 19–20 April 2018) had been organized in order to promote implementation of the Strategy. The workshop had been organized in cooperation with two national partners – the UNESCO Chair on Education for Sustainable Development in the Centre for Ecological-Noosphere Studies and the Vocational Education and Training Department in the Ministry of Education and Science –

and with financial support from the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation.

25. A representative of Armenia presented the outcomes of the workshop, which had focused on priority action area (b) of the framework (Strengthening technical and vocational education and training in support of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy).

26. A representative of Switzerland who had attended the workshop recalled that it had been the third in a series organized under the auspices of ECE and the Swiss Government; the two previous workshops had been held in 2015 and 2016 in, respectively, Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgystan and Minsk. The workshop had shown how ESD might be implemented successfully at the national level even under sometimes-difficult conditions. The workshops should be viewed as part of a learning process that enabled the participating partners to promote ESD and contribute actively to implementation of the Strategy and the 2030 Agenda. In light of the successful experience of the three workshops, the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation would be honoured to provide support for the next workshop, to be held in another Eastern or Southern European country in 2019.

27. The Chair thanked the Swiss State Secretariat for providing crucial support for capacity-building activities that provided a unique opportunity to bring together a variety of stakeholders, including governments and NGOs, and to promote the goals of the Strategy at the national level.

28. The Secretary of the Steering Committee said that the workshops had pursued the objectives of the Steering Committee, enhanced cooperation with the national authorities of several countries and helped the secretariat to gain knowledge and experience that would better prepare it for similar activities in the future.

29. The Committee thanked the Swiss State Secretariat for financing the workshop, welcomed the information that funding for the 2019 capacity-building workshop would be provided and requested the secretariat to continue to cooperate with interested member States, including in seeking a host for the workshop in 2019.

30. The secretariat provided an update on cooperation with the Swedish NGO, Legacy17, including joint efforts to further develop the project proposal presented at the twelfth meeting of the Steering Committee. The project will build the capacity of interested countries in the region to implement the Strategy, focusing on the framework's "vertical" priority areas (a) and (b) on, respectively, embedding ESD in existing school plans and in teacher education.

31. A representative of Legacy17 presented the outcome of the international partnership project, Education for Sustainable Development in Action, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and implemented by a Swedish charitable association, Global Action Plan International, through its Ukrainian member, Teachers for Democracy and Partnership (TDP). The goal of the project, which was completed in 2012, was to promote enhanced understanding of sustainable development issues and an ecologically sound lifestyle by state institutions, selected regional authorities and the general public; reductions in water/electricity use and waste production; and sustainable development and environment-friendly policymaking in selected areas through the introduction of sustainable development into school curricula in eight selected regions of Ukraine and the reduction of water/electricity use and waste production as part of education programmes (learning by doing).

32. The project's methodology and the lessons learned from its implementation had laid the foundation for a joint project proposal entitled "ESD2030: Promoting sustainable lifestyles, consumption patterns and global citizenship through education", developed by

the ECE secretariat in cooperation with TDP (Ukraine) and Legacy17 (Sweden). The project would promote the whole-institution approach in introducing ESD in existing schools by combining the best available materials and the lessons learned from implementation of the Strategy over the past decade with the specific methodology and experience provided by the two NGOs. In so doing, it would provide an opportunity to promote implementation of the priority areas of the Strategy and to make progress towards target 4.7 and other elements of the Sustainable Development Goals.

33. The Committee took note of the cooperation with the Legacy17 and of the draft project proposal, encouraged the secretariat to explore further possibilities for financing the proposal and for other capacity-building activities and invited member States with an interest in implementing such a project at the national level to identify themselves and remain in contact with the secretariat.

#### **D. Awareness-raising and the role of the national focal points**

34. The Chair led a discussion on the need for additional efforts to promote the Strategy at the international, regional and national levels, emphasizing the role of the national focal points and the future of the Steering Committee.

35. The Chair said that the Steering Committee had made significant progress in promoting the Strategy at the national, regional and international levels in cooperation with other global organizations such as UNESCO. The initial cycle of work (2005–2015) had been completed and the progress in implementing it had been acknowledged at the High-level Meeting of Education and Environment ministries (Batumi, 8 June 2016). The new cycle of work had begun and the national focal points, including other Committee members, were invited to reflect on their role and that of the Committee and on the methods to be used and approaches taken at the national and regional levels in the current global context.

36. During the ensuing discussion, a number of challenges were identified.

37. It was necessary to reconsider the role of education, which should be driven by the existing and emerging needs of society and should focus more closely on sustainability. Change responded to demands from business or society, which might have different priorities that must be considered in terms of their implications for education and for the priorities of the Steering Committee's work, which should focus on specific, realistic issues and visible results.

38. It was important to identify the right people with the relevant expertise to serve as national focal points and to ensure that they had a common understanding of the Steering Committee's role and activities.

39. Participation in the Steering Committee's meetings gave national focal points an opportunity for direct personal contact with delegates; however, their current format and duration did not allow for the discussion of all issues of interest and should be changed in order to allow the focal points to participate more actively during and after the meetings.

40. National focal points often faced the challenge of fragmentation; some of them were involved in related European or international processes or in NGO projects in other countries and were unable to participate in the Committee's work.

41. Some Steering Committee members said that the work of the special focus working groups (e.g. on the three priority action areas, competencies and indicators) over the past decade had been both valuable and relevant to the needs of member States and other ESD stakeholders.

42. It was pointed out that fewer member States, particularly from Northern and Western European countries, had been represented at recent meetings than during the first decade of the Strategy's implementation and that few delegations included representatives of both ministries of education and ministries of the environment.

43. Members called for a fresher and deeper approach to engagement with ESD themes and processes and for new types of cooperation that might revitalize commitments and engagement with regard to implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

44. Disseminating information on ESD through the European processes was also a challenge. Lack of contact with the European Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment was identified as one of the shortcomings in the Steering Committee's work. It was recommended that the Commission should be requested to identify the individual and the structural unit responsible for ESD issues.

45. It was suggested that the Steering Committee should give greater consideration to how it might add value to the work of ECE and that of other international ESD stakeholders.

46. In order to address those challenges, it was agreed that a new platform for an interactive discussion – a strategic planning workshop or similar event – should be organized so that stakeholders could work together on emerging issues and new priorities, acquire needed skills and find ways to bring change.

47. In summarizing the discussion, the Chair highlighted the role of the focal points, the mission of the Steering Committee and its new priorities. The main role of national focal points was to translate the Steering Committee's mission into action and help to implement the Strategy at the national level through the relevant networks and platforms. The Steering Committee was currently in a transitional phase; it needed to respect the achievements of the past and undertake to pursue that work in a new format. A mechanism should be established in order to bring the focal points together more often and increase their interaction. The proposed strategic planning event would help to identify priorities and to move forward.

## **E. Good practices for bilateral or regional cooperation in the priority action areas**

48. Countries were invited to provide examples of good practices for cooperation in the priority action areas at the bilateral or regional level.

49. A representative of Armenia reported on his country's evolving bilateral cooperation with Cyprus on ESD issues, and particularly on teacher training and use of the whole-school approach, during the period 2018–2020.

## **F. Implementing the Strategy and possible developments beyond 2019**

50. The Committee was invited to discuss and agree on priority action areas and concrete issues beyond 2019, when the fourth national mandatory reporting cycle (2017–2019) will be completed. The future issues should be selected from the six priority action areas set out in the Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/2/Add.2) and included in the aforementioned framework for the future implementation of the Strategy. It was emphasized that these priority action areas should align with the priority areas of the UNESCO GAP, bearing in mind that the first phase of the GAP runs through the end of 2019 and that UNESCO is

currently preparing a framework for subsequent action with a focus on certain thematic priorities.

51. Other topics for discussion regarding the future implementation of the Strategy might focus on practical ways to promote ESD across all levels and types of education at the national level and to scale up the ESD process at the international level, stressing the Strategy's importance as a core instrument for implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and other international environment-related processes and instruments.

52. Following the discussions held under agenda items 2 (a), on the Sustainable Development Goals, and 2 (d), on awareness-raising and role of the national focal points, the Committee continued its reflection on possible developments with regard to implementation of the Strategy after the end of the current phase (2017–2019).

53. Following that discussion, the Committee agreed to set up an ad hoc advisory group on current challenges and future priorities for the Committee's work, including its renewed status and format of work, and to formulate strategic proposals for the further promotion of ESD in the region until 2030.

54. The primary purpose of the ad hoc group is to consider ways for the Steering Committee to add value to (i) the work and priorities of ECE, (ii) the work of other international stakeholders involved in ESD, and (iii) the work and role of ECE in implementation of the Global Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. This strategic positioning will be considered at the fourteenth meeting of the Steering Committee on 2-3 May 2019 with the aim of presenting key outcomes at the next High-level Meeting of Education and Environment ministries, to be held in 2021 within the framework of the Environment for Europe process, and at other meetings of the United Nations and the European Union.

55. It was proposed that at least one meeting of the ad hoc group be held prior to the next meeting of the Steering Committee in order to develop practical proposals for consideration and adoption. The representatives of the Netherlands and of the University of Gibraltar offered to support that process and to host a meeting of the ad hoc group.

56. The Committee requested the secretariat to cooperate with the Chair and interested members of the Committee in organizing the first meeting of the ad hoc group and facilitating its work.

### **III. Recent efforts to promote education for sustainable development in other international forums**

57. A representative of the UNESCO Section for Education for Sustainable Development updated the Committee on the activities of the Partner Networks established with a view to implementation of the GAP, the ongoing consideration of the future of ESD beyond 2019 and the draft position paper on the future of ESD, which would be discussed during a series of consultation processes in 2018 and, together with comments from member States, submitted to the UNESCO governing bodies (the General Conference, the Executive Board and the Secretariat) in 2019 as input to a decision on the future of ESD.

58. A technical consultation meeting on the draft position paper (Bangkok, July 2018) would be followed by online consultations in September–October 2018. The draft would then be presented for endorsement by the UNESCO Executive Board at its 206th session in April 2019 and launched in December 2019.



59. The draft position paper proposes a focus on a number of thematic priorities and the continued scaling up of effective strategies and strengthening of specific programme activities with the greater involvement of member States.

60. In line with United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/222 on education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 2 of which “reaffirms education for sustainable development as [...] an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goal on quality education and a key enabler of all the other Sustainable Development Goals [...]”, the draft position paper proposes that the goal of the post-2019 phase of the Programme should be “Education for Sustainable Development for Sustainable Development Goals”. This would support achievement of the Goals in and through the education system. It is suggested that the Goals should be grouped under three of the “five Ps”<sup>2</sup> (planet, people and prosperity) with a focus on their interdependence with ESD in order to emphasize that ESD is not a stand-alone topic but is linked with other disciplines and stakeholders under the Goals.

61. With regard to the proposed goal of the next phase, supporting achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through education, the draft recommends a focus on four areas: providing pedagogical guidance, supporting national initiatives, scaling up actions on the ground and enhancing advocacy and communication.

62. The representative of UNESCO then informed the Committee about several GAP events to be held between 2018 and 2019, including the fourth meeting of the Key Partners and the UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education. The next GAP monitoring report, to be released at the end of 2018, will support the Future of ESD framework to be presented to the UNESCO Executive Board in spring 2019 and provide a follow-up to the 2016 GAP report based on self-reporting questionnaires sent to the Key Partners. A final report on the five-year GAP implementation process will be presented in 2019.

63. During the ensuing discussion, the participants considered the details of the post-2019 thematic priorities outlined in the draft position paper and confirmed the need to organize a meeting of the new ad hoc group in order to align the Steering Committee’s work beyond 2019 with the new phase of GAP and with the Sustainable Development Goals.

64. The representative of Cyprus updated the Committee on the outcomes of the first meeting of the Mediterranean Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (Nicosia, 22–24 November 2017). The main objectives of the meeting had been to review and discuss how the Action Plan of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development had been integrated into existing programmes, products and initiatives of Mediterranean countries and associated international and regional organizations during the year since its adoption; to make decision-makers and, in particular, Mediterranean parliamentarians aware of ESD promotion efforts; to provide an opportunity to exchange know-how and experience on the latest developments in ESD and its role in achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by Mediterranean countries; and to train all involved parties on issues related to ESD implementation. The meeting had allowed the participants to discuss ways to support implementation of the Action Plan and other joint ESD activities.

65. The speaker briefed the Committee on the impact of the Mediterranean Strategy on the region and on the main outcomes of the meeting, including the progress achieved and challenges encountered in implementing that Strategy and its Action Plan and the conclusions and recommendations adopted.

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<sup>2</sup> The UNESCO “five Ps” are planet, people, peace, prosperity and partnership.

66. The secretariat thanked the representatives of UNESCO and Cyprus for their presentations and stressed that collaboration between the Steering Committee, UNESCO and other partners was important to implementation of the ESD agenda.

#### **IV. Adoption of the workplan for 2017–2019**

67. The Committee adopted the draft workplan for 2017–2019 for the ECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2018/3) with minor changes proposed by Austria and Hungary and requested the secretariat to incorporate those changes into the document and circulate the final text to the Committee for rapid approval through the silence procedure.

68. One of the proposed changes concerned the proposed timeline for reporting (annex II): the proposed timeline of 1 October 2018 for the submission of national reports to the secretariat was changed to 1 November 2018. The other was the addition, in section D, of a new paragraph 52 reading:

At its thirteenth meeting, held on 3–4 May 2018, in order to follow up on the foregoing, the Committee agreed to establish an ad hoc group on current challenges and future priorities for the Committee's work that would help to develop the work plan for the post-2019 implementation phase. The Committee agreed to hold a meeting of the ad hoc group prior to the next meeting of the Steering Committee meeting in 2019.

#### **V. Strengthening synergies with other organizations and processes**

69. A representative of the ECE Forests, Land and Housing Division briefed the Committee on cooperation between the joint ECE–Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Forestry and Timber Section and the Environment Division and, in particular, on preparations for the theme of the next International Day of Forests; previous themes had included Forests for food (2015), Forests and energy (2017) and Forests and sustainable cities (2018). The theme for 2019, Forests and education, might be of interest to ESD stakeholders. The challenges faced by the forests sector, such as high unemployment rates, an ageing workforce and unpopularity among youth, might be addressed through ESD, i.e. by educating people about forests. At the recent meeting of the Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management (March 2018), it had been suggested that a joint event with the ECE Steering Committee and other interested agencies, such as UNESCO, might be organized during the upcoming RFSD (March 2019) in order to discuss challenges and seek solutions.

70. The Committee requested the secretariat to remain in contact with the Forestry and Timber Section in exploring the possibility of joint input into preparations for the RFSD and the International Day of Forests in 2019.

71. A representative of the Canadian non-profit organization, Learning for a Sustainable Future, briefed delegates about its work at the national and international levels and its current activities in the context of the Government's implementation of the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education. Its main mission was to promote, through education, the knowledge, skills, perspectives and practices essential to a sustainable future by working in the three priority areas: advancing innovative education policies, standards and good practice in support of ESD; educating teachers; and

empowering youth with the knowledge, skills, values, perspectives, and practices essential for a sustainable future.

72. The representative of Legacy17 presented the Food Action programme on food and health, climate and environment, and food waste, prepared in six languages with funding from the European Union. During the pilot project, more than half of the participants had made sustained behaviour changes; trained Food Action coaches had found the skills generally useful and wished to continue. Those results suggested that successful scaling up might have significant societal effects; a survey of the participants showed a 10-15 per cent reduction in food waste and food miles (miles over which food is transported from producer to consumer) and a sustained decrease in meat consumption. The main objective of the two-year project had been to develop and test a self-learning package for adults on ways to adopt more sustainable food habits.

73. A representative of CAREC gave a presentation on the Centre's achievements and challenges in implementing its Education for Sustainable Development Programme and the Strategy over the past 15 years, its attempted transformation in light of new realities and adaptation to new challenges, and the importance of synergies with other organizations and processes. At present, the main objective of its work was to mainstream Goal 4 into education systems and to integrate "green" knowledge, skills, competencies and principles into education and training for educators, young leaders, public officials and civil society representatives. The presentation included an overview of various projects and other activities implemented in the pan-European region in cooperation with national authorities, United Nations agencies, international organizations, financial institutions, the private sector, academic institutions and NGOs, as well as environmental authorities from Europe and Asia.

74. The Steering Committee took note of the presentations on strengthening synergies with other organizations and processes, welcomed the information provided and called for the further strengthening of synergies with other organizations and processes with a view to implementation of the Strategy and the 2030 Agenda.

## **VI. Preparations for the next mandatory reporting cycle (2017-2019) under the Strategy**

75. The secretariat informed the Committee about the timeline and procedures for the fourth cycle of reporting (2018) and preparation of the format (template) for the next mandatory reporting cycle (2017-2019) (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2018/4), which had been revised on the basis of preliminary consultations with the Chair, the Bureau and national delegations and comments received from members prior to the meeting.

76. The Committee approved the reporting format with minor changes proposed by delegates: the deadline for the submission of national reports to the secretariat was set at 1 November 2018 rather than 1 October 2018 and the option "No information available" was added to the tables.

77. The Committee agreed to the secretariat's proposal to explore the possibility of creating an online reporting tool as an alternative to "paper" reporting, provided that its development proved technically feasible. Members were advised to complete the template for reporting in Word until further notice.

78. The Committee took note of the Chair's request that members inform the secretariat of their proposals for the outline and format of the evaluation report and of the secretariat's announcement that in case of the absence of such proposals, the outline used would be the same as for previous reporting cycles.

## **VII. Status of the trust fund and resource requirements**

79. The secretariat provided an update on the status of the education for sustainable development trust fund and resource requirements for 2018–2019. The Committee took note of the presentation and of the information that the dedicated staff position could not be maintained continuously under the present level of funding, affecting the secretariat's ability to service the ESD process efficiently (owing to the shortage of funds, support will be terminated on 31 May 2018 and might be resumed in late 2018 or early 2019, subject to the availability of resources).

80. The Chair invited the members and national focal points to consider the funding situation with regard to the Strategy's activities in recent years and seek ways to address the issue.

81. The Committee thanked the member States that had made contributions in support of the ESD process since the previous meeting and welcomed the expressions of future support from several member States.

82. The secretariat encouraged member States to consider making financial or in-kind contributions to the process, taking their national circumstances and United Nations procedures into account.

83. The Committee requested the secretariat to facilitate the issuance (preferably in early autumn) of letters to member States' education and environment authorities, inviting them to consider contributing to the Strategy's implementation in 2019 and beyond.

## **VIII. Calendar of meetings**

84. The Steering Committee agreed to hold its fourteenth meeting in Geneva on 2 and 3 May 2019.

## **IX. Other business**

85. The Steering Committee considered the progress in mainstreaming gender issues into ESD since its previous meeting.

86. A representative of ECODEMIA provided an update on the follow-up activities of the ad hoc working group for considering gender aspects of education for sustainable development in view of the 2030 Agenda, established at the previous meeting, in order to discuss gender aspects of ESD in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the outcome of the group's electronic consultations on the situation at the national and regional levels. The group suggested that, based on past practice, an electronic platform might be established in order to support future meetings of the group.

87. The Steering Committee requested the secretariat to upload the presentations and other relevant materials discussed to the meeting website.

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