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**Sustainable development: education for
sustainable development**

Education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report prepared by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [76/209](#).

* [A/78/150](#).



Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Summary

The contribution of education for sustainable development to quality education and lifelong learning as a vital means of achieving sustainable development is increasingly recognized by the international community and stakeholders in countries and local communities.

As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution [76/209](#), the present document provides a review of the implementation of education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, highlighting the implementation of the framework entitled “Education for Sustainable Development: towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals” (Education for Sustainable Development for 2030), taken note of in resolution [74/223](#). The document also includes an account of the outcomes related to education for sustainable development of the Transforming Education Summit, as well as the findings from consultations with Member States, key stakeholders and United Nations entities.

I. Introduction

1. The international community has recognized the importance of education for sustainable development as an integral element of quality education and a key enabler for sustainable development. Education for sustainable development empowers learners with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society. It is a lifelong learning process and an integral part of quality education. Education for sustainable development is holistic and transformational; it addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It enhances the cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural dimensions of learning and promotes individual and social transformation.

2. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been the lead United Nations agency on education for sustainable development since the beginning of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014). The Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development as follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development after 2014 (2015–2019), which the General Assembly took note of in its resolutions [69/211](#) and [70/209](#), aimed at scaling up action on education for sustainable development. In its resolution [72/222](#), adopted in 2017, the Assembly reaffirmed the role of UNESCO as the lead agency on education for sustainable development, and recognized education for sustainable development as an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goal on quality education and a key enabler of all the other Goals. In 2019, in its resolution [74/223](#), the Assembly took note of the new global framework entitled “Education for Sustainable Development: towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals” (Education for Sustainable Development for 2030) and reinforced this by encouraging countries to scale up education for sustainable development action. In addition, in resolution [76/209](#), the Assembly took note of the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2021, and welcomed the increased international recognition of education for sustainable development in quality education and lifelong learning.

3. The present document was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [76/209](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit at its seventy-eighth session a report on the implementation of the resolution on education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It provides a review of the implementation of education for sustainable development under the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 framework, as well as an account of the outcomes related to education for sustainable development of the Transforming Education Summit in 2022.

4. Considering that education for sustainable development is an integral part of the Education 2030 Agenda, the present report also highlights the mandated role of UNESCO in leading and coordinating the Agenda, through the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism, and provides an update on developments since late 2021.

II. Addressing education for sustainable development as part of Sustainable Development Goal 4

A. Enhancing coordination on Sustainable Development Goal 4: Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) High-level Steering Committee

5. The work of UNESCO on education for sustainable development sits within the Organization's wider mandate on Sustainable Development Goal 4. UNESCO has focused its efforts on strengthening coordination on Goal 4 through the Global Education Cooperation Mechanism.

6. As the global education apex body at the core of the Mechanism, the Sustainable Development Goal 4 High-level Steering Committee assumed the leadership role in strengthening coordination across States Members of the United Nations and partners for accelerated progress towards Goal 4, notably in the context of the Transforming Education Summit and its follow-up.

7. Following its inauguration at the high-level segment of the Global Education Meeting held in 2021, the Steering Committee met for the first time in February 2022, agreeing on four thematic focus areas for 2022–2023:

- Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools (action track 1)
- Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development (action track 2)
- Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession (action track 3)
- Digital learning and transformation (action track 4)

8. The promotion and acceleration of progress in education for sustainable development is at the core of the second thematic focus area and is advanced through the Steering Committee's three functional areas on evidence-based policy (functional area 1), data and monitoring (functional area 2) and education financing (functional area 3).

9. The Steering Committee's thematic focus areas served as the basis for the thematic action tracks of the Transforming Education Summit, convened by the Secretary-General in September 2022 as part of Our Common Agenda to elevate education to the top of global and national political agendas.

10. Issued on the occasion of the Transforming Education Pre-Summit, the Steering Committee's urgent call for action underscored the centrality of education for sustainable development, calling on all Heads of State and Government to transform education, including through decisive actions to skill, reskill and empower young people for green societies and the sustainability of the planet.

11. In recognition of its unique mandate, the Steering Committee has been tasked with ensuring the effective follow-up to the Transforming Education Summit by building on the joint mobilization and momentum it created for education.

12. In line with the decisions taken at the Steering Committee's leaders group meeting, held in December 2022, and the targeted action plan created for their implementation, the Steering Committee will conceptualize a dashboard of country commitments and actions to monitor progress towards national commitments made in the context of the Summit. The dashboard will, notably, capture progress in the field of climate and greening education and strengthen accountability for results at the country level.

13. The dashboard will be featured on the Knowledge Hub on Sustainable Development Goal 4, which the Steering Committee decided to develop as a one-stop-shop for resources, good practices and research on education worldwide, as well as updates and news on key moments in global education. The Knowledge Hub will serve as a unique tool for the promotion of exchange and peer learning, including in the field of education for sustainable development.

14. To capture transformation in education at the country level, the Steering Committee also decided to add a new indicator on greening education to the existing Goal 4 benchmarking framework, the methodology for which is being developed by the Steering Committee's technical committee on data and monitoring, in cooperation with the Technical Cooperation Group on Sustainable Development Goal 4 Indicators. Countries will be encouraged to set national targets for 2025 and 2030.

B. Transforming education: Greening Education Partnership to make every learner climate ready

15. The Transforming Education Summit, held in New York in 2022, has confirmed that education must be transformed to respond to the global climate and environmental crisis and to promote sustainability. Under the leadership of Colombia and Japan, and with contributions from UNESCO, the International Labour Organization, the International Telecommunication Union, the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations University, WorldSkills International and the group of youth non-governmental organizations known as YOUNGO, education for sustainable development was discussed as a cross-cutting transformative component of thematic action track 2 on learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development.

16. Drawing upon a holistic approach to learning, and building on the knowledge and practice accumulated in education for sustainable development to address the complex global issue of climate change, the Greening Education Partnership was launched to accelerate education responses to climate change and promote sustainable development in countries through strong, coordinated and comprehensive action. Education for sustainable development is a useful conceptual framework for addressing the linkages between climate change and other sustainability challenges, including in terms of food, energy, biodiversity or justice, and for fostering system thinking, which is one of the critical competencies for promoting sustainability. Taking a lifelong learning and whole-institution approach, the Partnership sets goals for 2030 in four pillars of action.

(a) **Pillar 1: greening schools.** Pillar 1 concerns the need to ensure a whole-institution approach, including by promoting green teaching and learning, climate-ready school facilities and operations, inclusive governance and community engagement. From early childhood through adult education, stakeholders should work to ensure that all schools achieve green school accreditation, including for teacher training and higher education institutions. A green school is defined as an educational institution that promotes knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for the social, economic, cultural and environmental dimensions of sustainability through a whole-school approach in its teaching and learning, facilities and operations, school governance and community partnerships;

(b) **Pillar 2: greening curriculum.** Pillar 2 concerns the need to ensure relevant and quality learning content and pedagogy on climate change education. Actions in this regard will help to ensure that climate change education addresses climate mitigation and adaptation in school curricula; teaching and learning practices

at the pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels and in technical and vocational education and training; and workplace skills development, teaching materials and assessment;

(c) **Pillar 3: greening teacher training and education systems' capacities.**

Pillar 3 reflects the need to strengthen policy, planning, finance and implementation. Actions in this regard require strengthening education systems with adequate measures to be climate ready and ensuring that teachers and policymakers are trained to integrate climate change and sustainability into teaching and learning. Pre-service and in-service training should be provided at all levels, including early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education. Training should also be provided to educators and trainers in relevant fields, such as the environment, energy and agriculture, so as to support the acquisition of skills required for the green transition;

(d) **Pillar 4: greening communities.** Pillar 4 concerns the need to become climate resilient through lifelong learning. Actions in this regard call for engaging communities by integrating climate education in lifelong learning, in particular through community learning centres and learning cities. Lifelong learning opportunities, including school-to-work transition, are made available for young people and adults outside the formal education system, with a view to developing the skills, attitudes and behaviours to tackle climate change and environmental degradation.

17. The Greening Education Partnership serves as a mechanism to accelerate and improve the implementation of climate change education through better coordination and collaboration; knowledge management and research; and advocacy, communications and monitoring. Currently, over 800 partner organizations and 70 Member States have expressed their commitment to contributing to at least one of the four pillars of action. For each of the pillars, joint workplans will be developed to connect the needs of Member States in greening education with the technical support available from stakeholders; to build a community of practice; to develop a baseline and monitor progress; to enhance the capacities of policymakers, educators and learners; and to strengthen investment in education for sustainable development, including through cross-sectoral synergies with climate financing. The Partnership will work closely with the United Arab Emirates during its presidency of the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to ensure that the role of education is highlighted at the Conference in December 2023. Efforts in this regard include collaboration on a dedicated education pavilion hosted by the Ministry of Education of the United Arab Emirates, as well as the joint organization of a high-level event on greening education.

18. A dedicated United Nations multi-partner trust fund is being developed to finance the Partnership, while ensuring synergetic and coordinated country-level implementation throughout the United Nations system. UNESCO, UNEP and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change are working together to set up the fund, and several "early champions" have expressed some interest. A key objective of the fund will be to ensure that a portion of climate finance is channelled to education systems, so that the potential of education is fully harnessed for climate change adaptation, mitigation and sustainable development.

19. The Greening Education Partnership will also build on the engagement of young people at the Transforming Education Summit.

III. Review of the implementation of education for sustainable development

20. Much progress has been made around the world to promote ecological transition in education, but a further systematic and targeted approach is needed. The Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 framework is a reference point for Governments, education stakeholders, civil society and learners of all ages to reorient learning goals for the purpose of societal transformation.

A. Global coordination of the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 framework

21. The official launch of the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 framework took place at the fourth UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held virtually in Berlin in 2021 and organized by UNESCO, in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research of Germany and the German Commission for UNESCO, as advisory partners. At the end of the Conference, participants adopted the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, in which they pledge to ensure that environmental and climate action is a core curriculum component in all education systems. The Declaration outlines a range of policies to transform learning that encompass teaching, learning, professional training and civic engagement. It also highlights the need to implement education for sustainable development, with a focus on cognitive skills, social and emotional learning, collaborative skills, problem-solving and resilience-building.

22. To facilitate cooperation and partnerships around the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 framework, the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 Global Network was established in 2022 to mobilize a wide range of stakeholders in education and sustainable development, including government agencies, civil society organizations, educators, young people, research institutions, United Nations partners, international development communities and business entities. It serves as a platform for knowledge-sharing, collaboration, peer learning, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation.

23. To date, more than 100 States members of UNESCO and international partners have joined the Network's core group, while, overall, more than 4,000 stakeholders globally have engaged with the Network. It was officially launched in October 2022, with an online webinar and workshop. The learning webinar series, which continues to be organized at the global level in 2023, presents concrete and practical education for sustainable development activities in line with the five priority action areas outlined in the publication entitled *Education for Sustainable Development: A Road Map*: advancing policy; transforming learning environments; building the capacities of educators; empowering and mobilizing youth; and accelerating local level actions.

24. Meetings and webinars are also being carried out at the regional level to support member States in the development and implementation of country initiatives under the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 framework and to strengthen partnership and collaboration across the Network. With the support of Japan, the outcomes of those regional events will serve as the basis for a global meeting, to be held in Tokyo in December 2023, to further strengthen the Network and share good practices in implementing the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 framework.

25. Since the beginning of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) and the follow-up Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (2015–2019), UNESCO has organized several opportunities for knowledge exchange and cooperation among education stakeholders and others, which has generated a broad community of practice on education for sustainable development that is connected through the various UNESCO communication channels dedicated to education for sustainable development – web pages, a newsletter and a LinkedIn group – and relevant publications and guidance documents.

26. The UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development, established in 2014, aims to reward institutions and organizations that have developed outstanding, innovative and impactful projects in education for sustainable development. The Prize was renewed in November 2019 for a period of six years, 2020–2025, on a biennial cycle. It has helped to underscore the critical role of education for sustainable development as a key enabler of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The 2021 Prize was the first edition of the renewed cycle, for which the laureates were World Vision Ghana (Ghana), the Media Development Center of Birzeit University (Palestine) and Kusi Kawsay Andean School (Peru). Each received an award of \$50,000 at the ceremony held on 19 November 2021, during the forty-first session of the General Conference of UNESCO. For the promotion of the Prize, a brochure and a video featuring the 2021 laureates were created. The call for nominations for the 2023 edition was launched in December 2022 and will culminate in an award ceremony, which is scheduled to take place in November 2023, during the forty-second session of the General Conference.

27. UNESCO has launched the UNESCO Green Citizens platform to support and highlight local citizen projects that are shaping new ways of inhabiting the world in harmony with nature. The initiative offers opportunities for partnerships and the sharing of good practices. UNESCO has identified over 150 local initiatives across 65 countries that are grounded in citizen-driven, innovative, impactful and replicable solutions across five key themes to combat climate change and preserve the environment: biodiversity, the ocean, education for sustainable development, Indigenous and local knowledge, and hydrology.

28. UNESCO also launched the UNESCO Campus programme to help young people develop a better understanding of key contemporary issues and their role as young citizens. These virtual campuses have provided a unique opportunity for young people aged 14 to 18 years from schools in all parts of the world to exchange views with representatives of UNESCO and experts on global topics related to the Organization's mandate, including environmental and sustainability issues. A library of resources, including videos and publications, allows participants to deepen their knowledge on the issues discussed.

B. Implementing the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 framework: country initiatives

29. At the launch of the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 road map and to create momentum to implement the framework and its five priority action areas, UNESCO encouraged Member States to develop and implement country initiatives to mainstream education for sustainable development as part of their efforts to advance sustainable development in and through education.

30. The country initiative template was designed and disseminated to facilitate self-assessment of achievements and the identification of opportunities for scaling up.

31. UNESCO recommends that these multi-stakeholder country initiatives be led by ministries of education, in coordination with other related ministries, such as ministries of the environment. It also recommends integrating the country initiative into existing national frameworks on the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 4, but also Goals 12 and 13, among others, in order to ensure that coherent action at the country level underscores education for sustainable development as a strategy for transforming education. The country initiative can be linked to planned or ongoing education sector reforms, including a review of curriculum and teacher education policy.

32. Currently, 86 countries have expressed interest in developing country initiatives, including 31 countries that have submitted a first draft and 7 countries that have finalized and successfully launched their country initiatives: Haiti, Ireland, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Spain.

33. For instance, the country initiative on education for sustainable development for Mongolia, building on the country's national policy, aims to reflect more extensively education for sustainable development in the national curriculum in order to support the development of students' knowledge, skills and attitudes; transform learning and education by implementing a whole-school approach; and make education for sustainable development a reality. Although education for sustainable development is currently not reflected at the national level in Saint Kitts and Nevis, its country initiative is aimed at fully integrating education for sustainable development into the curriculum and national education strategy in the next few years, based on the five priority action areas in the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 road map. It will also focus on formal and non-formal education in both curricular and extracurricular activities and increase multi-stakeholder engagement on the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 framework.

34. The number of country initiatives launched is expected to reach about 50 by the end of 2023, as more countries advance in their preparation and development.

C. Strengthening the capacities of teachers in education for sustainable development

35. Teachers have the power to help learners develop the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours required to address global challenges and contribute to shaping more sustainable futures. However, according to a global survey of 58,000 teachers, conducted by UNESCO and Education International, while many teachers are motivated, a quarter still do not feel ready to teach themes related to education for sustainable development.

36. Released in November 2021, the publication entitled *Teachers Have their Say: Motivation, Skills and Opportunities to Teach Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship* provided data from the global survey and sheds light on the progress towards target 4.7 of the Goals from the viewpoint of one of the key players in achieving that target: teachers themselves. Fewer than 40 per cent of teachers surveyed are confident in teaching about the severity of climate change, even though 95 per cent of teachers believe that it is important or very important to teach about it. Teachers feel more confident teaching cognitive skills, and less confident and knowledgeable about behavioural and socioemotional learning, especially in education for sustainable development. They need more support from schools, training institutions, communities and governments at all levels if they are to succeed in shaping among learners the behaviours needed to inhabit the planet sustainably.

37. With a view to supporting teachers to integrate education for sustainable development effectively in their teaching, the publication contains the following recommendations for decision makers, educational planners, curriculum developers, teacher trainers, teachers, school leadership, communities and other stakeholders:

- Consider education for sustainable development as a core component of quality education, integrating it as a core curricular component
- Prioritize education for sustainable development to ensure that adequate investments are made to support teachers to teach it
- Provide high-quality and relevant teaching and learning materials for education for sustainable development
- Provide high-quality professional development and teacher training to teach education for sustainable development, including providing training and tools to support teachers in assessing students on education for sustainable development
- Involve teachers, especially through their elected representatives, in determining policies, curricula and assessment methods on education for sustainable development and support teacher leadership and autonomy
- Create a supportive school environment for teaching education for sustainable development, ensuring the active participation of students in determining policies and practices
- Foster broader collaborations with academic institutions for education for sustainable development

38. The survey findings were presented, with the launch of the publication, at the UNESCO Forum on Transformative Education for Sustainable Development, Global Citizenship, Health and Well-Being, held virtually in the Republic of Korea in November 2021, with its sessions focusing on implementing change in education systems so that learners can transform their own lives and their societies. Teachers were encouraged to transform their teaching, for example, ensuring that the curriculum, pedagogy, learning materials, schools and learning environments are meaningful in political, economic and cultural contexts.

39. Teachers from around the world also shared insights on teaching for climate empowerment as part of the joint Teaching for Climate Action initiative that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, UNESCO and Education International ran from July to December 2021 to gather teacher expertise on what makes a difference in student agency to act and lead on climate matters. Overall, about 850 teachers actively contributed to this initiative, with engagement from more than 6,500 visitors across 157 countries. They also participated in five global dialogues with peers, teacher educators, school leaders, organizations and climate experts, including an event held during the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to discuss the preliminary insights from the initiative and future directions for education systems.

40. Through the Sustainability Starts with Teachers initiative, supported by Sweden, teacher educators from early childhood care and education, primary and secondary education, and technical and vocational education and training from 11 countries were involved in capacity-building programmes using a whole-school approach, which engages the entire school community and facilities in sustainability practices.

41. Faced with the growing commitment of young people in favour of the environment and their fears for the future, teachers are on the front line to accompany

them in their reflections. To overcome the disparities in access to resources on the subject, UNESCO organized for the first time in early April 2023 a masterclass addressed to teachers on the key issue of how to educate students about the environment. The online masterclass allowed for a dialogue among 250 teachers and five experts on the subject. The discussion will continue in the classrooms using the educational resources shared during the event.

D. Addressing the concerns and commitments of youth

42. In recent years, young people have become increasingly vocal and active, demanding decisive change, forming and joining social movements, and holding their leaders accountable on climate change. The “Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition” manifesto, issued during the event held in Milan, Italy, in 2021, calls on Governments to ensure that learners of all ages are supported with comprehensive and universal climate change education at all levels. Such education should integrate Indigenous and local knowledge and a gender perspective, promote changes in lifestyles and ensure the climate neutrality and climate resilience of educational institutions.

43. During the summer of 2022, a survey and five focus group discussions were organized globally to collect the views, experiences and wishes of young people on climate change education. Over 17,000 young people engaged in the consultation, which led to the launch of the document entitled “Youth demands for quality climate change education” at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change during a ministerial session organized by UNESCO, the secretariat of the Convention and the Ministry of Education of Egypt.

44. The global survey revealed young people’s dissatisfaction with the quality of the climate change education they receive: one in five respondents report that they do not feel prepared for climate change based on what they have learned at school. Furthermore, the survey revealed that 27 per cent of respondents cannot explain what climate change is, 41 per cent can only explain the broad principles and 2 per cent do not know anything about it. Youth demands are clear: it is no longer enough to have some climate change education in science classes.

45. Young people demand learner-centred, experiential and reflective ways of learning that are more fun, solutions based and action oriented. They feel that education should help them to take environmental and climate action, understand how human activities affect the environment and cause climate change, make positive changes in society and re-envision humans as part of nature.

46. Youth engagement was at the heart of the Transforming Education Summit. The resulting Youth Declaration on Transforming Education, launched in 2022, clearly highlighted the collective sense of urgency of young people to address the global education crisis and other simultaneous and interconnected global challenges. In particular, young people demanded in the declaration that decision makers “invest in education for sustainable development across curricula, particularly climate education to build skills and knowledge needed to build resilience, mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis and ensure climate justice, as well as invest in early warning systems and resilient infrastructure to ensure safety, security, and education continuity”. The SDG4Youth Network, tasked with taking the Declaration forward, has championed this critical message in various forums, including the Global Futures Literacy Design Forum and the Economic and Social Council youth forum, where young people participated in dialogues with ministers. The Youth Declaration also forms the basis of the Global Youth Initiative, which, in part, aims to build the

capacity of young people and students to encourage their national Governments to take note of and implement policies aligned with the Youth Declaration.

E. Monitoring progress on Sustainable Development Goal target 4.7

47. As the recognized lead agency for education for sustainable development and in the framework of Goal 4 on education, UNESCO spearheads the monitoring of progress towards target 4.7. Given the target's unique and novel focus on the content and purpose of education, monitoring is challenging but continues to progress.

48. Target 4.7 of the Goals promotes quality education by ensuring that learners develop the relevant understanding, skills and attitudes to respond to the challenges facing the world today. It emphasizes the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development.

49. The report entitled "Where do we stand on education for sustainable development and global citizenship education: findings of the 7th consultation on the implementation of the 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" was issued in April 2022. National responses to the consultation also serve as the data source for the global Goal indicator 4.7.1 (as well as indicators 12.8.1 and 13.3.1). Data from 69 countries were published in 2021 on the Global SDG Indicators Database and set a baseline against which progress on mainstreaming education for sustainable development can be measured.

50. In November 2021, States members of UNESCO decided to revise the 1974 Recommendation to "take into account shifts in the global and educational landscape with a view to firmly embedding the role of education in fostering human rights and fundamental freedoms, global peace, international understanding and sustainable development". The revised draft contains a new section on follow-up and review based on advice from the monitoring and evaluation experts who were consulted in May 2022. The 1974 Recommendation was revised based on an extensive review and an inclusive, transparent and participatory consultative process involving a wide range of key stakeholders, experts and partners from around the world. National technical and legal experts nominated by member States discussed the text during two Special Committee meetings (30 May–2 June and 10–13 July 2023). The final draft will be submitted for adoption at the forty-second session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 2023.

51. UNESCO is undertaking a study to analyse content on climate change and environmental issues in science and social science curricula in secondary education worldwide and to identify examples of good practice. The results will be published and presented at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2023.

52. The Greening Education Partnership working groups will develop a baseline review of the global status of climate change education under the four pillars of action: greening schools, greening curriculum, greening teacher training and education systems' capacities and greening communities, based on data and evidence compiled from members of the Partnership. The baseline review is planned to be presented at the first annual meeting of the Greening Education Partnership at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as a common output of its members.

F. United Nations system-wide cooperation and global partnerships

53. United Nations inter-agency cooperation for addressing various global sustainability challenges through education for sustainable development has been strengthened through various coordination mechanisms dedicated to specific issues, such as the One United Nations Climate Change Learning Partnership, the United Nations Alliance on Action for Climate Empowerment, the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector, the Youth and United Nations Global Alliance, and the One Planet network of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.

54. The “Comprehensive school safety framework 2022–2030 for child rights and resilience in the education sector”, developed by members of the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector, was launched mid-September 2022. It is an opportunity for countries to renew their commitments towards disaster risk reduction and resilience in the education sector and learn from, and replicate, best practices in other regions. It is based on an all-hazard approach, taking into account the whole range of hazards and risks facing education systems, including natural hazards, climate change, biological and health hazards (i.e. as a response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic), conflict and violence, as well as other everyday hazards. The framework is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant global frameworks for child rights and child protection.

55. Inter-agency cooperation on greening education has been facilitated through the collaboration forged on the occasion of the Transforming Education Summit and the launch of the Greening Education Partnership. Currently eight United Nations entities, including the International Labour Organization, UNEP, the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations University, the World Food Programme and UNESCO, are members of the Partnership, collaborating on a daily basis on the four pillars. The cooperation created an opportunity for closer collaboration among ministries beyond ministries of education, which is paramount for the effective implementation of education for sustainable development.

56. In addition, UNESCO collaborates closely with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens and the Centre for Sustainable Development, as part of its patronage of the Mission 4.7 initiative. The multi-partner initiative is aimed at transforming education through the accelerated implementation of target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals by promoting education for sustainable development on the global agenda. In September 2022, Mission 4.7 organized a ministerial panel on the margins of the Transforming Education Summit to champion the work and commitment of countries towards the realization of target 4.7.

IV. Education for Sustainable Development responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis

57. The planetary crisis associated with climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution threatens the very survival of human beings. In an increasingly complex and interconnected world with a real, existential threat such as climate change, there is a growing call for education to enable individuals, as agents of change, to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for the green transition of societies, as

enshrined in target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals and, indeed, in the entire 2030 Agenda.

58. In the report entitled *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report*, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has shown that there is a very short period of time in which to change the trajectory of climate change, and that means making serious adaptations to patterns and ways of life, to values across diverse cultures and to relationships with each other, with other beings and with nature. Following up on the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO has called for environmental and climate action to be a core curriculum component in all education systems by 2025, and for education for sustainable development to be integrated throughout the learning cycle in every country by 2030.

59. However, recent findings in the UNESCO report entitled “Getting every school climate-ready: how countries are integrating climate change issues in education” show that around half of the 100 countries reviewed had no mention of climate change in their national curriculum frameworks, and only a quarter mentioned biodiversity. While 95 per cent of surveyed primary and secondary teachers felt that teaching climate change was important, less than 30 per cent felt ready to teach about climate change in relation to their local context. Over a third indicated no inclusion of content related to the environment in their teacher training programmes, according to the 2021 UNESCO report entitled “Learn for our planet: a global review of how environmental issues are integrated in education”.

A. Addressing climate change

60. Fruitful and active collaboration with the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has been ongoing for over a decade to support countries in the area of climate change education. Following the launch of the guide entitled “Integrating action for climate empowerment into nationally determined contributions: a short guide for countries”, UNESCO and the secretariat have been providing support to Member States to include strong commitments on education in their nationally determined contributions. UNESCO has also contributed to a series of dialogues on Action for Climate Empowerment organized by the secretariat and has helped to ensure the visibility of education at the sessions of the Conference of the Parties in various events. UNESCO and the secretariat have also been working closely to mobilize different stakeholders and sectors to contribute to the Action for Climate Empowerment agenda.

61. Through a partnership between UNESCO and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a series of eight monthly webinars on climate change education for social transformation, as part of the series on the theme “On the road to COP27”, were held from April to November 2022 to bring together key education and sustainable development stakeholders to raise public awareness around climate education issues. The first season, which focused on greening every education policy and curriculum, gathered 15,000 participants from 184 countries, including policymakers, practitioners, educators, young people, academics and representatives of civil society organizations. The webinar series led to the expert discussion on climate change education for social transformation, as part of the series on the theme “On the road to COP28”, organized by UNESCO, the Resident Coordinator’s Office in the United Arab Emirates and the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and held at the United Arab Emirates pavilion on Action for Climate Empowerment Day during the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties. The conversation revolved around greening schools, one of the four pillars of action of the Greening Education Partnership, as the key topic of the second series of webinars, to be held from May to

December 2023 in the lead-up to the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties.

62. As part of the collaboration between UNESCO and UNEP, a study was conducted in 2021 showcasing some promising and innovative practices that countries are undertaking to strengthen education for sustainable development through interministerial collaboration. Such practices range from strong collaborative platforms (e.g. networks, commissions and working groups) that assist in clearly articulating collaboration and implementation, coordinated programmes for mainstreaming education for sustainable development in the curriculum or specific pilot projects aimed at introducing education for sustainable development initiatives, to institutional and human resource development (e.g. in terms of teacher training or the improvement of school infrastructure). These good practices of interministerial collaboration among the ministries responsible for education and environment and other sustainable development issues may inspire others to place climate change at the core of educational content and practice in their future efforts.

63. At the first interministerial session on education, organized at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties in Glasgow, Scotland, by the Governments of Italy and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in partnership with UNESCO, 27 countries had committed to accelerate efforts to embed climate change education within education systems through cross-sectoral collaboration. At the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, UNESCO organized a ministerial session on climate change education, during which youth representatives and ministers of environment addressed young people's needs and demands on quality climate change education.

64. Building on those insights, UNESCO is beginning to co-develop green curriculum guidelines with young people, to be presented at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties. In parallel, UNESCO is also launching a project to develop a set of UNESCO green school quality standards for whole-school approaches to education for sustainable development and to support Member States in making all schools climate-ready by 2030. A mapping exercise has been initiated to identify and engage green school accreditation scheme owners in developing the green school quality standards, to be presented at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties for consultation and published in June 2024.

65. The demands of young people echo the call of UNESCO to promote and embed the whole-school approach to transform education by:

- Teaching diverse aspects of climate change across subjects and in an interdisciplinary manner to address complexity and interlinkages.
- Integrating aspects of social and emotional learning into learning about climate change to address climate anxiety. According to the document entitled "Youth demands for quality climate change education", only 13 per cent of survey respondents said they could write about feelings on climate change at school.
- Giving young people more say in decision-making on climate change actions at school. According to the survey, 53 per cent of climate change efforts in schools are led by adults. Young people need to have higher representation in the governance bodies responsible for sustainability initiatives.
- Providing more learner-centred, experiential ways of learning to make climate change education more fun, solution based and action oriented, since 64 per cent of respondents said that they are learning about climate change in a passive way.

66. These findings reinforce the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development of 2021, in which participants of the UNESCO World Conference on

Education for Sustainable Development commit to ensuring that environmental and climate action is a core curriculum component in education systems at all levels, and the Youth Declaration on Transforming Education, in which young people demanded that decision makers “invest in education for sustainable development across curricula, particularly climate education to build skills and knowledge needed to build resilience, mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis and ensure climate justice”.

B. Tackling biodiversity loss

67. Biodiversity protection, along with ocean sciences, is at the forefront of the ambition of UNESCO to rebuild humanity’s relationship with nature and with living beings. The Organization’s intersectoral strategy for biodiversity is based on three pillars: restore the relationship between humans and nature and regenerate ecosystems, conserve the harmony of our ecosystems and amplify the power of young people. With its multidisciplinary mandate encompassing education and public awareness of biodiversity and sustainable development, UNESCO emphasizes links between cultural diversity and biodiversity, and between societal aspects and ethical issues.

68. Education is essential for the sustainable and equitable use of biodiversity and its conservation. It is also crucial for mainstreaming biodiversity. The erosion of Indigenous and local knowledge and the associated decline in sustainable traditional land use threatens biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as community contributions to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4. It is therefore vital to integrate biodiversity into education and learning programmes.

69. UNESCO actively supports education on biodiversity, notably through the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 priority action areas on youth and by encouraging sustainable solutions at the local level. The Organization has initiated activities to strengthen biodiversity education and learning, notably in terms of teacher training and the development of learning materials on biosphere reserves, world heritage sites and UNESCO Global Geoparks, with the involvement of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network and UNESCO Chairs. These activities have helped to improve the educational offer and outreach of UNESCO sites, as well as the focus on integrating biodiversity and cultural diversity issues into educational and learning programmes. A number of activities have also contributed to addressing the role of biodiversity in sustainable consumption and lifestyles, in particular in the framework of the One Planet network Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme.

70. Both the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development include strong education components. Education is fundamental to promoting behaviour change, fostering more sustainable approaches and empowering a generation of restoration and ocean champions. It is the primary agent of transformation towards sustainable development, increasing people’s capacities to transform their visions for society into reality.

71. During the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a challenge under the education theme had recently been launched, allowing partners to come together and propose actions to move education towards ecosystem restoration. UNESCO is co-leading one of the restoration challenges, with the Foundation for Environmental Education and the North American Association for Environmental Education, to embed ecosystem restoration into formal and non-formal education systems globally by 2030. This challenge is aimed at creating a dynamic framework that is adaptable

to multiple contexts, thereby demonstrating ways to embed ecosystem restoration education in diverse lifelong education contexts.

72. Also selected as an official education challenge to support the Decade, a challenge badge for ecosystem restoration awarded by the Youth and United Nations Global Alliance is being co-developed with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the host agency of the Alliance; UNESCO; the Youth Task Force of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration; and the World Food Forum. Developed through an iterative editing and review process, information in this resource is taken from several United Nations publications and incorporates ecosystem restoration education methodologies. The challenge badge programme seeks to increase knowledge and awareness of the need to protect and restore ecosystems globally, foster behaviour change and develop young people's sense of agency so that they become leaders and agents of change in their local communities.

73. Ocean issues are part of the implementation of the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 framework of UNESCO, notably in teacher education, school curriculum and learning environments, as well as in non-formal education, the acceleration of solutions at the local level, and youth and citizen empowerment. UNESCO is developing a range of pedagogical resources to support that ambition and drive the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. With its ocean literacy initiative, the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission is committed to creating an ocean-literate society able to make informed and responsible decisions on ocean resources and ocean sustainability. Such commitment requires all people to acquire a better understanding of the ocean's influence on humans and their influence on the ocean.

74. Working in coordination with the Education Sector, the Commission is leading the development of related solutions and toolkits. It supports exchanges between various national and international networks, notably through a dedicated Ocean Literacy portal, which provides a rich collection of resources. To promote the inclusion of ocean literacy in curriculum frameworks and help educators to integrate ocean issues in their teaching, the guide entitled "A new blue curriculum: a toolkit for policy-makers", providing a set of tools and ready-to-use materials, was launched on the occasion of the International Day of Education in 2022.

75. Conserving biodiversity requires an inclusive approach that speaks to and involves everyone. Beyond the curriculum, experiential learning – for instance, through field trips and during extracurricular clubs – is also important to foster care and positive attitudes towards nature in young people. This is also about linking content between subjects and in partnership with local communities, the private sector and other organizations so as to enable and empower communities to reconnect with their environment. The future of biodiversity will thus depend on the global collective action of an educated society, including efforts to promote local and Indigenous knowledge of biodiversity.

V. Conclusion and recommendations

76. Education can transform the way all people live within the planetary boundaries, as part of a shared ecosystem. Education for sustainable development is an ethic of "taking care". It aims to ensure that learners acquire the knowledge, skills and mindsets to act for the planet by connecting their mind, hands and heart. It reorients education to empower learners of all ages to act for environmental integrity, economic viability, cultural diversity and a more equitable society. Underscoring interdisciplinarity, education for sustainable

development addresses the interlinkages among the complex challenges of the contemporary world by developing system thinking.

77. Achieving that goal entails a paradigm shift around more collaborative and project-based learning, critical reflection and partnerships with the scientific community, as well as with Indigenous and local communities. It implies that curricula are ecological and interdisciplinary, that teachers have the know-how to lead their classes on a journey of awareness-raising and action, and that educational institutions themselves “walk the talk” by becoming examples of sustainability.

78. Ultimately, such an education is empowering and transformational because it provides the motivation and the impetus to transform societies. It gives voice to the people to shape policies from the community to the global level. When people feel connected to nature, they will take action, and this connection calls for promoting multi-stakeholder and cross-disciplinary cooperation between the education, environment and sustainable development sectors.

79. It is widely acknowledged that stronger commitment from Governments and other stakeholders is needed to support the further scaling-up of education and learning in the fight against climate change. Such a commitment must begin with a strong commitment to include education for sustainable development in relevant policies. It also implies ensuring that curricula and schools, as well as formal and informal learning environments, connect with the natural, political, economic and cultural contexts and needs of a country. Some of the remaining challenges and opportunities are discussed below.

80. International and national educational and environmental actors need to better collaborate to strengthen the implementation of the Education for Sustainable Development for 2030 framework at the global, regional and national levels. Partnerships and networking are crucial to raise ambitions and advocate action through global benchmarks, regulations, policies, programmes and events focused on education for sustainable development among a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, educators, young people, research institutions, United Nations partners, international development communities and the private sector. In particular, ministries of education and environment can and should work together to boost education for sustainable development. Many examples from across the world show that a greater impact is created when the ministries responsible for education, environment and sustainable development collaborate to promote education responses to key sustainability challenges such as climate change.

81. Education systems need to be transformed so as to be fit to tackle, adapt to and mitigate the challenges of climate change. A challenge so comprehensive can only be met with a powerful multi-stakeholder alliance, bringing together Governments; the international sustainable development, education and climate communities from within and outside the United Nations system; the private sector; social partners; academia; civil society; and young people. Transforming the education sector needs to be backed by sufficient financing to bring it to scale. To fill in the gaps, the education sector needs to work more closely with other sectors, such as the environment, energy and agriculture, for increased investment in education through domestic financing, but also official development assistance.

82. Teachers need to be empowered and trained to address sustainability. They are at the forefront of ensuring that learners of all ages have the knowledge, skills, values and initiative to act in order to address the triple planetary crisis

of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Climate change and biodiversity education should be integrated into pre-service and in-service teacher training in all subjects and at all levels of education. Knowledge, effective pedagogies and tools should be provided to encourage a whole-school approach to environmental and climate learning and action.

83. Meaningful youth engagement is crucial to strengthen and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to build a better future for all. Engaging young people in decisions that affect them is not just a matter of principle; there is a duty to involve those whose future will be impacted. Young people play a major role in articulating the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and responding to current and future sustainability 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.

84. Climate change education should be integrated across all levels and disciplines of lifelong learning. Climate change education should not be sidelined as a feel-good topic, but should be actively placed at the centre of what is taught and learned, especially in those countries that have played a significant role in perpetuating unsustainable ways of inhabiting the planet, so that education can lead to the urgently needed transformation of societies. The ecological transition of societies requires everyone's contribution, and it cannot be achieved without the engagement of all sectors of societies.

85. The climate, biodiversity and environmental crisis is endangering all that humans depend on for survival and is the result of destructive human actions. Education and lifelong learning are crucial for raising planetary consciousness. Humankind must rebalance its relationship with nature by learning to live with the more-than-human world. Such efforts call for transformative education that nurtures in learners from the youngest age an awareness of humankind's interdependence with nature and encourages action to protect the ecosystem. Education has the potential to empower individuals to become agents of change, as well as acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will lead to a green transition in societies. Humankind needs to learn to care for itself, for other species and for the planet.
