

## **Mediterranean Committee on Education for Sustainable Development**

### **MEDITERRANEAN ESD STATEMENT**

The Mediterranean Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (MCESD) and the ESD community of the Mediterranean Region address the “UNESCO World Conference on ESD” (17-19 May 2021) and the UNESCO message “**Time to act-Now or never**”,

by replying: “**Now and for ever**”,

because we know well that the Mediterranean region is facing pressing environmental and socio-economic challenges, which need to be addressed as a matter of urgency and through immediate and coordinated action at all levels and fronts including ESD.

All issues and priorities dealt with in the Declaration of the present Conference as well as those elaborated during the UNESCO webinar series, carried out for the preparation of it, are also important for the Mediterranean region, which is experiencing a cluster of interlinked crises, among which a well-documented climate and environmental crisis, that destabilize the region by making of it a biodiversity-loss and water scarcity & desertification hot-spot – warming 20% faster than the rest of the world – together with ongoing political and socio-economic challenges, generating high unemployment rates, particularly for youth, migration and exclusion further aggravated by the Pandemic.

Almost all the aforementioned problems, while being of crucial importance for each one of the countries of the region, cannot be approached separately by countries on their own and require effective regional approach, cooperation schemes and initiatives, many of which are indeed in place. It is noteworthy that the Mediterranean is not recognized by the UN as a single region but split among three different regions and continents. It is an eco-region with well-defined characteristics, geography, history and culture, strongly supported by the collective interest of its people to maintain its culture and identity.

The Mediterranean Strategy on ESD (MSESD) approved by the Ministers of Environment and Climate Change of the UfM and integrated in the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development of the UNEP/MAP – Barcelona Convention system, as well as the MSESD Action Plan, endorsed by the Mediterranean Ministers of Education and the Mediterranean Committee on ESD, chaired currently by Cyprus, where important Regional and International Organizations active in the region (UNESCO, UNECE, UNEP/MAP, UfM and LAS) together with the countries and the key

stakeholders that participate, present a unique, flexible, comprehensive model and framework, eventually useful for other regions, to explore.

Out of the many issues on which the region will work and the MCESD will facilitate is mainstreaming ESD activities at regional and national level, as a follow-up of this Conference, in addition to the capital global priorities of climate change and biodiversity, with parallel enhancement of: MAB/UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and other types of designated areas; ocean issues (including marine litter); water; peace and inclusion; green & blue economy; circular economy, sustainable consumption and production and employability; Mediterranean food & diet; youth & gender; advancing the capacities of educators and all those involved at all levels of Education, Information and Communication Technologies; and, the ESD connections with and through CSOs and local communities, have been identified as our key priorities for the 2021-2030 period.

ESD is our major hope through which we can strengthen in the mind and the heart of the people of the Mediterranean region, and the young people in particular, **the conviction that the future we want should be created by us.**