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Evaluation of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean and recommendations

Contents

Introduction	3
Background of the Environmental Training Network and its Trust Fund	3
Environmental Training in UNEP’s 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 Programmes of Works	3
Current Situation of the Training Network	4
Activities in 2010-2011	5
Regional Workshop for Latin America on Monitoring and Evaluation Processes of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (2010)	5
Regional Workshop for the Caribbean on Education for Sustainable Development (2011).....	6
Mainstreaming environmental issues and sustainability in English-speaking Caribbean Universities	6
Global High-Level Meeting for Planning, Consultation, Exchange and Learning for Leading Universities in the framework of the proposal for UNEP’s Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (2011)	7
Memorandum of Understanding with the Sustainable Rural Development Programme (SRDP) of the German Development Cooperation Agency– GIZ in Peru (2011).....	7
Distribution of Environmental Training Network publications (2010-2011)	8
Proposal of Activities for the Environmental Training Network for the 2011-2012 period	8

Introduction

1. This document has been developed for the Agenda Item number 4 of the Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. Its purpose is to submit for the consideration of the Forum of Ministers the **“PROPOSAL OF ACTIVITIES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING NETWORK FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN”**, presented by UNEP.

Background of the Environmental Training Network and its Trust Fund

2. “In the early 1980’s, the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean requested UNEP to create an environmental training network for high-level experts. As a result, the General Programme of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean started in 1982, supported by UNEP.

3. The main objective of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean is to coordinate, promote and support activities in the areas of environmental education, capacity-building and training in the region. Therefore the Network coordinates and supports courses and environmental training programmes, environmental capacity-building activities at a community level and the promotion of strategies to foster sustainable development policies.” The Network’s Trust Fund was established shortly after the Network was created.

Environmental Training in UNEP’s 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 Programmes of Works

4. Globally, the issue of environmental training in UNEP’s 2010-2011 Programme of Work has mainly been reflected in the Ecosystem Management sub-programme and specifically in the draft of project 6 *“Building Capacity to Incorporate Ecosystem Management into Development Processes: Knowledge Management, Information Sharing and Learning”*. This project, which was not approved by the UNEP Project Approval Committee, proposed:

- *“Development of an expanded network of universities on North-South and South-South modalities that integrates ecosystem management into their research, teaching and community engagement activities.*
- *Development and management of a holistic, useful and widely used web-based knowledge management hub based at UNEP.*
- *Development of ecosystem management training materials distributed to relevant country, university, and other inter-governmental actors.”*

5. A new project is being redesigned as part of the 2012-2013 Programme of Work approved at the 26th session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum held between 21 and 24 February 2011 in Nairobi.

6. The project will work around three pillars of the UNEP Environmental Education Strategy draft, namely: Education, training and networks. i) Education is focused on inspiring, informing, facilitating universities to incorporate syllabus innovations on sustainability and, “greening”. ii) Training is directed towards developing the application of skills to improve knowledge and awareness of UNEP’s

priority theme areas, and offering key players (especially mid-level public officials and policy makers) practical tools and values to improve sustainability, through planned training courses at universities, seminars and leadership sustainability programmes. iii) And the goal of the networks is to foster higher education networks on environment and sustainability at a regional, sub-regional, South-South, North-South level.

Current Situation of the Training Network

7. The document "EVALUATION AND NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING NETWORK" (<http://www.pnuma.org/forodeministros/17-panama/html/documentos.htm>), submitted by UNEP at the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama, Panama; 26 - 30 April 2010) made the following recommendations:

8. *"Based on the understanding that the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean was created by governments in the region at the start of the 1980's, with the main goal of coordinating, promoting and supporting activities in the areas of environmental education, capacity-building and training in the region, the following is proposed for the Environmental Training Network for the 2010-2011 period:*

- a.** Focusing on the Latin American and Caribbean Strategy for Sustainable Development;
- b.** Identifying mutually complementary areas and mutual support among the activities of the ETN, PLACEA and the activities of the ITC agencies;
- c.** Promoting on-line environmental education in Spanish, English and French within the framework of MENTOR;
- d.** Promoting the integration of environmental subjects and focus on ecosystem management in University research and teaching in different disciplines, and on knowledge management;
- e.** Within the ILAC¹ Framework and the Regional Action Plan 2010-2011, providing support to the working group on Environmental Education for Sustainable Development;
- f.** Building alliances with sub-regional organizations, the private sector and community organizations;
- g.** Raising awareness of the Environmental Training Network publications;
- h.** Continuing to support the regional Congresses of Environmental Education;
- i.** Seeking to extend the financial fund of the ETN and pursuing payment of contributions by countries.
- j.** Continuing to provide technical support for countries in the implementation of PLACEA; and,

¹ Latin American and Caribbean Strategy for Sustainable Development

k. Embracing once more the proposal for the “establishment of a Consultative Committee of Focal Points that will allow for a more continuous process of consultation and decision-making, including programming and publicizing activities, and selection of candidates as beneficiaries of the Network’s activities. This committee would include, at the same time, representatives of the ITC and other agencies that collaborate in a concrete manner.” The Committee would meet virtually with the support of electronic tools.”

9. However, during the Seventeenth Forum, the Ministers of Environment did not take a decision on the Environmental Training Network. In the Forum Declaration they only stated: “22. To reaffirm our commitment with environmental education in the region, in particular with the promotion of the Latin American and Caribbean Programme on Environmental Education (PLACEA for its initials in Spanish) launched by this forum in 2003, as well as the sub-regional mechanisms arising from it, taking into consideration priority themes identified in the RAP (Regional Action Plan).”

10. Until the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, previous forums had reached a decision on the subject of environmental education, and those decisions systematically referred to the trust fund as follows:

- *To extend the operation of the Network’s Trust Fund through the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, asking UNEP to continue managing this Fund.*
- *To ask the countries of the Region to cover their outstanding contributions and to meet their annual commitments to the Network’s Trust Fund.*

Activities in 2010-2011

11. After the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment in 2010 and through October 2011, the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean committed to a specific series of environmental education activities:

- ***Regional Workshop for Latin America on Monitoring and Evaluation Processes of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (2010)***

12. In partnership with the UNESCO Regional office, this activity involved the substantive and logistical organization of the Regional Workshop for Latin America on Monitoring and Evaluation Processes of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (Panama City, Panama, 18-20 October 2010). Participants at the meeting included representatives of the Ministries of Education and Environment in Latin America. The aims of the meeting were:

- a. To submit the results of the first monitoring and assessment report of the Decade
- b. To promote a common understanding of the Decade
- c. To raise awareness of the framework for the second monitoring and assessment phase
- d. Strengthen monitoring and assessment capacities

13. Reference was made to the existing consensus that the millennium development goals will not be reached and that development is increasingly unsustainable. It was noted that Latin America has seen greater economic growth in recent years, but at the expense of increased extraction and plundering of natural resources. The inconsistency between countries' domestic policies was also mentioned: On one hand the Education Ministries promote guidance on environmental education, but on the other hand public policies do not them into consideration.

14. The assessment of the first phase (2008-2009) of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean highlighted, inter alia, the need to clarify what is actually understood by education for sustainable development and to show that it refers to a integrating approach linked to environmental education.

15. A document called "Regional Strategy: Building an Education for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean" was approved.

- ***Regional Workshop for the Caribbean on Education for Sustainable Development (2011)***

16. Support was provided to The Cropper Foundation in the substantive organization and participation of high-level experts at the Regional Workshop for the Caribbean on Education for Sustainable Development –ESD- (Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 28-29 April 2011). UNESCO and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat supported the meeting. Two parallel sessions were held – one to follow up on the Decade, the other to examine the role of Caribbean youth in ESD. Participants included over 80 sustainable development education professionals and administrators of secondary and tertiary institutions in the Caribbean, youth representatives from various youth organizations, NGOs, relevant ministries, international organizations, private sector representatives and the media. A proposal was submitted to develop a shared vision on Education for Sustainable Development in the region, noting the importance of including all interested parties and taking into account similarities and differences when formulating policies on education for sustainable development in the region. Finally, the need was identified to focus more on the following areas related to education for sustainable development: policy-making and the implementation, management, research, communication, networks and associations, capacity-building, and monitoring and assessment. Further information: <http://tcf-regional-workshop.weebly.com/>

- ***Mainstreaming environmental issues and sustainability in English-speaking Caribbean Universities***

17. Through the University of West Indies (UWI) and supported by UNEP, July 2011 saw the conclusion of audits on environmental programmes and practices in six English-speaking Caribbean Universities (University of Trinidad and Tobago, University of Technology, Northern Caribbean University, University of the West Indies represented by the Mona and Cave Hill campuses, and the University of Belize). The audits reflect the current state of these universities, and provided

recommendations for the transversalization of the environmental and sustainability aspects of the curricula, daily procurement-related operations, water and energy use, and waste disposal management. UWI adapted the audit tool successfully used in several universities in Africa to the context of Caribbean universities, a development now formalized in the Mainstreaming of Environment and Sustainability in Caribbean Universities (MESCA) initiative.

- **Global High-Level Meeting for Planning, Consultation, Exchange and Learning for Leading Universities in the framework of the proposal for UNEP's Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (2011)**

18. Support was given to UNEP headquarters and Chile's Andrés Bello University to carry out the Global High-Level Meeting for Planning, Consultation, Exchange and Learning for Leading Universities in the framework of the proposal for UNEP's Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES). (Santiago de Chile, Chile, 5-6 September 2011.)

19. GUPES aims to promote the infusion of environmental and sustainability concerns into teaching, research, community engagement and management of universities, as well as to increase and improve student participation in sustainable development activities both within the university and off campus. During this two-day meeting, an agreement was reached for universities' position regarding sustainability as a contribution to the Rio+20 Conference, with a special emphasis on the green economy. Current initiatives were also discussed, such as preparing University Greening Guidelines, course plans on the green economy and ecosystem management, as well as education for sustainable development. The official launch of GUPES in 2012 was also discussed. This was the first GUPES meeting to be held in Latin America. Further information available at: http://unep.org/training/News_events/gupes_santiago_meeting.asp

- ***Memorandum of Understanding with the Sustainable Rural Development Programme (SRDP) of the German Development Cooperation Agency– GIZ in Peru (2011)***

20. In October 2011, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the Sustainable Rural Development Programme (PDRS for its initials in Spanish) of the German Development Cooperation Agency (GIZ) in Peru, in order to:

- a. Support training and research processes related to environmental and sustainability issues, in national and regional educational institutions, social organizations and research groups, fostering community and inter-institutional participation
- b. Development of post-graduate programmes on environmental and sustainability issues, to be taught face-to-face, online or a mix
- c. Promote the exchange of training experiences in Latin American countries on issues relating to the environment, rural sustainable development, biodiversity and intercultural knowledge, with a view toward sustainability

- ***Distribution of Environmental Training Network publications (2010-2011)***

21. Available pre-2008 Environmental Training Network publications were distributed, such as the Text Book Prototypes and Guides for Environmental Education for Teachers at Primary level (UNEP and the Autonomous University of Mexico City -UACM-), Manual on Rainwater Harvesting Collection Systems for Domestic Use and Human Consumption in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP and the International Centre for Demonstration and Training in Rainwater Harvesting –CIDECALLI-).

Proposal of Activities for the Environmental Training Network for the 2011-2012 period

22. UNEP proposes that the Eighteenth Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean resume the analysis the recommendations of the aforementioned document "EVALUATION AND NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING NETWORK" (<http://www.pnuma.org/forodeministros/17-panama/htmlldocumentos.htm>), submitted by UNEP before the Seventeenth Eighteenth Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama, Panama; 26 to 30 April 2010).

23. Thus, "based on the understanding that the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean was created by governments in the region at the start of the 1980's, with the main goal of coordinating, promoting and supporting activities in the areas of environmental education, capacity-building and training in the region, the following is proposed for the Environmental Training Network for the 2012-2013 period:

1. *Focusing on the Latin American and Caribbean Strategy for Sustainable Development;*
2. *Identifying mutually complementary and mutual support among the activities of the ETN, PLACEA and the activities of the ITC agencies;*
3. *Promoting the integration of environmental subjects and focus on ecosystem management in University research and teaching in different disciplines, and on knowledge management;*
4. *Within the ILAC Framework and the Regional Action Plan 2010-2011[sic], providing support to the working group on Environmental Education for Sustainable Development;*
5. *Building alliances with sub-regional organizations, the private sector and community organizations;*
6. *Raising awareness of the Environmental Training Network publications;*
7. *Continuing to support the organizers of regional Congresses of Environmental Education;*
8. *Seeking to extend the financial fund of the ETN and pursue payment of contributions by countries.*
9. *Continuing to provide technical support for countries in the implementation of PLACEA; and,*

10. *Embracing once more the proposal for the “establishment of a Consultative Committee of Focal Points that will allow for a more continuous process of consultation and decision-making, including programming and dissemination of activities, and selection of candidates as beneficiaries of the Network’s activities. This committee would include, at the same time, representatives of the ITC² and other agencies that collaborate in a concrete manner.” The Committee would meet virtually with the support of electronic tools.*

24. Furthermore we recommend supporting universities in the region to participate actively in the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES), in line with the regional priorities and needs and with a view toward South-South and triangular cooperation.

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² Interagency Technical Committee of the Forum of Ministers