Action Plan towards 2030 of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development

Adopted by the High Level Event of Education and Environment Ministers on the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and its Action Plan towards 2030 (6 October 2022) at the 9th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Nicosia, Cyprus

MCESD

Mediterranean Committee on Education for Sustainable Development

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I. JUSTIFICATION

The World as a whole, and the Mediterranean Region in particular, face important challenges related to a complex combination of natural phenomena and, mostly, anthropogenic pressures resulting in well-documented climate crisis, expanding desertification, depletion or deterioration of vital natural resources, such as water, mass loss of biodiversity, including intrusion of devastating alien species and widespread forest fires, degradation of ecosystem services, pollution of the atmosphere, the terrestrial and aquatic environment, contamination of the food chain, impacts on health, pandemic diseases and a series of important socioeconomic consequences and phenomena related to the still prevailing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, the rapidly increasing population, migration, inequalities - including poverty and gender-related ones, youth un- and underemployment as well as the various tensions including armed conflicts, terrorism and occupation exerted at least on some parts of the wider region followed by misery, displacement and mass flows of refugees. Some of the above are also related to economies characterised, in general, by low productivity and low efficiency of natural resources utilisation, while at the root of many of the tensions, one could find lack of trust and understanding frequently based on ignorance or erratic education.

Many of the above challenges could be addressed through public policies, "widening of the horizons" of societies and adaptation of individual and collective choices and behaviours, many of which could be influenced significantly and positively through appropriate education and awareness raising, especially if the latter is of quality and oriented to sustainable development.

It has been repeatedly recognised that appropriate education is the prerequisite for addressing all issues related to Sustainable Development (SD) as it creates the necessary enabling environment and enhances competences as well as individual and collective social commitment for the needed transformation for creating more sustainable futures.

Despite the efforts of international organisations and countries, including governments, educational institutions, economic sectors and civil society organisations, at large, there is an urgent need throughout the Mediterranean, to promote the type of education which could empower learners in addressing the accumulated and new challenges in a creative and optimistic way. Furthermore, a better link of education with policies, strategies and efforts promoting SD is needed for the achievement of the UNESCO 'ESD for 2030' framework and its

Roadmap, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, in particular, SDG 4 and notably Target 4.7 and commitments under major UN Conventions.

In promoting appropriate educational approaches, we are not starting from scratch. The countries of the region have already valuable experience in international cooperation on education, especially in higher education. They have followed the developments under the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (2005-2014). A number of national and subregional education networks and associations of universities, teacher's education and programmes have been set up, some of which include issues linked to SD. It is noteworthy that in the national, subregional and regional level there is a wealth of experience on Environmental Education (EE) much of which have gradually integrated sustainability dimensions and evolved to ESD. The challenge remains on how to optimise all these initiatives and their potential in order to promote ESD and SD at regional/Mediterranean level.

To address this challenge, ESD which extends through formal, non-formal and informal modes from the classroom to the information provided by the media and the related multidisciplinary research, international/regional cooperation on ESD has been identified as a top priority by all countries and has led to the adoption of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD), a visionary and progressive policy document which, however, is still unevenly introduced and implemented in the various countries of the region. The present Action Plan towards 2030 aims at facilitating all the countries of the region to speed up and upgrade ESD in line with the MSESD and by taking into account all relevant international and regional provisions which are listed in Part IV (Background) and in more details in ANNEX I, while providing, in Part V, Recommendations for the Implementation and proposed Strategic Directions for Activities and Programmes.

II. PREAMBLE

The Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD) was endorsed by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministers of the Environment in Athens, on 13 May 2014 on the occasion of the adoption of the UfM Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Climate Change. The Strategy was developed, using the UNECE ESD Strategy as a background document under the formal framework of the UfM, through a long participatory process involving international and national experts from universities, government departments, Non Governmental Organisations and Civil Society Organisations, in general, from the North and the South of the region in several consultations, scientifically-technically coordinated by the University of Athens/UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Development Management and Education in the Mediterranean and supported by the Mediterranean Educational Initiative on Environment and Sustainability (MEdIES) of the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), many of which were organised under the EU funded Horizon 2020 Capacity Building/Mediterranean Environment Programme.

The MSESD has been accepted as an integral part of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD), while a specific relevant indicator has been included among those which will demonstrate the progress of the MSSD's, current phase (2016-2025) as well as the expected second phase of implementation (2026-2035).

The **mandate** to develop the first Action Plan (2017-2021) for the MSESD to guide its implementation and to promote regional and sub-regional activities on ESD comes from the MSESD's statement that "A 5-year Action Plan will be developed for the promotion of regional and subregional activities on ESD, including capacity building activities at national level, taking into account the Global Action Programme of ESD as a follow-up of DESD after 2014". It will support the relevant to Public Awareness and Education part of the MSSD. The Action Plan has therefore been prepared accordingly, facilitated by the UoA UNESCO Chair on Management and Education for Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean, in collaboration with MEdIES of MIO-ECSDE. Apart from inputs by the countries, and stakeholders, it has also considered the outcomes of a region-wide youth survey. The 2017-2021 Action Plan was adopted by the Ministers of Education of the Mediterranean countries and all relevant IGOs (UfM, UNEP/MAP, UNESCO, UNECE, LAS) in Nicosia, Cyprus in December 2016.

The meeting to update/review the Action Plan was foreseen to take place at the end of 2021 or early 2022. It was considered appropriate, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, to delay for a few months the meeting and hold it with physical presence combining it with the 9th Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference.

III. GOAL & OBJECTIVES

The Goal
The Goal of the Action Plan is the facilitation of the implementation of the MSESD and, as appropriate, the provisions on ESD of all other relevant Conventions, International and Regional Bodies by all the countries of the region through appropriate activities of governments and other competent stakeholders.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the Action Plan are to:

1. Facilitate through regional cooperation and activities the Ministries of Education of the region in planning and implementing their national ESD priorities as it relates to appropriate resources, thematic areas, educators' competences, etc.
2. Raise throughout the region the awareness and recognition of the fundamental role of Education, and ESD in particular as quality education, emphasizing also the developmental transformative and participatory character of ESD.

3. Ensure further support by governments and other bodies, mobilizing appropriate resources as it regards ESD mainstreaming, as called for by the MSESD.

4. Support the educational community of the region in content development for ESD along the lines described in the MSESD and for increasing human and material resources regarding the production of publicly available educational materials, teacher training material, etc.

5. Assist Ministries of Environment, Water, Energy, Health, Agriculture, Tourism, Research, etc. of the region in mainstreaming their awareness and education campaigns and initiatives related to the SDGs, viewing the access to the aforementioned resources not only as basic need but also from the perspective of the human rights.

6. Provide identified priority areas to donors and supporters in regard to ESD key themes for the Mediterranean region.

7. Help the countries to fulfill their international commitments related to ESD towards UNESCO and other International and regional Organisations.

8. Promote regional educational and research projects building on existing regional and subregional experiences.

9. Enhance international cooperation among Educational Institutions and other stakeholders and CSOs in promoting effectively the SDGs and sustainable development approaches in the Mediterranean, through regional activities.

10. Contribute in addressing, through regional educational activities, the economic and humanitarian crises and peace issues in the region.

11. Facilitate the better synergy between educational initiatives and the private sector particularly as it concerns the optimisation of interactions within the corporate social responsibility programmes of enterprises and the "opening" to the society initiatives of educational institutions.

IV. BACKGROUND

The Action Plan is a "new generation" instrument, which could serve in an integrated way all major international commitments of the countries of the region related to formal and non-formal ESD as well as informal ESD/awareness raising in a way easy to be followed by national administrations, contributing to the reduction of unnecessary overlaps, repetitions and related costs.

It is stressed that the Action Plan is directly related, on the one hand, to the two major relevant regional Mediterranean processes, namely: the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, under the UfM, and the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD) (2016-2025) of the Barcelona Convention, coordinated by UNEP/MAP, and on the other, on the promotion and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the UNESCO ESD for 2030, and the UNECE ESD Strategy and the Framework for its implementation 2021-2030 while it takes due consideration of the objectives of the EU Green

Deal and integrates the other relevant provisions deriving from international conventions and important international developments.

The figure below demonstrates the dynamic relations with the key Organisations and their initiatives (presented in the following paragraphs and in Annex I) that were considered for the drafting and revising the Action Plan and which are "serviced" by it.
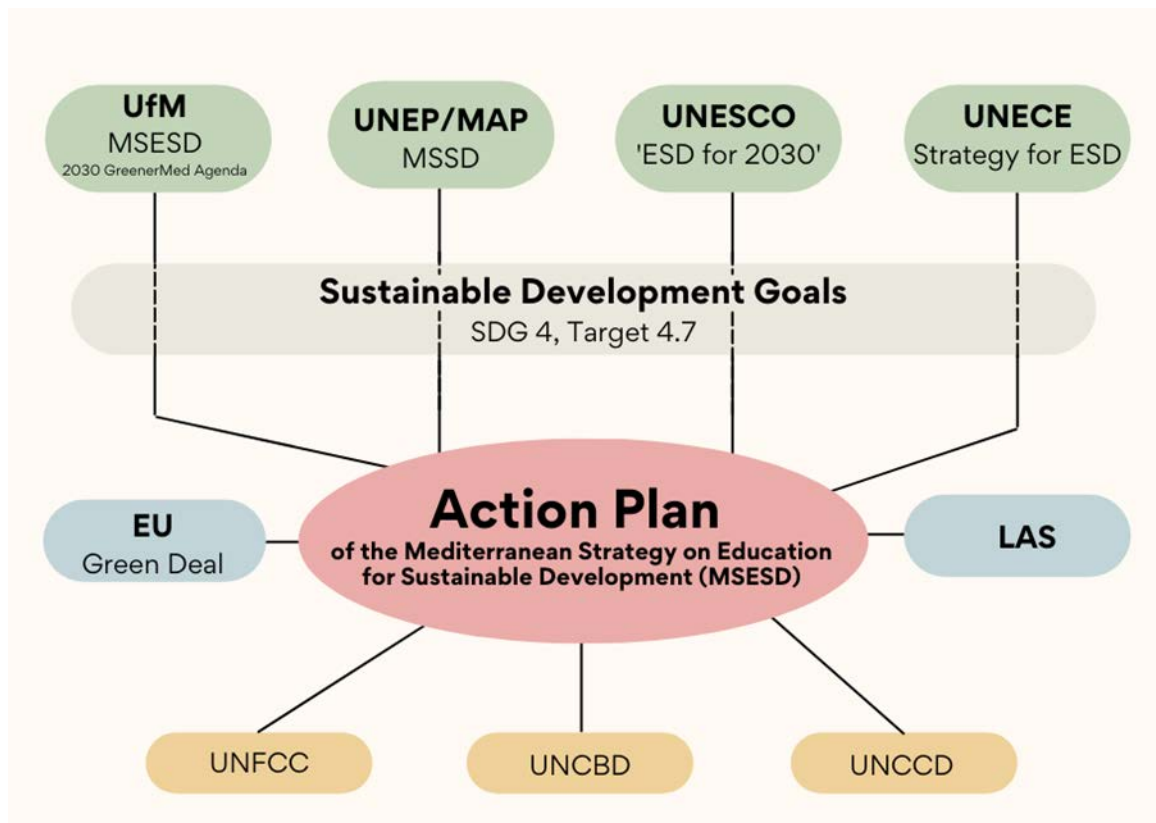
1. The **Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development** (MSESD) (2014).
2. The **Union for the Mediterranean** and the **2030GreenerMed Agenda.**
3. The **Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development** (MSSD 2016-2025).
4. The **UNESCO 'ESD for 2030'** framework and its **Roadmap (2021)**.
5. The **Education 2030 Framework for Action** and the **Incheon Declaration.**
6. The **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
7. The **Transformative Education Summit** (19 September 2022).
8. The **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCC, 1992).
9. The **UN Convention to Combat Desertification** (UNCCD, 1994).
10. The **UN Convention on Biological Diversity** (UNCBD, 1992).
11. The **Framework for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD.**
12. The **League of the Arab States efforts/initiatives related to ESD.**
13. The **Paris Declaration** on "Promoting Citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through Education".

14. The **European Commission** through the **European Green Deal.**
15. The **EU's new Agenda for the Mediterranean** (February 2021).
16. The **Catania Declaration of G20 Ministers of Education** (June 22, 2021).
17. The **Council of Europe** (CoE) **Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education** (2010).
18. The **Climate Change Education and Outreach in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East**

In this respect, the present Action Plan meaningfully combines and reflects the key provisions and commitments included in the aforementioned Conventions, Strategies, Declarations and Communications (more details on which are provided in ANNEX I) and, therefore, its implementation virtually fulfils simultaneously all the ESD related priorities and commitments of the countries of the Mediterranean region to the UN and other international organizations and fora.

Furthermore, the Action Plan was informed by a Survey on Mediterranean Youth Responses towards sustainable development and the current crisis that was run by the University of Athens/UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Development Management and Education in the Mediterranean and MIO-ECSDE throughout 2015 while the present Action Plan towards 2030 was further informed by a series of actions collecting feedback and evidence, namely: The results of the First (2017) and the Second Meeting of the MCESD (2019) monitoring the progress of the AP/MSESD and their accompanied Regional ESD Workshops; The outcomes of the Mediterranean Preparatory Webinar on ESDfor2030 & its Statement (April 2021); The online surveys addressing competent stakeholders in the context of the EU funded WES ESD Trainings of Trainers (2021, 2022); The outcomes of the Webinar entitled *"Distilling priorities & updating the ESD Action Plan for 2030 in the Mediterranean"* (14 June 2021); The outcomes of the round table discussion *"Rebalancing people, planet and prosperity: ESD as key enabler for the 17 SDGs and Agenda 2030"* in the framework of the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (7 April 2022).

The revision of the Action Plan takes into consideration all the aforementioned, either directly or indirectly in its various parts. For the facilitation of the inter-comparisons Annex II Table indicates where the UNESCO ESD for 2030 priority areas and the Framework for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD from 2021 to 2030 strands are reflected.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES & PROGRAMMES

The Action Plan directly derives from and reflects the "Framework of Implementation" of the MSESD (articles 42-70) and as a consequence, it elaborates and interprets the Framework's components in a more detailed and concrete way, in order to assist towards:

A. Enhancing the enabling conditions for the proper implementation of the MSESD. Part A addresses mostly the needed changes and provisions to be secured by the countries at national level for the promotion of ESD.

B. Proposing a set of identified common regional programmes/projects of institutional/non-thematic nature. Part B focusses on suggested regional (or subregional) / Mediterranean programmes.

C. Highlighting priority thematic issues for region-wide programmes. This list includes thematic priorities for both national and regional programmes as suggested by various stakeholders and consultations.

D. Proposing indicators of progress and monitoring.

A. Enhancing the enabling conditions for the proper implementation of the MSESD

The Priority Areas of institutional and operational interventions as identified by the MSESD (the numbers in brackets correspond to the relevant articles of the Strategy) are presented below, together with key Recommended Activities for the Action Plan towards 2030.

Priority Area 1 [Article 42]: To include SD perspectives throughout formal, non-formal and informal education strong political support will be necessary at all levels and sectors of governance.

Recommended Activities:
i. Translate the MSESD and its Action Plan into the national language.
ii. Distribute them to the relevant authorities and bodies including civil society organisations.
iii. Designate a focal point for regular contact and coordination within the country and for communication with the MSESD.

Priority Area 2 [Articles 48 & 49]: National implementation plans should serve as a core element of implementation through educational quality processes and supporting measures.

Recommended Activities:
i. Set up a National ESD platform/Committee /Body involving all stakeholders from the relevant Ministries (Education, Environment, etc.), Local Authorities, Academia, Educators' representatives, Youth, CSOs, etc. to:
ii. Draft/review/revise/amend, if needed, the National Plan on ESD to provide effective pathways for transforming learning systems, aligning them with sustainable development
iii. Launch the implementation of the National Plan.
iv. Collect the necessary data, share information and stimulate partnerships on ESD among different actors with involvement of youth.

Priority Area 3 [Article 50]: Curricula and extra curricula activities should include and support ESD.

Recommended Activities:

i. Promote "Whole Institution Approach" (WIA)*, improve the provision and management of education facilities towards SD.

ii. Adopt appropriate "frameworks" (including legal, institutional, learning outcome, competences) for ESD at all levels of education, in all disciplines and subjects.

iii. Integrate SD principles into the study programmes and introduce whenever necessary special courses at all levels of Higher Education.

iv. Promote assessments of the impact of ESD programmes on learners' behaviours, employing appropriate methodologies.

v. Connect SD principles with employable skills, for instance through the Green skills.

Priority Area 4 [Articles 52-53]: Professional development on SD and lifelong learning on SD to be promoted and enhanced.

Recommended Activities:

i. Offer SD-related learning opportunities in education for professionals of all disciplines in relation to the efforts for achieving the SDGs and enhance their employability.

ii. Support community-based SD awareness raising activities, involving local regional (sub national) authorities, media, CSOs/NGOs, as well as formal educational institutions.

Priority Area 5 [Articles 54-55]: Professionals within the education sector to build capacities on ESD.

Recommended Activities:

i. Provide pre-service ESD competence development opportunities for young educators and for staff involved in the education sector.

ii. Develop criteria for validating and recognition of professional competence in ESD. A new document on Educators Competences in ESD is under preparation.

iii. Include ESD related issues in in-service training and re-training programmes for educators at all levels of education and for other stakeholders in the educational field (Directors, Inspectors, Counselors, etc.).

iv. Familiarize educators with the pedagogical approaches of ESD in the formal and non-formal context and all the interested parties of the school process with the theory and praxis of the "Whole Institution Approach". In this context educators should be provided with the interdependence and freedom to undertake initiatives and adopt interactive methodologies in their educational practices.

Priority Area 6 [Articles 56-57]: Accessible materials for ESD at all levels need to be developed.

Recommended Activities:

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* The Whole-Institution Approach involves more than integrating sustainability in the curricula. It is a cohesive, collective and collaborative approach, implying that the whole educational institution including: curriculum and teaching/learning, campus management and "institution" culture (administration-leadership-teachers-students) recognizes diversity and promotes shared commitment to quality teaching and improving student achievements, as well as that the educational institution interacts with the local society. (UNESCO 2014).

i. Ensure that adequate ESD materials and other resources for educators, youth workers, learners, young people and researchers for all levels of education and training are available and open for public use.

ii. Make use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for both learning and youth work purposes and for sharing information.

iii. Develop strategies for appropriate dissemination of ESD materials.

Priority Area 7 [Articles 58-60]: Interdisciplinary research on ESD should offer a continuing basis in further developing ESD.

Recommended Activities:

i. Promote research on the content of ESD, teaching and learning methods; youth work methods; the economic impacts/benefits of and incentives for ESD; indicators and evaluation instruments for ESD, involving in this activity non-education stakeholders i.e. enterprises, local authorities, youth and civil society associations, etc.

ii. Share the results of research with relevant actors locally, regionally and globally, incorporate the results into different parts of the education system and share examples of good practices.

iii. Employ Science Diplomacy as a flexible tool for spreading awareness and foster cooperation on the Sustainable Development goals, fostering a shared understanding of common challenges and the creation of joint innovative solutions.

Priority Area 8 [Articles 61-62]: Support cooperation on ESD at the regional level to review and facilitate the implementation of the Strategy.

Recommended Activities:

Follow closely and synergise with international and regional processes (e.g. UNESCO, UfM, MSSD, SDGs), that could enhance the implementation of the MSESD and, in particular, through:

i. The co-operation of the countries at regional level.

ii. The active involvement of the Mediterranean region in contributing to the ESD agenda at global level.

Priority Area 9 [Article 64]: Experiences and needs vary in different parts of the Mediterranean region. Regional and subregional forums that bring together members of the education community, such as civil servants, educators and researchers, and other relevant actors including youth and civil society actors to share their experience and good practices on SD- and ESD-related issues should receive high priority.

Recommended Activities:

i. Reinforce international cooperation in the framework of the implementation of the MSESD and the National Plans.

ii. Utilise systematically ESD in supporting common activities of countries for the achievements of the SDGs at regional and subregional level.

iii. Elaborate and implement an appropriate high-level information/training programme on SD challenges and opportunities in the Mediterranean targeting decision makers,

parliamentarians, national and local authorities, administrators, leadership in the private sector, the media, etc.

iv. Develop or synergise within subregional programmes (such as those related to: 5+5 for the Western Mediterranean subregion on Water, the Ionian-Adriatic initiative, etc.) appropriate educational components.

Priority Area 10 [Article 65]:
The complex nature of ESD requires that, in addition to the education community, other relevant international actors be involved for enhancing SD related knowledge and skills of professionals and decision makers.

Recommended Activities:
Actively involve international/regional organisations, Chambers of crucial sectors, e.g. Tourism, Agriculture, Water, Research and organisations representing Parliamentarians, Municipal Councils, youth organisations, etc., to work in partnership with the countries and other stakeholders contributing to, benefiting from and promoting the implementation of the MSESD.

Priority Area 11 [Articles 67-68]: Continuous assessment of the ESD needs in different subregions is required. Some of their problems are lack of adequate teaching and awareness materials, the inefficient use of the capacity of higher education and research institutions, the shortage of skilled educators and insufficient awareness raising as well as a lack of interdepartmental and multi-stakeholder cooperation on ESD.

Recommended Activities:
i. Reinforce the production of ESD materials in cooperation with UNESCO, and other regional competent bodies and organisations.
ii. Strengthen existing regional and subregional alliances and networks working on ESD and encourage twinning programmes, bilateral cooperation and partnerships; peer-to-peer capacity building.
iii. Use, as appropriate, other relevant agreements to raise awareness of SD; facilitate the sharing of good practices and experiences on innovation and information of national and/or local experiences and projects in development cooperation on ESD-related issues, e.g. by using ICT tools the Internet and social media; include ESD in relevant bilateral and multilateral programmes; encourage the participation of NGOs and other major groups in international cooperation on ESD; encourage and coordinate international events for SD-awareness raising; and encourage the sharing of experience.

Priority Area 12 [Articles 1, 68]: Youth involvement Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation, Green Deal.
Entrepreneurship, employment and innovation when placed in a "green and circular economy" framework that is owned by young people and understood by the society at large can lead to radical transformation of individual and collective choices increase employability and shape sustainable development models. ESD could help learners of all ages: (a) to cope with the rapid changes and related challenges that involve economy (e.g. new economic models), society (e.g. alternative jobs) and environment (e.g. climate change); (b) to answer

the question of what kind of society and economy people want to live and work in; (c) to stimulate the development of entrepreneurial and innovative mindsets; (d) to contribute in building capacities and skills of the next generation of change makers at all levels with emphasis on the local ones.

Recommended Activities:

i. Put emphasis on educating and re-educating people to address rapid changes and new challenges.

ii. Help young people and other learners to better prepare for the future labor market. This in turn also requires major reskilling and upskilling in the form of train the trainers.

iii. Improve curricula to be more attuned to SD and the needs of job markets, for instance through green skills.

iv. Reduce drastically gender and social inequalities to boost employability for all including entrepreneurship.

v. Promote through ESD intergenerational approaches where urgent employment for the youth should be combined with full utilization of the experience of older generations and indigenous knowledge.

vi. Include researchers, entrepreneurs, innovators in spurring green and blue innovations that offer employment opportunities to the youth while contributing to making economies more sustainable, also through multisectoral dialogue (quintuple helix).

B. Proposed Regional Programmes

The Action Plan includes the following set of identified common regional 'institutional' (non-thematic) programmes, some either existing and some new/proposed, that could help the countries not only to raise awareness on environment and SD, on key for the region topics, but also as tools to create the necessary 'enabling' environment in order to achieve various SDGs. The proposed programmes should be open to all countries and stakeholders of the region and could be developed and implemented by making systematic use of the existing opportunities and programmes provided by UNESCO, the EU, UNEP, etc. and of the existing networking schemes among Schools, Universities, Educational Centres, CSOs/NGOs, etc.

1. Programme for the promotion of the Whole Institution Approach by 2026 in at least 50% of the schools of each country based on three-year ESD school plans involving all classes and available means (e.g. including application of Non Conventional Water Resources, increasing the energy efficiency of schools through various means, waste management, actions related to nature conservation and restoration including school gardens and green campuses, alternative mobility/transportation, health nutrition, promotion of dialogue, consensus and respect of different opinions, promoting action and change at school and in the community, active relationship with the school neighborhood and local society, participatory school governance, students' participation in decision formulation, parents' involvement in projects, projects/activities on SDGs making links of local relevance, projects with farmers, professionals, SCP initiatives, etc.).

2. School Twinnings Programme for primary and secondary education levels between different countries of the region.

3. Programme to mobilise youth activities including activities of youth associations and programmes supported by national and local authorities.

4. Programme for supporting joint projects among Schools, Local Authorities, Private Sector and NGOs (CSOs) of the Mediterranean region (North – South, South-South) on ESD.

5. Programme for enhancing the linkage between outdoor education, ESD and specially designated areas (e.g. MAB/UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, different types of Protected Areas) with an emphasis on training activities and regional/sub-regional summer schools/universities, etc.

6. "Peer-to-peer" Capacity Building Programme for school teachers and/or staff of Ministries of Education, etc.

7. Programme on ESD inclusion in Higher Education, particularly at the post-graduate level, including green skills.

8. Programmes supporting Exchanges on ESD among Educational Institutions of the Mediterranean region (like the Erasmus+).

9. Programme on common e-learning courses on SD/ESD among Mediterranean Universities.

10. Programme aiming at the promotion of good practices and adoption of ESD Charters e.g. Sustainability Charter of Higher Education Institutions based on the Whole Institution Approach (e.g. curricula reform including or reinforcing basic courses on SD in the Mediterranean).

11. Post-graduate programmes among Mediterranean Universities for joint Master Degrees on ESD/SD issues.

12. Programme on Research and Science Diplomacy on ESD involving Higher Education and Research Institutes and Centres from the wider Euro-Mediterranean and Middle East region.

13. Programme for the enhancement of cooperation on ESD by strengthening and expanding the regional Networks working on ESD.

14. Supporting Programmes for Regional cooperation on the adult education sector and life-long learning.

15. Creation of an Association of Mediterranean Training Centres with competences on ESD.

16. Programme covering different aspects of ESD in view of the extreme importance of the refugee and migration crisis evolving in the wider Mediterranean addressing (a) refugees and migrants with emphasis on children, (b) the host communities, (c) vocational trainings.

17. Capacity Building Programme for Media/Journalists dealing with awareness raising on ESD issues.

18. Programme for crisis management addressing education in emerging situations as contribution to Sustainable Development.

C. Priority thematic issues for ESD in the Mediterranean region

The priority thematic issues regarding ESD which regional programmes and activities shall target, either independently or as cross-cutting issues, are listed below.

1. Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation building on the guidelines issued by UNESCO and UNFCCC.

2. Alternative Energy Sources; Energy footprint.

3. Biodiversity; Nature/Ecosystems conservation and restoration; Sustainable management of Biosphere Reserves and Protected Areas; Ecosystem services.

4. Land erosion and desertification.

5. Cultural Diversity, Heritage and the values it carries, with due attention to the importance of native languages and indigenous traditions.

6. Empowerment of Women and Youth.

7. Integrated Water Resources Management; Non-Conventional Water Resources (NCWRs).

8. Ocean Literacy; Marine Resources; Blue Economy; Fisheries; Marine litter; Integrated Coastal Zone Management; Invasive species.

9. Migration and Refugees Crisis - direct and indirect impacts including rights of displaced populations.

10. Peace / Conflict resolution and promotion of spirit of tolerance, co-existence, away from religious and cultural fundamentalism.

11. Public Participation in planning and decision making on Sustainable Development issues; Aarhus Convention.

12. Sustainable cities; Urban environment; Local Governments for Sustainability.

13. Sustainable Consumption and Production patterns.

14. Waste Management; Life Cycle of Products; Circular Economy; Sustainable Consumption and Production; Resource efficiency.

15. Sustainable Tourism.

16. Private Sector and Public Private Synergies for SD; Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

17. Using Water Monuments as entry points of ESD by registering important water works of the past in the "HYDRIA" Virtual Museum, which is a valuable open powerful ESD tool on water management, culture and all aspects of SD.

18. Mediterranean food and diet as an integrated approach to Culture, Health, Economy and Rural Development in the region.

19. Addressing education in emerging situations through appropriate crisis management.

D. Proposed Indicators of progress, monitoring and reporting

Consistent with Article 70 of the MSESD, Ministers, at relevant regional Conferences (UfM, MCSD, UNESCO, UNECE, UNEP, etc.) on Education, Environment, Sustainable Development, etc., may wish to include sessions, discuss and report progress on the implementation of the MSESD.

The following initial set of indicators to monitor the MSESD's progress and to serve also reporting purposes are proposed. They will be further enriched and elaborated in line with developments at Mediterranean and Global level.

INDICATOR 1. Number of countries that have launched national strategies on ESD.
Deriving from the "Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard" (under development) that will be used for monitoring the progress of implementation of the MSSD (2016-2015).

INDICATOR 2. Extent to which (i) Global Citizenship Education and (ii) Education for Sustainable Development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed in
(a) national education policies
(b) curricula
(c) teacher education
(d) student assessment

This can be derived from the global indicators (under development) for SDG 4.7. Guidelines for the assessment of the components of the indicator could eventually be deduced from the UNECE Indicators on ESD already used by some of the Mediterranean countries (http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/esd/01_Typo3site/LearningFromEachOther.pdf)

INDICATOR 3. Percentage of students by age group (or level of education) showing adequate understanding of issues relating to global citizenship and sustainability. This can be derived from the thematic indicators (under development) for SDG 4.7.

INDICATOR 4. Extent to which regional/international cooperation on ESD is strengthened within the Mediterranean region, and more specifically:
(a) The public authorities that cooperate in or support international networks on ESD (Yes/No and list of networks);
(b) The educational institutions/organisations (formal and non-formal) in the countries that participate in international networks related to ESD (Yes/No and list of networks);
(c) Existence of State, bilateral and/or multilateral cooperation mechanisms/agreements that include an explicit ESD component (Yes/No and list of mechanisms/agreements);
(d) Steps taken by the Government to promote ESD in international forums outside the region (Y/N and list of initiatives).
Deriving from the UNECE Indicators on ESD.

VI. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES and FINANCING

1. Consistent with Articles 71 to 77 of the MSESD, it is reaffirmed that the implementation of the Action Plan is primarily the responsibility of the Governments and the Authorities designated for the implementation of Educational Policies of each country. Because of the multi- and inter-disciplinary nature of ESD, other Ministries, Agencies, organisations and stakeholders should be encouraged to support ESD initiatives and collaborate in the design, support and implementation of ESD programmes beyond the schooling system, recognising ESD interventions as important components of management and professional development of various sectors including health, industry, tourism, agriculture/fisheries, financing, trade, transport, construction and media. To facilitate coordinated approaches, countries are encouraged to appoint an Officer/Focal Point responsible for ESD in every Ministry of Education. This person could also communicate/coordinate with the MSESD Secretariat.

2. For the MSESD and its Action Plan to substantially contribute to the sustainable future of the Mediterranean, ensuring adequate funding for ESD is an important precondition. Although, as stated in Article 75 of the MSESD, the cost of its implementation should, in principle, be borne by each country in coordination with other investments for Education, ESD should be supported also from additional budgets and funds dedicated to the achievement of the SDGs, beyond SDG 4 and contributions by donors. Similarly, countries facing serious refugee flows should be assisted in dealing with ESD for refugees and host communities.

3. The proposed regional activities and programmes (V.B and V.C) require adequate funding. International Organisations and Agencies, the EU, Foundations and private donors should include the Priority Areas and themes in their budget programming and their calls for proposals. At the same time, systematic efforts should be made to include ESD components in relevant bilateral and multilateral development/aid programmes, including with the EU, considering investment in ESD as a genuine development activity. The establishment of a specialised Mediterranean ESD Trust Fund for voluntary contributions (funds or in-kind e.g. through contribution to publications, organizing/hosting of meetings) should be considered.

4. A Mediterranean Committee for ESD was established in 2016 for following up and promoting the implementation of the MSESD and its Action Plan. The Committee will collaborate closely with UNESCO, the European Union, the League of the Arab States, the Secretariat of the Union of the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development (MCSD) (facilitated by UNEP/MAP) for pursuing its tasks. Ministries of Education and other Ministries responsible for Environment and Sustainable Development of all countries of the region or their appointed representatives are eligible to participate. Relevant international/regional (Mediterranean) organisations/stakeholders also participate in its works. The Committee is guided by a Bureau consisting of relevant international/regional bodies (UNESCO, UNEP/MAP, UNECE, LAS, UfM, EU (tbc)) and up to equal number of Mediterranean countries (elected every two years), among which the Chair, and the Co-Chair elected among the members of the Bureau keeping to the extent possible a regional balance. The Committee could set up focus groups to work on specific issues such as one on ESD indicators and on monitoring and evaluation of progress in the implementation of the AP. The MEdIES Secretariat of MIO-ECSDE and the UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Development Management and Education in the Mediterranean by the University of Athens are kindly

requested to continue their facilitating Secretariat and Scientific Advisory and fundraising role under the guidance of the Bureau.

ANNEX I – ANALYTICAL BACKGROUND

1. The **Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development** (MSESD). The Action Plan stems from and is fully aligned with the MSESD. In its 81 Articles provides the regional Vision, defines the Aims and Objectives, the Scope and the Principles, explains the Implication for Education and proposes the Framework for Implementation identifying areas for action and national and international/regional level, while it also clarifies the modalities. The Framework for Implementation is the one providing the structural elements for the Action Plan.

AIM

The aim of the Strategy is to encourage countries of the Mediterranean to develop and incorporate ESD into their formal education systems, in all relevant subjects, and in non-formal and informal education.

OBJECTIVES:

(a) Ensure that policy, legislation and other regulatory and operational frameworks support ESD;

(b) Promote SD through formal, non-formal and informal learning;

(c) Equip educators with the competence to include SD in their teaching;

(d) Ensure that adequate tools and materials for ESD are accessible;

(e) Promote research on and development of ESD;

(f) Strengthen cooperation on ESD at all levels, including exchange of experience and technologies within the Mediterranean region.

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2. The **Union for the Mediterranean** and the **2030GreenerMed Agenda.** Following on the endorsement of the Strategy for Education on Sustainable Development of 2014, the UfM has been steadily supporting and mainstreaming ESD across the different sectorial dossiers, feeding and addressing ESD as key enabler for the green/blue, circular economy transition, and particularly through its GreenerMed Agenda.

The **2nd UfM Ministerial on Environment and Climate Action** addresses the most urgent environmental issues and reconciles them with the economy and development, promoting an integrated approach, providing for a greater sector integration, aligning its priorities and objectives to the Agenda 2030 and related SDGs, to the Rio Conventions (and related Post 2020 frameworks) and other key international and regional conventions and frameworks such as other relevant UfM Ministerial Declarations, the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, or the Mediterranean Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and its Action Plan. The 2nd UfM Ministerial on Environmnet and Climate Action operates through its GreenerMed Agenda. The core objective of the 2030GreenerMed is to set the framework to coordinate, streamline and promote the efforts in the Mediterranean region – involving UfM member countries and other relevant stakeholders, including regional partners and local authorities, through a participatory approach, to:

- Support the transition towards a Green, Circular and Socially Inclusive Economy, based on sustainable consumption and production practices and nature-based solutions.
- Prevent and reduce pollution on land, air, and sea; as well as

- Protect, preserve, manage, and restore natural resources in the Mediterranean region within an integrated ecosystem approach, including terrestrial, marine, and coastal dimensions.

The three thematic areas are closely interlinked and need to be addressed simultaneously. A fourth cross-cutting thematic area of high regional priority is the link with climate action for mitigation and adaptation. Special attention will be paid to education for sustainable development as horizontal issue which permeates and integrates all the three priority axes. In particular, as approved by the 42 UfM countries, GreenerMed emphasises the:

- Links to Education for Sustainable Development, at all educational levels of formal, informal and non-formal education, including the development of transformative learning environments that induce positive change of minds and give impulse to action, e.g. including awareness of consumer's behaviour (food, fashion, etc.), the role of the consumer and its rights and responsibilities, as well as support of consumer movements and consumerism.
- Improvement of marine (sea/ocean) literacy and promotion of a Marine Culture within a wider Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) approach.
- Systematic introduction and support of Education for sustainable development at all levels of education and outside the schooling system with the involvement of competent stakeholders, including exchange of good practices.
- Interlinkages with other relevant Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) related agendas such as UNESCO ESDfor2030, UNECE Strategic Planning 2021-2030.

Equally important is the **2021 UfM Ministerial on Sustainable Blue Economy** dedicates importance and attention to Education for Sustainable Development; in addition to Ocean Literacy, the Ministerial Declaration specifically calls for:

- The need to prioritize education, vocational training and scientific capacity including technology transfer to anticipate transformative technological trends and promote just transitions;
- Further use of the Mediterranean Blue Economy Stakeholder Platform managed by the UfM Secretariat to facilitate contacts between existing education networks, exchange information including pedagogic tools and serve as an interface for mobility programs;
- The UfM countries to collaborate in the relevant international fora to adapt training and education requirements for maritime-related professions, in view of technological developments and climate-related commitments.

The **2022 UfM Ministerial Declaration on Research and Innovation** promote the inclusion of Science as a tool in developing more awareness on the Sustainable Development Goals and their application in societies, by proposing to fully exploit: "The positive role of Science Diplomacy in enhancing regional cooperation in the Mediterranean while developing skills and promoting circulation of talents, especially on fields of sustainable development where Research and Innovation play a prominent role, including in climate action, health, renewable energy, marine and inland waters sustainable food systems, and green, circular, and resource-efficient economy, including sustainable blue economy."

It also wishes to connect research practices with broader education by promoting: "cross-cutting and enabling actions that facilitate the R&I Roadmaps, and in particular the knowledge triangle comprising research, continuity of education, innovation, which includes the following key stakeholders: researchers, students, entrepreneurs, NGO officers, and policy-makers. Promote innovation as a tool for building knowledge, skills, vocational training, careers and economic inclusion of Mediterranean graduates and researchers.

The UfM Roadmaps on R&I on Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Health, endorsed by Ministers in June 2022 also target: To Promote demonstration of transdisciplinary projects on sustainable development in the Euro-Mediterranean Region; the need for establishing a network between Research and Higher Education Institutions, National Authorities/Observatories, private companies dedicated to the Renewable Energies, Health and Climate Change/Environmental sectors – in a multilateral approach with Mediterranean Countries - to develop innovative interconnected ecosystems with important repercussion on R&I and on sustainable development of the whole region. Finally, they suggest a capacity building approach with the organization of Workshops and educational seminars about sustainable development.

3. The **Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development** (MSSD 2016-2025) is based on the integration between socio-economic development and protection of natural resources. This principle is encapsulated in the subtitle of the Strategy: "investing in environmental sustainability to achieve social and economic development". The MSSD 2016-2025 provides an integrative policy framework for all stakeholders, including MAP partners, to translate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the regional, sub-regional, national and local levels in the Mediterranean region. As a strategic document, the MSSD serves to adapt international commitments to regional conditions and guide national strategies and stimulate regional cooperation in the achievement of sustainable development objectives.

The MSSD 2016-2025 was adopted by the Contracting Parties of the Barcelona Convention (including the EU) gathered in the 19th Conference of Parties (Athens, 9-12 February 2016) and is articulated around 6 objectives with 29 strategic directions and 147 actions. Within this Strategy, the MSESD was accepted as an integral part while it was also included in the "Athens Declaration" as instrumental to achieve the SDGs. Based on the results of the mid-term review of the MSSD conducted in 2021, a new MSSD for the period 2026-2035 is expected to be issued following the final evaluation of the Strategy.

MSSD 2016-2025 is complementary with the Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production for the Mediterranean and its Roadmap for implementation, which focuses on four priority areas: e.g. food, agriculture and fisheries; goods manufacturing; tourism; and, housing and construction. Those areas represent drivers of pollution generation and environmental pressures on the marine and coastal ecosystems but at the same time high contributors to the Mediterranean economies and to social well-being.

Based on the results of the mid-term review of the MSSD conducted in 2021, a new MSSD for the period 2026-2035 is expected to be issued following the final evaluation of the Strategy. In defining a regional process for the monitoring of the implementation of MSSD 2016-2025 in relation with the adaptation of the Sustainable Development Goals to the Mediterranean region, the so-called "Mediterranean Sustainability Dashboard" was developed as a living set of indicators and easy to communicate to decision makers. In this first core set of 28 indicators, Youth Literacy and the National Strategies/Action Plans on Education for Sustainable Development in place are included.

4. The **UNESCO** '**ESD for 2030**' framework and its **Roadmap (2021)** set out to respond to the urgent challenges the planet is facing through education with detail on new emphases and actions. They are the guiding documents for the next 10 years to mobilize action on Education for Sustainable Development in the areas of policy, transforming learning environments, capacity development of educators, youth empowerment, and local level action.

In order to build a follow-up to the Global Action Programme (GAP) framework (2015-2019), the Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs (#ESD for 2030) framework was adopted with the aim of increasing the contribution of education to building a more just and sustainable world. It seeks to encourage strong leadership from Member States and diverse stakeholders from education and sustainable development communities through the ESD for 2030 Network (ESD-Net) at global and regional levels. In addition, it will step up actions on Five Priority Action Areas, stressing further ESD's key role for the great individual and societal transformation required to address the urgent sustainability challenges:

For priority action area 1, on Policy, ESD must be integrated in global, regional and national and local policies related to education and sustainable development; 2, on Education and Training settings, attention is required to promote the Whole-Institution Approach (WIA) to ensure we learn what we live and live what we learn; 3, on Building Capacities of Educators, the focus is on empowering educators with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for the transition to sustainability; 4, on Youth must recognize young people as key actors in addressing sustainability challenges and the associated decision-making processes; and 5, on Local level Action emphasizes the importance of actions in the communities as they are where meaningful transformative actions are most likely to occur.

The **Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development**, adopted at UNESCO ESD Conference (17-19 May 2021) to ensure that ESD is a foundational element of the education systems at all levels of education and training from early childhood to adult education, while maintaining a holistic perspective on ESD that recognizes the interrelatedness of all dimensions of sustainable development.

Furthermore, the findings of the UNESCO publications *'Learn for our planet: A global review of how environmental issues are integrated in education'* (2021) and *'Where do we stand on education for sustainable development and global citizenship education'* reinforce that students and teachers need more support to be agents of change.

5. The **Education 2030 Framework for Action** and the Incheon Declaration which provide guidance for the implementation out of a new vision of Education towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

6. The **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** adopted by all the UN Member States, in most of which Education is mentioned as necessary for achieving their targets ESD for 2030 directly contributes to SDG 4 on quality and inclusive education which emphasises the need to ensure that all girls and boys have quality primary and secondary education and all men and women have access to affordable technical, vocational and tertiary education as foundation of improving people's lives and sustainable development. Notably, Target 4.7 provides that relevant education puts responsibility for the future at the center, "by 2030, all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

During the 2022 UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, during the session *'SDGs in focus: SDG 4 and interlinkages with other SDGs - Quality education'* explored how innovations in learning that emerged during the COVID-19 crisis can be directed toward the provision of quality education and lifelong learning for everyone.

7. **The Transformative Education Summit** (**19 September 2022, convened by the UN Secretary General)**, during which 130 countries committed to prioritize education to address the learning loss of hundreds of millions of young people due to COVID-19 pandemic, support psycho social well being of students and teachers and offset direct and indirect costs of education for economically vulnerable communities, while paying particular attention to promote gender-sensitive education policies.

The establishment of the International Financing Facility for Education (IFFEd) was announced, which is the first-of-its-kind finance facility developed in partnership with the Governments of Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands as well as the Asian and African Development Bank. The IFFEd will provide an initial $2 billion in additional affordable funding for education programs to be disbursed starting in 2023 and which could unlock an extra $10 billion of additional financing for education and skills by 2030. Furthermore, a Commitment to Action on Education in Crisis Situations was also revealed, supported by member states and partners, while UNESCO and UNICEF launched Gateways to Public Digital Learning, a global multi-partner initiative to create and strengthen inclusive digital learning platforms and content.

The Secretary-General released a Vision Statement, laying out a path for education in the 21st century, serving as an input to negotiations in preparation of the Summit of the Future which will be held at the UN General Assembly in 2024. The SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee will be responsible for the follow-up process to further shape the future of education and meet 2030 SDG Education targets.

8. The **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCC, 1992), in its Article 6, specifies that "the parties shall promote at the National and as appropriate sub-regional and regional levels. the development and implementation of educational and public awareness programmes on climate change and its effects; … Training of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Personnel; …Development and exchange of educational and public awareness material on climate change and its effects; and the development and implementation of education and training programmes, including the strengthening of national institutions and the exchange or secondment of personnel to train experts in this field, in particular for developing countries".

Furthermore, the **UN Conference on Climate Change COP 21** (Paris, December 2015) hosted representatives of 195 governments who agreed in holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and in pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels in order to significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change. In the Paris negotiations the critical role of education in climate change was given special attention: ESD and climate change education were included in the Paris Agreement, approved by the countries, while an entire thematic day of the Conference was dedicated to Education recognizing its top priority in the Climate Change Agenda.

In addition, at the High-Level meeting organized during the COP22 in Marrakesh on the 14th of November 2016, the UNESCO/UNFCCC Guidelines were launched and the role of education in preparing societies for global change and a greener future was a clear message.

Furthermore, at the latest **UN Conference on Climate Change COP 26** (Glasgow, November 2021) for the first time, Ministers of Education and Environment came together to pledge to integrate sustainable development and climate change into learning, recognizing education as a society-wide learning process that can equip everyone with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for urgent action to combat global challenges such as climate change. Specifically, the Ministers committed to the integration of sustainability and climate change in formal education systems, including as core curriculum components, in guidelines, teacher training, examination standards and at multiple levels through institutions.

9. The **UN Convention to Combat Desertification** (UNCCD, 1994) in its article 8 provides that "the overall strategy of national action programmes (to combat desertification), shall aim at strengthening the capacity of local authorities and ensuring the active involvement of local populations, communities and groups, with emphasis on education and training, mobilization of non-governmental organizations with proven expertise and strengthening of decentralized governmental structures. They shall, as appropriate, include training with regard to, and strengthening, public awareness and environmental education campaigns and disseminating knowledge of techniques relating to the sustainable management of natural resources". Also under article 11 it defines that priority areas for subregional action programmes shall, as appropriate, focus on capacity building, education and public awareness activities that are better carried out or supported at the subregional level.

10. The **UN Convention on Biological Diversity** (UNCBD, 1992), in its Article 13 provides that "the Contracting Parties shall:

a) promote and encourage understanding of the importance of, and the measures required for, the conservation of biological diversity, as well as its propagation through media, and the inclusion of these topics in educational programmes, and

b) cooperate, as appropriate, with other States and international organisations in developing educational and public awareness programmes with respect to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity".

11. **The Framework for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD** which provides for a series of countries of the north and east coasts of the Mediterranean (adopted at the 8th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Batumi, Georgia, 8-10 June 2016) which calls for:

1. Encouraging whole-institution approaches by establishing ESD school plans or embedding ESD in existing school plans.
2. Promoting the extension of ESD in Teacher Education and in the Training of all educators.
3. Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in support of sustainable development and green economy.
4. Strengthening integration of ESD in both international and national education and sustainable development policies and other relevant policies.
5. Linking ESD in formal, informal and non-formal education.
6. Acknowledging the important role of networks, including those of civil society, academia and science, non-governmental organizations, business and enterprises, in implementing ESD.

A series of indicators have been introduced by UNECE some of which have been included in the present Action Plan (see V.D).

In May 2022, an update was released on the outcomes of the work of an Ad Hoc Group on Strategic Planning: Framework for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD from 2021 to 2030. During the current pandemic and beyond, it was decided to focus on a limited number of priority areas of regional and national, but also global, importance, where UNECE expertise could trigger and facilitate adequate transformative mobilization and change. The update includes a limited number of strands which reflect in a combined and complementary way many of the issues and needs for ESD identified above and earlier on and may contribute to improving educational systems and other mechanisms to enable people to learn, live and work on a planet and in a region that are more prosperous, just, creative, healthy and sustainable. The above-mentioned strands are the following:

(a) Quality education and ESD;
(b) Whole Institution Approach/Institutions as communities of transformational learning;
(c) Digital education, information and communications technology and ESD;
(d) Entrepreneurship, employment, innovation and ESD while there is a specific attention on the role of Youth.

12. The **League of the Arab States efforts and initiatives related to ESD**. These includes the following:

- The Arab Plan for Education during Emergencies and Crisis, which has been drafted in cooperation with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), to be submitted to LAS Social and Economic Council and adopted, with the aim of Ensuring the continuity of education and learning in emergency and crisis situations in all stages and areas of formal education.
- The adoption of the Arab Decade for Literacy and Adult Education (2015-2024) as a decade to eradicate illiteracy in the Arab world in all its forms (alphabetical, digital, cultural), and the establishment of the Higher Coordination Committee for the Arab Decade for Literacy in cooperation with the ALECSO, which aims to develop a program of action to eradicate illiteracy in Arab countries over the next ten years, and the General Secretariat organized seven meetings of the Higher Coordination Committee, the last of which was in December 2021.
- The organization of a training course entitled *"Developing the competencies of adult education and learning trainers for displaced people and refugees in stable places in the Arab countries"*, which was held during 2019, to qualify them to carry out the task of eradicating the illiteracy of refugees and displaced persons. Launching a training course entitled "Women and Life Approach and Methodology" in 2022 dedicated to eradicating women' illiteracy and educating them in refugee and displacement camps, with the aim of developing awareness and the ability to coexist and investing technologies to build a knowledgeable society, building skills to increase income, preserve the environment, build values and trends of citizenship, accept difference and manage crises.
- The drafting of a comprehensive development plan for technical and vocational education system that meets the current and future needs of the labor market and contributes effectively to the prosperity of Arab citizens and the realization of their aspirations.
- The "Education for Return" initiative, which will be launched with the aim of protecting the right to education for Arab refugees and supporting the countries hosting them economically and socially; and it will include all Arab countries hosting refugees, whether in camps or in the local community.
- The Launching of the Arab Universities Ranking project having its pilot phase in 2022, in cooperation with the Association for Arab Universities (AARU) and the (ALECSO). The door will be opened for Arab universities to participate in the first edition (October 2022).
- The adoption of the Arab Strategy for scientific and technological research and innovation was adopted in the Arab Summit in March 2017. LAS participated in the preparation of the executive plan and the general framework for the Arab strategy for scientific research in the social, cultural and economic fields, which was adopted in the 17th round of the Conference for the Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, held in Cairo in December 2019. LAS also participated in the preparation of the executive plan for the general framework of scientific research in the social, cultural and economic fields, which was approved by the Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research during the 18th session of the Conference for the Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, held in Algeria in December 2021; and participated as well - as one of the members of the scientific unit - in the 1st meeting of the ALECSO scientific unit concerned with the follow up of the implementation of the plan.

13. The **Paris Declaration** on "Promoting Citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through Education" adopted at the informal meeting of European Union Education Ministers (17 March 2015).

14. The **European Commission** through the **European Green Deal** (2020) presented an ambitious strategy to decouple economic growth and resource use and is embedding environmental sustainability in all education and training policies, programmes and processes to build the skills and competences needed for the transformational changes which are necessary across our economy and society. Notably, the Communication on the European Education Area, the Council Recommendation on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, the New European Bauhaus, the European Strategy for Universities, the Council Recommendation on effective European higher education cooperation, the adopted Proposal for a Council Recommendation on learning for Environmental Sustainability (16 June 2022), the Council of the European Union Conclusions (21 June 2022) on the transformative role of education for sustainable development and global citizenship as an instrumental tool for the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs); they all support education and training systems to take action for the green transition so that learners of all ages and backgrounds can access high-quality and inclusive education on sustainable development.

15. The EU's **new Agenda for the Mediterranean** (February 2021) through the "Joint Communication on the renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood" incorporates new areas and forms of cooperation through education and trainings, specifically through 'Action points: Enhance human development, health and cooperation on youth, education, skills and culture.'

16. The **Catania Declaration of G20 Ministers of Education** (June 22, 2021) that re-affirm the fundamental role of education for inclusive economic growth, equity, equality, human dignity, social inclusion, and wellbeing and recognises the importance of putting education at the centre of the political agenda as part of the recovery from the present global crisis to build back better and with resilience for the future.

17. The **Council of Europe** (CoE) **Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education** (2010). The Charter is an important reference point for ESD and citizenship and human rights education, which have a key role to play in ensuring sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles.

18. The **Report on Climate Change Education and Outreach in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East (EMME) region.** The report identifies trends, commonalities and gaps of Climate Change Education in the region to help the countries to develop synergies and integrate it into their educational systems. Despite the region's political difficulties, the EMME countries recognize the urgency and share the vision to develop and apply appropriate education on climate change as an important tool to combat/address climate crisis. For the next steps ahead, some strategic orientations

and options for the facilitation and operationalization of the initiative are proposed.

ANNEX II – Comparative Table of the Action Plan towards 2030 of MSESD with the current priority areas for ESD of UNESCO and UNECE

	Priority Areas for ESD of UNESCO, UNECE	Action Plan towards 2030 of MSESD
	Advancing Policy/ Inclusion of ESD in policies (UNESCO)	Priority Areas (1), (2)
	Whole Institution Approach (UNESCO), (UNECE)	Priority Area (3) Proposed Regional Programmes (1)
	Training of Trainers / Educators Capacity Building (UNESCO)	Priority Area 5 (i) (iii) (iv) Proposed Regional Programmes (6)
	Youth Empowerment (UNESCO), (UNECE)	Priority Area (2), (9), (10) , (12) Proposed Regional Programmes (3) Priority Thematic Issues(6)
	Local level Actions (UNESCO)	Priority Area (2), (10) , (11) Proposed Regional Programmes (4) Priority Thematic issues (12)
	Quality Education (UNECE)	Priority Area (2), (4), (5)
	Digital Education /ICTs (UNECE)	Priority Area (6) Proposed Regional Programmes (9)
	Entrepreneurship/Employment/Innovation (UNECE) *Green Deal*	Priority Area (12)