

CONCEPT NOTE**Side Event on Education for Sustainable Development****Climate Action and Education****19 April 2024, 11:30-13:00 (GMT+3)**

Organized jointly by UNESCO and UNICEF within the framework of the 10th Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (ARFSD)



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Thematic Focus

The side event will focus on addressing SDG 13 (Climate Action) and 17 (Partnership), as well as SDG 4 (Education)

Context and Summary of the Side Event

While Africa is responsible for less than 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions, it suffers disproportionately from climate change, which harms food security, economies, delivery of basic services (e.g. education), ecosystems and biodiversity, driving displacement and migration and accentuating the risks of conflict over decreasing resources (The State of the Climate in Africa 2022 report). Education opportunities are increasingly affected by extreme weather events such as drought (including water scarcity and desertification), heavy rainfall, floods, tropical cyclones, windstorms, sandstorms and wildfires, all of which are provoked or exacerbated by climate change. A new UNESCO

study (2023) highlights saturated school capacity, destroyed infrastructure, deepening poverty and increasing school dropout rates, difficulties having past qualifications recognized, and discrimination, etc. as dire consequences of climate displacements. These vulnerabilities extend across Africa. According to UNICEF (2021), the Children's Climate Risk Index¹ ranks children in African countries, especially in the Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria, Guinea, and Guinea Bissau, most at risk.

Given the urgent needs of addressing this issue, education and training needs to be integrated as a part of climate action, so as to: (1) support accessibility, availability and resilience of schools and educational institutions to safeguard the right to education, especially for the most vulnerable populations, and (2) encourage updating the content and pedagogies of education and training opportunities to acquire foundational learning, build resilience, knowledge and competencies for addressing climate change and contributing to peaceful and sustainable communities, cultures and economies. "Climate education is crucial for raising the ambition we need to address the existential threat of climate change", as UN secretary-General said, education and training should be re-envisioned and renewed to be able to equip present and future generations with the required values, attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviours.

Indeed, it is important to recognize the remarkable progress that has been made to strengthen the role of education in tackling climate and sustainable development challenges in several countries, supported by different actors including UNICEF and UNESCO. The UN Decade of ESD (2005-2014) and the Global Action Programme on ESD (2014-2019) have generated education actions and partnerships in favour of sustainable development; and ESD for 2030, launched in 2020 has established ESD Network at global and regional levels including the drafting of ESD Country Initiatives at country level to achieve local targets, provides an overarching framework for sustained global multi-stakeholder endeavors in ESD. Other international frameworks such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992), the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and the Paris Agreement (2015) have been contributors to reinforcing climate action around the world.

However, more effort is needed. The global survey conducted in 2022 has shown that 70% of youth participants responded that they cannot explain climate change, or can only explain its broad principles, or do not know anything about it, putting into question the quality of climate change education in today's schools; the older the respondents, the lower the level of satisfaction of their learning experiences on climate change education; and girls have less confidence in dealing with climate change based on what they learned in school compared to boys (UNESCO, 2022, Youth Demands for Quality Climate Change Education).

Against this background, the side event aims to highlight and raise awareness of the importance of education and training as an integral part of climate adaptation and mitigation efforts in the African context, and to share innovative partnerships and practices in education and training in this regard, which may cross-cut different sectoral actors. It is particularly pertinent as the African Union has just declared 2024 as the Year of Education in its Summit in February, generating renewed commitment and public interest to education in the continent. This side event contributes to the Forum's theme: "Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: The effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions"

¹ The Children's Climate Risk Index ranks countries based on how vulnerable children are to environmental stresses and extreme weather events.

through putting forward the central place of education and training and emphasizing the vital importance of strategic partnership in bringing about innovative and lasting solutions.

The side event is a follow-up to the 2022 Transforming Education Summit (TES) to give impetus to more collective actions for climate change education and education for sustainable development. It also seeks to valorize the political commitment made at COP28 through the adoption of the Declaration on the Common Agenda for Education and Climate Change, elaborated by members of GEP and Global Partnership for Education (GPE) countries, with the support of the UK as member of the consultative group of GEP and host of COP 26. Eleven African countries signed the Declaration (Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Tunisia).

Proposed Agenda

Time: 11:30 – 13:00 (GMT+3), April 19, 2024

Format: Online. Please register here:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Fd7uvrkwTiW1we6ZmvUexA

Languages: English, French

Time (GMT+3)	Description / Contents	Responsible
11:30-11:50	<p>Introduction by MC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Dimitri Sanga, Director, UNESCO Regional Office for West Africa <p>Welcome & opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Sophia Ashipala, Head of Education Division, African Union Commission • Ms Eskedar Nega, Deputy Regional Director, United Nations Development Coordination Office • Mr Gilles Fagninou, Director, UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa 	<p>UNESCO Regional Director</p> <p>AUC DCO UNICEF Regional Director</p>
11:50-12:12	<p>Panel discussion on countries' efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government representative from West and Central Africa (TBC) • Ms Maureen Maguza-Tembo, Deputy Director, Department of School Health, Nutrition, HIV, and AIDS, Ministry of Education, Malawi 	Government representatives
12:12-12:33	<p>Panel discussion on donors' efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Margarita Focas Licht, Partnerships Manager. Global Partnership for Education • Mr Shin Saito, First Secretary of Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO 	Donor representatives

12:33-12:55	Youths' participation efforts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Omnia El Omrani, COP27 President Youth Envoy, Egypt • Mr Dzudzogbe Prince Armand Koumi, National Coordinator for The Climate Student Movement, Togo 	Youth representatives
12:55-13:00	Wrap-up & closing by MC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Dimitri Sanga, Director, UNESCO Regional Office for West Africa 	UNESCO Regional Director

For more information, please contact:

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