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From Berlin to Nairobi

The Nairobi Consensus on Education for
Sustainable Development (ESD):

A renewed global commitment on
ESD for 2030 and beyond

First draft

1. We, participants from governments, international, intergovernmental and non- governmental organizations, civil society, youth, teachers, education unions the academic community, the private sector and all spheres of teaching and learning convened in Nairobi from 13 to 15 January 2027 for the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, hosted by the Government of Kenya and co-organized by UNESCO and Kenya, confirm our consensus.
2. Building on the long tradition of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), including outcomes of the 2021 World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Berlin, and with gratitude for the continued support and commitment to ESD of partners including Japan, Germany and Kenya, we confirm the ongoing relevance and importance of the 'ESD for 2030' framework, its Roadmap for implementation, Berlin Declaration 2021 and position paper on ESD Beyond 2030 as our guiding documents for the remaining 4 years and beyond-2030 to mobilize action on ESD in the areas of policy, transforming learning environments, capacity development of educators, youth empowerment, and local level action.
3. We acknowledge that current global dynamics are reshaping the role of education due to rising geopolitical tensions and conflicts, rapid technological change, threats to democracy, risks of pandemic diseases, decreasing financing for education, deepening economic inequalities and extreme poverty, and declining trust in institutions, knowledge systems and sustainable development agendas. Urgent and radical action is also needed to address the planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, disinformation and eco-anxiety.
4. We realize that these socio-political, economic and environmental challenges are interrelated and require integrated, evidence-based and transformative responses.
5. We believe that renewed efforts are needed to transform education and harness its potential as a powerful enabler of positive change of mindsets, fostering critical thinking, social cohesion, peaceful relationships with each other and nature and a sense of belonging to a common humanity, ensuring that development trajectories are not exclusively orientated towards economic growth but also human well-being, social justice and ecological integrity within planetary boundaries.
6. We are convinced that ESD, anchored in SDG Target 4.7, Greening Education Partnership targets and the ESD for 2030 Framework, is an enabler of all 17 SDGs and the foundation for the required transformation, providing everyone with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to become change agents for sustainable development and fulfilling the right to quality education as defined in SDG 4. We recognize that that 2023 Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development, unanimously adopted by all UNESCO Member States, is a landmark instrument that acknowledges the critical and foundational role of ESD alongside Education for Peace and Human Rights, and represents an unprecedented opportunity to situate ESD strongly in the post-2030 agenda.
7. We appreciate the growing body of evidence confirming that ESD enables learners to develop their cognitive and non-cognitive skills and competencies including critical thinking, collaboration, problem solving, coping with complexity and risk, building resilience, thinking systemically and creatively to envisage alternative futures, and strengthening individual and collective agency to actively shape more just, peaceful and sustainable societies. We acknowledge the strong complementarity between ESD and Global Citizenship Education in fostering critical thinking, intercultural understanding, democratic participation, media and information literacy and a shared sense of responsibility towards humanity and the planet.

8. We recognize the value of ESD at any age as part of lifelong learning, including early childhood as a critical stage, for fostering values of care, empathy, cooperation, peace and sustainability and through both formal and informal learning environments involving families, caregivers and communities.

Our commitment

9. We, within our respective mandates and in our areas of responsibility, in line with the ESD for 2030 Framework and taking into account our needs, capacities, available resources and national priorities, commit to the following:
 - a. Strengthening the integration of ESD into all levels of education and training from early childhood to tertiary and adult education, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET) non-formal and informal learning including community-based spaces, so that all individuals are provided with lifelong opportunities for ESD;
 - b. Implementing ESD with shared emphasis on the cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural learning dimensions required for individual and societal transformation, and promoting equality, respect for human dignity and rights, fundamental structural and cultural changes at the systemic level of economies and societies, and the required political action to bring about these changes;
 - c. Harnessing the power of ESD to reengineer our societies, encouraging, inter alia, access to scientific data and diverse sources of evidence and knowledge to facilitate research, policy development, democratic decision-making and the respect for knowledge of local and indigenous communities to promote sustainable and transformative economies centered on respect for the well-being of people and the planet, and to enhance resilience and preparedness for global crises;
 - d. Ensuring ESD is based on, and promotes, respect for nature, human rights, democracy, rule of law, non-discrimination, equity, gender equality, intercultural understanding, cultural diversity, peace and non-violence, inclusion, respect for local communities and indigenous values, and the notion of responsible and active global citizenship;
 - e. Promoting whole-institution and whole-systems approaches, recognizing that learners of all ages become meaningfully engaged in sustainable development through democratic participation within their institutions as working models for participation and active citizenship, equity and gender equality, social cohesion, health, connections with nature and respect for the environment, energy efficiency and sustainable consumption, and where learning is co-created, experiential, action-oriented, localized and culturally specific, allowing learners to learn what they live and live what they learn;
 - f. Improving school infrastructure by ensuring that buildings are sustainable, striving toward climate-readiness so that ESD and all other learning can continue;
 - g. Recognizing climate change as a priority area of ESD as supported by the Greening Education Partnership, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and other climate-vulnerable countries, requiring systemic transformation and investment to get schools, curriculum, teacher training and education system's capacities, communities climate-ready;
 - h. Recognizing teachers, other educators and education personnel as key agents of transformation for ESD and commit to strengthening their capacity at all levels to support a whole-institution and whole-of-sector approach. Ensure enabling policy environments including safe working conditions, adequate remuneration, well-being, job security and professional autonomy, and engage them—through their

representative organizations—in regular and meaningful dialogue on ESD policy design, implementation and evaluation;

- i. Harnessing the potential of AI and new, digital and ‘green’ technologies to ensure that the access, development and use of technologies is responsible, safe, equitable, inclusive and based on critical thinking and sustainability principles with a proper assessment of risks and benefits, as well as promotes open educational resources, open science and affordable eLearning for ESD;
- j. Empowering young people as change agents for sustainable development, by providing them with meaningful opportunities for learning, competency development and tools for civic engagement and the co-creation of individual and societal transformation;
- k. Prioritizing marginalized and vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, refugees and persons affected by conflict, crises and natural disasters, by promoting inclusive, innovative and contextualized ESD policies and embedding ESD in crisis and emergency education. This includes strengthening public awareness and understanding of sustainable development through communication, community engagement, and collaboration with diverse knowledge holders;
- l. Emphasizing gender equity and non-discrimination in access to knowledge skills and competences, and ensure gender mainstreaming in ESD to enable a more profound and holistic understanding of sustainability challenges and potential solutions;
- m. Mobilizing ESD to combat poverty, particularly extreme poverty, and provide learners with relevant competencies to meet individual and societal demands, including through TVET, green skills, entrepreneurial skills and skills development for sustainable livelihoods to ensure human dignity and the right to live decently;
- n. Enhancing inter-agency, multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary collaboration on ESD at all levels of governance, with Ministries of Education collaborating with all other Ministries that influence sustainable development and in particular Ministries of Environment, to ensure a whole-of-government approach, with strengthened cooperation with all other relevant stakeholder groups, such as non-governmental organizations, the academic community, the business sector, youth, and others;
- o. Supporting the further alignment of ESD policy and action, at global, regional, national and institutional levels of the education systems, sustainable economies, other relevant development agendas and societal frameworks, and enhance networking between different stakeholder groups in order to ensure that efforts are mutually supportive and complementary and support structural mainstreaming of ESD;
- p. Mobilizing sufficient domestic resources to finance this agenda including through progressive taxation and debt justice, and strengthen international solidarity in financing ESD as a catalytic lever for change and as a shared commitment and global responsibility of SDG4;
- q. Monitoring and share ESD progress in the context of the overall monitoring of the SDGs and Target 4.7 (indicator 4.7.1), the Greening Education Partnership global progress tracker and the statutory reporting on country implementation of the 2023 Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development to ensure that implementation is continuously improved, impact is widely shared and no one is left behind;
- r. Putting in place assessment systems on ESD in the context of monitoring the SDGs and Target 4.7 in particular, and enhance inter- and trans-disciplinary research on how to evaluate ESD progress, also benefitting from the role of higher education as an actor for sustainability;

s. (placeholder for paragraph on ESD beyond-2030)

Way forward

10. We invite UNESCO, as the lead United Nations agency for ESD, to support the implementation of this declaration in cooperation with Member States, mobilizing its networks, including the Greening Education Partnership, ESD-Net, UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs, UNESCO Associated Schools and UNESCO designated sites, National Commissions among others, ensuring regular reviews of implementation progress, and to support Member States in strengthening accountability, monitoring progress, and sharing evidence-based practices.
11. We call for renewed commitment to global solidarity and multistakeholder partnerships, including increased and sustained public investment, innovative financing mechanisms and international cooperation to ensure equitable access to transformative quality education and the implementation of ESD at all levels.
12. We commit to taking this declaration and its provisions forward through relevant global, regional, national and local processes, looking ahead to align the objectives of this declaration with important milestones such as the 2028 United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP 18), 2027 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 32) and beyond 2030.
13. We invite the pursuit of transformative learning for people, and the planet as a necessity for our survival and that of future generations. Now more than ever is the time to accelerate learning that empowers radical action and drives systemic change for our people and planet, securing a just, sustainable, equitable, dignified and peaceful future for all generations to come.
14. (placeholder for paragraph on ESD beyond-2030)