

Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES)

Newsletter, December 2012

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I. Global Updates:

Tbilisi+35: The Intergovernmental Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

The Tbilisi+35 inter-government meeting which was held in Tbilisi, Georgia from 6 – 7 September 2012 reviewed progress since the landmark one on environmental education in 1977. The meeting discussed new Environmental Education approaches in the transition towards a Green Economy as a follow up to RIO+20 Summit. The meeting also explored modalities for extending the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) beyond 2014. Mahesh Pradhan, Chief, EETU was part of the delegation that represented UNEP at the meeting which was opened by the President of Georgia, H.E. Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili and attended by over 500 delegates from around the world. More information can be found at: <http://tbilisiplus35.ge/>

2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress

The 2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress was held in Jeju, Korea from 6 – 15 September 2012, and the Greening Higher Education for Next Generation of Sustainability Leadership knowledge café, held on the margins of the Congress, was aimed at sharing know-how on aspects of curriculum orientations, teaching & learning approaches, transformative research (action & applied research), community engagement, students participation and networking for a green economy and sustainable management and use of ecosystem services within the broader context of education for sustainable development in higher education and the concept of ‘greening higher education’. The event was chaired by **Ms. Elizabeth Mrema** from UNEP. The café was attended by eighteen participants showing interest and importance attached by different stakeholders on the education methodology being imparted to the younger generation.

African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN)

The 14th Session of the AMCEN was held in Arusha, Tanzania from 10 – 14 September 2012, and consisted of an expert group session from 10 – 12 September, while the Ministerial segment was held from 13 – 14 September 2012. This meeting took place after the RIO+20 Summit (Brazil) and hence provided a good forum for Africa to debate on the key outcomes of the Summit, and in particular, to review the state of the environment and sustainable development in Africa. The AMCEN also provided a good platform for the region to prepare

for the climate change negotiations at the 18th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP 18) that was held in Doha, Qatar from 26 November to 7 December 2012. African environment ministers passed a decision declaring their resolve to develop an action plan for environmental education and training that will cover formal and non-formal education in their countries.

30th Annual Conference of the Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa (EEASA)

The EEASA Conference was held in Port Elizabeth, South Africa from 13 – 15 September 2012, and the theme of this 30th Annual Conference was “*Environmental Learning, Agency and Social Change*”. Mr. Mahesh Pradhan delivered the closing plenary address at the Conference which addressed the following issues: the extent to which current environmental education and training processes develop societal potential to be agents of change, what educational orientations and materials can support change-oriented learning and where should environmental educators focus their efforts in the next 10 – 20 years.

CNRD Advisory Board Meeting

The Centre for Natural Resources and Development (CNRD) network, coordinated by the Cologne University of Applied Sciences, held their Advisory Board Meeting in Cairo, Egypt from 1 – 5 October 2012. The network brings together 11 Universities from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean in developing post-graduate programmes on environmental management, natural resource development and climate change adaptation. More information on CNRD’s activities can be found at: <http://www.cnrdr.info>.

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)

AASHE held their 2012 Annual Conference at the Los Angeles Convention Centre from 13 – 16 October 2012. UNEP’s Environmental Education and Training Unit signed an MoU with AASHE to collaborate on mutual activities promoting Environment and Sustainability, under its networking pillar. The AASHE Conference provided a good opportunity to increase GUPES visibility in North America, as well as exploring potential partnerships with leading Universities in the region. Over 850 universities and colleges in N. America were in attendance. More information on AASHE can be found at: www.aashe.org.

Dresden University, 35th Anniversary

The annual training programme at Dresden University is a flagship programme under EETU's training pillar and UNEP was therefore invited to participate in the 35th anniversary celebrations of the partnership at the Centre for International Post Graduate Studies of Environmental Management (CIPSEM). Further discussions were also held on the partnership in the development of a graduate curriculum sourcebook on Climate Change Adaptation.

2nd Eye on Earth Secretariat Meeting

The 2nd Eye on Earth Secretariat Meeting took place in Abu Dhabi on November 5-6, 2012. Several representatives from UNEP attended the meeting. Structure of the Secretariat, Special Initiatives and Projects were reviewed during the Secretariat meeting. Other topics discussed in the meeting were the communications strategy and a donor plan.

EETU is involved in Eye on Earth through the Eye on Environmental Education Special Initiative (EoEESI). As one of the Eye on Earth Foundation Initiatives, EoEESI aims at enhancing Environmental Education and Awareness in the formal, non-formal and informal education and capacity building sectors for responsible decision and policy making and transformative action for environment and sustainability in six target regions: Africa, Asia and Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and West Asia. It will build on other existing Environmental Education initiatives in order to collectively and effectively contribute to sustainable development through all forms of education.

This Special Initiative aims to establish a networked commons of collaborating entities and resources, based on the reorientation, alignment and strengthening of existing programs and networks. It will also support and offer an education and outreach platform to the Eye on Earth Thematic Special Initiatives.

II. Regional updates

Youth Encounter on Sustainability (YES), Kenya Chapter

The Youth Encounter on Sustainability (YES) is an initiative that builds a network of young leaders around the world to advance sustainability. The YES Course, Kenya Chapter was held in Naivasha, Kenya from 26 October to 12 November 2012, with a one-day session being held at the UN Complex on Thursday, 1 November 2012. The YES courses are

designed to touch on and discuss all facets of the sustainability concept within a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary context. The courses follow a modular concept that includes the key themes of: climate change, food, water & health, biodiversity, energy & clean technology, policy making, among others.

More information on YES can be found on their webpage: www.actis-education.ch.

World Students' Summit for Sustainability (WS3)

The World Students' Summit for Sustainability (WS3), under the auspices of the World Student Community for Sustainable Development (WSCSD), UNEP and the University of Nairobi, was held in Nairobi from 12th to 16th November, 2012, with the Opening Ceremony being hosted at the University of Nairobi on 13 November. The occasion was graced by several local dignitaries, which included the Kenyan Ministers for Lands, on behalf of the Prime Minister and the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources. More information on the recently concluded WS3 can be found at: www.s3nairobi.org

Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability into Ethiopian Universities (MESE)

The MESA Reflection and Planning workshop was held from 19-20 Nov 2012 and it brought together over 30 participants from universities across Africa. It was also attended by participants drawn from Non-Governmental Organizations that have been working with universities in Africa. The MESE Planning Workshop was attended by over 50 participants from universities in Ethiopia, of which 4 were University Presidents, 3 were Deputy University Presidents, and others were Directors and Senior Managers of Environment and Sustainability institutes in their respective Universities. Achievements/outcomes, challenges and lessons learned from the first 2 phases of MESA were shared and some critical issues were flagged out for consideration in the MESA strategy for phase 3 (2013 – 2018).

Environment and Sustainability Round Table Seminar

The Environment and Sustainability Round Table Seminar for Corporate and University communities was organized by the EETU and held in the UN Complex, Nairobi on 27 November 2012. Its overall objective was to enhance the quality and practical relevance of UNEP's work with universities and university education to the business and industry sector in the context of Green Economy, Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication. The objectives of the seminar were as follows:

- To explore the opportunities and challenges for corporate and university communities in the transition to a green economy;
- To present a global perspective on the transition to a green economy – with reference to the outcomes of the Rio+20 Summit;
- To share the key findings of the Green Economy report for Kenya, and the implications thereof for corporate and university communities;
- To identify the role of higher education in the transition to a green economy;
- To identify the role of businesses and industries in the transition to a green economy;
- To explore the potential for stakeholder collaboration (universities and corporates) in the transition to a green economy;
- To share some success stories and practical steps already undertaken by corporates and Universities towards greening the Kenyan Economy.

A good number of local Kenyan corporates and universities were represented at the meeting.

III. Upcoming Events

EETU Green Room Event

This is scheduled for 21 – 22 February 2013, on the margins of the next session of the Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) which is scheduled for February 2013 at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, Kenya.

IV. Publications

Sourcebooks:

EETU is in the process of producing the following publications:

Climate Change Adaptation graduate curriculum sourcebook: UNEP's Environmental Education and Training Unit (EETU) in collaboration with the Climate Change Adaptation Unit (CCAU), is developing a graduate curriculum sourcebook, a resource that will accelerate the incorporation of Climate Change Adaptation concepts in university curricula, especially for those in developing countries. This curriculum sourcebook will elaborate the major Climate Change Adaptation approaches and principles, including Ecosystem-Based Approaches (EbA) and provide guidelines on how these principles can be incorporated into

curricula of existing courses. It will also outline case studies and provide references for further research on the topic.

Forests in a Changing Climate Sourcebook: EETU in collaboration with UN-REDD are developing a sourcebook, a resource that will accelerate the incorporation of REDD+ concepts into university curriculum. The sourcebook will elaborate on the major REDD+ approaches and principles, provide a guideline on how to incorporate the principles in curriculum, outline case studies in the practice and provide references for further study.

This curriculum sourcebook will contribute to UNEP climate change objective which is to strengthen the ability of developing countries to integrate climate change responses to national development. This will be achieved by enhancing the knowledge of REDD+ approaches within universities, who ultimately influence the quality and practitioners, with reference to sustainable development and forest management.

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