

KEY-NOTE SPEECH 1

The Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development: Perspectives and Practices from the Network of Biosphere Reserves in Europe

Philippe Pypaert - UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (Venice)

Contact: p.pypaert@unesco.org

Education for Sustainable Development empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. In this view, ESD is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society. To build on achievements and create new momentum when the UN Decade closed in 2014, UNESCO, the lead agency of the Decade, has developed a Global Action Programme on ESD. It comes at a time when the international community is charged with proposing a new set of sustainable development goals that are action-oriented, global in nature and universally applicable. As a follow-up to the Decade, the Global Action Programme is also designed as a concrete, tangible contribution to the post-2015 development and education agendas. One of its 5 Priority Action Areas is aimed at accelerating sustainable solutions at local level. Territories included in the network of Biosphere Reserves of the UNESCO Programme “Man and the Biosphere” (MAB) are much more than a particular category of Protected Areas. They are “learning places”, laboratories where approaches to Sustainable Development can be tested, consolidated and disseminated in society. In this view, they are also expected to be tools to achieve ESD, and in particular to:

- enhance innovative approaches to ESD and biodiversity conservation in Biosphere Reserves (as well as in World Heritage sites);
- provide and support teacher training, and strengthen capacities of education institutions and educators;
- address the place of biodiversity in sustainable consumption, lifestyles and livelihoods;
- explore the interlinks between biodiversity and cultural diversity.

Keywords: Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development, Man and the Biosphere Programme, Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites, Integrated planning and management.

Figure: The model structure of a MAB Biosphere Reserve of UNESCO



