

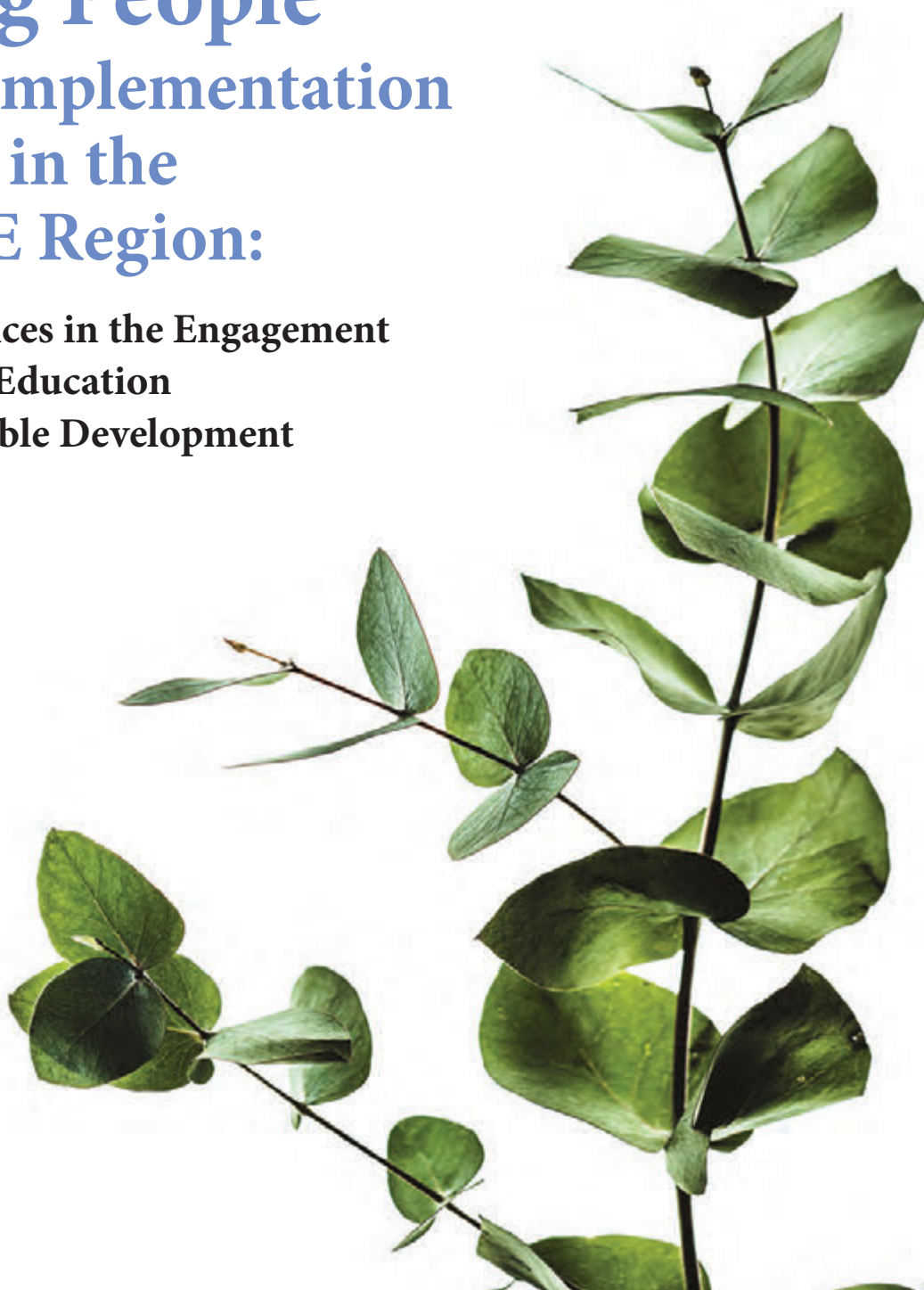
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

# Engaging Young People in the Implementation of ESD in the UNECE Region:

**Good Practices in the Engagement  
of Youth in Education  
for Sustainable Development**



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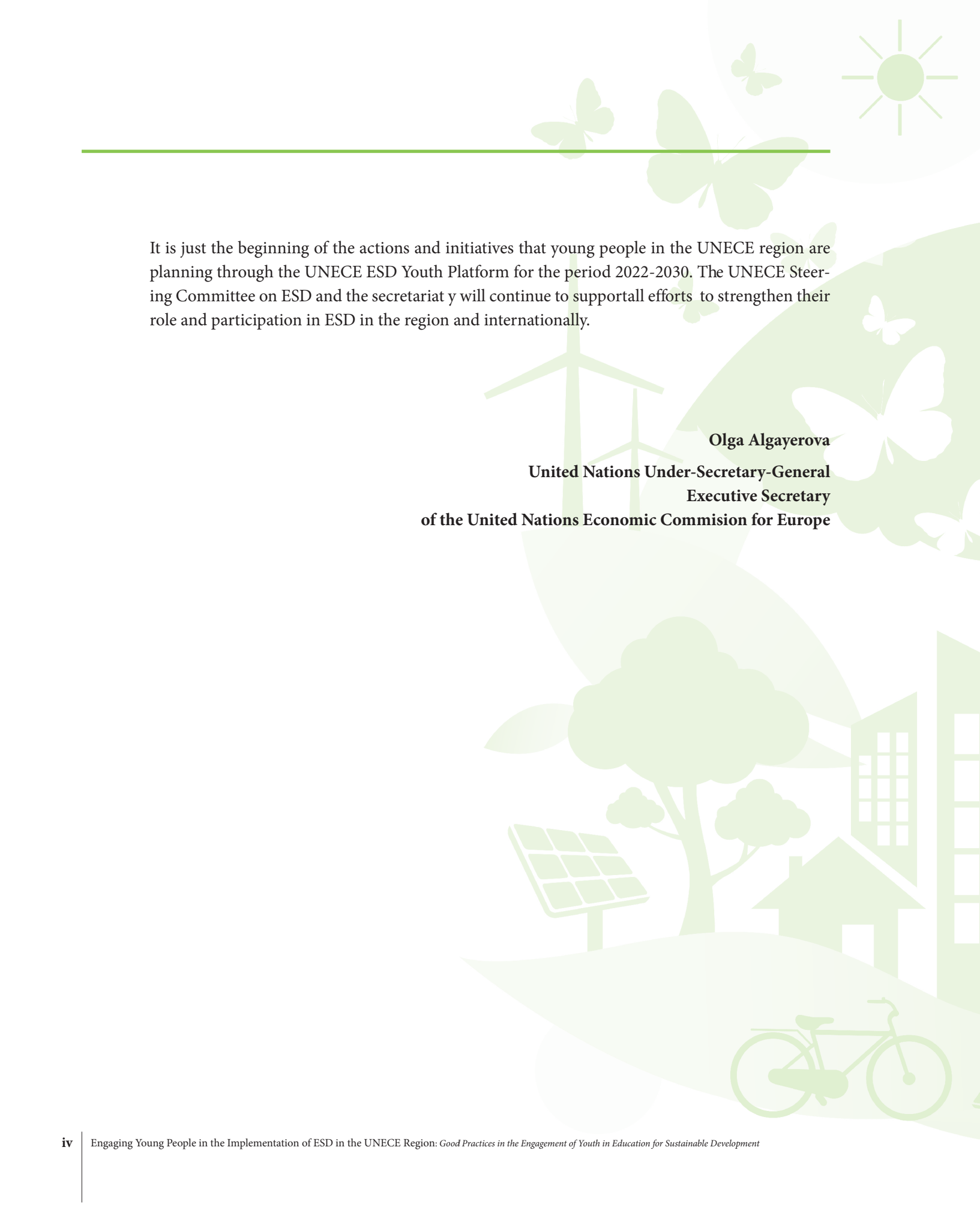
## Foreword

Believing in the aspiration and vision of young people is important. Giving space to young people and making them participants and equal players in all stages of the processes and mechanisms concerning their future is more than important, it is their legitimate request that we have to respond to. Education itself should provide young people with the knowledge, skills, means, and mechanisms that will allow them to innovate, create, and prosper to become agents of change for a more sustainable world.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), as a dynamic and liberating form of learning, but above all, as a comprehensive framework for thinking and viewing life, suggests that young people are not only the focus of our policies and decisions, but active co-designers and pioneers in the implementation of policies and actions related to the protection and preservation of the planet and to our survival. The UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD SC), recognizing that youth participation is critical in the global effort to achieve sustainability goals, recommended to establish the UNECE ESD Youth Platform. Its aim is to create a dynamic network of communication and interaction of young people from countries of the UNECE region, allowing them to participate in political processes in the field of ESD and directly involving them in the work of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD. Through this platform, young people can put forward initiatives and actions for their active involvement and participation in ESD issues both in the national context of their countries and at the regional level, while developing cooperation with other international and regional organizations and networks.

The present publication introduces good practice programs and initiatives aimed at supporting and empowering youth participation in ESD and in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD in member countries. It deserves to be highlighted that the publication was developed and implemented by the UNECE ESD Youth Platform.. The authors of the texts are young people, active researchers and professionals working for and with young people to promote ESD in their country.

On I would like to thank and congratulate all those who have contributed to this excellent publication in our hands today.




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It is just the beginning of the actions and initiatives that young people in the UNECE region are planning through the UNECE ESD Youth Platform for the period 2022-2030. The UNECE Steering Committee on ESD and the secretariat will continue to support all efforts to strengthen their role and participation in ESD in the region and internationally.

**Olga Algayerova**  
**United Nations Under-Secretary-General**  
**Executive Secretary**  
**of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**







As we inch closer to 2030, the Earth is faced with increasing challenges in meeting the ambitious United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These goals are designed to be a ‘blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all’<sup>1</sup> and to prevent us reaching an irreversible tipping point for the planet. This publication was envisioned not only as a call to action, but also as evidence that change is possible. It focuses on best practices to build a better, sustainable future with realistic and attainable approaches.

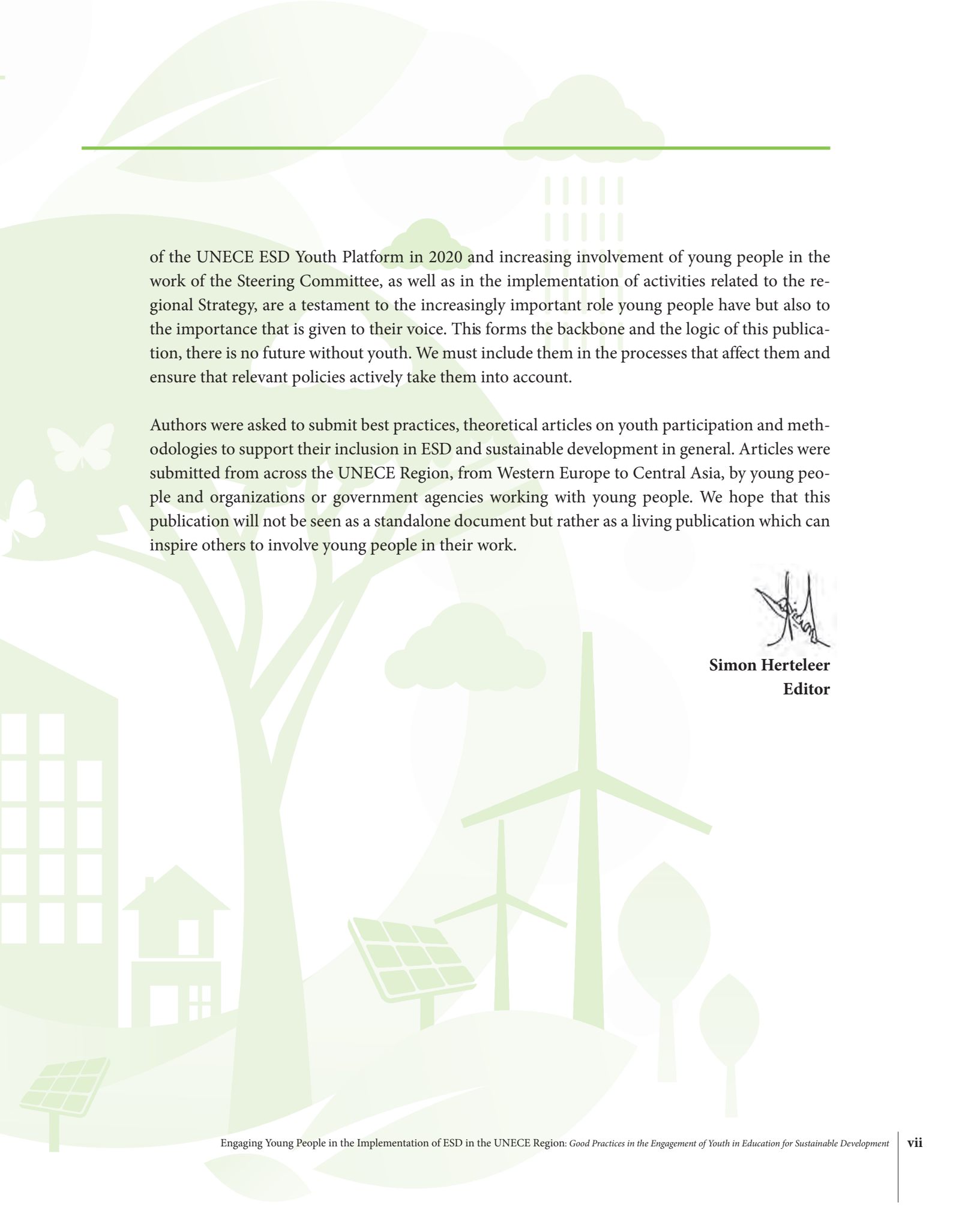
Taking this context into account, it is not surprising that the focus of this publication is on youth. Young people are the people whose actions are our best hope for achieving sustainable development assuming they can play their full part as key agents for social change, economic growth and technological innovation. Participation in decision-making is a key priority area of the UN agenda on youth. In 1995, on the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, the United Nations strengthened its commitment to young people by adopting the World Program of Action for Youth, an international strategy to more effectively address their problems and increase opportunities for participation in society. The international community has reaffirmed its commitment to youth participation through UN General Assembly resolution 58/133, which reiterates the “importance of the full and effective participation of youth and youth organizations at the local, national, regional and international levels in promoting and implementing the World Program of Action and in evaluating the progress achieved and the obstacles encountered in its implementation”. Subsequent resolutions have also dealt with policies and programs involving youth as well as promoting youth participation in social and economic development<sup>2</sup>.

Within the Implementation Framework of the UNECE Strategy for ESD (education for sustainable development), youth has taken a more central role in recent years, a trend that the UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development wishes to promote. The creation

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<sup>1</sup> dpicampaigns. “Take Action for the Sustainable Development Goals.” United Nations Sustainable Development. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> (May 2022, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> [social.un.org/youthyear/docs/youth-participation.pdf](https://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/youth-participation.pdf)



of the UNECE ESD Youth Platform in 2020 and increasing involvement of young people in the work of the Steering Committee, as well as in the implementation of activities related to the regional Strategy, are a testament to the increasingly important role young people have but also to the importance that is given to their voice. This forms the backbone and the logic of this publication, there is no future without youth. We must include them in the processes that affect them and ensure that relevant policies actively take them into account.

Authors were asked to submit best practices, theoretical articles on youth participation and methodologies to support their inclusion in ESD and sustainable development in general. Articles were submitted from across the UNECE Region, from Western Europe to Central Asia, by young people and organizations or government agencies working with young people. We hope that this publication will not be seen as a standalone document but rather as a living publication which can inspire others to involve young people in their work.



**Simon Herteleer**  
Editor





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