

Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean

Recommendations of Actions for Ministers of Environment

17th September 2019

In the framework of the last meeting of the Environmental Training Network (ETN) held on 1st July 2019 in the city of Quito, Ecuador, the representatives of countries members of the Network have reflected on the national and international scenarios that have been opened for environmental education and the new and changing challenges that the global crisis demands.

The network has been transformed into a community of practice that favours the action, cooperation, and the exchange of knowledge and experience in environmental education among the countries of our region, both in person and virtual manner.

Considering the final document “The Future We Want” in which member States recognised *“that the younger generations are the custodians of the future, and the need for better quality and access to education beyond the primary level. We therefore resolve to improve the capacity of our education systems to prepare people to pursue sustainable development, including through enhanced teacher training, the development of sustainability curricula, the development of training programmes that prepare students for careers in fields related to sustainability, and more effective use of information and communication technologies to enhance learning outcomes”*.

Recognising the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals which states in SDG 4.7 *“By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”*, in the SDG 12.8 *“By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature”* and the SDG 13.3 *“Improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning”*.

Recalling the decisions of the XX Forum of Ministers of Environment, adopted during the meeting of 28th – 31st March 2016 in Cartagena, Colombia. Decision 3 on Environmental Education¹ states that: *“Whereas environmental education is a key part of policies for sustainable development, to take care of the planet to understand the causes of environmental degradation processes and its consequences, to propose solutions and to transform values, behaviour and visions towards sustainable development, devoted to poverty eradication, peace, inclusion, respect for multiculturalism, gender equality, participation of youth,*

¹ [Decision 3 Environmental Education for Sustainable Development](#)

sustainable consumption and production, decent work, improving the quality of life and environmental protection”;

Taking into account the last meeting of the XXI Forum of Ministers of the Environment, in which ministers and heads of delegation through the Declaration of Buenos Aires² decided: *“To strengthen environmental education as a cross-cutting issue and provide more support to the Environmental Training Network of Latin America and the Caribbean”.*

Members of the Environmental Training Network of Latin America and the Caribbean wish to put the following recommendations for the consideration of the ministers of the environment:

1. **Give higher priority** and use environmental education as a cross-cutting theme and as an effective and transformative tool for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other national and global environmental agreements and policies;
2. **Join efforts** at a national and regional level to achieve the SDGs, in particular SDGs 4, 12 and 13, and strengthen training and cooperation for the measurement of impact indicators;
3. **Raise the priority** of environmental education with a more comprehensive, holistic vision and capable of providing new approaches, generating bigger coordinated actions and offer innovative tools to face global, regional and national environmental challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, among others;
4. **Increase resources** (financial, human, institutional, among others) to attend in an equivalent manner the growing citizen demand and social movements on environmental education.

Within each country’s national context:

1. **Evaluate and strengthen** the position of environmental education within organisational structures, providing it with human and financial resources that allows it to interact in a cross-cutting way with other areas of their own ministries of environment, as well as with other relevant ministries and actors, working in a more coordinated manner and with greater impact and visibility in environmental education, this could work in the following areas:
 - a) **Structure and/or strengthen** the Environmental Education Units within the ministries of environment. This continues to be a challenge shared by all the country members of the network. Often, these units have few human and

² [Buenos Aires Declaration](#)

financial resources, and even in some cases, they are not included in the institutional organisational chart;

- b) **Strengthen** the environmental education units, articulating them more efficiently with other units of the ministry itself, which permits the achievement of bigger impacts in the fulfilment of the ministerial mission and its dialogue with the citizenry. Within the ministries of environment, most of their units and projects contemplate environmental education interventions, these can be aligned to generate greater impact and reduce costs;
- c) **Promote** intersectoral and inter-ministerial strategies that strengthen cooperation and collaboration that allows increasing the scope and coverage of environmental education in different areas of society and at local and national levels;
- d) **Promote** the participation of citizens both in the design and implementation of environmental education policies;
- e) **Develop communication strategies** that facilitate raising awareness amongst all citizens in different sectors about the relevance of having environmental education, to move towards a model based on sustainability and balance with ecosystems (production and consumption), as well as to communicate practices to carry it out. This with the aim of creating a critical and responsible citizenship for the protection of the environment.

At the regional level, the Environmental Training Network could:

- 6. **Review and approve** the new work plan of the Environmental Training Network, which has been shared for consideration of the environment ministers;
- 7. **Conduct** a ministerial dialogue on environmental education at the next Forum of Ministers of the Environment, to be celebrated in Barbados in 2020;
- 8. **Join efforts** for the development of regional campaigns and environmental fairs on priority issues, such as climate change, biodiversity, integrated waste management, and sustainable consumption and production;
- 9. **Strengthen** cooperation with other agencies of the UN system such as UNESCO, UNICEF and other cooperation agencies including the Organisation of American States (OAS), Euroclima, among others;
- 10. **To approve the designation** of a president and vice president of the Environmental Training Network, constituted on a voluntary and rotating basis, which may be the host country of the last and future meeting;

11. **Reiterate** the commitment of all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to contribute to the Trust Fund of the Environmental Training Network to contribute to the network's mission and implementation of its work plan.

Members of the Environmental Training Network express their gratitude to the Ministry of Environment of Ecuador for their generosity in hosting the Focal Points' Meeting of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Quito, Ecuador from 1st – 3rd July 2019.