



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

17<sup>th</sup> meeting, 25 and 26 May 2023

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### **Information Paper No. 1**

#### **Concept note and programme of the side event “Unleashing the power of youth through education: sustainable solutions for a better future”<sup>1</sup>**

##### **Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda:**

Implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development: Regional framework of cooperation for sustainable development: outcomes of the 2023 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and of the side event, organized by the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development in the framework of the Forum and in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

*Prepared by the UNECE Secretariat*

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<sup>1</sup> This information document was not formally edited

1. The Steering Committee will be briefed on: the main outcomes of the 2023 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development; and the outcomes of the side event “Unleashing the power of youth through education: sustainable solutions for a better future”, organized on 28 March 2023 in the framework of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (Geneva (hybrid), 29 and 30 March 2023) (information paper No. 1).
2. The concept note and the programme of the side event are provided below.
3. The weblink to the event including the video is available at <https://bit.ly/3m2otsB> and <https://youtu.be/4mOU9ZB65xE>

### ***RFSD 2023 – Side event “Unleashing the power of youth through education: sustainable solutions for a better future”***



## CONCEPT NOTE

2023 marks an important milestone for the 2030 Agenda, representing the halfway mark for its implementation, and to continue building the momentum to recover from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and accelerate the Decade of Action and Sustainable Solutions for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels. It is also the European Year of Skills.

In addition of being the halfway mark, 2023 was meant to be the year to organize the 'Summit of the Future: Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow' in order to better respond to humanity's most serious and pressing challenges - ranging from coronavirus to war, climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, human rights - challenges that can only be solved by working together to make life better for everyone, rebuilding trust, to protect the planet, and to think for the long term, to deliver more for young people and succeeding generations. These are elements captured in the UN Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda report and his vision on the future of global cooperation.

The specific focus on meaningful, diverse, and effective youth engagement both within and outside the UN is crucial for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the transition to climate-neutral society and economy both an urgent challenge and an opportunity to build a better future for all. Engaging young people in decisions that affect them is not just a matter of right, it is a matter of principle.

Young people play a major role in articulating the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and to respond to current and future challenges. As leading innovators and knowledge creators, young people have proven time and again how crucial they are to social change notably through youth-led research and action. During COP27, Youth representatives and Ministers of environment and education came together to address young people's needs and demands on climate change education, and the Greening Education Partnership was launched as a concrete global mechanism for mainstreaming climate change education.

As part of the UN Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda, the Transforming Education Summit set the tone for the necessary skills, training, and lifelong learning. Almost all the serious and most pressing global challenges listed in the UN75 declaration A/RES/75/1 can be tackled by investing in education. We must elevate education to the top of the global political agenda and to mobilize action, ambition, solidarity, and solutions to bring about profound changes in the world.

This side event will build on the outcomes of key global and regional commitments made since the RFSD2022 and how they can be used to strengthen and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the active participation of young people and the education for sustainable development network. These include, the UN Transforming Education Summit, the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, the Third High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries, the European Year of Youth 2022, and Climate Change Conference (COP 27) and UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) Youth summits. It will discuss sustainable solutions for a better future based on active citizenship, peace, solidarity, democracy and equity, as well as build on the European Declaration on Global Education to 2050 and the UNESCO Recommendations concerning education for international

understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

This event can serve as a platform to connect the different organizations and networks working in the areas of education and youth development, and further strengthen the engagement of youth from the European region to support the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the power of education for sustainable development.

## **PROGRAMME**

### **Welcome and Introductory Remarks**

Wondwosen ASNAKE KIBRET | Policy and Partnerships Coordinator, Europe Office, UNEP | Moderator

Bernard COMBES | UNESCO

Sylvie MOTARD | Acting Director, Europe Office, UN Environment Programme

Marco Keiner | Director, Environment Division, UNECE

### **Engagement of youth in SD policies (lessons from community/organizational involvement)**

António MARQUES PINTO | Association of Young Doctors of Portugal

Jessica GILL and David GILES | UN Youth Delegates for Ireland 2022/23

Simon HERTELEER | Coordinator of the UNECE ESD Youth Platform

### **Commitments to accelerate 2030 agenda**

Diana RIZZOLIO | Geneva Environment Network

Vladislav KAIM | UN SG's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change

### **Promising collaborative actions to advance the interest of young people**

Emily MORRIS | The Brookings Institution, Center for Universal Education

Samia KASSID | World Future Council

Michaela KRÖMER (TBC) | Attorney-at-Law

### **Good practices of youth engagement through education**

Luise HEIDENREICH | Co-Head Education and Learning, Climate-KIC

Deirdre HODSON | European Commission

Aravella ZACHARIOU | Chair of the UNECE Steering Committee for ESD

Bahar ÖZAY | Coordinator, Sustainable Development Solutions Network Turkey (SDSN)

### **Q&A**

### **Closing**