

UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development
Hong Kong Regional Report Press Conference

The UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (WCESD) was held online from 17th to 19th May 2021 (BJT) in Berlin. The Chinese subconference was located at the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. China National Commission for UNESCO, Basic Education Department of the Ministry of Education, chiefs of the Department of Teaching Materials and the Department of Teachers, National Working Committee for UNESCO Project on ESD attended the conference, while UNESCO Hong Kong Association, Hong Kong Institute of Education for Sustainable Development, and UNESCO Chair in Regional Education Development and Lifelong Learning also joined online in Hong Kong.



Following the closure of UWCESD, UNESCO Hong Kong Association convened Hong Kong Regional Report Press Conference at 10 am on 29 May 2021 in Hong Kong. **Professor Karen Cheung**, Executive President & Secretary-General of UNESCO Hong Kong Association and Director of the Institute of Education for Sustainable Development, and **Professor John Lee**, UNESCO Chair in Regional Education Development and Lifelong Learning, announced the Reports by first reporting the UWCESD key points, followed by introducing the six chapters in the Country Report submitted by China in the Conference, and the four stages of development regarding the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and its outlook in Hong Kong in the Regional Report.



Professor Karen Cheung (left) and Professor John Lee (right)

Professor Karen cheung introduced the background of UWCESD, then **Professor John Lee** reported that the ministers from various countries reported the experience and potential challenges during their regional implementation of ESD, while making commitments towards the realization of ESD. **Mr. Zheng Fu-zhi**, Vice Minister of Education of the People's Republic of China, pointed out that the Chinese government had already put Education for Ecological Civilization and Education for Sustainable Development into the education curriculum by (1) incorporation into the national plan with clear action goals; (2) amendment of teaching materials and integration into teaching; and (3) establishment of a sound incentive scheme to ensure effective implementation.



Mr. Zheng Fu-zhi, Vice Minister of Education of PRC

The Conference was divided into many parts: in the group discussion session, some ubiquitous and correlated global challenges were deeply probed into, especially how ESD fosters a reform for the sake of the achievement of sustainable development, for instance, how ESD can provide countermeasures for aspects like climate change, biodiversity, and green circular economy.

In the **“ESD for 2030”** meeting, the UNESCO **“Learn for Our Planet”** Report was published. Lastly in the closing ceremony, **“Berlin Declaration on ESD”** was published, urging all countries to take immediate actions through education and commitment to ESD, and speed up the realization of SDGs and climate actions.

Mr. Qin Chang-wei, Secretary General of China National Commission for UNESCO claimed on the Chinese subconference that we shall follow the planning by the Ministry of Education with the emphasis of Education for Ecological Civilization and ESD, and to contribute more to worldwide ESD by realizing 2030 ESD roadmap.



Five Priority Action Areas

After the summary of UWCESD, **Professor Karen Cheung** summed up the six chapters of the National Report entitled **Development Process, Overall framework, Implementation Strategies, Quality Assessment, Case Studies, and Forecast**. She also stated that **many parts of Hong Kong Regional Report were included in many parts of the Country Report**, for example, **“the building of SDG lifelong learning system in Hong Kong”** as introduced Chapter 3: Implementation Strategies. **“the promotion of SDGs and learning cities in HKSAR”**, an HK Education University’s project entitled **“Life Education and Citizen Science through Tree Protection and Conservation”**, an HiESD project named **“Smart Healthy School”** were introduced in Chapter 5.

In the Hong Kong Regional Report, the promotion of ESD in Hong Kong has gone through four stages of development. **Professor John Lee** recapped that the first two stages were the stages of network building, learning and exchange, research and development, and publicity and promotion, as well as the implementation of the Global Action Plan for ESD of UNESCO (GAP). In the third stage (2016-2020), an SDG lifelong learning system was set up. With the participation of various professionals, along with the support from Nobel Laureates, professionals from UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (UNPRME), the World Institute of Sustainable Development Planners was established. At the same time, collaboration with UN-related organizations was enhanced; for example, the Association was the regional reporter under United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), a member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), etc.

Coming to the fourth stage, **Professor Karen Cheung** stressed that “promoting ESD 2030 by creating new opportunities in global crisis” was an important stage from 2021-2030. Applied research will be carried out based on the forward-looking fundamental research by UNESCO, for the sake of building an inclusive, open, peaceful, adaptive and sustainable city to nurture elites, while making an emphasis on ecological civilization and ESD and the realization of the 2030 ESD roadmap.



2030 ESD roadmap and SDGs

In addition to the main report, **Professor Karen Cheung** mentioned four cases in the Hong Kong Region Report: ESD Learning Programme, Smart Healthy School Project, Sustainable Development Planning Project, and Life Education and Citizen Science through Tree Protection and Conservation Project, along with six ESD school

cases from St. Paul's Convent School, the Chinese Foundation Secondary School, St. Bonaventure Catholic Primary School, St. Paul's Secondary School, Man Kwan Pak Kau College, and AD & FD of POHL Leung Sing Tak School.

At the end of the Hong Kong Regional Report Press Conference, Professor Cheung called on close attention to the Hong Kong Regional Report that is about to be published.

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