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In late September 2012, 105 leading experts from 43 Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development joined more than 350 Korean participants in Tongyeong, Republic of Korea. Together they discussed the fundamental role that education plays in achieving a sustainable future worldwide. The event was a rare opportunity to bring together a wide variety of stakeholders – from cities, communities, governments, industries, international organizations and academia – to work together toward this common goal.

The global network of Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCEs) is dedicated to using education as a transformative tool to create a better and more sustainable society for present and future generations.

The following pages describe the outcomes from the events in Tongyeong. This was more than just a conference. It was a launching pad for a series of new global initiatives that are a tangible step toward a better world, where everyone has the opportunity to learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles needed for a sustainable future.

It is my sincere hope that this publication will serve as a useful reference and record of our strong commitment to using education and learning in all their forms to achieve sustainable development.

**Kazuhiko Takemoto**  
Director, ESD  
UNU-IAS



“I WISH TO CONGRATULATE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY AND THIS GLOBAL NETWORK FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO PROMOTING EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

THINK GLOBAL, ACT LOCAL. THIS NETWORK SHOWCASES THE POWER OF THIS CONCEPT. THE SCALE OF COOPERATION MUST BE GLOBAL BUT IT MUST START LOCALLY...

EDUCATION IS SIMPLY THE BEST WAY TO SHAPE NEW WAYS OF THINKING AND BEHAVING. TOGETHER OUR GOAL IS TO EQUIP INDIVIDUALS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO MAKE INFORMED CHOICES AND RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS. THIS REQUIRES WIDE PARTNERSHIPS; IT CALLS FOR GLOBAL ACTION AND LOCAL ENGAGEMENT.”

**Irina Bokova**  
Director-General, UNESCO



Conference participants and Tongyeong residents enjoy the Green Map Exhibit



RCE Tongyeong Board of Directors Chairperson Eun Kyung Park welcomes participants to the conference

# Conference Highlights

Eight new RCEs are welcomed into the RCE community during the Opening Reception



Won J. Byun accepts an RCE Good Practices Recognition Award on behalf of RCE Tongyeong



Conference participants applaud the unanimous adoption of the RCE Declaration on ESD



More than 100 RCE participants took part in thematic, operational and strategic discussions throughout the conference

Founder of the RCE movement and former UNU Rector Hans van Ginkel welcomes participants



Press conference for South Korean media on the final day of the conference

# Africa and the Middle East



### RCEs in Action

RCE Africa and Middle East participants developed a multi-tiered strategy for action that focuses on collaborative research and projects in the areas of:

- Leadership in education for sustainable development (ESD);
- Sustainable agriculture and food security;
- Social and cultural issues;
- Disease and health issues; and
- Teacher education (primary and secondary).

In addition, RCE members further defined their actions toward the development of capacity development modules and worked on preparations for the 8th Global RCE Conference, to be held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2013.

## Background

There are 18 RCEs operating in Africa and the Middle East. Their programmes range from the recovery and documentation of traditional knowledge practices relating to biodiversity, to developing green university programmes for higher education institutions. The one thing all programmes have in common is a bottom-up, grassroots approach to solving the sustainable development problems in the region.

As noted at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Rio+20), Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable development have been hindered by conflicts, insufficient investment, limited market access opportunities and supply side constraints, unsustainable debt burdens, historically declining levels of official development assistance and the impact of HIV/AIDS.

The RCE members participating in the 7th Global RCE Conference in Tongyeong discussed the unique capacity of RCEs in the region to address these challenges through collaborative, multistakeholder initiatives.



1. Cairo, Egypt
2. Ghana
3. Greater Mbarara, Uganda
4. Greater Nairobi, Kenya
5. Jordan
6. Kakamega-Western Kenya
7. Kano, Nigeria
8. Khomas-Erongo, Namibia
9. KwaZulu Natal, South Africa
10. Lagos, Nigeria
11. Lesotho
12. Makana & Rural Eastern Cape, South Africa
13. Maputo, Mozambique
14. Mau Ecosystem Complex, Kenya
15. Minna, Nigeria
16. Senegal
17. Swaziland
18. Zomba, Malawi



# Americas



## Background

There are 16 RCEs in the Americas, spread over two continents. The Americas region is rich in biodiversity and equally rich in cultural history, with roots tracing back to European, African, Asian and Amerindian ancestry. RCEs in the region are faced with a diverse set of sustainability challenges and have responded by developing a wide range of RCE programmes, from curriculum development for secondary and tertiary formal education institutions to traditional knowledge initiatives and projects to engage First Nations peoples in the four pillars of sustainability.



## RCEs in Action

In an effort to foster greater regional collaboration and knowledge-sharing, RCEs meeting in Tongyeong created the blueprint for collaborative action on a variety of key issues:

- 1. Teacher Training:** RCEs will increase regional communication and share information around already existing teacher training networks. These efforts will ideally lead to the development a faculty network, to help move from research to education.
- 2. Traditional Knowledge and Environmental Education:** RCEs will work to prioritize quality education for indigenous groups, through efforts such as surveying RCEs, creating a subgroup on ESD and Indigenous Youth and building a bank of success stories in the area.
- 3. RCE and Ministry of Education Partnerships:** Historically, in the Americas, it has been difficult to involve Ministries of Education in ESD efforts at the same level as Ministries of the Environment. RCEs will collaborate on a new two-tiered effort, where they first share general evidence that ESD improves the

quality of education and then, in the second phase, they help generate case study evidence among RCEs.

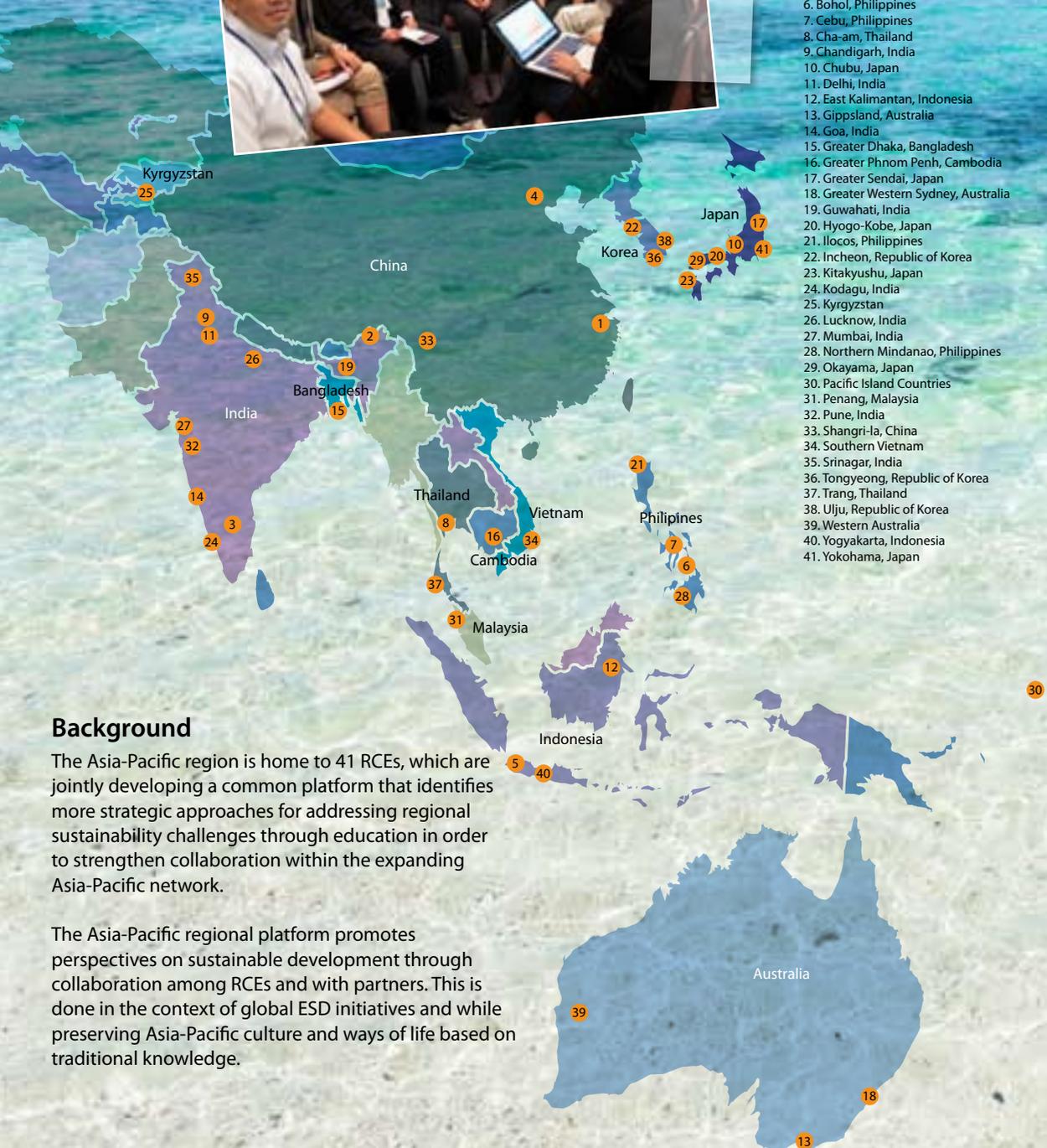
- 4. Living Learning Laboratories:** While noting the already existing learning laboratories across the Americas – especially those set up by RCEs, such as RCEs Tantramar, Curitiba, and Bogota – RCEs gathered in Tongyeong re-committed themselves to further developing learning laboratories in their communities and sharing opportunities to learn from and visit these sites with other RCEs.
- 5. Private Sector Partnerships:** Innovation is a hallmark of all RCEs and RCEs in the Americas are connecting with businesses and the private sector through innovation, entrepreneurship and ESD. RCE Bogota, in particular, is working with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development to better understand how the companies within the group have been trying to achieve sustainable development and how RCEs can support them in their efforts.



# Asia-Pacific



1. Anji, China
2. Arunachal Pradesh, India
3. Bangalore, India
4. Beijing, China
5. Bogor, Indonesia
6. Bohol, Philippines
7. Cebu, Philippines
8. Cha-am, Thailand
9. Chandigarh, India
10. Chubu, Japan
11. Delhi, India
12. East Kalimantan, Indonesia
13. Gippsland, Australia
14. Goa, India
15. Greater Dhaka, Bangladesh
16. Greater Phnom Penh, Cambodia
17. Greater Sendai, Japan
18. Greater Western Sydney, Australia
19. Guwahati, India
20. Hyogo-Kobe, Japan
21. Ilocos, Philippines
22. Incheon, Republic of Korea
23. Kitakyushu, Japan
24. Kodagu, India
25. Kyrgyzstan
26. Lucknow, India
27. Mumbai, India
28. Northern Mindanao, Philippines
29. Okayama, Japan
30. Pacific Island Countries
31. Penang, Malaysia
32. Pune, India
33. Shangri-la, China
34. Southern Vietnam
35. Srinagar, India
36. Tongyeong, Republic of Korea
37. Trang, Thailand
38. Ulju, Republic of Korea
39. Western Australia
40. Yogyakarta, Indonesia
41. Yokohama, Japan



## Background

The Asia-Pacific region is home to 41 RCEs, which are jointly developing a common platform that identifies more strategic approaches for addressing regional sustainability challenges through education in order to strengthen collaboration within the expanding Asia-Pacific network.

The Asia-Pacific regional platform promotes perspectives on sustainable development through collaboration among RCEs and with partners. This is done in the context of global ESD initiatives and while preserving Asia-Pacific culture and ways of life based on traditional knowledge.

## RCEs in Action

Representatives from 22 of the 41 Asia-Pacific RCEs met in Tongyeong to develop concrete collaborative projects under five key thematic areas:

1. **Biodiversity and Traditional Knowledge:** Asia-Pacific RCEs will collect case reports that will help identify similarities and challenges to allow the region to better plan for joint projects and secure the necessary funding.
2. **Youth:** RCEs Okayama, Tongyeong and Delhi will lead efforts to develop a collaborative project for youth to address skills development, energy consumption, food security, and local culture and traditional knowledge. Skype chats, video-conferencing and exchange programmes will all be an integral part of the project in order to help bridge the distances among participants.
3. **Community and Livelihood:** A group of eight RCEs have each launched community-based projects that are focused on local challenges but address common regional challenges, such as rural to urban migration and the generation gap between young and old. Following the discussions in Tongyeong, the RCEs

will work collaboratively to help active community members become agents of change, to exponentially improve the impact of each project on local towns and villages.

4. **Formal Education:** The RCEs created four action groups to propel cooperative action on: 1. Teacher education; 2. Research; 3. Creating living laboratories on campus; and 4. Leadership for sustainability among staff and students. The RCEs intend to collaborate with the Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network (ProSPER.Net), which is a network of top academic institutions in the region under the aegis of UNU-IAS.
5. **Disaster Risk Reduction:** Led by RCEs Cebu, East Kalimantan and Srinagar, the Asia-Pacific RCEs will launch a flagship collaborative project focused on capacity-building for disaster-resilient communities. This will include research, sharing of good practices and education materials related to disaster risk reduction, exchange visits, and the creation of Disaster Response Teams in local communities.



# Europe



1. Açores, Portugal
2. Barcelona, Spain
3. Central Macedonia, Greece
4. Creias-Oeste, Portugal
5. Crete, Greece
6. Denmark
7. East Midlands, UK
8. Espoo, Finland
9. Graz-Styria, Austria
10. Hamburg, Germany
11. Ireland
12. London, UK
13. Munich, Germany
14. Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
15. North East, UK
16. Nuremberg, Germany
17. Oldenburger Münsterland, Germany
18. Porto Metropolitan Area, Portugal
19. Rhine-Meuse
20. Samara, Russia
21. Severn, UK
22. Skåne, Sweden
23. Southern North Sea
24. Vienna, Austria
25. Wales, UK
26. Yorkshire and Humberside, UK

## Background

Applying and implementing ESD can be a challenging opportunity for developed and developing countries alike. In Europe, 26 RCEs are working to implement individual and collaborative projects that can be catalysts for transformative education. Together, they focus on raising the visibility of European RCEs on the continent and strengthening their relationships with European Union bodies that can foster RCE initiatives.



## RCEs in Action

At the Global RCE Conference in Tongyeong, European RCEs took another step towards the creation of a positioning paper for an alliance of regional RCEs. This paper would be based on the Global RCE Positioning Paper and the RCE Declaration on ESD, which were developed by the wider group of RCEs in Tongyeong. Positioning would be focused on the attributes common to RCEs worldwide: inclusiveness, an understanding of the local context of each community involved, and collaboration.

European RCE discussions at Tongyeong also addressed another common global issue: communication. Communication is key to ensure knowledge-sharing, good practices and networking. With a wealth of communication tools at their disposal, European RCEs zeroed in on an RCE Networking Portal as a main communication channel through which they could work on greater collaborative efforts.



# RCE Good Practices Recognition Awards

Thirty-two RCE projects were conferred an RCE Good Practices Recognition Award at the Global Conference in Tongyeong. The Global RCE Service Centre created the award to celebrate good practices in education for sustainable development.

The Award recognizes ESD projects, initiatives and activities that have translated existing local knowledge into concrete sustainability change practices, and empowered individuals and communities to make sustainable choices for the future. The nominated projects provide evidence of involvement of diverse actors in addressing local sustainable development challenges through dialogue, education, research and multistakeholder learning.



**Category 1:**  
Contribution to innovative multistakeholder learning and educational processes for sustainable development

- RCE Bohol:** Traditional Dispersal Practice in Vermicomposting – An Added Value to Sustainable Organic Agriculture
- RCE Chandigarh:** ‘My Carbon: Footprint vs Handprint’ Book and Teachers’ Guide
- RCE Guatemala:** Wisdom Dialogues
- RCE Greater Western Sydney:** UWS Hawkesbury Riverfarm: A Living Laboratory on Education for Sustainability
- RCE Mau Ecoystem Complex:** Environmental Education Awareness Initiative
- RCE Mumbai:** Project SEARCH
- RCE Nizhny Novgorod:** Sustainable Development Ideas: Combining Practical and Cognitive RCE Experiences
- RCE Penang:** Flood Disaster Risk Management in Kuala Nerang
- RCE Penang:** Enhancing Sustainable Living within Universiti Sains Malaysia and its Neighboring Community
- RCE Yogyakarta:** Biodiversity and Conservation of Indonesian Medicinal Plants – Sustainable Use and Standardization

**Category 2:**  
Building enabling conditions for sustainability change

- RCE Curitiba:** SENAI Eco-event
- RCE Curitiba:** SENAI Sustainability Committee
- RCE Greater Western Sydney:** Turnaround Leadership for Sustainability in Higher Education
- RCE Kano:** Masa Fryer
- RCE Okayama:** Good Practices
- RCE Saskatchewan:** RCE Saskatchewan ESD Recognition Program
- RCE Ulju:** Network Project
- RCE Yogyakarta:** An Integrated Model for Social-Economic Recovery Post Merapi Eruption
- RCE Yogyakarta:** Demo Plant on Biogas from Fruit Waste – Towards an Effective Connection and Learning Process of Multistakeholders in Sustainable Resource Recovery
- RCE Yogyakarta:** Preparing Green Economics Trough Synergy Among Courses in Engineering Physics Gadjah Mada University
- RCE Yogyakarta:** Kampung Upgrading and Greening – Enabling and Learning Processes for Consolidation-based Urban Settlement Redevelopment
- RCE Yogyakarta:** Sustainability Village – A Pilot Project for a Socially Constructed Technology as the Foundation of a Sustainable Way of Living in Harmony with Nature

**Category 3:**  
Bridging local and global perspectives on sustainable development

- RCE Crete:** Reorienting University Curricula to Address Sustainability (RUCAS)
- RCE Greater Nairobi:** Schools’ Environmental Projects for Sustainable Development

**Category 4:**  
Upscaling of ESD and sustainable development projects and activities

- RCE Cairo:** EduCamp – Enabling Multistakeholder Learning through Multi-level Cooperation of RCEs
- RCE Curitiba:** Green Office of the UTFPR and the RCE – A Practical Experience in Sustainable Development Education
- RCE Greater Dhaka:** Improvement of Health, Hygiene and Nutritional Status of Urban Slum Dwellers
- RCE Srinagar:** Dealing with Disasters
- RCE Tongyeong:** Bridge to the World

**Category 5:**  
Application of innovative networked governance strategies

- RCE Curitiba:** SENAI Core of Sustainable Solutions
- RCE Grand Rapids:** Seeds of Promise
- RCE Greater Nairobi:** 2011 Clean Up Exercise of Nairobi National Parks and Environs

## Policymakers' Roundtable Discussion on Engaging RCEs and Education for Sustainable Development

Strong commitments and active engagement of policymakers are the keys to promoting education for sustainable development and integrating ESD into the global sustainable development agenda.

There are FOUR DISTINCT MODELS OF ENGAGEMENT with policymakers that can help RCEs worldwide shape education for sustainable development practices in their local communities and regions.

Examples of each model can be seen throughout the RCE global network.

In Japan, for example, the Ministry of the Environment has long been a supporter of ESD, developing policies and concrete projects to promote ESD both domestically and internationally. RCEs work closely with government to help it achieve its goals, implementing model projects, creating good practices and providing a link to global ESD networks.

In Kenya, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) champions local RCEs, going so far as to include RCEs in their national ESD strategy. NEMA focuses on national coordination, capacity-building and funding, while RCEs work on implementation of ESD projects and turning national strategy into concrete actions in local communities.

In Tongyeong, the city government leads the movement while the local RCE uses its network's expertise to help define specific projects and actions. Members of the city council participate in RCE Tongyeong decision-making and RCE Tongyeong partners therefore have a strong role in informing and influencing the decisions of those policymakers.

In the San Francisco community of Cebu in the Philippines, governance is community-driven and families and individuals play a strong role in sustainable development decisions. This grassroots, multistakeholder approach mimics the approach of RCEs and, in this community, the RCE itself has become one of the instruments of local governance.

These four models of engagement – internationally, nationally, within a municipality, and through the RCE as a form of local governance itself – can be replicated globally to help RCEs shape policies towards ESD for the maximum possible value.

RCE Tongyeong and the global group of RCEs participating in the Policymakers Roundtable Discussion on Engaging RCEs and Education for Sustainable Development at the 7th Global RCE Conference in Tongyeong.



# Climate Change

## Facts on Climate Change<sup>1</sup>



The rate of warming of the Earth's average surface temperature over the last 50 years is nearly twice the rate for the last 100 years.

In response to higher temperatures, ecosystems are moving towards the poles and up mountainsides. Some species will not survive; 20-30% of species are likely to face an increased risk of extinction.

Sea levels will rise due to ocean expansion and glacier melt, worsening coastal flooding and erosion.

The poorest communities will be the most vulnerable as they have fewer resources to invest in preventing and mitigating its effects. Some of the most at-risk people include subsistence farmers, indigenous peoples and coastal populations.



## RCEs in Action

In response to the overwhelming challenge of climate change, RCEs in Tongyeong further developed a multi-tiered approach using the transformative power of education to attain sustainable development and adapt to climate change. Key to this effort is the sharing of resources, research and best practices within the global RCE network and in support of RCE communities.

Among the initiatives launched in Tongyeong were:

- A report on best practices with respect to addressing climate change. The report will address a wide range of areas, including strategies, teacher trainings, projects, indicators and formalized education courses, and will be shared on networking portals available to all RCEs.
- For countries with existing national action plans to address climate change, RCEs will partner with governments on implementation and report back on actions within one year.
- RCEs will create a publication for policymakers and multinational agencies to show how climate change affects lifestyles, as well as a publication to document RCE activities with respect to climate change.



<sup>1</sup> United Nations website, November 2012. <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/climatechange/pages/gateway/the-science/facts>

## Health and ESD

Facts on Health and Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup>



Over the last 50 years, human activities have released sufficient quantities of greenhouse gases to affect the global climate.

Climate-sensitive diseases are among the largest global killers. Together, diarrhoea, malaria and protein-energy malnutrition caused more than 3 million deaths globally in 2004.

43% of the global population still relies on solid fuels for household use, resulting in severe health consequences, such as cancer, tuberculosis and pneumonia, especially among women and children.

Water scarcity encourages people to transport water long distances and store supplies in their homes. This can increase the risk of household water contamination, causing illnesses.

Sustainable development solutions can greatly improve lives, by reducing poverty, improving living environments and improving public health.

### RCEs in Action

RCEs worldwide are involved in diverse projects related to health and ESD. The major areas of work include traditional knowledge and health, environment, sanitation, water and health, inclusive community health and well-being, and health intervention research.

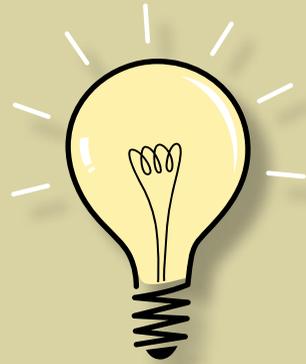
The gathering in Tongyeong was an opportunity for RCEs to share their expertise on the thematic issue, while solidifying their commitment to documenting good practices, working towards greater capacity-building and engaging more strategically with policymakers.



<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization website. November 2012.  
[http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/climate\\_change/facts/en/index8.html](http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/climate_change/facts/en/index8.html)

UN Women website. November 2012.  
<http://www.unwomen.org/the-united-nations-conference-on-sustainable-development-rio20/facts-and-figures/>

## Teacher Education and Better Schools



“ If we are to build our future on firm ground, we need to learn to maintain social, cultural, and economic well-being without depleting natural resources or overloading nature’s delicate balance. It is the role of education and training to ensure that citizens of all ages have the knowledge, skills, readiness and vision that will enable them to build a sustainable and equitable future and commit to a sustainable way of life. ”

“ It is the role of education and training to ensure that citizens of all ages have the knowledge, skills, readiness and vision that will enable them to build a sustainable and equitable future and commit to a sustainable way of life. ”

*Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development, Subcommittee for Education, 2006*



### RCEs in Action

RCEs gathered at the 7th Global RCE Conference laid out a series of objectives for their discussions, namely:

1. Promoting inter-RCE networking and partnerships on teacher education;
2. Sharing visions, challenges, experiences and case studies on teacher education and schooling; and
3. Identifying areas for collaboration and joint actions to enhance teacher education.

While steps were made towards all of those goals, a few key priorities for collaborative action rose to the surface.

1. Led by RCE KwaZulu-Natal, efforts will be made to develop leadership resources and a leadership programme based on the Turnaround Leadership for Sustainability in Higher Education (TLSHE) research project in Teacher Education departments across Southern Africa.
2. Similarly, RCE Greater Western Sydney will work on replicating TLSHE in other contexts, looking for successful leaders in various communities to support RCEs and ESD in teacher education.
3. RCE Severn will lead other RCEs in establishing greater opportunities for student and staff exchanges.
4. RCEs, with the guidance of RCE Denmark and RCE Graz-Styria, will also work to share videos, narratives, stories, and case studies on what works in teacher education and use these tools as a selling point to key leaders.



## Sustainable Consumption and Production, Sustainable Livelihoods, and Well-being

### Facts on Sustainable Consumption and Production<sup>3</sup>



The global economy started exceeding the planet's biocapacity in the 1980s. Since then, overconsumption of resources has increased.

Carbon dioxide emissions have been rising steadily. Since 1751 approximately 329 billion tons of carbon have been released to the atmosphere from the consumption of fossil fuels and cement production. Half of these emissions have occurred since the mid 1970s.

High-income countries have been characterized by a steady increase in the average per-person Ecological Footprint, from 3.5 global hectares in the early 1960s to roughly 6 global hectares at present.

About 50 countries are already experiencing moderate to severe water stress all year round. Many lakes and rivers have dried out following extensive extraction and damming to irrigate agriculture.



### RCEs in Action

RCEs, as unique multistakeholder initiatives, can contribute in important ways to creating more sustainable consumption, production, and livelihoods and improving overall well-being. Indeed, since the RCE network's establishment, RCEs worldwide have been implementing successful programmes towards those ends, including water education efforts in China, a productive capital project in Canada, and a sustainable agriculture initiative in Kenya.

In Tongyeong, participants identified five areas of common ground that could form the basis of collaborative projects in the future. These were:

1. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): RCEs will form an action group to further explore the issue and identify actions.
2. Innovative Educational Processes with a Focus on Formal Education: RCEs from China, Korea and Japan will focus on ESD-inspired changes in curricula, education of teachers, and informal education
3. Upscaling SCP and Livelihood Practices: RCEs will document upscaling practices in text, video, and photo format for further analysis.
4. Capacity Development for SCP and Livelihood Practices: RCEs will conduct research transformative practices in capacity development.
5. Social and Community Enterprises: RCEs will facilitate learning through documentation and exchange of lessons learned.



<sup>3</sup> United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development website. November 2012. [http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/15Trends\\_in\\_sustainable\\_consumption\\_and\\_production.pdf](http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/15Trends_in_sustainable_consumption_and_production.pdf)

## Youth

“ Today’s generation of youth – the largest the world has ever known, and the vast majority of whom live in developing countries – has unprecedented potential to advance the well-being of the entire human family. ”

“ Youth are a transformative force; they are creative, resourceful and enthusiastic agents of change, be it in public squares or cyberspace. From their pivotal role in efforts to achieve freedom, democracy and equality, to their global mobilization in support of the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, youth have energetically demonstrated yet again their capacity and desire to turn the tide of history and tackle global challenges. ”

*UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's message on International Youth Day 2012*



### RCEs in Action

A small group of highly engaged RCEs met in Tongyeong to discuss a framework for sustainable youth activities and how businesses could be motivated to contribute towards youth development.

The key action points that emerged from the discussion, included:

- 1 Involving and sensitizing parents in the ESD school programmes.
- 2 Appointing a youth coordinator for each individual RCE.
- 3 Capacity-building of youth in higher education on issues related to sustainability.
- 4 Creating entrepreneurship opportunities for youth.

Based on these action points the RCEs developed a set of recommendations that included involving youth in decision-making processes in governance at the school level, as well as providing them with platforms for innovation. Four RCE regional youth coordinators were also nominated to guide discussions on RCE youth initiatives.



## Higher Education

Facts on Higher Education<sup>4</sup>

# 53%

## INCREASE

In 2007 there were around 150 million tertiary students globally, roughly a 53% increase over 2000. In low-income countries tertiary-level participation has improved only marginally, from 5% in 2000 to 7% in 2007.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest tertiary education participation rate in the world, at 5%. In Latin America, enrollment is less than half that of high-income countries.

More than 2.5 million students are studying outside their home countries. Estimates predict a rise to 7 million international students by 2020.

The growth of private higher education worldwide has been one of the most remarkable developments of the past several decades. Today some 30% of global higher education enrollment is private.

### RCEs in Action

Recognizing the need to convince senior leaders of universities and colleges of the need for ESD in higher education, RCEs gathered in Tongyeong developed a series of collaborative actions to further progress in this important area.

1. Student and Staff Exchanges: Led by RCE Severn, RCEs will contact international programme offices in each RCE university, assessing the needs and available skills at each office. In addition, RCEs will produce a good practice handbook from the exchanges.
2. Engagement Strategies: RCEs will use the RCE concept and international network as a key focus for each university's engagement strategy. Led by RCE Grand Rapids, this effort will ideally lead to a paper in the Higher Education Journal of Sustainability on the role of RCEs in engaged learning and research strategies of universities.
3. Communication: RCEs will make use of the RCE Networking Portal to share successful strategies for engagement and information on projects. Additionally, RCE representatives will strive to increase their presence at international conferences.



<sup>4</sup> UNESCO website. November 2012.  
<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/trends-global-higher-education-2009-world-conference-en.pdf>



## Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity

### Facts on Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity<sup>5</sup>



Indigenous peoples live in all regions of the world and own, occupy or use up to 22% of the global land area, which in turn harbours 80% of the world's biological diversity.

Indigenous peoples are estimated to number some 370 million and represent the greater part of the world's cultural diversity, including the major share of the world's almost 7000 languages.

Traditional livelihoods are the mainstay of large segments of the world's population. Pastoralism is practised on an estimated 25% of the global land area and provides 10% of the world's meat production.

Indigenous peoples have long and multi-generational histories of interaction with their environments that include coping with environmental uncertainty, variability and change.



### RCEs in Action

RCEs worldwide are actively working in various areas related to bio-cultural diversity. Tongyeong was an opportunity for more than a dozen RCEs to share their experiences, from RCE Guatemala's work on community heritage education to RCE Lesotho's wetlands and birds conservation.

It was also an important opportunity to lay the path ahead. RCEs agreed to focus more on capacity-building, research publications and linking with policy processes in the future. To ensure action on these items, the RCEs created a panel and network of experts to advance initiatives.



<sup>5</sup> UNESCO website. November 2012.  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002166/216613e.pdf>

## Disaster Risk Reduction

### Facts on Disaster Risk Reduction<sup>6</sup>



Since the start of the new millennium, more than 35 major conflicts and some 2,500 disasters have affected billions of people around the world.

In the past 20 years, natural disasters have caused 2 trillion USD worth of damages worldwide, which is equal to 25 years of total Overseas Development Aid.

Since 1992, 64% of the world's population has been affected by natural disasters and 1.3 million people have been killed.

Disasters affect the most vulnerable sectors and population groups in society with the least capacity to cope, including the very poor, women, children and the elderly.

### RCEs in Action

RCEs gathered in Tongyeong agreed that members belonging to higher education institutes should carry out research on disaster management in the local context. Cross-continental documentation of good practices related to disaster risk reduction should also be prioritized.

At the same time that RCEs take up community level work, RCEs also committed to taking a proactive role in mobilizing political will and support for community-related disaster risk reduction initiatives

Capacity-building will also be a key focus moving forward. This will include preparing RCEs to take action on vulnerability-reduction initiatives, such as preparing local volunteers with appropriate training and supporting response systems.



<sup>6</sup> UNISDR website, November 2012.  
<http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/disaster-statistics>

## Strategic and Operational Sessions

Participants at the 7th Global RCE Conference in Tongyeong also took part in a series of discussions on strategic and operational matters.

Strategic discussions focused on Capacity Development and ESD, Appraisal of RCEs, Governance and Coordination, Research and Development, and Engaging with Policymakers. During these discussions, RCEs committed themselves to increased and better-coordinated sharing of information and tools, such as capacity development resources and materials, and assessments related to the impact of ESD practices. In addition, RCEs expressed their commitment to conducting comparative research on RCE governance, on what makes productive RCE partnerships, on appropriate methods of sustainable technology, and on the evolution of the RCE concept.

Operational discussions focused on Fundraising and Marketing, Communications and Outreach, and Engagement with International Sustainability Processes. The discussions led to concrete commitments to developing fundraising partnerships between RCEs in the North and South, developing a cooperative framework for raising funds, redesigning a more accessible online communications portal for RCEs, and making use of international and UN communication experts from other UN agencies in order to better engage with international sustainability processes.



## RCE Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development

Adopted in Tongyeong, Republic of Korea, 24 September 2012

THE GLOBAL NETWORK OF REGIONAL CENTRES OF EXPERTISE ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RCEs), ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE UBUNTU ALLIANCE, HAVING MET IN TONGYEONG, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, AND REAFFIRMING ALL PREVIOUS DECLARATIONS RELATED TO EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD), HEREBY DECLARE THEIR **COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIC ACTIONS THAT BUILD A GLOBAL LEARNING SPACE ON ESD.**

AS THE WORLD LOOKS TO 2014 AND BEYOND, RCEs RECOGNIZE THEIR **DISTINCTIVE ABILITY TO RESPOND TO OUR GLOBAL SYSTEMS IN CRISIS** AND THEIR MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT ON THESE WELL BEYOND THE END OF THE DECADE ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

RCEs ARE A **TOOL FOR TRANSFORMATION TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY**, COMBINING EDUCATION AND ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. RCEs REAFFIRM THEIR STRONG COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING THEIR SYSTEMS OF GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY OF THEIR ACTIONS. THEY ARE COMMITTED TO EXPANDING THEIR COLLABORATION WITH AS WIDE A NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS AS POSSIBLE, AND FURTHER EXPANDING THE GLOBAL NETWORK IN FIVE YEARS, THEREBY INCREASING THEIR GLOBAL IMPACT.

RCEs ARE DEDICATED TO BUILDING THEIR CAPACITIES TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT COLLABORATIVE ESD PROJECTS CRITICAL FOR ESTABLISHING A GLOBAL LEARNING SPACE. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WILL BE VIEWED AS A TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING PROCESS, GENERATED FROM WITHIN THE RCE NETWORK.

**RCEs WILL PUT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES INTO A SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXT**, PROVIDE A CONSTRUCTIVE CRITIQUE AND HELP TO DEVELOP NEW POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS. AT THE SAME TIME, RCEs WILL CONTINUE TO DEDICATE THEMSELVES TO ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE MARKET OPPORTUNITIES AND OTHER SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS – ESPECIALLY FOR THE MOST MARGINALIZED – TO IMPROVE HUMAN WELL-BEING AND ECOSYSTEM HEALTH.

RCEs RECOGNIZE THEIR UNIQUE POSITION, AS GRASSROOTS, MULTI-STAKEHOLDER NETWORKS, WITH DISTINCTIVE CAPACITIES FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION THAT CAN REVITALIZE EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS THROUGH FLAGSHIP PROJECTS. AS **REGIONALLY BASED YET GLOBALLY CONNECTED NETWORKS**, RCEs FORM A GLOBAL LEARNING SPACE ON ESD, WORKING TO ENSURE THAT ALL INDIVIDUALS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN THE VALUES, BEHAVIOURS AND LIFESTYLES REQUIRED FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE AND FOR POSITIVE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION.

## Positioning RCEs

### Background:

1. In December 2002, based on a proposal that first came to light in Johannesburg at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution 57/254 to put in place a United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), spanning from 2005 to 2014. The overall goal of the DESD is to integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning. The basic vision of the DESD is to realize a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation. In 2003, as preparations for the DESD unfolded, the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) launched a programme on education for sustainable development (ESD) and developed the initial concept for the RCEs.

### RCE Mission and Goals:

2. The RCE network is a multistakeholder network that translates the global vision of the DESD into local realities. Underlying the concept of the RCEs are the four thrusts of ESD: improving access and retention in quality basic education for children and young people; reorienting existing education programmes to address sustainability; increasing public understanding and awareness of sustainability; and providing training to all sectors of society.
3. RCEs are committed to building a global learning space on sustainable development issues while helping people in local communities and regions learn the values, behaviours and practices needed to create a sustainable future. By acting as the premium 'global learning space' on sustainable development, the RCE network will measurably contribute to building a sustainable future at local, regional and international levels.
4. An RCE is characterized by a well-defined system of governance and management, a contribution to the transformation of the current education and training systems, an emphasis on enhancing collaborative partnerships and an inclusion of a research component in its ESD activities.

5. RCEs aspire to achieve the goals of the DESD by building an innovative platform for multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary information-sharing, dialogue and collaboration at local and global levels. A diverse group of stakeholders participate in the work of each RCE. Collaborative undertakings within and across RCEs include transformative education, action research and policy work to address the challenges of sustainable development (SD).
6. In 2011, citing the ongoing crisis of unsustainable development, the community reaffirmed its commitment to helping transition towards a sustainable and resilient society by inspiring innovation and positive change through transformative learning. At the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, the role of education was highlighted once more as a tool to prepare people for the age of climate change and as a way of continuing to grow resilient and just society.

### The RCE Role in Sustainability-Change Processes:

7. RCEs create communities of learning on sustainable development issues, helping people in local communities and regions learn the values, behaviours, knowledge and practices needed to create a sustainable future. These communities act as agents of change, implementing national, regional and global sustainable development processes, and offering critical input, policy recommendations and action plans on ESD and SD.



Learning sustainable agricultural techniques

8. The innovative, situated learning taking place in local communities through RCE support is a key element in building sustainable development. Those efforts, combined with the cross-regional collaboration of the RCE community make the RCE network a key resource within global sustainability-related processes. Engagement in global processes by RCEs helps create and identify synergies necessary to address the challenges of SD, and provides all stakeholders with a critical opportunity to reflect on global policy and development practices.
9. RCEs deliver a diversity of innovations for sustainability through co-engaged learning. The RCE community has a unique capability to communicate and upscale these innovations. Innovative actions positively impact the local community while the efforts of the global RCE network brings these actions to the forefront of the international stage, allowing them to be replicated and increasing their impact.
10. The RCE network is actively involved in helping develop policies and practices related to ESD and sustainability innovations. RCEs are hubs of enhanced knowledge networks and, as such, they are able to take collective action that is often beyond the constraints of more bureaucratic organizations. Enhancing cross-boundary social learning and forging transnational policy research networks are key efforts of the global RCE movement. In this way, RCEs are at the forefront of dealing with complexities and uncertainties of sustainability issues.
11. RCE efforts encourage innovation and new approaches to sustainable development. They translate existing knowledge into concrete actions and empower individuals to make sustainable choices for themselves and their communities. By transdisciplinary research where higher education collaborates with society, RCEs also translate citizen and intangible knowledge into science for sustainable development. The success each RCE achieves on the local level is brought to scale through the global RCE Network of more than 100 RCEs worldwide. Local knowledge, expertise and best practices are shared globally through the network and are able to be adapted and applied

successfully in other regions. RCEs also play a central role in the transfer of global technologies, knowledge and experiences at the local level, through their programmes, activities and international partners.

**RCE Commitment to ESD:**

12. RCEs declare their commitment to playing a leading role in the implementation of the DESD and spearheading the ESD movement beyond the end of the Decade in 2014. RCEs will work in a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect to achieve concrete actions and outcomes in line with the broader efforts of the international community. Through their efforts they will enable learners to fulfil their individual potential and will lead whole communities towards positive social transformation. RCEs will foster the fundamental pillars of learning to provide quality education and foster sustainable development worldwide.
13. RCEs stress the role of local and national governments in providing effective leadership and resources for promoting ESD within local communities. As common challenges override political differences and transforming education requires an unyielding effort, the commitment of governments should be sustainable. RCEs will encourage local education institutions to lead changes in formal and informal



education to meet global challenges, particularly through teacher training and curriculum transformation. RCEs also recognize the role of youth as custodians of the future. Youth should be given the chance to be educated on current and future challenges, and allowed the opportunity to actively participate in the global RCE movement.

**Way Forward:**

14. To affirm their commitment to ESD, RCEs will implement the strategic and thematic actions outlined below, as well as other relevant actions that may arise over time, with a view to building a global learning space on sustainable development issues. RCEs will accelerate the exchange and sharing of resources, experiences and good practices in ESD using the communication portal and other fora. Furthermore, RCEs will undertake necessary efforts to ensure that ESD is an integral part of the post-DESD agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).



**Strategic Actions**

**RCEs and the Global Learning Space**

15. RCEs are committed to actions aligned with the DESD vision, and in synergies with other international learning programmes, to contribute to building a global learning space on sustainable development issues, helping people in local communities and regions learn the values, behaviours and practices needed to create a sustainable future. At the local and regional levels, RCEs will serve as platforms for discussion and carrying out activities around learning for sustainable development. The activities

of each RCE will quantifiably improve the ability of its local community to overcome the sustainable development challenges they face. Local RCE efforts will also support in overcoming regional development challenges. Globally, the RCE network will take these individual and successful practices to scale, enabling diverse ideas and unique experiences to grow into more systematic approaches to sustainable development.

**RCEs and Capacity Development**

16. RCEs are committed to building their capacities to plan and implement collaborative ESD projects critical for the global learning space and to confirm the importance of multistakeholder learning in addressing sustainability issues. RCEs therefore will develop programmes that maximize learning at individual, organizational, multistakeholder and regional levels. RCEs will also assess their existing capacities for facilitating and implementing ESD projects.
17. Capacity development will be viewed as a transformative learning process generated from within the RCE network. The process will involve more than fostering knowledge, competencies and skills on sustainable development amongst RCE actors and stakeholders; it will be responsive to the broader social, economic and environmental context of the RCE network.
18. Within the global RCE community, RCEs will commit to using various approaches to develop capacities for ESD. Amongst them are to involve RCEs in the design and implementation of thematic capacity development programmes that will help address prevailing local sustainable development challenges. RCEs will design capacity development modules to address issues related to governance and management of RCEs, and will exchange experiences, ideas and best sustainability practices with other RCEs. An operational RCE communication portal will enhance widespread sharing of ESD resources.

**RCEs and Research and Development**

19. RCEs believe that ESD knowledge is locally relevant and meaningful to communities, and research that drives innovation emerges out of local problems in

communities. RCEs will undertake multi-disciplinary and transdisciplinary research to make effective transformation for sustainable development.

20. RCEs will undertake research for capacity-building in problem-solving, bridging boundaries and interfacing, facilitating solutions and leadership, which are transdisciplinary and holistic in nature. RCEs will commit to enhancing research capacity through making use of existing collaborative partnerships to discuss methodologies and capacity-building of researchers, raising awareness of transdisciplinarity among researchers, developing case studies of effective research approaches, and conducting appropriate research training.
21. RCEs are committed to mobilizing resources and moving in strategic research directions by way of strategically linking universities in research processes and feedback of research results to communities.

### Thematic Actions

#### RCEs and Climate Change

22. RCEs are committed to implementing climate-related actions at the regional/sub-national level, engaging multiple stakeholders in transformative learning and understanding of critical local climate change issues. Being part of the global network, the RCEs will exchange experiences and knowledge with other regions while contributing to the global knowledge base on climate-related issues.
23. In recognition of climate change challenges, RCEs will develop respective comprehensive programmes aimed at empowering the regions where RCEs operate to facilitate learning systems that would address challenges of climate change. RCEs will become important partners for implementing global policies addressing climate change, and facilitate learning necessary for acquiring critical competencies, and to contribute to the locally appropriate translation of the global mitigation and adaptation policies.
24. RCEs will chart future directions through community work with a clear understanding of the present often-disastrous impact of climate change on the lives of the communities. Generally, link of climate change and disaster prevention and management area is critical,

and RCEs will demonstrate ways of doing so. Actions of the RCE network will keep in mind an important concern on how to move from small scale one-off projects to programmes, and in the course of which RCEs could systematically support emergence of innovative experimental practices for low carbon society.

#### RCEs and Health

25. RCEs will address sustainability issues that relate to community health education, healthy environments including water and sanitation, alternative medicine, preventive health and sustainable lifestyles, and community-based health education. RCEs are committed to a shared vision – to reflect and engage on ‘how people learn about health and what brings about social change’ – and a shared strategy, which includes focusing on unique strengths of the RCEs in health education and facilitating collaboration with regional and international organizations dealing with health education and capacity development of various stakeholders.
26. RCEs will undertake community-based learning through root cause analysis, and transformative perspectives on health intervention and education will be used as tools. RCEs will create a platform to interact more effectively on community health education, advancing research through multistakeholder and multidisciplinary approaches.



#### RCEs and Higher Education

27. RCEs will lead and stimulate transformations, innovation, and incorporation of sustainable practices in HEI operation, education, research, governance, and outreach activities. RCEs will promote teaching for sustainable development through integration of sustainability in the curriculum of all disciplines, and training of teachers, professionals and practitioners.
28. RCEs will foster research on sustainable development that contributes to knowledge generation regarding sustainable solutions and new technologies, and will attempt to influence higher education policies, as well as to disseminate, transfer and promote knowledge applications to improve livelihood, foster sustainable lifestyles and community development, and decrease poverty levels. RCEs will engage with stakeholders in educational activities to develop capacity and skills for sustainable development, and will provide a space for dialogue with other stakeholders, networks and ‘knowledge communities’ that can open opportunities for knowledge generation.

#### RCEs, Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity

29. RCEs are committed to contributing to the preservation of natural heritage by protecting species, ecosystems, and genetic diversity through mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and management of natural resources, and advocacy in organisational plans and programmes. RCEs will engage with multistakeholders with the aim of deepening involvement in biodiversity conservation through traditional and local knowledge education, engage in transformative education and training of trainers on biodiversity conservation for sustainable development that can change behavior of all stakeholders, and engage the mass media to create awareness on various issues relating to biodiversity conservation.
30. RCEs will encourage customary use of biological resources in line with principles of sustainable use and conservation, need to ensure equitable sharing of benefits among traditional knowledge (TK) holders while accessing biological resources and related knowledge. RCEs will call for reinforcing the community’s confidence in relevant practices, while also addressing issues of resource rights,

and integration of biodiversity and TK education at various forms and levels of education. They will utilize appropriate methodologies for bridging knowledge systems, promoting intergenerational transfer, assessing and promoting TK for contemporary needs such as health, nutrition, agriculture, livelihood, sustainable resource management and cultural diversity and continuity, as well as building institutional values and methods to provide choices in education.

#### RCEs, Youth and School

31. RCEs will establish and enhance youth and school capacities and resilience in adapting, solving, and tackling problems and challenges, and empowering the community by empowering the youth to solve problems and improve resilience. They are also committed to building the capacity and character of school students to enhance knowledge, and engage them for local initiatives to protect the environment for sustainability. RCEs will undertake research and adapt appropriate technology in response to problems, challenges and opportunities faced by the community, and engage in training of trainers by and for the youth or young adult in the community on appropriate technology and skills. RCEs will commit to establish social networks for sharing knowledge and exchanging ideas, and developing collaborations with stakeholders (ministries, local governments, private sector, media, civil society, schools, universities, and others).



**RCEs, Sustainable Consumption, Production and Sustainable Livelihoods**

- 32. The RCE network will contribute to putting green economy issues into scientific social context in collaboration with knowledge institutions. The approach to green economy is to decouple economic growth with environmental impact, while tackling social considerations.
- 33. Changing consumption and production patterns as an overarching strategy for green economy requires behavioural societal transformation through education to effectuate a change in public consumption behaviour, increase resource-use efficiency by the production and service sectors, and a change in the way governments administer and manage national resources. RCEs will therefore advocate public awareness on product and service selection, creating a mechanism to support green product and service marketing, promoting alternative markets and market forms, and integrating sustainable consumption concept into formal and informal education at all levels.
- 34. RCEs will promote effective use of resource-base in production and service sectors, which include applying the ecological footprint concept, promoting local innovations and entrepreneurship, development and application of clean and green technologies, promoting green design, green and clean production, seeking to promote a cradle to cradle product design, promoting green skills and addressing ethical traceability issues. RCEs will demonstrate good practice cases that can influence policies to develop a strategy to take care of and protect the resource base.

**Assessment**

- 35. RCEs are committed to evaluation of their performance in terms of delivery of ESD goals and objectives. This requires undertaking evaluation of ESD activities as learning processes of social change. The evaluation can be in the form of self-assessment through the RCE Networking Portal and peer reviews through an RCE evaluation and assessment working group. RCEs will strive to develop milestones for every collaborative project undertaken as a form of self-assessment. RCEs will also work to assess existing and necessary capability for ESD and SD actions.
- 36. RCEs will undertake necessary efforts to encourage the participation of actors in development and assessment. This can be achieved through development of various assessment award schemes that take into account the regional and continental contexts of RCEs. These assessment schemes will highlight basic quality criteria including the impact of collaborative projects, partnerships amongst stakeholders, research, and sustainability innovations. It is important, however, that general assessment criteria are collectively set to minimise counterproductive outcomes of evaluation. The Global RCE Service Centre will promote and facilitate the regular use of the RCE communication portal for sharing outcomes of evaluation processes, and make an informative database on the same.





On behalf of the citizens of Tongyeong, I wish to thank all participants and staff for allowing the Tongyeong conference to be full of heart-warming memories. It was indeed a privilege to host the conference, and I wish to convey my gratitude to UNU-IAS for sharing the outcomes through this well-captured report.

The conference produced the 'Tongyeong Declaration' which recognized the vision and goal of RCEs. Backed by the Policymakers' Roundtable, the Declaration will hopefully become a small but significant milestone in promoting the RCE movement beyond the UN Decade.

Together with the honour of being recognized with the UNEP Livable Communities Award 2011, the experience of interacting with RCE colleagues renewed Tongyeong's commitment to become a sustainable city. As one of the first RCEs to be acknowledged, Tongyeong will open the Asia-Pacific RCE Centre with the hope that it will serve as a training hub on ESD in the region by 2014.

With sincere wishes for closer partnership in the future and with my thanks,

**Dong Jin Kim**  
Mayor  
Tongyeong Municipal Government



It is with great joy and appreciation that we received feedback from grateful, happy, and inspired delegates from all over the world following 7th Global RCE Conference in September 2012.

The global RCE network is a group of flexible and creative organizations, in different forms, united under one vision: learning for a sustainable future. The 7th Global RCE Conference was held under the theme of "Co-existence", in search of harmony among cultures, humans and the natural world for our sustainable future.

The Tongyeong conference introduced three new programmes: The Policymakers' Roundtable, Mission T and the RCE Good Practices Recognition Award.

At the Policymakers' Roundtable, participants recognized the importance of political leadership in promoting ESD and sharing from good cases. As RCEs are closely working in partnership with policymakers, the roundtable provided a forum for leaders to deepen their engagement with the global RCE movement. The roundtable surely followed the 500-year-old tradition of the venue.

The special interactive field trip programme, Mission T, linked participants with 20 different organizations and schools of RCE Tongyeong. It was an ambitious project for the organizers in our pursuit of interactive milieu for delegates and local participants alike.

The idea for the establishment of the RCE Good Practices Recognition Award was first proposed in 2011 and bore fruit in Tongyeong. The Award, given to 32 RCEs at the closing ceremony celebrated diverse education initiatives, which have flourished among global RCEs.

As Dr. Hans van Ginkel emphasized at the conference, the UN Decade on ESD is only a starting point for our endeavours. Sustainable development should continue to be implemented by people, young and old, in every corner of the world.

In 2005, at the start of the UN Decade and when Tongyeong was designated as the 8th RCE in the world, the vision of creating a learning city for sustainable development seemed far off and difficult to reach. Today, after seven years, our dream is becoming a reality. With ESD curricula developed for all school levels and an ever-growing informal education network, Tongyeong is now looking forward to inviting friends of the global RCE community to the 2014 opening of the Asia-Pacific RCE Education Centre and RCE Eco-Park, located on the beautiful and historic seashore.

It was our great honour and privilege to be able to host the conference, and I wish to thank Mayor Kim Dong Jin of Tongyeong city, the conference secretariat, staff of UNU-IAS, 70 task force team staff, 140 volunteers, and 140,000 citizens who have worked one-and whole-heartedly to welcome every single RCE delegate warmly.

With promises to continue to work towards a sustainable world at the 2013 Nairobi conference and all future conferences and with much appreciation,

**Dr. Eun Kyung Park**  
Chairperson, Board of Directors,  
Tongyeong Education Foundation for Sustainable  
Development (RCE Tongyeong)

