

Introductory remarks by Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO, at the Opening Session of the Third Symposium on “Sustainability Science: Towards Guidelines on Research and Education”

UNESCO Headquarters - Room XIII (Bonvin Building)

Date: 31 May 2017

Time: Opening Session starts at 10.00 a.m.

Venue: Room XIII (Bonvin Building). UNESCO Headquarters

- Your Excellencies, dear friends, I would like to extend – on behalf of UNESCO - a cordial welcome to all the participants in this Third Symposium.
- Your presence here today is very important to UNESCO because this project on Sustainability Science advocates a paradigm shift in terms of the production and dissemination of knowledge that contemporary development requires.
- Two successful events organized in 2016 – the Inception Symposium, in April, and the Regional/Thematic Symposium, in December - offered the opportunity to discuss conceptual issues and to review relevant UNESCO projects. Following up those results, the Drafting Group established by the project Steering Committee focused on developing, in the first months of 2017, the “Guidelines on Sustainability Science in Research and Education” that will be examined in this Third Symposium.
- These Guidelines represents a concrete contribution of the project to the capabilities of Member States to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- As stated in the draft guidelines that you will discuss, Sustainability Science is still a rather new approach for several Member States and thus it may be seen as a competitor for scarce resources. This project intends to articulate a coherent approach that responds to such misconceptions. Several global studies, including the **UNESCO Science Report**, have concluded that there are compelling arguments for Member States to increase support and funding to scientific research and education, across the board of disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, notably on issues of sustainability.

- This is an exciting time for our inter-sectoral project “Broadening the Application of Sustainability Science”, as we are currently finishing the initial phase that we started in 2015. We hope that the results of the project will enrich the design of UNESCO’s action and response to contemporary challenges of sustainability that will be incorporated in UNESCO’s Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5).

- Our gratitude goes to the Government of Japan for its generous support to this project, especially the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Japan/MEXT), the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO (JNCU), the Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO, and the United Nations University (UNU). Our deep appreciation goes to Professor Kazuhiko Takeuchi for leading this initiative.

- I would also like to thank the German National Commission for UNESCO and the National Research Centre (NRC) representing the Government of Egypt, for their firm commitment to advancing this project, particularly its North-South and South-South collaboration components.

- Special thanks also go to the members of the Steering Committee of the project and to the main global networks that have supported the project: the International Council for Science (ICSU); the International Social Science Council (ISSC); and the International Council of Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH).
- I also want to thank the distinguished scholars who have participated in diverse activities of the project, and the members of the Drafting Group who have worked very hard to complete the Guidelines. This is very much a collaborative UNESCO effort – and I wish to recognize the support and leadership of the ADG Natural Sciences Sector and to all colleagues from various sectors of the Organization who participated in the organization of the event.
- I look forward to your deliberations and I wish you every success with this exciting event.
- Our welcome, again, to all participants.