



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

8 April 2019

Excellency,

Further to my letter dated 8 March 2019, I have the honour to enclose herewith an updated concept note, including a draft programme for the Interactive Dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature, taking place on Monday, 22 April 2019, under the theme “Mother Earth approach in the implementation of Education and Climate Change”, pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 73/235.

For further information, your office may contact my Senior Advisor, Ms. Hana Alhashimi (hana.alhashimi@un.org), and the Coordinator for the United Nations Harmony with Nature Programme, Ms. Maria Mercedes Sanchez (sanchezmm@un.org).

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

MFEspinosa
María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON HARMONY WITH NATURE IN COMMEMORATION OF INTERNATIONAL MOTHER EARTH DAY

Theme: "Mother Earth approach in the implementation of Education & Climate Change"

Monday 22 April 2019, Trusteeship Council Chamber

CONCEPT NOTE

The President of the General Assembly will convene an Interactive Dialogue on Harmony with Nature, commemorating the 10th International Mother Earth Day at the United Nations in New York, under the theme "Mother Earth approach in the implementation of Education and Climate Change". This dialogue will be convened pursuant to General Assembly resolution A/RES/73/235, which in its operative paragraph 3 invites Member States to promote a balance integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development through Harmony with Nature. The resolution further calls to discuss the contributions of Harmony with Nature in ensuring inclusive, equitable and quality education on taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts and to inspire citizens and societies to reconsider how they interact with the natural world in the context of sustainable development, poverty eradication and climate justice.

Climate change is one of the largest threats to sustainable development globally and is just one of many imbalances caused by the unsustainable actions of humankind, with direct implications for future generations. The Special 1.5 Degree Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (October 2018) confirms that historically accumulated emissions are estimated to cause an increase in the global temperature above pre-industrial levels of 1.5 degrees Celsius between 2030-2052, with implications for centuries to come. Many land and ocean ecosystems have already been altered due to climate change in a long-lasting and irreversible way, impacting millions of people.

Yet, as indicated by Member States during the President of the General Assembly's High-level Meeting on Climate and Sustainable Development For All on 28-29 March 2019, it is still possible to halt and perhaps reverse this trend, while unlocking economic, social and environmental opportunities. One such way is by empowering people through education on how to tackle the structural causes of climate change, the transition to sustainable consumption and production patterns, and support political decisions for climate action, taking into account common but shared responsibilities, equity and respective capabilities, in light of national circumstances. This is in line with Article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Article 12 of the Paris Agreement, which encourage international cooperation among parties on climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on quality education plays a key role in promoting a new paradigm for living in Harmony with Nature, and securing the conditions needed to transition to low-emission and climate resilient development according to SDG 13, and facilitate the realization of other SDGs. In order to strengthen the global response, in the context of sustainable development, effective climate change education, capacity-building, inter-disciplinary dialogue and community approaches will increase the number of informed and engaged stakeholders.

An integrated approach to education and capacity-building are essential to better understand the intricate connectedness of the systems of life in our planet. Engaging in conversations and learning from cultures which have diverse connections with nature can certainly contribute to the transfer of knowledge among

the peoples of the world and between present and future generations. Strengthening the capacities for climate action through education, national and sub-national authorities, Indigenous Peoples and communities, civil society, and the private sector can further support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The 2019 Interactive Dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature will encourage all countries and relevant stakeholders to further promote the integration of collective climate action in education, taking into account innovative paradigms, concerning present and future challenges in the design and implementation of nationally determined contributions, adaptation planning, long-term low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilient development strategies, and climate policies. The interactive dialogue will include the participation of Member States, United Nations entities, independent experts and other relevant stakeholders.

Guiding Questions

1. How can Education and Climate Action in harmony with nature help us build an equitable and sustainable future?
2. What promising approaches and actions should be implemented, replicated or scaled-up to advance climate change education to achieve a transformational effect of humankind as a whole?
3. How can citizens, communities and societies improve the ethical basis for the relationship between humankind and Mother Earth in the context of sustainable development?

Draft Programme

10:00 am – 11:00 am	<p>Opening Session Speakers (tbc):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - President of the General Assembly - Permanent Representative of Bolivia - Permanent Representative of Ecuador - Tribal Attorney, White Earth Band/Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, USA - Organizer, Lake Erie Bill of Rights, USA
11:00 am – 1:00 pm	<p>Panel 1: “Education in Harmony with Nature” Moderated dialogue with multi-stakeholder panelists, followed by Q&A from Member States, UN organizations and stakeholders.</p>
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Break
3:00 pm – 5:30 pm	<p>Panel 2: “Climate Action in Harmony with Nature” Moderated dialogue with multi-stakeholder panelists, followed by Q&A from Member States, UN organizations and stakeholders.</p>
5:30 pm – 6:00 pm	Wrap Up: The way forward and closing remarks

Panel 1 – “Education in Harmony with Nature” will address the following questions:

1. What values, knowledge systems and skills are needed to equip citizens, communities and societies to build an equitable and sustainable future in Harmony with Nature?
2. What is the role of current educational models, structures, institutions and pedagogies in addressing contemporary environmental challenges?
3. What educational approaches engender an increased awareness of humanity's relationship with Mother Earth? How can educational practices, both formal and informal, assist in shaping policies aimed to live in Harmony with Nature?
4. How can Indigenous pedagogies enhance a global understanding, appreciation, and respect for humanity's interdependence and interconnectedness with Earth's natural systems?
5. What is the role of the arts and culture in raising awareness about climate change and fostering humanity's sense of connection to, and participation in, Mother Earth's ongoing existence?

Panel 2 – “Climate Action in Harmony with Nature” will address the following questions:

1. How can living in Harmony with Nature lead citizens, communities, and societies toward an ethical, collective, and collaborative response to climate change?
2. What particular tools are provided by living in Harmony with Nature to engage with, and respond to, climate change?
3. In times of climatic uncertainty, what policies need to be in place for humanity to live in Harmony with Nature and chart the path towards an equitable and ecologically sustainable future?