Introduction

Hello. Today we're going to tackle an essential issue for sustainable development. It's the issue of education and training.

It’s essential to bear in mind that whatever policies are implemented, they can only induce changes in mentality or in practices in relation to sustainable development with the support of educative and training activities for all the concerned players.

1. What the sustainable development?

A development which responds to current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to react to theirs is the definition of the 1987 World Commission on the Environment and Development report, the Brundtland report, named after the Norwegian Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland. It’s this commission's report which, for the first time, gives a definition of sustainable development and instils in the universal conscience a new vision of development.

A vision of development which encompasses peoples, animal and plant species, ecosystems, natural resources, water, air, energy and integrates concerns such as the fight against poverty, peace, gender equality, human rights, education for all, health human safety, intercultural dialogues. The concept of sustainable development aims to provide long term solutions for the excesses and dysfunction of economic production systems which are leading to the progressive destruction of the planet's resources, pollution, global warming, degradation of biodiversity, overexploitation, and the impoverishment of land and natural resources, desertification, deforestation, etc.

What are the consequences? On an economic level, a notable reduction of available resources and an increase of poverty, particularly in areas which are already poor. On a social plan, the growth of inequalities and conflicts resulting from the progressive scarcity of certain resources which are necessary for life, like water. Since Rio, in 1992, there have been several solutions: local, national, regional and global, political negotiations on a global scale like COP 21, national politics that take into account issues linked to sustainable development such as environmental issues, local solutions, popular community initiatives.

2. What UNESCO is currently doing ?

UNESCO has a multidisciplinary mandate which covers all of sustainable development's fields of action: education, one of the fundamental pillars of development, science, technology and innovation, culture (which is considered to be a major axis in sustainable development policies), communication, information which constitutes a vector by which messages of awareness,
conscientisation and empowerment surrounding the issues of sustainable development are conveyed.

At the United Nations Conference on sustainable development at Rio+20 in 2012, states agreed to promote education and to more actively integrate the issue of sustainable development into their education programs. UNESCO, whose mandate is to promote education, thus created a global action plan for education about sustainable development in 2013 which had the aim of concretely contributing to the post 2015 agenda.

3. What is the ESD?

ESD, from which we learn the ways to make decisions with full knowledge of the facts and to act in a responsible way for present and future generations, is an integral part of high quality education. It's a holistic education which is about contents, results, learning, pedagogy, and the educative environment. Education and sustainable development call for a change of the societal model. It completes political agreements, financial incentives, technological solutions aiming to respond to the challenges of sustainable development.

We can see that Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents to climate change. This continent must expect to undergo more frequent droughts, a continuation of desertification and more violent storms. We can also see a rise in sea level in the low altitude coastal areas where several poorer populations generally live. We therefore consider these zones to be the most exposed to the effects of climate change.

4. Are there normative and common executives at the world wide level which take into account the ESD?

EDD has already been integrated into several frameworks and conventions on a global scale: the United Nations Framework Convention on climate change and its work programs, article 6, the convention on biological diversity and its work programs, article 13, the Hyogo action framework for 2005-2015, the ten-year framework for scheduling in relation to the forms of consumption and sustainable production for 2012-2021.

5. What is the global action plan adopted by the UNESCO in 2013?

The global action plan adopted by UNESCO from 2013 applies a double approach. First, integrating sustainable development in education, second, integrating education in sustainable development. The plan also follows two objectives. First, reorientating education and learning so that everyone has the chance to gain the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to have the means to contribute to sustainable development. Second, increase the place of education and learning in all action plans, programs, and activities which aim to promote sustainable development.
6. What are the priority areas for action of the ESD?

Transform the learning and training environments, reinforce the skills of educators and trainers, mobilise young people and give them autonomy, accelerate the search for sustainable solutions on a local level.

Conclusion

Africa is the least literate continent in the world. It has the highest number of children dropping out of school, the highest number of illiterate women, the highest number of people living in situations of extreme poverty. Education about sustainable development therefore helps to respond to the essential needs of African peoples by strengthening the synergies between school and community, and by readjusting education to local contexts.