PRESS RELEASE

Sub-Saharan Africa Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Local sustainable solutions for cities and communities

UNESCO, with support of the Government of Japan, in partnership with FAO, IOM, UN Environment, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF and UN Women, is convening, from 7 to 8 December 2017, a Conference to support the Member States of the Sub-Saharan Africa region with the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in cities and urban communities through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Africa is one of the continents that most vulnerable to climate change. The continent is expected to face more frequent droughts, desertification, floods and more intense storms. Sea levels are rising in low-lying coastal areas, where large numbers of poor people tend to live, areas considered the most susceptible to climate change impacts. In the same vein, Africa is home to large populations of refugees in both rural and urban settings that have been displaced due to conflicts. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) can help address several major needs in the region, especially by developing greater synergies between school and community and re-aligning education with local contexts.

As the lead agency for ESD, UNESCO is promoting the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD, the official follow-up to the UN Decade of ESD. Supported by the Government of Japan, it aims at generating and scaling up ESD action at all levels and in all areas of education, and in all sustainable development sectors. In this context, UNESCO and eight UN agencies (FAO, IOM, UN Environment, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF and UN Women), are convening a Conference for the Sub-Saharan Africa region on 7 to 8 December 2017 on the GAP priority 5: Accelerating sustainable solutions at local level. It focuses in accelerating sustainable solutions and scaling up ESD actions at local level in Sub-Saharan Africa, taking into account regional priorities in addressing sustainability issues, and the urban specificities in the region.

The provision of ESD awareness to cities and local authorities through policy dialogue and exposure is expected to result in enhanced sustainable development learning opportunities for their citizens and non-citizens (i.e. refugees and migrants). This conference will work with cities and communities in Sub-Saharan Africa, connecting the dots of other GAP areas: policy, capacity building, youth, etc. It will also focus on youth, educators, formal and non-formal education.

As envisaged by target 4.7 of SDG 4, ESD can contribute to knowledge and skills acquisition necessary for sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union’s Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) provide the wider context for further scaling up and mainstreaming of ESD.
Venue: Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya
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Related documents:

- The African Union Continental Strategy for Africa (CESA) in English and French
- Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and framework for action, in English and French
- Education for Sustainable Development: Learning Objective in English, French and Portuguese
- UNESCO Roadmap for implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development in English and French
- Global Education Monitoring Report PLANET 2016: Education for environmental sustainability and green growth in English
- UNESCO Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development in English
- UNESCO Inclusive and Sustainable CITIES series 2016: Cities Welcoming Refugees and Migrants: Enhancing effective urban governance in an age of migration, in English
- UNCTAD, Economic and Social Council, Commission on Science and Technology for Development 2016: Smart cities and infrastructure – Report of the Secretary-General in English
- UN Habitat, 2016. World Cities Report in English
- UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities Guiding Documents, English