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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the workplan for 2017–2019

Draft workplan for 2017-2019 for the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

Note by the secretariat

Summary

At the High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries held on 8 June 2016 within the framework of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016), ministers and heads of delegation considered progress in implementing the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2005 to 2015 and reaffirmed participating States' commitment to the future implementation of the Strategy. Ministries supported the continuation of the Strategy's implementation at the regional level beyond its first decade, and the alignment of the work under the Strategy with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its Sustainable Development Goals and the first five-year phase of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.

Participants at the High-Level Meeting also extended the mandate of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development until 2030, and requested it to prepare, with the support of the secretariat, a workplan and budget for the Strategy's implementation for a period covering the next four years (2016–2019). As the draft workplan could not be approved before the meeting of the Steering Committee in 2017, it was agreed to consider the first phase of the new implementation period as starting from 2017. It was proposed that the workplan include targeted assistance activities, taking into account the results of the final evaluation report on the Strategy's implementation during the past decade (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2016/3) and the needs identified by the subregional and national capacity-building activities held in

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South-Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Mediterranean, in addition to those expressed by the member States.

The present draft workplan was prepared by the secretariat, in cooperation with the ad hoc task force on planning and finance, on the basis 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 and was approved by the Bureau of the Steering Committee.

The draft workplan was considered at the twelfth meeting of the Steering Committee held in 2017 and finalized after the meeting on the basis of the input received from member States and other stakeholders. The Bureau of the Steering Committee approved the final version of the draft workplan.

The Steering Committee is invited to consider the draft workplan for adoption.

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I. Introduction

1. Ministers and heads of delegation at the High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries (High-level Meeting) held on 8 June 2016 in Batumi, Georgia, within the framework of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference considered progress made in implementing the first 10 years of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.¹ They also indicated the way forward for the further implementation of the Strategy in the region by adopting the framework for the future implementation of the Strategy (Batumi Framework) (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/11), and the Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/2/Add.2), a joint commitment of member States to continue national implementation of the Strategy for achieving sustainable development in the region.

2. At the High-level Meeting it was agreed that the Strategy's future implementation should follow on from the Vilnius implementation framework adopted at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) High-level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries in 2005, and reconfirmed at the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Belgrade in 2007. It was agreed that future implementation of the Strategy should take into consideration the progress made and the challenges encountered in its implementation over the past 10 years, and should focus on continuing the implementation of all the Strategy's objectives.

3. While member States recognized the importance of continuing to implement all the objectives of the Strategy, representatives of ECE education and environment ministries at the High-level Meeting in Batumi stressed in particular the importance of advancing the six priority action areas outlined in the Batumi Framework.

4. The Batumi Framework reflects basic elements decided by the ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development and was also inspired by and aligned with the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (Global Action Programme) endorsed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference in 2013 (37 C/Resolution 12) and acknowledged by the United Nations General Assembly (resolutions 69/211 and 70/209) as a follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The Batumi Framework also contains proposed terms of reference for the Steering Committee for the period 2016–2030 to guide the Strategy's implementation. At the High-level Meeting, the Steering Committee was requested to prepare, with the support of the ECE secretariat, a workplan and a budget for the implementation of the Strategy for a period covering the next three years (2017–2019). The workplan was to include targeted assistance activities, taking into account the results of the third and final evaluation report (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2016/3) on the implementation of the Strategy, and the needs identified by the subregional and national capacity-building activities held in South-Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Mediterranean during the past decade, in addition to those expressed by member States.

5. The present document proposes a set of activities to be undertaken during the three years of the next implementation phase (2017–2019), aligned with the first five-year phase of the Global Action Programme, which ends in 2019, to further the implementation of the Strategy both at the national and international levels. It outlines a number of concrete

¹ All the documents from this Conference are available from <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/environment-for-europe/efe-conferences/batumi-conference/documents-and-materials.html>.

activities focused on: (a) coordination; (b) capacity-building and sharing of experience; and (c) review of implementation. Information about the resources required to support the implementation activities will be provided in a separate information document.

6. The activities outlined aim to address the needs and challenges identified across the ECE region during the first 10 years of the Strategy's implementation. These needs and challenges were highlighted in the main findings of the third evaluation report, which provided a synopsis of progress made by the ECE member States in implementing the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development from 2005 to 2015, with particular attention to the third phase of implementation (2011–2015). Outcomes from phase III indicated that it was now essential to move from political leadership and support to practical action; therefore, the present draft workplan focuses on implementation of practical actions intended to advance the ECE education for sustainable development agenda, building on the work accomplished over the past 10 years.

7. Given the resource constraints, it will be necessary to prioritize the proposed activities. Many of them will need additional financial and human resources to enable their implementation. A prerequisite for the Strategy's successful implementation is the availability of a structured plan of action at the national level and the possession of competence in education for sustainable development, as highlighted in the workplans for the previous phases of implementation during the period 2005–2015.

8. As was the case with the earlier phases of the Strategy, the workplan will be implemented in consultation with UNESCO, and in line with its Global Action Programme and other relevant international activities and processes. In particular, it will be aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) process (with its Sustainable Development Goals as a means of implementation), to ensure synergies and mutual benefits, as a contribution to achieving Sustainable Development Goal target 4.7 and as an instrument for achieving all 17 of the Goals.

9. Subject to the availability of resources, ECE will continue to provide secretariat services for the implementation of the workplan. Member States and groups of member States, jointly with relevant international organizations, are encouraged to take a lead role in the implementation of particular activities of the workplan. Partnerships, involving national, subnational and local authorities, the business community, academia, media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other interested stakeholders, are encouraged for the implementation of the activities.

10. The Steering Committee is invited to consider and adopt the draft workplan proposed herein.

II. Proposed activities

A. Coordination at the international and national levels

1. International level

11. At the international level, annual meetings of the Steering Committee should remain the main mechanism for the efficient coordination of activities, experience sharing, provision of assistance to implementation and review of progress achieved. To ensure efficient regional governance and communication, member States should reconfirm or newly nominate focal points for education for sustainable development within education and environment ministries. They may also nominate, in addition, focal points in other departments or ministries, as appropriate, to participate in the ECE education for sustainable development process. The Environment for Europe process should continue to

be used as a platform for the regional high-level coordination of the Strategy's implementation.

12. Further focus should be put on strengthening synergies and links between education for sustainable development and other relevant processes, with the aim of emphasizing the added value of education for sustainable development in attaining sustainable development. In this regard, the Steering Committee should promote and coordinate the implementation of the Strategy in line with the Global Action Programme and in consultation with UNESCO and other relevant international activities and processes, such as the 2030 Agenda process, seeking synergies and avoiding overlaps. The Steering Committee should provide a platform for the sharing of experience and good practices, particularly those reflecting specific facts and figures, demonstrating the role of education for sustainable development in facilitating the effectiveness of sectoral policies related to sustainable development.

13. The Steering Committee should also strengthen synergies with other global and regional processes aimed at achieving education for sustainable development and sustainable development, including: the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and its Action Plan; the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, steered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) — in particular its Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme;² the Education 2030 Framework for Action;³ the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, its Doha work programme on article 6 and the Paris Agreement adopted at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties; the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians and the 2014 decision by its Conference of the Parties on awareness-raising, education and public participation (decision COP4/9); and other relevant international, regional and national processes.

2. National level

14. At the national level, each member State should be encouraged to review its progress on education for sustainable development and identify the critical success factors, including the mechanisms for multi-stakeholder dialogue and engagement, both across government departments and among external groups. The national activities should focus on addressing challenges and obstacles that have persisted throughout the previous decade of the Strategy's implementation, as outlined in the major findings of the third evaluation report. These challenges were taken into consideration in drafting the Batumi Framework for the Strategy's future implementation. In the Batumi Framework, representatives of ECE education and environment ministries gathered at the High-level Meeting recognized the importance of continuing the implementation of all the objectives of the Strategy, and at the same time proposed to focus in particular on advancing three "vertical" priority action (subparas. 20 (a)-(c) of the Batumi Framework), which focus on what should be done, taking into account the national or regional educational policies and education systems, and three "horizontal" priority action areas (subparas. 20 (d)-(f) of the Batumi Framework), which focus on how it should be done.

15. Therefore, on the national level, the member States are invited to undertake activities aimed at the implementation of the Strategy during the next phase (2017–2019) in accordance with the six priority action areas highlighted, as follows:

² See <http://www.scpclearinghouse.org/sustainable-lifestyles-and-education>.

³ Adopted on 4 November 2015 by the UNESCO General Conference at its thirty-eighth session.

(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:

(i) To promote whole-institution approaches by integrating education for sustainable development in capacity-building, governance, curricula, teaching and learning, campus facilities and their operation and the larger community, as an important vehicle for achieving holistic and structural implementation of education for sustainable development in formal education (primary and secondary) and vocational and higher education, and also facilitating a link between formal and non-formal education;

(ii) To encourage the establishment of education for sustainable development school plans, or the embedding of education for sustainable development in existing school plans. The adoption of whole-school approaches in preschool education is also considered beneficial;

(b) Promoting the extension of education for sustainable development in teacher education and in the training of all educators: to continue strengthening the capacities of teachers through the inclusion of education for sustainable development in pre-service and in-service teacher education and through professional development that supports the acquisition of education for sustainable development competences by non-formal and informal educators;

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

(i) To continue integrating education for sustainable development into national technical and vocational education and training policy by:

a. Educating students about the importance of moving to a green economy and becoming ecologically literate;

b. Promoting understanding of the needs of industry to transition to a green economy, with an emphasis on sustainable production and consumption;

c. Ensuring that policymakers' support for educators is sufficient to enable them to provide the requisite training for new skills related to the environment and the efficient use of energy (e.g., careers in green industry, such as solar panel installers and wind turbine technicians);

(ii) To support the more active involvement of professional unions, vocational training centres and the business sector in the strengthening of technical and vocational education and training in support of sustainable development;

(d) Strengthening integration of education for sustainable development in both international and national education and sustainable development policies and other relevant processes:

(i) To foster the integration of education for sustainable development in both international and national education and sustainable development policies and other relevant processes;

(ii) On the regional level, in particular, to strengthen the link with the United Nations environmental conventions;

(iii) To develop synergies with other relevant programmes and key stakeholders active in the promotion and integration of education for sustainable development policy in region;

(iv) To support institutional education for sustainable development-related policies at different levels of education. Education for sustainable development is an effective tool to support implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals;

(e) Enhancing synergies between formal, informal and non-formal education: to provide the synergy of formal education needs with non-formal and informal education to effectively promote education for sustainable development in educational and environmental contexts. It is essential that formal, non-formal and informal education systems work together in a complementary fashion, so that diversity and innovation is supported. It is also important to consider an educational continuum involving formal, non-formal and informal education, forming part of a strategy providing inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all;

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

(i) To consider the role of networks, including those of civil society, academia and science, youth, NGOs, companies and enterprises, in education for sustainable development as a vital part of the implementation framework;

(ii) To empower and increase the capacity of civil society, and in particular youth as critical agents of change, through networking and co-learning, which is essential for a wide and participatory implementation process;

(iii) To strengthen multi-stakeholder networks at the local level, as one example of an action under this priority area.

16. The member States should further the implementation of national strategies and action plans on education for sustainable development developed during the previous three implementation phases. Countries that have yet to finalize and adopt their education for sustainable development action plans and/or strategies in the course of the first decade (2005–2015) are invited to speed up and complete the process in the course of 2017 and to provide written inputs on that progress in time for the Committee's thirteenth meeting in 2018. While all member States should focus on the practical implementation of their national plans and strategies in accordance with the priorities identified in the recently adopted Batumi Framework, some of the priorities identified in the workplans for the previous three phases remain valid. Previous priorities that remain valid include building stronger partnerships between authorities and stakeholders (e.g., academia and NGOs) and among different departments, in particular between education and environment ministries, and fully engaging Governments in the implementation of the Strategy through public budget allocations and/or economic incentives to support education for sustainable development.

B. Capacity-building and sharing of experience

17. The following issues need to be addressed to continue the implementation of the Strategy in the ECE region: (a) practical application of educator competences in education for sustainable development; (b) general capacity-building, including expert assistance; (c) research and development of education for sustainable development-related materials and tools; and (d) awareness-raising. While most of these have already been identified in the workplans for the three previous implementation phases, the focus on policy development and the lack of financial resources in phases II and III led to the de-prioritization of capacity-building activities. With the shift of focus to practical implementation, capacity-building and experience sharing should be allocated the highest priority in planning and resource allocation both at the national and regional levels.

18. The above-listed priorities could be addressed through activities during the first post-2015 implementation phase (2017–2019), to be continued also during the following phases, as set out below.

1. Educator competences in education for sustainable development

19. The ECE Expert Group on Competences, established by the Steering Committee at its meeting in 2009 and active between 2009 and 2012, developed a set of the education for sustainable development competences for educators and policy recommendations for promoting those competences across the education system. The resulting Expert Group report, “Learning for the future: competences in education for sustainable development” (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2011/6),⁴ has served to guide a number of ECE member States in strengthening the competences of educators, and has had significant influence globally. Following a mandate provided by the Steering Committee in 2012, the Expert Group also developed a standard workshop concept and designed a toolkit titled “Empowering educators for a sustainable future: Tools for policy and practice workshops on competences in education for sustainable development”⁵ to be used throughout the region to promote educator competences in education for sustainable development and to organize workshops, aimed mainly at two primary target groups: policymakers and educator trainers.

20. With the conclusion of the expert work on education for sustainable development, activities to develop educator competences shifted towards practical capacity-building at the national and regional levels. Since 2012, the toolkit has served as training material for one subregional workshop in Central Asia (Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia, Kazakhstan, 2012) and a series of national workshops in Central Asian countries (Uzbekistan, 2012; Kyrgyzstan, 2013 and 2015) and in Belarus (2016), which helped to build capacity and ensure educator capacities and coordination among countries of the region. At the request of the Steering Committee, the workshops held in Kyrgyzstan and Belarus focused on one of the priority action areas of the previous phase III (2011–2015), introducing education for sustainable development in technical and vocational education and training to support sustainability, in consultation and partnership with industry sectors and technical and vocational education and training institutions. Educators’ education for sustainable development competences were systemically reviewed throughout the European Union region at the higher education level. These efforts resulted in the development of the *State of the Art Report*⁶ and the *Leading Practice Publication*⁷ on behalf of 33 European countries and an online platform of resources for education for sustainable development.⁸ However, according the third evaluation report, less than half of member States indicated that there had been significant progress made in defining new competences and skills and developing new courses revising technical and vocational education and training programmes. Therefore it is important to continue building the capacity of the member

⁴ Available from <http://www.unece.org/?id=14896#/>. Also available as a publication from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=31922>.

⁵ Available from <https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=35136>.

⁶ Marlene Madder and others, *State of the Art Report: Mapping Opportunities for Developing Education for Sustainable Development competences in the UE4SD Partner Countries* (Cheltenham, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, University of Gloucestershire, 2014). Available from <https://www.ue4sd.eu/outcomes>.

⁷ Dana Kapitulčinová and others, eds., *Leading Practice Publication: Professional Development of University Educators on Education for Sustainable Development in European Countries* (Prague, Charles University, 2015). Available from <https://www.ue4sd.eu/outcomes>.

⁸ See University Educators for Sustainable Development: ESD Professional Development Resources, <https://platform.ue4sd.eu/>.

States to retool technical and vocational education and training to support sustainability and the transition to a green economy.

21. As during the previous implementation phases, one of the first priorities at the national level remains to continue bringing the outcomes of the Expert Group's work to the attention of the policymakers and educator trainers with the help of the national focal points for education for sustainable development, i.e., ministries of environment and education, which should take the responsibility for this task. This includes: (a) translating the Expert Group's report into national languages; (b) identifying relevant policymakers and bringing the report's policy recommendations to their attention; (c) making the document available at any relevant meetings or forums where education and sustainable development policies or legislation are discussed; and creating multi-stakeholder forums or using the existing education for sustainable development multi-stakeholder working groups to discuss the application of the Expert Group's recommendations at the national and local levels. Similarly, the report, and in particular its sections related to educator competences in education for sustainable development, should be brought to the attention of educators, in particular those responsible for educator training, both initial and in-service. It is particularly important to utilize the document in any national or local capacity-building initiatives. Member States might also consider organizing specially tailored workshops for teacher training institutions, policymakers, curriculum development agencies and experts.

22. Member States and other stakeholders should also consider ways in which the issue of educator competences in education for sustainable development can be brought to the attention of actors working in non-formal and informal education. In this connection the involvement of NGOs in any national capacity-building activities on competences in education for sustainable development is very important.

23. At the international level, the first priority with regard to the recommendations and the toolkit produced by the Expert Group on Competences is also related to active dissemination. While the Steering Committee itself plays an important role in this process, it is its individual members that have a unique opportunity and responsibility to ensure that the toolkit is brought to the attention of various international forums and organizations other than ECE in which they participate, such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe, Environment and School Initiatives, the Live and Learn Environmental Education network, the European Training Foundation, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and other relevant education for sustainable development processes.

24. A subregional workshop to consider progress made in applying education for sustainable development competences in technical and vocational education and training, following a series of the capacity-building workshops, could be organized in 2018 to discuss the application of the Expert Group outcomes. Such an event would need to bring together not only national focal points for education for sustainable development and members of the Expert Group on Competences, but also relevant policymakers and experts in educator training and curriculum development and representatives of the relevant international organizations and NGOs.

2. General workshops, trainings and expert assistance

25. The workplans for phases II and III of the previous implementation plan identified subregional workshops as particularly effective, not only in ensuring experience sharing and in keeping education for sustainable development on national and subregional agendas, but also in strengthening subregional cooperation and networking. Subject to the availability of funds, at least one workshop per subregion should be organized in countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia for the relevant policymakers, educators and experts involved in curricula development in cooperation with UNESCO, intergovernmental, non-governmental and subregional organizations working in

the field of sustainable development and education for sustainable development. Such workshops should aim to promote networking, partnership, synergies and experience sharing at the subregional level.

26. At the national level, educator training remains a priority that should be addressed in a strategic way, including through national education for sustainable development strategies and action plans, as well as in a practical way through capacity-building events aimed at educators, in particular those involving educator trainers and curricula developers.

27. Requests for direct support for the implementation of the Strategy have been made by countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in the previous implementation phases, including at the Steering Committee sessions and in their national implementation reports. With the focus shifting from policy development to practical implementation, expert assistance for the implementation of national action plans and strategies will be particularly required. The practical focus of the first post-2015 phase needs to reflect and address these needs by facilitating such assistance at the request of the countries concerned. The Committee at its meetings should consider a framework for such assistance, including issues such as coordination and funding.

3. Education for sustainable development tools, materials, research and good practices

28. The Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development considers both the availability and the quality of education for sustainable development teaching tools and materials to be important in the implementation of education for sustainable development across the region. The third evaluation report contains descriptions of a wide range of such tools and materials provided by the member States, including: textbooks for students that now incorporate education for sustainable development; curriculum and learning outcomes guidance materials developed for teachers by ministries of education; curriculum support materials developed by NGOs; web portals as mechanisms to draw attention to a broad range of education for sustainable development support materials; training materials; and public awareness materials.

29. While many member States report the existence of national strategies, institutions and mechanisms to produce and make available education for sustainable development-related materials, particularly for primary, lower and upper secondary levels, fewer have given attention to quality criteria and approval of those materials. In most cases, teaching materials that relate to education for sustainable development are subject to the same comprehensive quality criteria as all other education materials used in public education. But some member States indicate that specific strategies on quality criteria and guidelines for education for sustainable development materials do not exist. At the present time, with rare exceptions, targeted efforts to address quality in education for sustainable development materials are ad hoc and often led by NGOs and academic institutions rather than the curriculum developers in ministries of education.

30. In some member States, education for sustainable development resources and materials are generally lacking. Resources developed by NGOs and other institutions are often project-based and only distributed through an institution's project website; no central portal exists to provide easier access to what potentially could be thousands of kits, lesson and project plans and interpretative materials. Sometimes many digital resources are available but teachers are not trained in their use.

31. To address the challenges noted above, it is important to focus on providing greater assurances on the quality and utility of education for sustainable development resources. In the future, production of education for sustainable development teaching tools, materials and needs assessments should be considered together with guidelines for quality.

32. The UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development website,⁹ with its Global Action Programme Clearinghouse,¹⁰ and the ECE education for sustainable development website¹¹ continue to provide information on global and regional activities, measures and materials related to education for sustainable development. Steering Committee members are encouraged to make use of the available information and to inform other relevant stakeholders at the international, national and local levels of the information available.

33. At the national level, the development of national education for sustainable development websites and portals should continue. These could be used to share information on practices, materials, tools and other resources available in national languages. They could also be relied on to facilitate networking among education for sustainable development experts, educators, NGOs and other stakeholders. Steering Committee members and observers are invited to link their national education for sustainable development websites or portals to the ECE education for sustainable development website.

34. The third evaluation report highlights the importance of addressing the need for education for sustainable development research, monitoring and evaluation: the limited availability of education for sustainable development research and the need for robust approaches to monitoring and evaluation of education for sustainable development initiatives have been identified as significant barriers to the implementation of education for sustainable development. In 2015 most member States recognized the need for more research on education for sustainable development and the need for monitoring, assessment and evaluation of education for sustainable development actions and learning outcomes. Theories of learning, new methodologies for teaching and evidence of progress need to be systematically collected, rigorously reviewed and disseminated through open access mechanisms. Education for sustainable development research needs to be seen as a legitimate and important field of inquiry. Promoting the need for and value of education for sustainable development research, monitoring and evaluation should be a priority in the next phase of work.

35. The collection of good practices should be continued, and the Steering Committee members are invited to make use of the good practices available in the third evaluation report.

36. The maintenance of a database of best practices on education for sustainable development would help to transfer knowledge of tools, methods and practices in order to support the development and adoption of education for sustainable development policies, instruments and curricula.

4. Awareness-raising

37. At the international level, national focal points need to continue promoting the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and the UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development at various relevant international forums. The ECE secretariat will also continue to play an active role in promoting education for sustainable development at the international level.

38. At the national level, countries should proceed with awareness-raising strategies identified in the national education for sustainable development action plans and strategies

⁹ See <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development>.

¹⁰ Available from <https://en.unesco.org/gap>.

¹¹ See www.unece.org/env/esd.

to raise awareness with regard to education for sustainable development not only among the relevant experts and educators, but also among the general public.

39. The Steering Committee should explore further the role of the media in raising awareness with regard to education for sustainable development, and the involvement of media in education for sustainable development activities could be facilitated. In this regard, options for capacity-building activities aimed at the media should be promoted at the national and regional levels.

40. At the regional level, the ECE education for sustainable development secretariat has played a central role in promoting education for sustainable development among member States and maintaining the focus on the Strategy over the original 10-year implementation period. The Steering Committee should:

- (a) Continue keeping the member States engaged and accountable;
- (b) Promote research into key issues, such as education for sustainable development indicators and teacher competences;
- (c) Provide essential guidance to member States in the implementation of the next phase's priority areas;
- (d) Foster the sharing of information among member States.

41. The nature and purpose of regional cooperation has ranged from the exchange of expertise and sharing of lessons learned to financial support for research and implementation projects. Legislation and frameworks have been reviewed through cooperative efforts, teaching and curriculum support materials have been developed, capacities of teachers and trainers have been strengthened through workshops and exchanges and good practice guidelines have been compiled.

42. The Steering Committee should continue promoting cooperation with other regional forums and agreements across the ECE region, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Benelux Union, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Union for the Mediterranean and other relevant regional organizations that have also proven to be important arenas for advancing education for sustainable development interests.

43. The secretariat should ensure that information on projects and activities made available by the partner organizations is regularly updated and is made available on the ECE education for sustainable development website. The Steering Committee should keep progress in the coordination of capacity-building under ongoing review.

C. Review of implementation

44. During the first decade of the Strategy's implementation, the reporting frame for the review of implementation was set in three phases — phase I (2005-2007); phase II (2008-2010); and phase III (2011-2015) — followed by evaluation reports produced in 2007, 2010 and 2015. The framework for assessment used in the three evaluation reports followed the Guidance for Reporting on the Implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (Guidance for Reporting) (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/5)¹² and the "Criteria to assess successful implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development" developed by the ECE Expert Group on Indicators and annexed

¹² Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=8066#/>.

to the Guidance. The reporting format was updated by the secretariat in consultation with the Expert Group on Indicators to meet the reporting needs of each of phase.

45. According to the third evaluation report, 38 out of the 56 ECE member States submitted a national implementation report to the ECE secretariat for the third reporting period. While 38 member States submitted national implementation reports for the 2014 reporting round, covering the period 2005-2014, another 13 member countries have reported at various stages to ECE and/or UNESCO on their efforts to address education for sustainable development. This suggests that, at the end of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which was the Strategy's original implementation period, a total of 51 countries (91 per cent of ECE member States) had engaged wholly or in part to advance education for sustainable development. Since the Strategy was adopted, only five countries have never reported to either ECE or UNESCO on their progress—representing just 9 per cent of ECE member States.

46. In the same manner, the information from the evaluation report to be prepared for the first phase of the Strategy's post-2015 implementation framework (2017–2019) should facilitate discussions on the achievements of the countries in the region and any follow-up that the Committee may wish to consider. To enable such informed discussions, the implementation should be reviewed and national reports prepared as early as the second half of 2018. The national implementation reports, to be prepared pursuant to the agreed procedure, including through an interactive consultative and multi-stakeholder process, should be submitted to the secretariat by 1 October 2018.

47. The reporting format (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/10)¹³ on which the first three reporting exercises relied should be used as a basis for the preparation of the updated format for reporting to meet the reporting needs for the next round of reports in 2018, as should the indicator-based Guidance for Reporting.

48. According to the new framework for the Strategy's implementation, it is important to coordinate reporting with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to align future monitoring and evaluation work as much as possible with the Global Action Programme reporting scheme, while also allowing for the comparability of the reporting outcomes with previous ECE national implementation reporting exercises.

49. As for the previous phases, the regional reporting exercise should provide for an overview of the Strategy's implementation and allow for the sharing of examples and practices between the countries. It is therefore essential that a more ongoing periodic review take place at the national level.

50. According to the updated terms of reference adopted at the Batumi High-level Meeting, the ECE Steering Committee constitutes the principal decision-making body for the activities carried out under the Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development in the ECE region. The Committee was mandated to continue to decide on the implementation of the Strategy and to review the progress of implementation by carrying out the following activities:

(a) Promoting and coordinating the implementation of the Strategy in line with the Global Action Programme and in consultation with UNESCO — the lead agency for education for sustainable development in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 69/211 and 70/209 — and other relevant international activities and processes, such as the Sustainable Development Goals process, seeking synergies and avoiding overlaps;

(b) Advancing the six priority action areas outlined in the Batumi Framework;

¹³ Available from <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=8066#/>.

- (c) Monitoring progress in implementation, preparing assessments of progress made, proposing priorities for action, identifying challenges and proposing corrective measures, where appropriate;
- (d) Liaising and cooperating closely with relevant key actors, i.e., intergovernmental organizations and NGOs active in education, the environment and sustainable development, and education for sustainable development networks;
- (e) Establishing ad hoc working groups, task forces and other bodies, as needed, to implement the activities;
- (f) Providing guidance on the need for possible new instruments promoting education for sustainable development;
- (g) Serving as a forum for the consideration of issues related to education for sustainable development at the regional and international levels;
- (h) Liaising, as required, with other regional commissions, including those of the United Nations, on matters related to its competence;
- (i) Keeping the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy and other relevant bodies informed about its activities.

D. Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development after 2019

51. The current first phase of the post-2015 framework for implementation runs until 2019. This also coincides with the end of the first phase of the UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development. The Committee may wish to set up the process for considering possible follow-up measures for the next phase, with a view to discussing them at its last meeting of the first phase in 2019. Such a process should be carried forward by the Bureau or a specially set up body and should be based on input from member States and other stakeholders, including the national implementation reports to be prepared in 2018.

III. Financial arrangements

52. In their joint Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development, ECE ministries of education and environment invited stakeholders and bilateral and multilateral donors to continue contributing to and supporting the implementation process for the Strategy.

53. Effective implementation of the Strategy depends, inter alia, on the availability of sufficient financial and human resources. There is a need for stable and predictable sources of funding, while a fair sharing of the burden should be the guiding principle of any financial arrangements established for this purpose.

54. The availability or lack of financial resources underpinning implementation measures determines their success. Financial constraints have been reported by a number of countries with regard to education for sustainable development activities at the national and local levels. In this regard, the Steering Committee should include in its deliberations information from its members concerning regulatory and practical arrangements to address the allocation of funds for the priority education for sustainable development activities in State budgets, and also the identification of possible external sources of funding.

55. As for the previous phases, the implementation of the process at the regional level relies entirely on voluntary contributions from ECE member States, international

organizations, the private sector and international financial institutions, as agreed at the High-level Meeting in Vilnius in 2005. The scheme of contributions agreed at that meeting remains in force for the post-2015 implementation period, with “big” countries or interested organization donors expected to contribute €20,000 or more, “medium” donors €2,000 or more and “small” donors €200 or more, in cash or in kind.

56. A number of important contributions were made by member States in the course of implementation phases I and II. During phase II, contributions to the education for sustainable development trust fund came for the first time from some countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. While these have been at the lower end of the scale, they are particularly significant in underlining the importance these countries allocate to education for sustainable development and the implementation of the Strategy. However, as can be clearly seen from the financial reports provided to the successive meetings of the Steering Committee, summary contributions received from the member States during phase III as compared with the previous phases have been significantly lower, with only a few exceptions.

57. The level of contributions fell consistently short not only of the full-scale budget, but also of the minimum budget required to cover the costs of core activities under the Strategy. This had a negative effect on areas such as the development of a more user-friendly website, timely submission of the planned publication, the Bureau meetings and, most importantly, Professional staff support for running the activities under the Strategy.

58. Under these circumstances there is a probability that, while technical facilities and support (e.g., the meeting venue and interpretation service during the meeting, technical processing and translation of the documents and the provision of travel assistance to eligible participants) will still continue to be available at no direct cost, the Steering Committee may have to operate with decreased secretariat support for a prolonged time periods and may need to adapt to such a minimum level of Professional staff support. This may, for example, affect the ability of the Committee to produce, consult and negotiate substantial documents, and eventually its ability to take, implement and monitor its decisions. The Steering Committee may also consider holding an electronic meeting every other year (and also electronic Bureau meetings), with a view to both environmental and financial considerations. A clear link needs therefore to be developed, and annually reviewed, between the proposed activities and the available resources. Each Steering Committee meeting may hold a special session to review and revise the prioritization of activities in the workplan.

Annex I

Tentative timeline for implementation of the workplan for the first post-2015 implementation phase (2017-2019)

Year	2017												2018												2019																									
Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12														
A. Coordination at the international and national levels																																																		
Steering Committee meetings																																																		
Interlinking with international processes			x ^a																																															
B. Capacity-building and sharing of experience																																																		
Educator competences in education for sustainable development ^d																																																		
Workshops, trainings, expert assistance ^e																																																		
Electronic tools, research and development, good practices																																																		
Awareness-raising																																																		
C. Review of implementation																																																		
Reporting (mandatory) ^f																																																		

Note: Shaded areas in the table indicate in which months activities are expected to be carried out. X's represent specific events or meetings.

^a Promotion of education for sustainable development at the Review Forum for the Global Action Programme during the UNESCO Week for Peace and Sustainable Development (Ottawa, 6–10 March 2017).

^b Promotion of education for sustainable development at the annual Global Action Programme Partner Networks meeting in spring 2018.

^c Promotion of education for sustainable development at the annual Global Action Programme Partner Networks meeting in early summer 2019.

^d Activities for coordination at the international and national levels and capacity-building activities aimed at the active dissemination of the toolkit produced by the Expert Group on Competences and the organization of capacity-building workshops on the application of the outcomes of the Expert Group's work.

^e Activities for coordination at the subregional level aimed at promoting networking and experience sharing.

^f The fourth mandatory reporting cycle will be carried out in 2018.

Annex II

Proposed timeline for reporting

The proposed timeline for the preparation and submission of national implementation reports set out below aims to facilitate the reporting exercise at the national level. Member States are asked to respect the deadline of 1 October 2018 to ensure sufficient time for the preparation of the report on progress in implementation during the first post-2015 phase of implementation of the Strategy at the regional level, and the reflection of any review of implementation in the discussions on education for sustainable development within the framework of the Steering Committee.

<i>Process in a country</i>	<i>Time required</i>	<i>Tentative timing</i>
First draft of the report	1 month	June 2018
Multi-stakeholder consultation on the draft	1–2 months	July–August 2018
Final report preparation (including translation, where required)	1 month	September 2018
Deadline for submission of national implementation reports to ECE		1 October 2018