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EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD) BEYOND 2019

SUMMARY

This item has been included in the provisional agenda of the 204th session of the Executive Board at the request of Japan, with the support of Austria, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Kenya, Morocco, Oman, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, The Netherlands and Viet Nam.

It includes an explanatory note and a draft decision.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 6.



Job: 201800211

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Introduction

1. The Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development was endorsed by UNESCO's 37th General Conference in November 2013 (37 C/Resolution 12), and acknowledged by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 69/211 as follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014), for which UNESCO was the lead agency. The GAP was launched at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD in November 2014 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, for an initial phase of five years.

2. UNESCO has been implementing the GAP together with a network of Key Partners bringing together a wide range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders from all regions. According to the mid-term review which was presented at the UNESCO Week for Peace and Sustainable Development (March 2017, Ottawa, Canada), GAP Key Partners have exceeded their mid-term targets and engaged with over 6 million learners, educators, stakeholders and thousands of institutions. All activities of GAP Key Partners focus on scaling up ESD, further implementation, and further development of innovative approaches, including through joint flagship projects. Furthermore, the UNESCO-Japan Prize on ESD is an integral element of – and stimulus for – the implementation of the GAP. The Prize rewards outstanding efforts of individuals, institutions, organizations or other entities engaged in ESD activities. Funded by the Government of Japan, it has been seen as one of the most successful Prizes in UNESCO.

3. The implementation of the GAP takes place in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the context of Education 2030, which is coordinated by UNESCO. ESD is an integral part of Target 4.7 of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 which calls upon all countries to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and 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. Furthermore, ESD is widely seen as a key instrument to support and implement all of the SDGs, further than its authentic goals of quality education. According to recent United Nations General Assembly Resolution 72/222, ESD is “an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goal on quality education and a key enabler of all the other Sustainable Development Goals”. The contribution of ESD to all SDGs has been spelled out by UNESCO in the widely used publication “Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives” (2017).

4. The initial five-year phase of the GAP will come to an end in 2019. In light of the increasing importance of ESD after the adoption of the SDGs, there is an urgent need to continue and further scale up ESD beyond 2019 and to promote ESD as an education that provides the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that allow every individual - and organisation - to contribute to sustainable development in a comprehensive manner integrating the environmental, economic and social perspectives. UNESCO's current approach to ESD should be updated in light of the 2030 Agenda and emerging contexts and a proposal should be developed that ensures continued ESD implementation after the end of the GAP, highlighting the contribution of ESD to all the SDGs. Since the SDGs call for action by all governments, from developed and developing countries alike, in cooperation with all other stakeholders, it is crucial to involve Member States and other relevant stakeholders in the development of a post-GAP ESD proposal and ensure their ownership of the new ESD framework. It is essential that the proposed framework builds upon the outcomes and lessons learnt from the initial phase of the GAP and that UNESCO undertakes a review to assess the achievements and challenges during the period. UNESCO has already started to update its approach to ESD through a series of expert symposia.

5. The proposed draft decision calls upon the Director-General to develop a plan for the post-GAP ESD framework and involve Member States in the process.

Proposed decision

6. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/211 “Follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014): Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development”, 192 EX/Decision 6 and 37 C/Resolution 12 on the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as the follow-up to the United Nations Decade on ESD, as well as recalling the adoption of the 39 C/5 at the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO,
2. Also recalling United Nations General Assembly resolutions 70/209 “United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)” and 72/222 “Education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, which invites UNESCO to continue its mandated role to lead the Education 2030 agenda, in particular through the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, reaffirms UNESCO as the lead agency for ESD and affirm that ESD is “an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goal on quality education and a key enabler of all the other Sustainable Development Goals”,
3. Further recalling the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on ESD, adopted at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD (2014, Aichi-Nagoya, Japan),
4. Reaffirms that ESD is a key instrument for the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
5. Takes note with appreciation of the coordination and implementation undertaken by UNESCO thus far of the Global Action Programme on ESD;
6. Calls upon all Member States to further strengthen their commitment to the implementation of the Global Action Programme on ESD;
7. Requests the Director-General to develop, in full alignment with UNESCO’s four-year programme (39 C/5) and the 2030 Agenda as well as other relevant international commitments and in close consultation with Member States and other stakeholders, a draft framework for the further implementation of ESD based on the overall approach that ESD is an integral part of target 4.7 and contributes to the implementation of all the SDGs, to be put in place after 2019, when the current phase of the Global Action Programme comes to an end;
8. Also requests the Director-General to initiate a review of the implementation of the Global Action Programme to ensure that the proposed framework builds upon the outcomes and lessons learnt from the Global Action Programme;
9. Calls upon Member States and other stakeholders to fully engage in the consultations to be conducted by UNESCO on the draft framework;
10. Further requests the Director-General to submit this draft framework to the Executive Board at its 206th session, with a view to submitting it to the General Conference at its 40th session for approval and to the United Nations General Assembly at its 74th session in 2019 for acknowledgement, so as to ensure seamless follow-up to the Global Action Programme and continued UNESCO leadership in ESD beyond 2019.