

Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

(8–10 June 2016, Batumi, Georgia, Sheraton Hotel)

High-level meeting of Education and Environment Ministries

8 June 2016, Batumi, Georgia, Sheraton Hotel

UNESCO Keynote Address

Message of the Assistant Director-General for Education

Excellencies, distinguished experts, dear participants, it is a great pleasure and honour for me to address you on the occasion of this High-level Segment on Education for Sustainable Development. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge your strong commitment to Education for Sustainable Development over the last 10 years. Your UNECE Steering Committee on ESD has been a key partner for UNESCO in furthering ESD in the region. The UNECE ESD Regional Strategy was an important contribution to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

Achieving sustainable development requires a change in the way we think and act, and as a result a transition to sustainable lifestyles, consumption and production patterns. Only education and learning at all levels and in all social contexts can bring about this critical change. This lies at the heart of the quest to solve the problems threatening our collective future. Education, broadly understood, is therefore linked to well-balanced development, which takes into consideration the social, environmental and economic dimensions of an improved quality of life for present and future generations.

The Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development - the official follow-up to the UN Decade for ESD - which UNESCO as ESD lead agency coordinates, places the spotlight on the central role of education and learning in the common pursuit of sustainable development. Its conceptual basis, socio-economic implications, and

environmental and cultural connections make it an enterprise which touches on every aspect of life.

The overall goal of the Global Action Programme is to generate and scale up actions in all levels and areas of education and learning to accelerate progress towards sustainable development. I thus want to stress the importance of the UNECE ESD future implementation framework and of its stakeholders to help intensify ESD actions in the framework of the Global Action Programme. With UNECE as a GAP Key Partner, we look forward to continued and strengthened cooperation between our organizations in jointly implementing the Global Action Programme and contributing to the 2030 Agenda.

Let me thus wish this important event every success, especially as it promises to make a valuable contribution to strengthening the role of Education for Sustainable Development in supporting the implementation of the 2030 development agenda.

Thank you.

Qian Tang