

Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES)

Newsletter, Issue No. 5

Table of contents

I. Global Updates:

- 7TH World Environmental Education Congress (WEEEC7)

II. Regional Updates:

Africa:

- Sustainable Communities Workshop in Tanzania
- 6th Horn of Africa Regional Environmental Meeting in Ethiopia

Asia:

- YES Japan course
- Inception workshop on Mainstreaming Sustainability Courses in Administrative Staff Colleges in India
- Steering Committee of the Asia Pacific University Consortium on Environment for Sustainable Development

North America:

- Association of American Geographers' Annual Meeting

Europe:

- International Training Programme on Education for Sustainable Development

Latin America:

- Education – The Path towards a Sustainable Future

III. Upcoming Events/Announcements:

IV. Useful UNEP Resources

I. Global Updates:

The 7TH World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC7), Marrakech, Morocco – 9 – 14 June 2013

The WEEC7 was convened in Marrakech, Morocco from 9 – 14 June 2013, the theme for the Congress being, “*Environmental education and issues in cities and rural areas: seeking greater harmony*”, and included 11 thematic areas. 2,400 participants from over 150 countries attended the congress which, for the first time, was held in an Arab country.

The Congress was hosted by the Kingdom of Morocco, and organized by the Mohamed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection together with the WEEC Permanent Secretariat in Italy. UNEP had several side events and bilateral meetings at the Congress. Below is a summary of the UNEP side events:

- **Opening Ceremony and Opening Plenary:** Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO, and Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Hasnaa, were present at the Opening Ceremony of WEEC 7 amongst others;
- **Plenary 1:** Mr. Steiner and Ms. Bokova participated in the Opening Plenary Session of the congress, under the theme *Education, pillar of ecological transition*. UNEP’s Executive Director stressed the importance of environmental education and its role to empowerment;
- **Plenary 3:** Mahesh Pradhan, Chief of the Environmental Education and Training Unit (EETU), participated in Plenary Session 3, under the theme *Diversity of perspectives on environmental education: a dialogue between current knowledge and disciplines*. Mr. Pradhan highlighted the urgency of implementation, as well as the importance of establishing partnerships to promote environment education, such as GUPES;
- **Thematic Presentation:** Pablo Fuentenebro, Associate Programme Officer, EETU, gave a presentation on GUPES, the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability under the *Promoting Environmental Education and Networking* thematic area;
- **GUPES Side Event.** EETU organised a side event on GUPES, which featured over 100 participants, and included presentations by UNEP members and representatives from academia and other organizations from Africa, Latin and North America, Asia-Pacific and Europe. The side event also featured launch of the **Greening Universities Toolkit** and signing of an MoU with the Institute of Management in Government, India;
- **MESA Side Event:** EETU organised a side event on MESA, the Mainstreaming of Environment and Sustainability in African Universities, which was led by Professor Heila Lotz-Sisitka, Rhodes University, South Africa. A presentation was made on the draft African Action Plan on Environmental Education and Training;
- **Disasters, Environment and Risk Reduction (ecoDRR) workshop:** organised by EETU together with the Disaster Risk Reduction Unit in collaboration with the Center for Natural Resources and Development (CNRD) and the Partnership of Environment and Disaster Risk

Reduction (PEDRR). The workshop was carried out by colleagues from Ain Shams University, Egypt; Cologne University of Applied Sciences, Germany; Tribhuvan University Kathmandu, Nepal; Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia; Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí / Mexico; and UNEP Geneva Office, Switzerland;

- **UNESCO Side Event:** Mahesh Pradhan participated in the UNESCO Side Event, *Planning for the Future of Education for Sustainable Development*, and highlighted the Environmental Education dimension of ESD;
- **International, Intergenerational, Informal Network of Centers (IIIN) Unofficial Side Event:** organised by the Center For Environmental And Sustainability Education, Florida Gulf Coast University. The meeting agreed to formalise the Center and work towards a joint publication for the 2014 UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, which will take place in Nagoya, Japan;
- **GUPES Steering Committee Meeting:** The second meeting of the GUPES Steering Committee took place during WEEC7 on 12 June. Representatives from 5 GUPES regions were present. An update on GUPES progress over the past year was presented, with focus on 3 pillars: education, training and networking. The meeting called for greater clarity, transparency and focus for the growing GUPES network.

Bilateral meetings were also held with: Tongji University, Mohamed IV Foundation for Environmental Protection, GUPES Latin America group and the GUPES Africa group. The 8th WEEC will be held in Gothenburg, Sweden in 2015.

II. Regional updates

Africa:

Sustainable Communities Workshop:

The above workshop took place in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from 12 – 22 March 2013, and was organized by the Aalto University in Finland, UN-Habitat and Uongozi (Leadership) Institute of Tanzania. The training course was funded by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was designed for mid-career professionals primarily from East Africa, mainly experienced individuals from academia, local or central government, business life and civil society with experience in urban and environmental planning. EETU served as resource at the training workshop, while also introducing the GUPES initiatives to participants.

6th Horn of Africa Regional Environmental Meeting:

The meeting was convened in Ethiopia from 26 – 28 June 2013, under the auspices of the Horn of Africa Regional Environment Centre & Network (HoAREC/N), Addis Ababa University. The

HoA-REM is a platform that addresses regional environmental issues and promotes collaborations among its members. EETU was invited to participate in the meeting and give a talk on MESA and GUPES, which are two of the key Environmental Education and Training Unit initiatives.

Asia:

Youth Encounter on Sustainability (YES) Course, Japan:

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with ACTIS for joint organization of annual YES training programmes, with the YES Japan chapter being the 4th joint event. More than 1,200 alumni from 90 countries have previously participated in YES, since the first course under the platform of Alliance for Global Sustainability, an international partnership among several leading technical universities around the world (namely ETH Zurich, MIT, University of Tokyo, Chalmers University of Technology Gothenburg). UNEP-EETU has been involved in design of the YES training course, and has delivered lectures on Education for Sustainable Development. Discussions were also further held with the United Nations University, the Japanese Ministry of Environment and IGES on collaborative programmes.

Inception workshop on Mainstreaming Sustainability Courses in Administrative Staff Colleges

The workshop was held in Trivandrum, India from 8 – 10 April 2013. The Institute for Management in Government (IMG), in Kerala (India), offered to develop a pilot course on sustainable development in partnership with UNEP, which in turn could be scaled up so that all civil servants in India gain some knowledge on sustainability issues during their orientation/refresher trainings. The inception workshop reviewed existing training curriculum at IMG, and developed elements for the sustainable development course. A Train the Trainers approach was adopted whereby IMG planned a follow-up workshop once the course structure and content was developed.

Steering Committee of the Asia Pacific University Consortium on Environment for Sustainable Development

A series of events were organized in partnership with Tongji University i.e. the Steering Committee Meeting of the Asia Pacific University Consortium on Environment for Sustainable Development, and the 10th Asia Pacific Leadership Programme on Environment for Sustainable Development. The events took place between 30 May – 5 June 2013.

North America:

As one of the leading scientific and educational organizations in geography and a stakeholder of the Eye on Environmental Education Special Initiative, the Association of American Geographers

(AAG) has shown great interest in the work carried out by EETU. UNEP's roles at the AAG Annual meeting were: (1) Chaired a panel on education and sustainable development along with representatives from the AAG, UNDP and academia. Focusing on the post-RIO+20 context, the panel contributed to raising awareness on environmental education by presenting among others, the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES); (2) UNEP participated on a panel on career development to present the work of UNEP following RIO+20 and the UN General Assembly resolution to strengthen and upgrade the programme. The panel allowed to enhance the presence of UNEP in the academic community, exploring possible avenues for collaboration between academia and UNEP; (3) Participated and presented in a high-level session on economic geography. The session discussed different policy-making strategies towards regional development; (4) Discussed and developed potential partnerships with the AAG and higher education institutions in order to expand and consolidate GUPES network presence in North America.

Europe:

International Training Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ITP)

The ITP on ESD has been an on-going partnership between UNEP/EETU and SIDA/Niras over the past 3 years, and comes to an end this year. SIDA plans to develop new ITP courses, as a follow-up to the ITP/ESD. At the above ITP which took place in Stockholm, Sweden, EETU delivered an opening keynote presentation, followed by the Stockholm Resilience Centre, and interacted with over 30 participants selected from Africa and Asia. Also, discussions were held with SIDA/Niras on follow-up ITPs, including a joint side event on the margins of the World Environmental Education Congress.

Latin America:

Education – The Path towards a sustainable future

The sub-regional consultation of Latin America on planning the programme framework of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) took place from 16 to 17 April in San José, Costa Rica. This is one of the monitoring activities related to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). The meeting was organized by UNESCO, UNEP and the Costa Rican Commission on Cooperation, and was attended, inter alia, by representatives of Ministries of Education and of the Environment, NGOs, universities and youth organizations. UNEP gave a presentation on its contributions to the Decade in Latin America and the Caribbean.

More information: on this can be found at the following link: [here](#)

III. Upcoming Events

- Central Asia Leadership Programme on ESD, Kazakhstan, September 2013
- Global South-South Expo, Nairobi, 28 Oct – 1 Nov 2013
- Youth Encounter for Sustainability (YES) Kenya, November 2013
- Global RCEs, Nairobi, 27 – 29 November 2013
- Organization of African Youth, 2 – 5 December 2013
- Latin America Forum on Universities and Sustainability, Chile, 9 – 11 Dec. 2013

IV. Useful UNEP Resources

Useful UNEP reports, references and new publications can be found at the following link: www.unep.org/publications

For more information and/or to submit articles/information, please contact:

**United Nations Environment Programme
Environmental Education and Training Unit
Division of Environmental Policy Implementation
P.O. Box 30552-00100, Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: +254-20-7624101
Fax: +254-20-7623917
Email: env.edu@unep.org
www.unep.org/training/**