



## Young ESD Voices Opening Ceremony Speech

*Claudia Matta (Lebanon)*

*Leonardo Velásquez (Honduras)*

***Mr. Director-General, Minister Schavan, Madam Machel, Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, colleagues...***

I invite you to imagine we live in a world where poverty and over consumption are minimal, a time where tolerance and respect for diversity are the norm, a time when clean technology is the primary source of energy, and a time when individuals from all walks of life are empowered to make informed appropriate decisions for today and for tomorrow.

One month ago we were 25 individuals from 25 different countries, yesterday we became a group of 25 passionate people working as a team, today we are around 1200 people sitting in this room exploring ESD, but

WHY DO WE CARE??

**We care;** because we want to make decisions about our present and our future.

**We care;** because we understand that the disparities of our world; ranging from extreme poverty to extreme wealth, are not favorable for peace

**We care;** because we recognize today's challenges are interconnected; between past and present; locally and globally; as such, they cannot be addressed by an individual or a single sector.

ESD helps us address the complexity of today's challenges. We share a vision of education as being the most powerful tool for change.

During our workshop yesterday, we identified **three** key elements for ESD, these are:

1. ESD should consist of dialogue and action that spans across sectors and disciplines. This enables the use and creation of a common language, encouraging and fostering partnerships and participation
2. ESD needs to address a common destination while celebrating the diversity of values in individuals and groups
3. ESD needs to link to peoples personal lives in order to achieve commitment.

To facilitate this, everybody needs to be involved with upward emphasis on the role of the media and the private sector.

Since the ESD Decade began in 2005, much work has been carried out. The world has learnt that ESD can be interpreted in different ways. ESD coordinating bodies have been established at different levels. Action Plans and Strategies now exist where they didn't before; stakeholders have been engaged such as government ministries, educators, UN Agencies, and NGOs to name a few networks have been established to share "good" practices.



All of us gathered here today have the motivation and dedication to move the second half of the decade ahead. We have identified five key actions going forward for everyone here today.

**Action 1** We need to increase our focus on monitoring and evaluation so we can plan our efforts better in the future.

**Action 2** We need to strengthen existing ESD structures and establish new ones where they do not exist.

**Action 3** We need to further mainstream ESD into policy to provide systematic support for teaching and learning.

**Action 4** We must research, document and share, not only “good” practices, but also “good” processes for supporting ESD.

**Action 5** Half of the world is under 20 years old, and 90% of all these young people live in developing countries. This is a huge population that needs to be engaged in decision-making for the future.

While we stand before you, I remind you that we are the voice of 25 participants, can we please invite these 25 Voices to stand up. We invite you to engage with us during the conference, ask about our initiatives and we are ready to engage with you.

Thank You Very Much.

Anwar Al-Khatib (Jordan), Sally Asker (Australia), Joel Bacha (Thailand), Mabel Baton (Philippines), Constant Sotima Berate (Benin), Dina Beshara (Egypt), Magali Decloedt (Belgium), Daniel Fonseca de Andrade (Brazil), Nadia Lausset (Switzerland), Keamogetse Magogwe (Botswana), Melhem Mansour (Syria), Lina Matta Guido (Costa Rica), Claudia Mata (Lebanon), Yolanda Durant Mcklmon (Jamaica), Hayden Montgomerie (New Zealand), Ibrahim Mohammed Mothana (Yemen), Shanka Musafir (India), Zizile Nomafa Khumalo (South Africa), Pernilla Kristina Ottosson (Sweden), Evgeniia Postnova (Kyrgyzstan), Adriana Valenzuela (Colombia), Leonardo Velásquez (Honduras), Francesco Volpini (Italy), Clayton Zazu (Zimbabwe).