



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
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pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
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COP 13, Cancun Mexico Mainstreaming Biodiversity,

Contributions from Science to Policy

Statement of UNESCO

Cancun, Mexico, 2 December 2016

Mainstreaming biodiversity, translating scientific contributions into policy, this theme strongly reflects the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its comprehensive and interconnected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The theme also reflects the outcome of the Paris Agreement reached in December 2015, which requires an unprecedented global effort in the coming decades to mitigate and adapt to climate change, thus reducing its impact on people, and their livelihoods derived from the planet's resources.

UNESCO has two flagship programmes, The World Heritage Convention and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, which are contributing to the conservation of biodiversity. While the World Heritage Convention, started in 1972, supports the conservation of sites with outstanding universal value including biodiversity, Biosphere Reserves, initiated in 1976, are established as active learning sites and test models for local sustainable development solutions. To date, UNESCO has designated 203 natural World Heritage sites in 91 State Parties of

the Convention and 669 Biosphere Reserves in 120 Member States. These sites cover all types of major ecosystems in the world with multiple and inextricable cultures and livelihoods. In addition, there are 120 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 33 countries in the newly established International Geosciences and Geoparks Programme, which are also contributing to biodiversity conservation and education as well as their main roles in geo-heritage protection and promotion.

At the designated site level, the sustainable use of biodiversity is mainstreamed in research, conservation actions, and education. Biodiversity is interconnected and integrated with cultural diversity, with local people and their social and economic contexts, and reflected in the local governance systems. It is through UNESCO instruments and networks that the global targets for the SDGs relating to biodiversity, and for the Aichi targets relating to the Convention on the Biological Diversity (CBD) are integrated and mainstreamed in local development agendas and into the sustainable development agenda at the global scale.

UNESCO designated sites demonstrate how ecosystem services, products and functions are directly benefiting local communities, their livelihoods and well-being. Combined with the Organization's comprehensive work in sciences, local and indigenous knowledge, intangible heritage, education for sustainable development, social inclusion and green economies, these sites, whether terrestrial or coastal/marine, are the places for the local communities to identify and promote new economic, social and cultural values,

promote the change of consumption concepts and styles, enable new partnerships and contribute to the growth of green societies that are fairer in benefit sharing, wiser in resource use, and more sustainable in generating livelihoods for their peoples.

Moreover, UNESCO's scientific Programmes such as the Man and the Biosphere Programme, The International Hydrological Programme and the International Geoscience Programme translate these results into management policy for biodiversity conservation and translate policies into action. Thus, UNESCO Sites span the the full range from 'knowing to action'. For example, transboundary biosphere reserves and transboundary geoparks together with transboundary aquifer research projects are excellent tools for establishing bi- or plurinational conservation and research sites, promoting thus the peaceful protection and use of renewable natural resources.

This message is of utmost importance, as States are moving to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and to address the consequences of climate change.