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

Sixteenth meeting

Geneva, 10 and 11 May 2021

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

I. Introduction

1. The sixteenth meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development was held in hybrid mode, on 10 and 11 May 2021, in Geneva.

A. Attendance

2. Delegations from the following 30 ECE member States attended the meeting: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uzbekistan.

3. From the United Nations system, representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) participated in the meeting.

4. Representatives of the European Union, the Union for the Mediterranean and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia also participated in the meeting.

5. In addition, representatives of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and educational institutions attended the meeting: the Cyprus Energy Agency, the Regional Centre of Expertise "Ecodemia" (Belarus), Partnership Network "Education for Sustainable Development in Ukraine" (Ukraine), Planet'ERE (France), Global Education Network Europe, the Interdisciplinary Coordination Centre for Education for Sustainable Development of the State Ecological Academy of Postgraduate Education and Management (Ukraine), Journalists for Human Rights (North Macedonia), the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (Greece), Project 1948 Foundation (United States of America), Frederick University (Cyprus), the Georgian Technical University, the University of Gloucestershire (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), the University of Graz (Italy), the International University of La Rioja



(Spain), Western Sydney University (Australia) and the National Education Institute (Slovenia).

B. Adoption of the agenda

6. The Steering Committee adopted the agenda for its sixteenth meeting as set out in document ECE/CEP/AC.13/2021/1.

II. Implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

A. Fourth evaluation report of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

7. The Committee was reminded that the summary outcomes of the fourth mandatory reporting cycle, carried out at the end of the fourth phase of implementation (2017–2019) of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), had been presented at the virtual consultation meeting (7 May 2020) and the fifteenth meeting of the Steering Committee (Geneva (hybrid), 19 and 20 October 2020). During the October meeting, the Committee had considered both the progress made and the remaining challenges as presented in the national implementation reports and discussed the implications of the findings from the fourth reporting round for the implementation of activities beyond the fourth phase of implementation. The Committee had decided that the decision on the report would be made during an additional 2-hour online session (6 November 2020).

8. The Chair reported that, during the above-mentioned additional session, the Committee had discussed the pre-final draft of the report and mandated the secretariat to incorporate the most recently received comments into the final version of the progress report, which had then been submitted as an official document for approval by the sixteenth meeting of the Steering Committee.

9. The Committee approved the final report (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2021/3), which had been officially submitted and translated for the meeting.

B. Progress in implementing the Strategy

10. The Chair recalled that, to facilitate tracking progress in implementation of the Strategy since the submission of the national implementation reports for the fourth mandatory reporting cycle carried out in 2018, a questionnaire (information paper No. 1)¹ had been sent to countries prior to the sixteenth meeting. In the questionnaire, particular attention had been paid to: (a) the priority action areas of the newly drafted concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework (quality education and ESD; whole institution approach and ESD; digital education, information and communications technology (ICT) and ESD; entrepreneurship, employability, innovation and ESD); and (b) the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on ESD implementation. The proposed questionnaire was not based on the new indicators, which still had to be formulated and approved by the current acting Ad Hoc Group on Indicators working on updating the draft template for reporting on the implementation of the Strategy, after the pre-final draft concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework had been finalized by the Ad Hoc Group on Strategic Planning.

¹ The information papers for, and the presentations given at, the sixteenth session of the Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development referred to in the present document are available under the relevant agenda item tabs at <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/sixteenth-meeting-unece-steering-committee-education-sustainable>.

11. The secretariat presented an overview of the informal country reports on activities since 2019, submitted in advance of the meeting by 17 countries and 1 NGO in response to the questionnaire contained in information paper No. 1.

12. The secretariat noted that most of the countries had made good progress (on average, around 80 per cent or more) under priority action areas (b) (Promoting the whole institution approach (WIA) in every institution of formal, non-formal and informal education) and (c) (Supporting ESD within ICT and digital education) of the newly drafted framework, as well as on other areas outlined in the questionnaire.

13. Most of the reporting countries in the ECE region had widely promoted WIA but on different a scale and at different levels of the education system. More work was required to achieve whole inclusion and coverage, i.e. to implement ESD as an integrated component across all educational and training programmes together with the sustainable management of the institution and its interface with the local community and system-wide interventions.

14. Digital education for teaching and learning on ESD had largely been introduced by countries (more than 85 per cent) but also for various levels and types of programmes, a process accelerated by the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. More efforts were required to obtain a systematic, balanced and updated use of ICT and all digital tools and resources as a means of promoting ESD and new educational practices facilitating access to SD learning.

15. With regard to priority action area (a) (Encouraging countries to embed ESD into quality standards, frameworks and resources associated with formal quality assessments and institutional reviews), it was emphasized that 67 per cent of countries had quality assessment or enhancement systems that addressed ESD or in general, and just over half (56 per cent) of countries reported having quality frameworks for integrating ESD in teachers' professional development. Nevertheless, there was substantial work to do to improve the situation in terms of embedding ESD in quality standards, frameworks, mechanisms and resources in all ECE member States.

16. Around 70 per cent of the countries had made progress in priority action area (d) (Enhancing entrepreneurship and employment within ESD), reporting on various existing programmes or initiatives that supported students/youth entrepreneurship but not on the systemic approach. It was therefore important to encourage the adoption of a systemic approach to using ESD to stimulate an entrepreneurial and innovative mindset in learners in order to accelerate transformations towards sustainable development and increase the employability of young people in existing or emerging new jobs, leading to lasting solutions.

17. The questionnaire also contained subsection V.1. on reflecting the impact of the pandemic on the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD in the countries. On average, around 70 per cent of countries had reported on the impact, challenges and lessons learned during the pandemic. Countries should use those lessons learned to strengthen the role of ESD in the national context as a vehicle for empowering youth and citizens to be more resilient in future emergencies.

18. During the ensuing discussion, the representatives of Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Greece and Romania, as well as an observer from Australia, gave presentations or made statements on their activities and initiatives since the previous reporting period.

19. The representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland proposed that, in future, the draft questionnaire be circulated to the Committee so that the national focal points and the leading experts of the ad hoc groups could be consulted about the content of the informal questionnaire to ensure quality.

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

C. Regional framework of cooperation for sustainable development: participation in the 2021 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and outcomes of the side event organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development in the framework of the Forum

21. The Chair informed the Committee about the outcomes of the virtual side event “Education for sustainable development as a key driver for youth empowerment for confronting the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19”, held on 10 March 2021 in the framework of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (Geneva, 17 and 18 March 2021).

22. The side event had focused on the role of ESD in empowering youth to participate in mitigating the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19, as well as engaging youth in actions for creating more resilient societies in the ECE region. It had highlighted the future framework of the UNECE Strategy for ESD and participation of youth in policymaking and decision-making. Its aim had been to give a voice to youth representatives of the Steering Committee to share, discuss and reflect, with other stakeholders, on issues related to education, sustainable development and the role of youth as pillars for the pandemic recovery and intrinsic components for confronting challenges in the post-pandemic era.

23. The event had brought together youth representatives from ECE member States, Governments, regional and international organizations and civil society to share knowledge and exchange ideas and good practices on how to accelerate ESD for empowering youth to confront and mitigate the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19.

24. The Committee took note of the information provided and highlighted the importance of the involvement of the Steering Committee and its members in the side event, following the decision of the previous Steering Committee meetings that participation in such events would give an opportunity to highlight the potential role of the UNECE Strategy for ESD in supporting countries’ efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4 and its target 4.7 related to ESD, by sharing, and encouraging other countries to adopt, good practices.²

D. Outcomes of capacity-building activities

25. The secretariat updated participants on a Swiss-funded capacity-building workshop on the promotion of education for sustainable development at the national level (Baku (virtual), 21 and 22 April 2021; postponed from 15 and 16 April 2020 due to pandemic-related travel restrictions).

26. The workshop had been organized as a follow-up to four capacity-building workshops funded with the support of the Government of Switzerland and held in 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019 in, respectively, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Armenia and Georgia, with the purpose of building national capacities for integrating ESD into national technical and vocational education and training policy, in consultation and partnership with economic sectors and technical and vocational education and training institutions. The workshop had been organized in the light of the efforts of Azerbaijan to implement the UNECE Strategy for ESD at the national level and other relevant global and regional international agendas, as well as national initiatives, including reform priorities in vocational education outlined in the National Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan (approved 24 October 2013) and the action plan for implementation of that Strategy (adopted 19 January 2015).

27. A representative of Azerbaijan presented the outcomes of the workshop, which had focused on priority action area (c) of the previous implementation framework of the Strategy (Strengthening technical and vocational education and training in support of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2017/4). The purpose of the workshop had been to discuss mechanisms for integrating the main principles of ESD

² ECE/CEP/AC.13/2019/2, para. 16.

into the national vocational education and training system by organizing a cross-sectoral dialogue between key stakeholders. The aim of that dialogue had been to look for opportunities to reorient the vocational education and training system towards: promotion of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals; and development of relevant ESD competencies of educators to ensure their active engagement in that field, given that the absence of such competencies had been identified as a major obstacle to progress in that regard.

28. The workshop had been organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and its State Agency for Vocational Education, as well as the Higher Education Department, which provided higher technical and vocational education. The workshop content had been developed by ECE experts, in cooperation with the national focal points to the ECE Steering Committee on ESD from the Ministry of Education and its State Agency for Vocational Education. The workshop had targeted the following priority sectors of the national economy – agriculture, tourism, mining and oil and gas. Around 60 participants had taken part in the workshop, including representatives of the relevant sectoral ministries, teachers of the vocational education system and higher educational institutions and the business community from the different regions of Azerbaijan, international experts from the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Cyprus, participants from Belarus, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, as well as representatives of the ECE secretariat and the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation.

29. The Chair thanked the host country for the information provided and pointed out that such workshops (at the national or subregional level) made an important contribution to promoting coordination between relevant stakeholders, including different governmental departments, in fostering the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD.

30. The Chair also warmly thanked the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation for its crucial support in organizing capacity-building activities over the past few years and expressed the hope that cooperation would continue in the future. She highlighted that the Committee would be asked to discuss the theme of the next round of capacity-building workshops to be organized during the next cycle of the Strategy's implementation as from 2021 during the agenda item on the status of the trust fund, resource requirements and fundraising efforts.

31. The Committee took note of the information about the capacity-building activity implemented in Azerbaijan, welcomed the cooperation with the Governments of Azerbaijan and of Switzerland, underlined the importance of conducting capacity-building activities in the framework of implementing the Strategy at the national level, invited member States to contribute further to capacity-building activities, and asked the secretariat to continue cooperation with interested member States in that regard.

III. Status of the trust fund, resource requirements and fundraising efforts

32. The secretariat presented its assessment of the current status of the ESD trust fund and resource requirements for 2021–2022, as presented in information paper No. 3.

33. The Committee took note of the information from the secretariat that the dedicated staff position could not be maintained continuously under the current level of funding, affecting the ability of the secretariat to service the process efficiently (due to the shortage of funds, the current dedicated staff position would be terminated on 30 June 2021; the date of its renewal would depend on the availability of resources).

34. The Chair underlined the important role of the secretariat's support in ensuring the effective functioning of the Steering Committee and encouraged the member States to consider making financial and in-kind contributions to the ECE ESD process, taking into consideration national circumstances and United Nations procedures.

35. The Chair expressed its gratitude to those member States that had made contributions (direct transfers and in-kind) in support of the ESD process during the period since the

preceding Steering Committee meeting. It also welcomed the expressions of future support from several member States.

36. In terms of financial support of activities carried out under the UNECE Strategy for ESD, the Chair stressed out that a sound financial basis was needed for an effective implementation of the Strategy. She underscored that, since the funding situation of the Strategy was always critical and ongoing programme activities under the Strategy were funded exclusively through contributions by member States to the trust fund, advance indications of pledges by States were vital.

37. The Chair recalled that planning of ESD activities according to the current and future work plans must include a realistic assessment of the situation regarding financing those activities in order to avoid overambitious expectations. It had already been agreed that any plans for the future must be based on such a realistic approach.

38. The countries were also invited to consider alternative options for contributing to the Strategy's activities, that was to say providing an in-kind contribution in the following possible forms:

(a) Hosting a meeting of an expert group for a specific task decided by the Committee

(b) Publishing and printing a publication of the Committee (i.e. one not included in the ECE publications programme)

(c) Hosting a conference or a meeting for a specific task (e.g., a youth conference or other)

(d) Undertaking activities included in the work plan of the new framework for the implementation of the Strategy up to 2030

(e) Funding capacity-building activities (workshops) and/or other

39. The representative of the Netherlands announced that, by the end of 2021 and once the pandemic-related travel restrictions had been lifted, the Government of the Netherlands intended to provide an in-kind contribution equal to €19,000 for organizing, in the Netherlands, an international conference on the second strand or priority area of the new implementation framework that was the whole institution approach.

40. The representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland informed the Committee that, currently, the Government was considering the possibility of contributing and the amount would be known by the end of June 2021.

41. The representative of Cyprus informed the Committee about a new scheme regarding the annual contribution amount soon to be approved by the Government, which would amount to €40,000, to be communicated to the secretariat by the beginning of June 2021.

42. The Chair recalled the critical role of the national focal points in appropriately informing their Governments about the importance of contributing financially or in-kind to the Committee's trust fund, taking into consideration the fact that the Committee's operations were based exclusively on member States' voluntary contributions.

43. With regard to funding capacity-building activities, the Chair recalled that a series of five workshops had been held during the period 2015–2021, devoted to implementing priority action area (c) (Strengthening technical and vocational education and training in support of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy) of the previous implementation framework, which had been funded by the Government of Switzerland. She then proposed that participants identify and agree on the focus of capacity-building activities for the next decade, arising from the priority areas of the newly drafted concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework.

44. In order to identify the focus of the capacity-building activities for the next decade, the Committee agreed to elaborate and distribute a survey containing questions that would help to identify the issues/themes of interest. Such a survey would be drafted in cooperation with the Bureau and the secretariat and circulated to the Committee, possibly in September 2021. The Committee would then be informed of the results of the survey, on the basis of

which a proposal with an interest-based focus of capacity-building activities would be developed and presented to the Committee before the next meeting in 2022.

45. The Chair invited the member States to make proposals on and give ideas for looking for ways to mobilize funds for the activities planned in the new work programme, as well as for additional funds for capacity-building activities to be held at the national and subregional levels.

46. The Steering Committee asked the secretariat to coordinate with the Chair and the Bureau in the process of elaborating a brief survey (before September 2021) on identifying the interest-based focus of the future capacity-building activities, as well as the potential interest of the member States in being donors for those activities.

47. In view of the critical status of the funds, the Steering Committee requested the secretariat to facilitate the issue (preferably in early autumn) of its regular formal letters to the member States' education and environment authorities, with the invitation to consider contributing to the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD for 2021 and beyond.

IV. Update on the preparations for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries (Nicosia, 5–7 October 2022)

A. Organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

48. The Steering Committee was updated on the relevant existing and expected decisions of the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP), including regarding organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, the proposed framework for preparing the Conference, and the requirements for hosting that event (information paper No. 4).

49. At its twenty-fifth session (Geneva, 13–15 November 2019), the CEP had adopted a document regarding organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (ECE/CEP/2019/19) with a minor change (recommendation that the maximum size of delegations for the Conference be reduced by 20 per cent).

50. At its twenty-sixth session (Geneva (hybrid), 9 and 10 November 2020), the CEP had agreed to reschedule the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries, for 5–7 October 2022. CEP had asked the Bureau, with support from the secretariat to prepare for the twenty-seventh session a new document regarding organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (only the dates of preparation and submission of the documents would be recalculated). At that meeting, the CEP had: expressed its gratitude to the Government of Cyprus for its continued commitment to host the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries; encouraged the member States, partner organizations and all interested stakeholders to actively participate in the preparation and conduct of the Conference; and asked the secretariat to follow up on the decision on rescheduling and to keep the Committee and the Bureau informed of the progress of all necessary preparations.³

51. The Committee took note of the secretariat's update on the relevant decisions of the CEP, including regarding organizational issues for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, the proposed framework for preparing the Conference and the rescheduled dates for organizing the Conference, and asked the secretariat to keep the Committee informed about developments in the course of preparations for the Conference.

³ ECE/CEP/2020/2, paras. 19 and 29.

52. It was highlighted that coordination at the national level between the environment and education authorities would be necessary for efficient preparations (e.g., on the composition of delegations).

B. Host country preparations

53. The Committee was updated about the host country preparations for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries.

54. The representative of Cyprus reiterated information on rescheduling the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference to 2022 and promised to keep the Steering Committee informed about developments regarding the host country preparations for the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, including the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries. It was highlighted, that, given the on-going worldwide unstable situation due to the pandemic, it was still unclear whether countries would open up their borders for international travel; therefore, the Government of Cyprus was considering the possibility of holding the Conference in a hybrid mode in case of continuing lockdown in 2022.

C. Official documents for consideration at the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries – outline of the draft Ministerial Statement

55. The secretariat informed the Committee about the official documents (information paper No. 5) to be prepared for consideration at the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries, which were the draft Ministerial Statement for the High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries and the Framework of implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD up to 2030.

56. The secretary clarified that, as indicated in the above-mentioned CEP document regarding the organizational issues (ECE/CEP/2019/19), the Conference documents would be divided into: (a) official substantive documents; and (b) information documents. Conference outcomes might include:

- (a) A Chair's summary (Co-Chairs' summary of the ESD segment)
- (b) Statements, initiatives, agreements, pledges by interested ministers and stakeholders on specific subjects and/or for specific subregions (post-2019 implementation framework of the UNECE Strategy for ESD)
- (c) An agreed outcome on follow-up and further actions (Ministerial Statement for the High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries)
- (d) [Non-negotiated] policy tools, including strategies, action plans with time frames, guidelines, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned that were presented to the Conference by interested countries of the ECE region and/or organizations

57. With regard to the draft Ministerial Statement for the High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries, its content and outline should be based on the example of the previous ministerial statement adopted at the second High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries (Batumi, Georgia, 8 June 2016), and include the following subsections:

- (a) Introduction (recalling past decisions; reconfirming the vision (past statements/declarations/commitments, etc.))
- (b) Assessment (welcoming the progress in implementation; recognizing roles, contributions, partnerships; recognizing challenges in implementation)
- (c) Actions/commitments (adopt, promote, support, strengthen)
- (d) Conclusion (mandates, responsibilities, future meetings)

58. The Committee took note of the information and asked the secretariat to assist the Committee members who had expressed an interest in participating in the drafting process of the Ministerial Statement. The members were reminded that those who wished to be part of the drafting group should inform the secretariat by email.

59. The secretariat also recalled that, in addition to the main official documents to be adopted by the High-level Meeting, the Committee might submit other documents, such as information and background papers, thematic reports and/or publications or other relevant documents, which would be presented for information, rather than decision-making, purposes.

D. Resource requirements.

60. The secretariat informed the Committee that information paper No. 4 referred to under agenda item 4 (d) contained information about the estimated resource requirements for preparing the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, which, in turn, referred to information paper No. 19 of the twenty-fifth session of the CEP containing an estimate of extrabudgetary costs for supporting the core services provided by the ECE secretariat in preparing the Ministerial Conference.⁴ The CEP invited interested countries and organizations to make contributions (in cash and in kind) for the preparation of the Conference.

61. The Committee was informed that mobilization of contributions had already begun and that several countries (including the host country) had made pledges and contributions for both preparing and conducting the Conference (to the Environment for Europe trust fund). The Steering Committee on ESD had to mobilize complementary resources for the preparation of the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries; therefore representatives of member States were invited to remind their Governments that the timely transfer of contributions to the ESD trust fund was vital.

V. Update on the outcomes of the work of the Ad Hoc Group on Strategic Planning:

A. Draft concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework

62. The Chair of the Steering Committee and at the same time the Chair of the Ad Hoc Group on Strategic Planning briefly updated the Committee on the outcomes of the work of the Ad Hoc Group, which had elaborated the draft concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework, and invited the leading experts of the Group to present the result of the document's last revision. It was clarified that it had not been possible to finalize the document in time for its official submission to the current meeting due to the general delay in conducting important international meetings and especially the corresponding decision-making on ESD, reflecting the impacts of the pandemic, by ECE partner organizations such as UNESCO, whose relevant policy decisions would have to be reflected in the draft concept note.

63. The key leaders of the Ad Hoc Group on Strategic Planning briefly presented the revised and recently finalized pre-final draft concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework, which would be included in the "Framework for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD up to 2030" and further presented to the 2022 High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries as the main policy document (information paper No. 6).

64. The Committee took note of the presentation of the agenda item and the discussed pre-final draft of the concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework (including the preamble and the four strands) and agreed to provide final comments, if any, on the

⁴ Available at <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/twenty-fifth-session-unece-committee-environmental-policy>.

present draft by 10 June 2021, in order to allow the Ad Hoc Group on Strategic Planning to begin work on the final draft of the document.

65. The Chair thanked the Ad Hoc Group for the important work on the document, stating that the document would be updated in the coming weeks after the deadline for the final comments from members had expired, in order to take into consideration any eventual comments and to include the results of other international processes (e.g., UNESCO processes).

66. The Committee asked the secretariat to collect all comments and send them to the Ad Hoc Group for elaboration of the final draft of the concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework, with a view to submitting the final version of the document to the next meeting of the Committee, to be held in 2022.

67. The secretariat was asked also to inform the Ad Hoc Group of the final deadlines for the official submission for translation of the final draft of the document and to facilitate its submission to the seventeenth meeting of the Steering Committee in 2022 for approval.

B. Draft workplan for the post-2019 implementation framework

68. The Committee was updated on the status of the process of elaboration of the outline of the draft workplan for the next phase of implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD, which was currently being prepared by the Ad Hoc Group for Strategic Planning. The purpose of the workplan was to establish a road map of activities to be undertaken during the next implementation phase following the anticipated decisions of the Nicosia Conference on furthering the implementation of the Strategy at the national and international levels, based on the mandate of the Steering Committee as articulated by education and environment ministries at the second High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries.

69. The Chair clarified that it had not been possible to finalize the draft workplan for the current meeting because the draft concept note considered under item 5 (a) had to be finalized first. The Chair stated that the most recent draft of the concept note for the new implementation framework included section number 8 entitled “Recommendations and proposed selected activities for the draft workplan for implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD for the period from 2022 to 2024”, which would be used as a basis for elaborating the final work plan for the post-2019 implementation framework.

70. The Committee was informed that the Ad Hoc Group would continue its work after the draft concept note had been finalized, with the aim of elaborating the final draft workplan, which would have to be submitted as an official document for the seventeenth meeting of the Committee in 2022.

VI. Update on the outcomes of the work of the Ad Hoc Group on Indicators: the draft template for reporting on the future implementation of the Strategy (2021–2030)

71. The Chair of the Ad Hoc Group on Indicators briefly updated the Steering Committee on the current status of work on the draft template for reporting on the future implementation of the Strategy (2021–2030), which was being updated and revised by the experts of the Group, who had started their work at the first meeting (Utrecht, Netherlands, 23–25 October 2019), followed by the second meeting (Podgorica, 16 and 17 December 2019), and the third meeting (Brussels, 12–14 February 2020). The fourth meeting of the Ad Hoc Group on Indicators – originally planned for early September 2020, in the Netherlands – had been cancelled due to the pandemic.

72. The current version of the template for reporting had not changed since the May 2020 online consultation meeting and would be finalized once the Ad Hoc Group on Strategic Planning had completed its work on the draft concept note for the new implementation framework. The few pending issues were the alignment of the set of indicators of the format for reporting with the newly developed four strands of the new implementation framework and the taking on board of the results of the upcoming UNESCO World Conference on

Education for Sustainable Development (Berlin (online), 17–19 May 2021) and alignment with the new UNESCO framework for monitoring and evaluation.

73. In the discussions, it was stressed that, bearing in mind that the revised monitoring and evaluation framework of the Strategy's implementation and its indicators should be aligned with the newly elaborated strands or priority areas, it was important to ensure that the strand leaders were involved in the process of elaborating the new indicators. It was also highlighted that, when revising the previous set of indicators and/or elaborating new indicators for the new monitoring and evaluation framework, more attention should be given to measuring two important elements, i.e. to highlight the difference between the voluntary actions of the member States made as a part of efforts to implement the Strategy, including compiling good practice examples, and the compulsory actions for executing official government policy on the implementation of ESD strategy at the national level, provided that the latter was in place.

74. The Committee took note of the presentation of the agenda item, i.e. the status of work of the Ad Hoc Group on Indicators on the draft format for reporting, and agreed that, following the progress in finalizing the draft concept note in the coming month or so, the Ad Hoc Group on Indicators would meet to discuss and proceed with finalizing the draft template for reporting before the summer holidays, which would be then presented to the Committee for final approval and further submitted officially for approval by the seventeenth meeting of the Steering Committee, to be held in 2022.

75. The secretariat was asked to inform the Ad Hoc Group of the existing deadlines for preparing the final draft of the document for its official submission, and to facilitate its submission to the seventeenth meeting of the Steering Committee for final approval.

VII. Outcome of the process of nominations of youth national focal points to the Steering Committee

A. Terms of reference of the established United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development Youth Network

76. The coordinator of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD Youth Network briefly updated the participants on developments following his invitation two years previously, when he had been invited to lead the process of youth engagement. The process had begun in 2019, when the Committee had discussed at its fourteenth meeting (Geneva, 2 and 3 May 2019) how youth could be engaged in advancing the ESD agenda, particularly in ECE processes, and the challenges that must be taken into account regarding youth engagement in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.⁵ In 2020, the Ad Hoc Group on Youth had been established, with nominees put forward by several members and observers of the Committee, and the first meeting of the Group had taken place in Vienna, from 16 to 18 February 2020. Subsequently, the Group had held several online meetings with the purpose of discussing the policy directions of the Youth Network established in the framework of the Steering Committee's activities and to elaborate its draft terms of reference presented for the Committee's approval in information paper No. 9. Up to the current time, there had been 17 youth national focal points officially appointed by the respective countries and observers to the Committee and the membership of the Group on Youth was open to all those members who had not yet appointed their youth delegates.

77. After the discussions, the Committee agreed on the final title of the Youth Network, to be known henceforth as the UNECE ESD Youth Platform.

78. The Chair and the members of the Committee expressed their gratitude to the Youth Platform coordinator for his excellent leadership and efforts made in organizing and coordinating the group of young representatives, and acknowledged the enthusiastic work of the nominated youth national focal points, who had begun to actively contribute to the

⁵ ECE/CEP/AC.13/2019/2, paras. 23–31.

Committee's activities, including to the elaboration of the draft concept note for the new strategic framework 2030.

79. The Committee took note of the information about nominations to the UNECE Steering Committee on UNECE ESD Youth Platform and approved its terms of reference.

B. Education for sustainable development and youth: Learning from each other - sharing experiences and good examples of national initiatives and actions on education for sustainable development and youth

80. The Committee was updated about youth initiatives and actions integrated into their national and regional context and focused on creating more just, healthy, resilient and sustainable societies. Special emphasis was given to the role of ESD in empowering youth to participate in mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

81. Two youth representatives of Ukraine gave presentations on methodological and psychological support to teachers and educators engaged with youth as key agents in adaptation to the new educational environment in the pandemic and mitigation of the post-pandemic crisis in a resilient and sustainable way, and the mechanisms and tools related to ESD developed in the framework of an innovative youth programme run under the United Nations Development Programme/Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme.

82. The representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland briefed the meeting on the most prominent activities held under the key youth-led and youth-focused initiatives that the country had been implementing in terms of empowering youth, especially in the lead up to the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 31 October–12 November 2021). The initiatives mentioned were the following: "Students Organizing for Sustainability", a student-led education charity focusing on sustainability; The "Futures Forward Academy", a leadership academy in sustainable development for youth aged 20 to 30; "Youth 7 2021", the official youth engagement group for the Group of Seven; and "#iwill Campaign", focused on making participation in social action the norm for youth aged under 20.

83. The youth national focal point from Germany updated the Committee on the results of recent activities organized by the German youth panel on ESD "youpaN", including an expert conference, as a part of which young people from various organizations had gathered online in May 2021 to discuss the pandemic's effects on youth participation and ESD.

84. The representative of the European Youth Forum updated the meeting on the activities of the organization, which was the biggest platform of youth organizations in Europe, representing over 100 youth organizations, bringing together tens of millions of young people from all over Europe and collaborating with other global and regional platforms on many important agendas, including on the topic of sustainable development. The Forum had been promoting youth participation in sustainable development processes for many years.

85. During the discussions, the youth national focal points expressed their views and opinions on their role in the Steering Committee and on what actions or initiatives could be proposed to be undertaken by the Committee for youth.

86. The Committee:

(a) Took note of the information about the reported youth initiatives and actions integrated into their national and regional context, as well as on the role of ESD in empowering youth to participate in mitigating the impact of the pandemic crisis.

(b) Took note of the views and opinions expressed by youth focal points on their role in the Steering Committee and on actions or initiatives to be undertaken by the Committee for youth.

(c) Suggested that the Platform consider preparing:

(i) An activity plan for the Youth Platform in the region for the period 2021–2025;

- (ii) Possible activities and side events on “Youth and ESD” that could be organized during the forthcoming Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.

VIII. Recent activities to promote education for sustainable development in other international forums

87. A representative of the UNESCO Section for Education for Sustainable Development updated participants on:

(a) Implementation of the “Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (ESD for 2030)” framework (2020–2030), including the regional launches of the ESD for 2030 Road Map and a global series of online workshops on the transformative power of ESD for the world beyond COVID-19;

(b) Preparations for the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (Berlin Conference) and highlights of the Conference programme;

(c) ESD for 2030 country initiatives among ECE member States, including information on the regional technical meeting scheduled to be held one week after the Berlin Conference.

88. In preparation for the Berlin Conference,⁶ which had been postponed because of pandemic, a series of seven pre-conference workshops had been held, with over 17,000 participants discussing issues related to, among other things, climate change, youth, health and changing systems. The regional online launch of the ESD for 2030 Road Map – Europe and North America had been held on 1 December 2020, with over 1,500 viewers on Zoom and YouTube. The Berlin Conference was expected to attract up to 2,500 invited participants. The Conference objectives had been set as: mobilization of support for the implementation of the ESD for 2030 Road Map; the highlighting of key global challenges and the educational response; and the promotion of ESD as a key enabler for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Invitations to participate had been sent to: ministers of education via permanent delegations and national commissions, with eight participants nominated per country; ministries of education, other ministries relevant to ESD, NGOs, youth delegates, academia and the private sector; and United Nations partners, international organizations, experts, cities and youth invited by UNESCO. Forty-six ECE member States had submitted nominations for the Conference; out of a total of 85 ministers and/or deputy ministers participating, some 30 had been from ECE member States.

89. The main outcome document to be adopted by the Conference would be the Berlin Declaration, the zero draft of which had been prepared by the UNESCO secretariat, based on wide consultations with various ESD stakeholders, with the main purpose of reaffirming political commitment to ESD and the ESD for 2030 framework and promoting ESD as a core component of education systems.

90. In preparation for the Conference, UNESCO had launched a campaign entitled “Learn for our planet”⁷, aimed at engaging people in ESD and raising their motivation. Among other issues, the Conference discussions would focus on country initiatives on ESD for 2030, aimed to build on ongoing efforts on ESD and possibly create new efforts through engaging multi-stakeholders from both the education and the sustainable development sectors.

91. The representative of UNESCO then informed the Committee about events to be held between 2021 and 2023, including: a regional technical meeting for Europe and North America one week after the Berlin Conference; a regional meeting on ESD for 2030, to be held in 2022 back-to-back to the regional Sustainable Development Goal 4 meeting, and a global ESD-Net meeting planned in 2023, in a 2-year cycle.

92. The representative of the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development briefed the Committee on recent activities organized in the framework of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development. He

⁶ Additional information available at <https://en.unesco.org/events/ESDfor2030>.

⁷ See <https://en.unesco.org/news/learn-our-planet-what-you-need-know>.

recalled that ECE Steering Committee on ESD was the leading member of the Mediterranean Committee on ESD, with Cyprus chairing both committees, in line with other international and regional partners such as the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, situated in Venice, Italy, the Union for the Mediterranean, the League of Arab States and the participating Governments of the member States of the Mediterranean subregion. The Mediterranean Committee on ESD had its Strategy and Action Plan, which would be revised after the Berlin Conference. It was important to highlight that the Mediterranean Strategy used the work implemented in the framework of the UNECE Strategy for ESD as a blueprint for cooperating with the Middle Eastern and Northern African countries that were members of the Mediterranean Committee, thus acting as a bridge between northern and southern communities, where various stakeholders and large networks of NGOs, including youth network, were working together to promote the ESD agenda. The speaker highlighted the particular value of the support received from the European Union Water and Environment Support project, which provided the possibility to continue capacity-building for educators in the southern part of the Mediterranean region, as well as the important support from the Government of Cyprus and in-kind support from other countries.

93. The representative of Global Education Network Europe updated the Committee on the recent activities on ESD and its synergies with the ECE Steering Committee. The organization represented a network of ministries and agencies with national responsibility for global education in European countries. The main goal of Global Education Network Europe was to strengthen education and learning for positive social change, including social justice, human rights and sustainability, locally and globally. The latest developments included an exchange of views with the European Union Working Party on Development Cooperation and International Partnerships, as a part of which it had become clear that the number of European Governments committed to strengthening global education in order to ensure that, in European countries, there was strong critical public engagement with global education issues, was increasing. In that context, on 14 June 2021, Global Education Network Europe would be launching a global initiative as a long-term political commitment looking into the future of global education and with the purpose of launching an 18-month process leading to the development of a new European Declaration on Global Education to 2050, as a follow-up to the commitments made during the Europe-wide Global Education Congress (Maastricht, Netherlands, 15–17 November 2002), which had produced a final document – the Maastricht Global Education Declaration – as an encouraging signal for international cooperation in the field, providing a European strategy framework for global education or ESD. The ECE Steering Committee would be officially invited to that event, which would strengthen cooperation between the two organizations.

94. The representative of the European Commission informed the participants about the relevant work and plans of the European Union. The European Green Deal was one of the big priorities of the European Commission, with education as one of the important dimensions, in line with the economic, social and development aid dimensions. The European Union had recently agreed on and published a new education strategy proposed by the European Commission, aimed at creating a European Education Area by 2025, which sought to foster cooperation between European Union member States to further enrich the quality and inclusiveness of national education and training systems. One of the work priorities was furthering education to support green and digital transitions. Concrete actions to implement those priorities included bringing together all involved partners, including young people, leading to the launch of the Education for Climate Coalition in December 2020 – a bottom-up approach to a true movement for climate, led by pupils and students with their schools, universities and the community, in order to work together to promote the agenda. At the policy level, in order to provide guidance for further national and regional policy development, the European Commission had launched an initiative to develop a European competence framework on climate change and sustainable development and to put forward a proposal for a Council Recommendation on education for environmental sustainability. Both the Recommendation and the new framework aimed to support European Union member States in their efforts to: equip learners and educators with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to live, work and act to contribute to achieving environmental sustainability; support education and training institutions in integrating sustainability into teaching and learning and across all aspects of their operations; and embed education for environmental sustainability throughout the education and training system as a whole. The time frame for preparing the

proposal for a Council Recommendation included a public consultation, launched by the Commission in June 2021, for gathering inputs and ideas for a proposal for a Council Recommendation on education for environmental sustainability, to be finalized and adopted before the end of 2021 by the Commission and further by European Union member States.

95. The Committee took note of the presentations given by the representatives of UNESCO, the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development, Global Education Network Europe and the European Commission, and agreed to work closely with the above-mentioned organizations, as well as with other regional and global partners, on further promoting the ESD agenda in the region and agreed to invite the representatives of relevant organizations (including the European Union) as observers to the ECE Steering Committee on ESD.

IX. Participation of the Steering Committee in upcoming regional and international forums

96. The Committee members were informed about upcoming regional and international forums in 2021 and 2022.

97. The Chair recalled that Committee members were asked to inform the secretariat, the Chair and the Bureau in advance of any plans they might have to participate on behalf of the Steering Committee in any national or international activities, such as forums or conferences.

98. The representative of the Netherlands referred to the announcement made under agenda item 3 on the status of the trust fund regarding the intention of the Government of the Netherlands to organize and host an international conference on the whole institution/school approach by the end of October or the beginning of November 2021, depending on how soon there was clarity regarding the possibility of resuming international travel in Europe. In preparation for the conference, a survey on collecting best practices would be launched, followed by a 3-day conference on the issue that would also support the exchange of practices and knowledge on the priority strands of the newly elaborated strategic framework.

99. The representative of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia reported on two Central Asian regional events in which Steering Committee members could participate: the Fourth Central Asian Conference on Climate Change Conference (Dushanbe (hybrid), 26 and 27 July 2021), conducted by the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia with the support and cooperation of the ongoing 5-year World Bank “Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Programme for the Aral Sea Basin”; and the twelfth annual Central Asian Leadership Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (hybrid, 20–24 September 2021). The thematic focus of the latter event would be production and consumption in the circular and green economy, which had strong links with the content of the fourth stand of the new strategic framework related to green jobs, youth employment issues, entrepreneurship and innovation.

100. The Chair and the secretary of the Committee stressed that the members were invited to send to the secretariat in writing information about the announced events so that it could be included in the report and placed on the website.

101. Regarding the participation of the ECE Steering Committee in the UNESCO Berlin Conference, the secretary clarified that, given that the Conference had twice been postponed owing to the pandemic, the participation of the Committee was limited to a brief intervention of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland focal point and, in future, participation in similar meetings should be better arranged. He highlighted that the Chair of the Steering Committee had, by default, the right to represent the Committee in other forums, but if other members would like to speak and highlight the work of the Committee, they should inform the secretariat and, if relevant, consult with the Chair and the Bureau about the content of such interventions.

102. The representative of the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development informed the meeting that the Committee members would have the possibility to participate in a workshop organized in the framework of the UNESCO Europe and North America regional technical meeting (25 May 2021), an event at which the

Steering Committee would have the opportunity to make a brief intervention about its activities and future plans.

103. The representative of Germany, as a host for the upcoming UNESCO Berlin Conference, invited the Committee members to participate in the live streaming of the Conference's plenary sessions and also in the regional event of 25 May 2021.

104. The Chair of the Steering Committee informed the meeting that: from 31 November to 20 December 2020, she had participated in a 3-week online course on the management of biosphere reserves and other designated areas as a part of the second phase of the Asterousia Hybrid University, organized by the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development and the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, during which she had been invited to present the new strategic plan of the ECE future framework of implementation; on 26 November 2020, she had been invited to attend a UNESCO webinar for the European region, as a part of which she had spoken about the priorities of the new strategic framework and the establishment of the UNECE ESD Youth Platform; and she had participated in a webinar organized by the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development entitled "Mediterranean Preparatory Webinar for #ESDfor2030" (20 April 2021) in order to assist the Mediterranean ESD community in their preparations ahead of the Berlin Conference by speaking about the activities and achievements of the Steering Committee.

105. The Chair also informed the Committee about invitations she had received to participate, as a representative of the Steering Committee, in upcoming international events, including from: UNESCO, for a brief intervention at the UNESCO Europe and North America regional technical meeting (25 May 2021); Global Education Network Europe, to a high-level political event to launch an 18-month process leading to the development of a new European Declaration on Global Education to 2050 (14 June 2021); the European Association for Integrating Food Science and Engineering Knowledge into the Food Chain, to the sixth international conference of said Association (online, 23–25 June 2021), that would explore the theme "Sustainable Development Goals in Food Systems: Challenges and Opportunities for the Future"; and the Institute of Research Engineers and Scientists, to organize a round table discussion at the 1220th International Conference on E-education, E-business, E-management and E-learning (Prague, 21 and 22 January 2022).

106. The Committee took note of the information provided and asked the members of the Committee to inform the secretariat about planned participation in upcoming regional and international forums as relevant, and to consult with the Bureau and the Chair should interventions be planned on behalf of the Steering Committee.

X. Strengthening synergies with other organizations and processes

107. The Steering Committee was informed about several national and international activities related to the Strategy's implementation that were planned or were currently being carried out.

108. The representative of the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development reported on a number of programmes run with several countries and communities for formal, informal and non-formal education, including the southern non-European Union countries of the Mediterranean region in cooperation with some European Union countries, which focused on marine litter with an effort to systematize the problem and address it through participatory and citizens' science and collect "fit for purpose" data for decision-making. There was also a series of activities on gender and youth supported by the Water and Environment Support project. There were also plans to hold a summer university in 2021, with interventions on ESD on climate issues linked to education and information, including the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. Currently, a survey was being conducted with ECE member States to identify gaps and lessons learned that could enrich knowledge throughout the region on issues related to matters such as citizens' rights

and democracy. The above-mentioned activities embraced the northern countries of the ECE region, the European Union and the Balkans.

109. The representative of Hungary reported on a successful workshop on the UNESCO ESD for 2030 country initiative, which had attracted 46 participants from 12 twelve stakeholder groups.

110. The observer from academia (University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) updated participants on the results of a 3-year Erasmus +-funded project entitled “A Rounder Sense of Purpose”,⁸ which had brought together experienced and committed institutions from across Europe to develop a practical framework of competences for educators who wished to educate for a fair and sustainable world. The project had been designed to revisit the ECE competence framework,⁹ with the explicit aim of developing an accessible set of competences that could be used in accreditation models across a range of jurisdictions. The project had resulted in the development of a practical framework of 12 competences for use in any educational context, allowing in-service and pre-service educators to develop and demonstrate their competence in ESD and developing tools and guidelines to help teacher educators implement the framework.

111. The representative of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia¹⁰ briefed the meeting about a recently completed (autumn 2020) 5-year project entitled “Smart Waters”, implemented in five Central Asian countries and Afghanistan in cooperation with and supported by the United States Agency for International Development to promote the goal of the Agency’s regional mission to enhance regional cooperation on shared water resources. The project had made a significant contribution to strengthening cooperation between neighbours and building capacity in the field of integrated water resources management by raising the level of education.

112. The Steering Committee took note of and welcomed the information provided on synergies with other organizations and processes and called for such synergies to be further strengthened.

XI. Publications on education for sustainable development from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

113. The Chair reminded the Committee that two publications were planned to be published in 2022 (postponed from 2021), i.e. the *Progress report on the implementation of the fourth mandatory reporting cycle of the Strategy* and *Good practices on the engagement of youth in education for sustainable development in the ECE region*. The draft outlines for the two publications (information paper No. 10) had been presented at the fifteenth meeting of the Steering Committee.

114. The secretariat pointed out that the final drafts of the above-mentioned publications must be ready before the end of 2021, in order to be published in the course of 2022, and stated that the publishing costs for both hard and electronic copies would be covered by ECE.

115. The Chair invited countries to make a final decision about the outline of the publications. It was agreed that the first publication would be drafted on the basis of the fourth evaluation report on the implementation of the fourth mandatory reporting cycle of the Strategy (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2021/3) and by the same expert from Cyprus who had prepared the progress report, and the second publication would be drafted by the members of the UNECE ESD Youth Platform with the guidance of the Group’s coordinator. It was also

⁸ Additional information is available at <https://arundersenseofpurpose.eu/> and www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/7/1890.

⁹ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, “Learning for the Future: Competences in Education for Sustainable Development – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development”. Available at https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/esd/ESD_Publications/Competences_Publication.pdf.

¹⁰ See various Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia materials, including thematic reports on climate change, biodiversity and water-related issues, at <https://carececo.org/en/main/ckh/publications/>, as well as e-modules at <http://elearning.carececo.org/>.

decided that the drafting groups would elaborate, as soon as possible, the templates for the case studies with good practices to be included in both publications, which would be circulated as soon as possible to the Committee by the secretariat for completion by interested members willing to have their good practice examples included in the publications.

116. The Committee took note of the information provided and agreed to continue working on the publications, in view to their being published in 2022.

XII. Mainstreaming gender issues in education for sustainable development

117. The Committee took note of the information and intervention of the representative of Frederick University, Cyprus, about its work on gender equality issues and efforts on integrating gender issues into ESD. Frederick University was a private establishment offering a broad range of academic programmes of study in different areas, including in education. The speaker briefed the meeting on the University's efforts to promote implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5 on gender equality. The issue of gender was mainstreamed in research and the University found practical solutions to various problems related to the issue. The issue had been integrated into the education process and included in course curricula. Efforts were made to promote class activities, projects, etc. relevant to gender equality, as well as activities designed to help students gain the knowledge, skills and mindset needed to challenge gender stereotypes and encourage equality both in general and within their specific field of study.

118. Countries were invited to give special attention to the issue and to present actions and measures taken in their countries on the issue at the national and regional levels at the next meeting of the Steering Committee, to be held in 2022.

XIII. Calendar of meetings

119. The Steering Committee agreed to hold its seventeenth meeting on 30 and 31 May 2022, in Geneva.

XIV. Other business

120. No additional items were proposed for discussion.

121. The Steering Committee asked the secretariat to upload to the meeting website the presentations and other relevant materials discussed during the meeting.

122. The Chair provided some concluding remarks on the two days of the meeting and thanked the speakers and the Committee for its constructive and efficient work. She also thanked the technical team who serviced the online platform and the interpreters for the excellent job they had done and officially closed the meeting.

XV. Closure of the meeting

123. Following some concluding remarks, the Chair officially closed the sixteenth meeting.
