

Draft Concept Note and Agenda

“The future of South East Europe and the Mediterranean in the context of Climate Change: a UNESCO perspective”

6-8 November 2019

Background and Context

As stated on numerous occasions by UN Secretary General Gutierrez, climate change is the defining issue of our time. Due to the multifaceted nature of climate challenges, it requires an unprecedented and collective effort from all sectors of society as well as a cross-generational approach giving youth a voice to determine their future.

SDG 13 calls for urgent actions through strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity, mainstreaming it into policies and planning, and capacity building. In 2015, Member States in the Paris Agreement committed to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels. These clear goals constitute a framework for collective action. The Climate Action Summit, to be held at UN headquarters on 23 September of this year, showcases the UN’s commitment to accelerate implementation of the Paris Agreement. Young leaders from around the world will also be convening on September 21 to showcase climate solutions and engage with global leaders on climate change.

In the Mediterranean region, average temperatures have already risen by 1.4 °C since the pre-industrial era, 0.4 °C more than the global average. As seen this past summer Europe and the Mediterranean region suffer from an increasingly warming and drying climate, already causing loss of life and disruptions throughout the region. The reducing summer rainfall and increasing water needs enhance existing water shortages and cause loss in agricultural productivity. In addition, during the last two decades, sea level has risen due to global loss of ice volume and sea water acidity has significantly increased. This affects the Mediterranean where a large part of the population live close to the coast, many in coastal cities.¹ Furthermore, the Mediterranean area will suffer more from the effects of heat-related mortality, water restrictions, habitat loss, energy demand for cooling and forest fires.²

In the SEE and Mediterranean, UNESCO through its UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe and its scientific programmes such as the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), Man and the Biosphere (MAB) and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) is contributing to discussions on how climate change is affecting the region, notably its water resources and the Mediterranean Sea. In addition, UNESCO has been working closely with its member states to study the effects of climate change on UNESCO sites, such as biosphere reserves, geoparks and world heritage sites, and propose ways for sites to best adapt to climate change and to the multiplication of extreme weather patterns. Finally, UNESCO is

¹ Risks associated to climate and environmental changes in the Mediterranean region: a preliminary assessment by the MedECC Network Science-policy interface

² Report from the commission to the European parliament and the council on the implementation of the EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0738>

working both at the global and regional levels with youth and promoting education as a key to addressing climate change through ESD and climate change education.

The overall aim of the symposium is to contribute to a more climate-resilient Mediterranean. The symposium will explore how UNESCO can more effectively work with UNESCO designated sites, which are emblematic sites both in terms of nature and culture in the region, to increase their resilience to climate change and extreme events. The symposium will bring together scientists, universities and research institutions, site managers, education specialists, local authorities as well as youth climate change advocates to exchange ideas and explore how UNESCO can, through its programmes and sites, make a strong contribution to the region's climate resilience.

The event will specifically involve youth and youth climate advocates to ensure that those making up a quarter of the world's population, and representing the future of the planet, have a voice in UNESCO deliberations on climate change.

Key Expected Outcomes:

- Providing a venue for MAB biosphere reserves, geoparks and world heritage properties located close to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea to discuss the cooperative efforts and potential synergies that could be achieved in tackling climate change and sea level rise, floods and droughts
- Sharing knowledge on water and ocean governance and climate change adaptation in the Mediterranean region and best practices and lessons learned in integrated river basin management and ocean management in the context of climate change;
- Identifying means to support and enable youth to meaningfully engage with UNESCO's Regional Bureau in the area of climate change and effectively contribute to climate action and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region;
- Exploring how climate change education and ESD can contribute to changing minds on climate in the region
- Strengthening UNESCO's regional network of stakeholders in climate related areas;

Provisional Agenda:

Day 1- Wednesday, 6 November 2019

17:30-18:00 Registration

18:00-18:30 Opening Ceremony

- *Welcoming remarks by UNESCO and local and national authorities*
- *Introduction of participants and workshop objectives and working methods*

18:30-19:30 Networking Cocktail

Day 2- Thursday, 7 November 2019

9:00-10:00 Opening session: The state of the Mediterranean in the age of climate change

10:00-10:30 Coffee break/Group Photo

10:30-12:30 Panel 1 The contributions of UNESCO's science programmes to water governance & ocean conservation in the Mediterranean in the context of climate change

This session aims at identifying ways UNESCO can to enhance the region's (notably its water resources and the Ocean) resilience to climate change as well as climate extremes through UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, by:

- Exploring tools and methodologies notably in coastal zones and the ocean to identify adaptation responses and reduce the risks of water related disasters, coastal flooding, sea rise etc.
- Strengthening water and ocean governance and facilitating exchanges between the water and ocean communities to enhance resilience to climate change and water-related climate extreme in the region;

12:30-14:00 Lunch

14:00-16:00 Panel 2 UNESCO designated sites in the Mediterranean:

This session aims at exploring adaptation measures for coastal sites and cities in the Mediterranean endangered by climate change through a cross sectoral approach, by:

- Exploring how UNESCO designated sites in the coastal areas of the Mediterranean (notably multi-designated sites) and cities, can better address climate change and enhance synergies among them;
- Understanding the role of UNESCO designated sites from the region to test and implement climate policies and goals (such as the Paris agreement and SDG 13) and national and regional initiatives on climate change adaptation and mitigation;

16:00-16:30 Coffee break

16:30-18:30 Panel 3 Youth engagement and climate change education

This session aims at engaging and enabling youth climate change advocates in UNESCO's climate work in the Mediterranean, by:

- Providing youth leaders of climate action with a chance to propose concrete solutions and have their voices heard and enabling them to effectively contribute to climate action through UNESCO;
- Better understanding how climate change education can equip youth with the necessary tools to be effective climate change advocates

20:00 Dinner at local restaurant

Day 3- Friday, 8 November 2019

9:00-13:00 Concluding session A way forward (coffee break 10:30-11:00)

This session aims at providing attendees with the opportunity to discuss a way forward for UNESCO and its partners based on challenges and opportunities that have been explored and identified in Panels 1, 2, and 3.

- By the end of the session, attendees will have agreed on a regional UNESCO strategy to address climate change, and identified the main lines of a project proposal to be presented to donors which concretely addresses the issues identified during the symposium

13:00-13:30 Concluding remarks

13:30-15:00 Farewell Lunch

Target Groups:

IHP/IOC/MAB National committees and associated experts, national and municipal authorities, Biosphere Reserves, geoparks, World Heritage Properties, UNESCO Chairs and Category II Centres, experts specialized in the areas of climate change, water, ocean, cities and youth, ESD and climate change education, Academia and universities, UN agencies, young entrepreneurs, young political leaders, young

climate activists and professionals, as well as other climate related organizations and stakeholders from the Mediterranean region.

Timeline and Venue of the Symposium:

Dates: 6 - 8 November, 2019

Location: UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (Venice, Italy)

Contact Information

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