



PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement¹

by

Ms. Olga Algayerova

United Nations Under-Secretary-General

Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

at the

**At the side event “Facing the Future: Climate Education and International Collaborative
Platforms” UNFCCC COP-25**

Madrid

COP 25 – Mare Nostrum room, Green Area

December 12, Thursday, 11:00 to 11:45

¹ IMPORTANT NOTE: *As the roundtable will be held in a talk-show format, the Chair would like to ask two questions to each speaker that would be answered by the intervention. Therefore, the below speaking notes may be adapted in this context – delivered more as a “response” to suggested questions, and less as a formal speech. The intervention of the ES will be the first one after the Chairs’ introduction. The following **two questions** are suggested to be asked by the Chair to the ES:*

- *You represent the Regional Commission of the United Nations, with strong focus on building and nurturing partnerships among key stakeholders:*
 - *What are the links between Climate and Education from the regional UN perspective?*
 - *Can existing global and regional frameworks facilitate the cooperation on these issues?*

Excellencies, Madame Chair, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, colleagues

It is my pleasure to speak at this event organized at the initiative of the Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the respected intergovernmental body to which we, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), provide the secretariat. First, I would like to thank Professor Daniella Tilbury, our Chair of today and an active member to the Steering Committee, for her efforts that have made this roundtable possible. I am also pleased to see here the colleagues from UNESCO and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

I do not need to extend on the nature and the scale of challenges posed by the climate change: we all know them well. When we say this problem respects no borders, it must be remembered that it transcends effectively all kinds of borders one can imagine – geographical, interdisciplinary, organizational, even – and maybe first – generational, etc.

Therefore, to find solutions to such a massive problem, we need trans-border collaboration of several kinds too: for example, for interdisciplinary borders it's the cooperation among scientists; for geographical borders – it's the cooperation between the member States' governments and civil society; collaboration between organizations is of course the must as well; but for every kind of potential solutions, for every sort of effort, education is part to the answer – and even more so in the inter-generational context.

No solution will work without the education; no education is possible without the collaboration of stakeholders. As the problem is global, the cooperation must be international too. Therefore, international cooperation platforms are important; and in the pan-European region my organization – UNECE – operates quite a few of those platforms.

UNECE work is quite diverse, addressing several SDGs; for the SDG 13, Climate action, we contribute through the work of our subprograms on the environment (water, air, environmental assessment, public information and participation, etc), sustainable energy, transport, forestry and land use, standardization and classification, statistics providing tools to measure and adapt to climate change, and so on. We are proud of our diverse activities contributing to the sustainable development in the region and globally; but to enable them, one still needs education.

The General Assembly resolution 72/222 (“Education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”) reaffirms that the ESD is “a key enabler of all the other Sustainable Development Goals and welcomes the increased international recognition of education for sustainable development in quality education and lifelong learning”. This gives clear mandate to the member States and the UN system for advancing ESD worldwide.

I am pleased that UNECE contributes to the implementation of this mandate by providing the secretariat to the regional ESD process lead by the UNECE ESD Steering Committee for the implementation of the Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development. The Ministerial Statement of the last highest-level meeting of this process (held in Batumi, Georgia, 2016) acknowledges the climate challenge by emphasizing the need to “strengthen synergies with other global and regional processes ... including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Doha work programme on article 6, as well as the Paris Agreement adopted at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties”.

To succeed, our efforts must be combined with that of our partners; I hope our present dialogue will help us to progress towards identifying collaborative pathways for Climate Education across the UN family and beyond. In this regard I am glad to note our long-standing cooperation with UNESCO, the global leader for ESD. I am

sure that the cooperation between the global and regional levels holds great potential for synergies yet to be utilised.

In November 2021, the Third High-Level Meeting of the Ministries of Education and Environment of the UNECE region will be held in Nicosia, on the kind invitation of the Republic of Cyprus Government. I would like to invite all colleagues to consider actively cooperating in the preparation of Nicosia Ministerial Conference to ensure that the decisions of this highest-level regional meeting on ESD duly reflect the ways of cooperation on Climate Education along with other important aspects of the 2030 Agenda.

Again, thank you, dear madame Chair, for your active role in organizing this meeting.

Thank you for your attention.