



Regional Office of Southern Africa



## UNESCO-SADC ESD Policy Dialogue

**Arrival 13 March 2022**

**Departure 16 March 2022**

**Venue: Johannesburg, South Africa**

**Hotel: The Capital on The Park**



### Background

Southern Africa envisions thriving and inclusive sustainable development via creating employment and new opportunities for its people. Safeguarding the rich cultural and natural heritage that sustains life and communities in the region is part of this vision. Currently, however, the region is challenged by inequality and unemployment, a degrading natural resource base and inadequate institutional development, including for quality education. Education for increased agricultural productivity, sustainable industrialization, investment in infrastructure development and renewable energy along with education that supports conservation of biodiversity, sustainable, fair and equitable use of genetic resources, clean air and water, and better adaptive capacity to climate change are further goals in sight. All of these have implications for quality education and for Teacher Education and TVET in a southern African context.

Education is both a goal in itself and a means for attaining all the other sixteen SDGs. It is not only an integral part of sustainable development, but also a key enabler for it. That is why education represents an essential strategy in the pursuit of the SDGs. Embarking on the path of sustainable development will require a profound transformation of how we think and act. To create a more sustainable world and to engage with sustainability-related issues as described in the SDGs, individuals and communities must become sustainability change-makers. They require the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development. Education, therefore, is crucial for the achievement of sustainable development. The role of teacher educators, who educate the next generation of teachers, is crucial in enabling this vision.

There is a need to enrich existing forms of agency in ways that expand people's learning, participation and contributions to co-creating a good life for all in a sustainable environment. The entire education sector is being called upon to support the renewal of education as a common good, as is well articulated in the 2021 report recently released by UNESCO on *'Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education'* which emphasizes the importance of a transformative orientation to education.

UNESCO is the lead agency for Education for Sustainable Development since the Decade for ESD (2005- 2014). *ESD for 2030* is the new global framework for implementation of ESD over the period 2020-2030. It builds upon the lessons learned from the Global Action Programme on ESD (GAP, 2015-2019), in response to the increased importance placed on ESD to promote the contribution of learning content to the survival and prosperity of humanity. "*ESD for 2030 places emphasis on education's contribution to the achievement of all 17 SDGs. It aims to review the purposes and values that underpin education and reorient all levels of education and learning to contribute to sustainable development and to strengthen the quality and relevance of learning.*" Priority Action Area number 1 is on advancing policy, meant to stimulate integration of ESD into education policies and all policies on sustainable development. Other priority areas include transforming learning environments, building capacities of educators, empowering and mobilizing youth and accelerating local level actions.

In order to create momentum to implement ESD for 2030 around its five Priority Action Areas, UNESCO encourages and supports Member States to develop and implement 'country initiative' to mainstream ESD in the country's efforts made for pursuing sustainable development. A country initiative on ESD for 2030 has a national scope and includes activities that have or potentially could have country-wide impacts. It can build on existing activities related to ESD or create a new initiative if necessary in the context of SDG 4 contributions (e.g. curriculum review, teacher development, etc.), and expand them where possible.

The aspirations enunciated in SADC's Vision and Mission 2050 are aligned to key global and continental frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. The overall objective of the Social and Human Development priority area of SADC is to develop and implement programmes, in order to improve human capacities for socio-economic development, in areas including: education and human resource development; health, HIV/AIDS, pandemics, and other diseases of public health concern; poverty eradication; employment and labour; food and nutrition security; and gender equality. Environment and Sustainable Development are among the cross-cutting issues highlighted in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020–2030 of SADC.

Since the beginning of 2021, the UNESCO Regional Office of Southern Africa (ROSA) and the SADC secretariat have been discussing ways to strengthen and advance Education Sustainable Development (ESD) in the Social and Human Development Directorate of the SADC Secretariat, building on a strong history of ESD in the Region since the Regional Environmental Education Programme of the SADC Secretariat, which was established as a partnership programme between SADC Environment and Land Management Sector and SADC Education Sector programmes in 2003.

*The Sustainability Starts with Teachers* programme (SST) is a capacity-building programme for teacher educators on Education for Sustainable Development. It seeks to strengthen the

implementation of ESD in teacher education institutions that train teachers and educators from ECCE, primary, secondary and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). With the funding support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the programme is implemented in 11 countries in SADC<sup>1</sup>. Transformative, change-oriented learning is at the heart of the SST programme. The programme therefore adopted a transformative learning model called the Change Project<sup>2</sup>.

## **The purpose of the policy dialogue**

The purpose of the dialogue is to engage policy actors and educational leaders on ESD activities as a way of advocating for ESD integration into policies, curriculum and leadership activities in the SADC<sup>3</sup> region. The intention is to develop a UNESCO / SADC Strategic Framework for ESD in the SADC Region in the context of the ESD 2030 framework and within the wider programme of the Futures of Education initiative of UNESCO that seeks to reaffirm education as a common good, and to support a transformative orientation to education which recognizes that if education is to shape peaceful, just, and sustainable futures, education itself must be transformed. The regional framework will guide Member States to integrate ESD into their education systems, as well as providing the much-needed foundation to work towards ESD for 2030 and the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The specific objectives of the policy dialogue are to:

1. showcase how ESD is integrated in policy documents and frameworks in SADC countries;
2. share the outcomes of the Sustainability Starts with Teachers (SST) programme in selected SADC countries;
3. highlight the synergies between the SST programme, ESD for 2030 country initiatives and the aspirations of SADC countries as specified in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020–2030;
4. create a forum for policy makers to dialogue and draft a SADC Strategic Framework for ESD in preparation for presentation to the next SADC ministerial meeting in June 2022.

Expected outputs are ideas and input for draft SADC Strategic Framework for ESD integration into the Social and Human Development Directorate of the SADC Secretariat and a timeline for this work.

This policy dialogue will take a hybrid format, gathering approximately 150 participants in a face-to-face format with others joining virtually. Proposed delegates are from 11 SADC countries mostly from Ministries of Education, Environment and Sustainable Development; key NGOs, SST alumni, ESD for 2030 focal persons, policy makers, senior education actors and SADC secretariat.

## **Venue and Dates**

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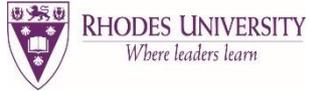
<sup>1</sup>These countries are Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia in year 1 (2019); Zambia, South Africa and Lesotho in year 2 (2020); Tanzania, Malawi and eSwatini in year 3 (2021); and Mozambique and Angola in year 4 (2022).

<sup>2</sup> These are self-defined institutional change initiatives include curriculum innovations, pedagogical innovations and whole-institution innovations orientated towards sustainability.

<sup>3</sup> SADC Member States are Angola, Botswana, the Union of Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The venue is The Capital On The Park Hotel in Sandton Johannesburg, equipped with adequate ICT infrastructure, related facilities and space to facilitate smooth running of the workshop. Proposed dates for the workshop are from the 14 to 16 March 2022.

In cooperation with:



With kind support from:

