



## **Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference**

**Batumi, Georgia  
8–10 June 2016**

---

### **Report of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference**

**Addendum**

**Co-Chairs' summary of the High-level Meeting of Education  
and Environment Ministries**





# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
12 August 2016

Original: English

---

## Economic Commission for Europe

### Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016

## Report of the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

### Addendum

### Co-Chairs' summary of the High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries

#### Introduction

1. The second High-level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries took place in Batumi, Georgia, on 8 June 2016 during the Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference. The Minister of Education and Science and the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia co-chaired the Meeting.
2. The Meeting considered progress made by participating member States in implementing the first 10 years of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development, with a view to reaffirming their commitment to the Strategy through the adoption of a framework for the Strategy's future implementation and a Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development.


#### I. Towards a new society: 10 years of education for sustainable development

3. In opening remarks, the Minister of Education and Science shared achievements in education for sustainable development in Georgia, including standards for preschool teachers to increase general awareness and funding for vocational and higher education for scientific studies. The Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection said education initiatives should raise awareness on climate change impacts, and called for an internationally binding agreement on education for sustainable development.

GE.16-14017(E)



\* 1 6 1 4 0 1 7 \*

Please recycle 



4. In a keynote address, the Minister of Education and Culture of Cyprus highlighted the role of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development as a key driver for developing and incorporating education for sustainable development into all levels of education, changing approaches to learning and engaging a broad range of stakeholders for the effective implementation of education for sustainable development in the region. Prioritization at ministerial level and financial investment were needed to forward education for sustainable development. He concluded by inviting the ministers to the Ministerial Meeting for the Adoption of the Action Plan for the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Cyprus in December 2016.
5. The Minister for the Environment of the Netherlands underlined the importance of formal, non-formal and informal education for the transition to sustainable development and the role of education for sustainable development in understanding complex environmental challenges and dealing with uncertainty and changing values. All countries should unite their education for sustainable development efforts and seek a more complete learning repertoire for a sustainable future.
6. In a video keynote address, the Assistant Director-General for Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stressed the importance of the framework for future implementation of the UNECE Strategy in intensifying education for sustainable development actions in the context of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development, the follow-up to the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. He urged countries to strengthen cooperation in implementing the Global Action Programme and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
7. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Executive Secretary emphasized that participants would decide on the next steps to be taken to advance education for sustainable development through cooperation between sectors, member States, international organizations and institutions, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders active in the region. He highlighted the important achievements in implementing the Strategy during the past decade, and welcomed the continuation of the process for further development of education for sustainable development strategies, plans and mechanisms on the national level.
8. The Chair of the ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development presented the findings of the report on progress in implementation of the Strategy from 2005 to 2015, which had been taken into account in drafting the framework for future implementation of the Strategy and the Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development.
9. Almost all participating member States had demonstrated support for advancing education for sustainable development by their political and administrative leadership. That support had been a critical factor in the Strategy's success and would be key for its further implementation.
10. Under the Strategy there had also been important advancements in terms of policy integration, curricula, resources and networking. For instance, a large majority of member States reported that education for sustainable development and accompanying competences and learning outcomes had been included in national curriculum frameworks at the primary and secondary education levels. That was less prevalent in higher education, although engagement with education for sustainable development was increasing also in those institutions.
11. The three priorities for phase III of the Strategy's implementation — education for sustainable development school plans; teacher competences; and education for sustainable development in technical and vocational education and training — were proving to be challenging but necessary leverage points in whole-system change. Nearly three quarters of

member States were promoting whole-institution approaches. That was an encouraging development, as it would provide a more solid context for the implementation and maintenance of education for sustainable development efforts in those institutions. Some States (but still a minority) had defined new competences and skills, developed new courses and revised vocational and training programmes.

12. However, although significant progress had been made both in policy and practice, securing recognition that education for sustainable development lay at the core of the purpose of education still faced major challenges and obstacles. That held also for securing leadership and political will among key decision makers to keep moving from policy to practice by securing the structural reform of education systems and including education for sustainable development in mainstream budgets.

13. Many country delegations, as well as representatives of the European ECO Forum, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe and the United Nations Environment Programme, made interventions on the implementation of the Strategy and outlining key achievements, lessons learned, challenges encountered and future plans. The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia provided a written statement summarizing activities aimed at the promotion of education, leadership and capacity-building processes for sustainable development in the subregion.

## **II. Adoption of the outcomes of the High-level Meeting**

14. A co-Chair introduced the framework for future implementation of the Strategy and the draft Batumi Ministerial Statement prepared through negotiations among Governments, and which also incorporated comments by non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

15. The future implementation framework followed on from the implementation framework adopted by ECE environment and education ministries in 2005 in Vilnius. It reflected basic elements decided by the Steering Committee and was also inspired by and aligned with the UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development. The framework also contained proposed terms of reference for the Steering Committee for the period of 2016–2030 so that it could guide the Strategy's implementation.

16. The Ministerial Statement was a forward-looking document — a joint commitment of member States to continue national implementation of the Strategy for achieving sustainable development.

17. Ministers and heads of delegation adopted the framework for the future implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and the Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development. In addition, Georgia announced its intention to discuss with the international community the possibility of developing a new binding agreement on education for sustainable development.

18. The co-Chairs congratulated countries and organizations participating in the High-level Meeting on the adoption of the two outcome documents, which would guide the way forward in implementing education for sustainable development in the region.