



Message from partners of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI): UNESCO, UN-DESA, UNEP, UN Global Compact's Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative, and UNU; and UN-Habitat

Dear Signatories of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI),

On behalf of the HESI partners we would like to welcome you to the new version of the Partnerships for SDGs online platform, now available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships>. The new platform will allow HESI members and signatories to access real-time information on HESI as well as to report directly on their work and progress in a large number of areas.

We would also like to take this opportunity to share with you the latest updates and developments under the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI). 2015 was a year full of landmark events: From the approval of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations General Assembly, to the COP 21 Paris Agreement on Climate Change - the international community has showed a clear commitment towards sustainable development.

In the lead-up to COP21, the HESI partners organized an event "*From Rio to Paris: Higher Education for Climate Change Action*" on 14 October 2015, held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. A report titled "*Climate Change Action for Sustainable Development*", was prepared ahead of the event with inputs from HESI signatories.

In addition, in the lead up to the COP21, HESI prepared a letter addressed to member states on the role of education within the context of climate change, <http://cop21.grii.org>

From an education point of view, the launch of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), as the follow-up programme to the UN Decade on ESD represents an important step forward. ESD is also reflected in several of the SDGs, and in particular within Goal 4 target 4.7

UNEP to Chair HESI in 2016

At the last meeting of the HESI partners, which took place on 15 October 2015 in Nanterre, France, it was agreed that UNEP would Chair HESI in 2016. More information on this will follow shortly.

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)

On 23-27 May 2016 UNEP will be hosting the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2) at its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. UNEA is the high-level decision-making forum formed by all member states and focused on environmental matters. The overall theme for this year will be on *Delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. More information on <http://web.unep.org/unea/>

One of the highlights from UNEA-2 for the HESI community is the proposed draft resolution by Georgia, Mongolia and other member states on *Investing in human capacity for Sustainable Development, through environmental education and training*. So far the text has received large support from a number of countries and we hope it will help develop further our work on ESD and Environmental Education.

UNEP will also be organizing a Green Room Event, *Innovation, Partnerships and Assessment: Environmental Education for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* on 26 May 2016. The event will feature, among others, the presentation of a new MOOC on Ecosystems Approaches and Systems Thinking, and the Sustainability Literacy Test.



Global GAP Key Partner meeting

UNESCO will organize a second global meeting of key partners of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) from 5-6 July 2016 in Paris. This Partner Network of more than 80 major ESD stakeholders, including the SULITEST initiative, from all world regions was established to intensify synergies between the GAP activities of their members. This second meeting of the Partner Networks of the GAP will focus on scaling-up ESD.

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is United Nations' central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. On 11-20 July 2016 in New York, HLPF will hold its first session since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, which will include voluntary national reviews and thematic reviews of the implementation of the Agenda, with inputs from other intergovernmental bodies and forums, relevant UN entities, regional processes, major groups and other stakeholders. The national reviews will provide a broad platform for partnerships. More information: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

2016 Focus: SDG 11 and Habitat III

At the HESI meeting in October 2015 it was also agreed that, following HESI focus on SDG 13 on Climate Change ahead of COP21, the focus for 2016 will be on SDG 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities. One of the main reasons for this decision is the Habitat III Conference, which will take place later this year in Quito, Ecuador. Habitat III is the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, and which seeks to address the main urbanization challenges the world is facing today as well as discuss the New Urban Agenda.

In order to better plan our work and activities on this area HESI has decided to partner with Habitat UNI, UN-Habitat's partnership for higher education, and to prepare and coordinate a series of events throughout the year.

As an example, UNEP and UN Habitat organized a Side-Event on the *Impact of higher education in the sustainability of urbanization* at the Habitat III Regional Meeting in Prague on 18 March 2016. The goal of this event was to 1) Set the basis for a programme of action for higher education at Habitat III; and 2) Design and conceptualize a position paper on the role of higher education for sustainable urban development, within the context of The City we need Habitat III Outcome Document.

HESI progress report 2016 – "Higher Education for Sustainable Urban Development"

As part of the launch of the new version of the Partnerships for SDGs platform, we are pleased to let you know that we have included a progress report with a number of questions ranging from overall achievement to more specific questions on sustainable urban development. We would like to invite you to fill in the questionnaire at your earliest convenience, **but no later than 2 May 2016**. Your submission will help us prepare a report on "**Higher Education for Sustainable Urban Development**". More information available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships/hesi>

We will be also circulating shortly a calendar of relevant activities and events. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information.

Yours kindly,



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