UNITWIN Network on Education for Sustainable Development and Social Transformation

Our Shared Vision for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

In light of the *Transforming education together: ESD-NET Global Meeting* in Tokyo on December 18-20, 2023, the *UNITWIN Network on Education for Sustainable Development and Societal Transformation* (UNiESD&ST) calls upon all stakeholders to promote the importance of *Education for Sustainable Development* (ESD) as stated in *Sustainable Development Goal* (SDG) 4.7 and defined in the *ESD for 2030 Roadmap* as a vital means of implementation for sustainable development, an integral element of quality education, and a key enabler to achieve all of the *SDGs*.

ESD empowers learners with knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society empowering people of all genders, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity.

(UNESCO ESD for 2030 Roadmap, p. 8)

Following *UNESCO*´s vision of a new social contract for education to unleash its potential in transforming societies and our shared futures, education is to be transformed towards a lifelong learning process in formal and non-formal learning environments. With sustainability as the directive, *ESD* is key to implementation and enables to cope with today´s and future challenges, such as our shared digital future.

ESD is an integral part of quality education as aimed for in *SDG* 4 yet addresses a broader scope in all aspects of education, public awareness, and training and in all learning dimensions: socio-emotional, cognitive, and behavioral. Grounded in transdisciplinarity, it engages learners with diverse knowledges to work towards desirable futures in response to pressing challenges of our times, such as the climate crisis. As a driver in transforming education, *ESD* inspires new ways to rethink how assessment can be better used for learning that goes beyond global awareness to develop critical and contextualized understandings of sustainable development and to mobilize informed action. As a cross-cutting concept, it is to be addressed in all forms of curricula and levels of formal education and training, in non-formal settings, and in public awareness raising to engage learners of all ages in deliberating sustainable development, encouraging and enabling the public to move away from unsustainable ways of living. Especially higher education in all streams of the mandate of teaching, research, and community service and in its societal role as honest brokers of information is expected to contribute to further the *SDGs*, sustainable development, and to the common good – all with *ESD* at the core throughout the whole institution.

Therefore, sustainable development must be positioned as a purpose of education while continuously questioned, examined, re-envisioned and contextualized. Connecting *ESD* to current value systems, ethics, and spirituality as well as power relations needs to be better understood in enhancing *ESD*'s role to further well-substantiated social criticism, to confront global injustices, and to challenge the systems and structures that perpetuate and normalize unsustainability. The Earth Charter provides an important ethical framework for *ESD* that can support implementation.

As the *ESD for 2030 Framework* focuses on the role of *ESD* in contributing to the achievement of the 17 *SDGs* and to fully integrate *ESD* in all of the SDGs through all of its priority action areas including policies, learning environments, capacity- building of educators, the empowerment and mobilization of young people, and local level action, we invite all *ESD-NET* members and stakeholders to frame all action in the broader vision of *ESD* as a key enabler in societies to build a more just and sustainable world for all, both within the current *SDGs* and the broad vision of sustainable development until and beyond 2030.

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