

# 7th World Environmental Education Congress - Summary

## Marrakesh, Morocco

### 9-14 June 2013



#### **Background**

- The **7th World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC7)** took place in Marrakech, Morocco from 9 to 14 June 2013.
- The theme for WEEC7 was ***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 organised by the **Mohamed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection** together with the **WEEC Permanent Secretariat** in Italy.

#### **UNEP 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 among others.
- **Plenary 1:** Mr. Steiner and Ms. Bokova also 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 empower.
- **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 importance of establishing partnerships to promote environment education.
- **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. Side event also featured launch of the **Greening Universities Toolkit**.

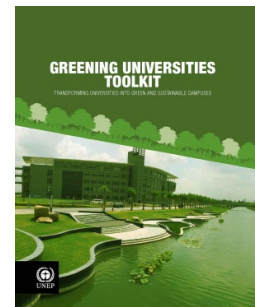
- **MESA Side Event.** EETU organised a side event on MESA, the Mainstreaming of Environment and Sustainability in African Universities, led by Professor Heila Lotz-Sisitka, Rhodes University, South Africa, who presented a draft of the African Action Plan on Environmental Education and Training.
- **Disasters, 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). 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*.
- **International, Intergenerational, Informal Network of Centers (IIIN) Unofficial Side Event,** organised by the Center For Environmental And Sustainability Education, Florida Gulf Coast University. An agreement was made 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. Representatives from 5 GUPES regions were present. An update on GUPES progress over the past year was presented, with focused on its 3 pillars: education, training and networking. The meeting called for greater clarity, transparency and forth looking of the GUPES network.

### Bilateral Meetings

- **UNEP – Tongji University.** Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, held a bilateral meeting with Professor Wu Jiang, Vice President, and Professor Fengting Li, Tongji University.
- **UNEP - Mohamed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection.** Bilateral meeting to discuss specific actions, following the MoU signed by UNEP and the Foundation in February 2013.
- **EETU - GUPES Latin America meeting.** Representatives from different Latin American countries were present at the meeting. Meeting participants gave an overview of environmental education activities in their respective universities and networks, and discuss current and future activities.
- **EETU - GUPES Africa Meeting.** Representatives from different African countries were present at the meeting, which provided an opportunity to discuss upcoming activities

### Follow up actions

- **WEEC Permanent Secretariat.** The 8<sup>th</sup> World Environmental Education Congress will take place in Gothenburg, Sweden in 2015. EETU to follow up / liaise for this congress.
- **Mohamed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection.** 3 areas of collaboration between UNEP and the Foundation have been identified: Training for Environmental journalists from Morocco and West Africa; Green Universities Network in Morocco, and Tunza and Youth. EETU will take the lead on the Green Universities Network.
- **GUPES Steering Committee.** Clarity on the GUPES Charter, mission and goals to follow up between EETU and the Steering Committee members.
- **GUPES Latin America.** Follow up discussions on the different national fora that are taking place in Latin America on environmental education, including the Latin America Universities Forum for Sustainability, which will take place in Valparaíso, Chile, in December 2013, and the Leadership Program, in Colombia in 2014, in close coordination with ROLAC.
- **Global South-South Development Expo 2013.** The UN Expo will be hosted by UNEP and will take place in Nairobi, Kenya from the 28 October through 1 November 2013. EETU will be organizing a mini-forum at the Expo. WEEC 7 gave an opportunity to present the Expo and the mini-forum, which will focus on academia and environment education.
- **UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development 2014.** The end of the Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) will take place in Nagoya, Japan, on 10-12 November 2014. EETU plans on presenting the African Action Plan on Environmental Education and Training at the conference, along with the most recent GUPES activities.



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