



Highlights on Progress to Date



September 2006

This document highlights developments of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) which are only a small reflection of the extraordinary number of activities, events, networks and support for the DESD from countries, regions, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and stakeholders from all over the world. Every day, UNESCO Headquarters receives e-mails, phone calls, letters and visitors to share ideas and concrete initiatives, including artistic expressions, in support of the DESD. All these activities are creating immense energy and attention for the DESD.

GOALS OF THE UN DECADE ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The overall goal of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) is to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects of learning to encourage changes in behavior that allow for a more sustainable and just society for all.

The basic vision of the DESD is 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. This translates into four objectives, to:

1. Facilitate networking, linkages, exchange and interaction among stakeholders in ESD;
2. Foster an increased quality of teaching and learning in education for sustainable development;
3. Help countries make progress towards and attain Millennium Development Goals through ESD efforts;
4. Provide countries with new opportunities to incorporate ESD into education reform efforts.

UNESCO'S LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION ROLE FOR THE DESD

UNESCO's role as lead of the DESD is fully in line with UNESCO's functions as laboratory of ideas, standard-setter, clearing house, capacity-builder and promoter of international cooperation. UNESCO will be proactive, and all of the parts of the Organization will work together in an intersectoral manner, to demonstrate the strong leadership and coordination role at international level that UNESCO can and will play to ensure efficiency and success to the Decade. The Organization will use its DESD coordination role to:

- catalyse new partnerships with the private sector, with youth, and with media groups;
- encourage monitoring and evaluation;
- encourage a research agenda and serve as a forum for relevant research on ESD;
- serve as forum for bringing together important stakeholders in the Decade such as: representatives of key multinationals, faith-based institutions, youth associations, indigenous people, etc.;
- share good ESD practices;
- link Member States that have put in place ESD curricula, policies, research, etc., with those Member States that are requesting help;
- convene flexible working groups on particular topics; and
- fulfill its strategic role with regard to ESD.

Key milestones

The Decade is a commitment that will be implemented by Member States according to their priorities and approaches. It also represents a common understanding, as outlined in the relevant GA resolutions, to work towards common goals and objectives. Thus, it is important that some common milestones be identified that can be addressed by all actors. These include:

- clearly identifiable plans and/or activities in place in Member States;
- identified focal points in Member States with reporting responsibilities;
- regional plans or strategies. These may also be present at subregional levels;
- indicators of progress and mechanisms for monitoring their achievement;
- identified sources for technical assistance and examples of good practice;
- information sharing on relevant research, development and innovation;
- modalities for fostering partnerships;
- provision of guidance in key areas;
- mid-Decade and end-of-Decade reports to the GA.

WITHIN UNESCO

UNESCO attaches great importance to an inter-sectoral "one UNESCO" approach to the DESD.

- To ensure coordination and inter-sectoral collaboration at the highest level, an "Inter-Sectoral Working Group on DESD" (IWG) has been established under the Chair of the Assistant Director General for Education. All members of the IWG are Directors representing the various Programme Sectors and Bureaux at Headquarters.
- A UNESCO Action Plan for DESD defining UNESCO's own contribution to the implementation of the Decade has been developed and is in the process of being adopted by the Inter-Sectoral Working Group. The Action Plan is a result of intensive inter-sectoral collaboration and extensive consultative process between all the UNESCO programme sectors, bureaux, regional, cluster and national offices and institutes. While the joint activities have already been ongoing, this Action Plan will be integrated into the next UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy (2008-2013, 34 C/4) and into the workplans for the 2007 – 2008 biennium (34 C/5).

- To supplement the Action Plan and reinforce visibility of the DESD and the importance of ESD, a *Framework for a DESD communication strategy* has just been finalized after extensive consultations within the Organizations, with UN agencies and selected partners.
- A UNESCO *Reference Group on the DESD* has been established. The first meeting of the Reference Group is scheduled for 19 – 20 October 2006 at UNESCO headquarters. This meeting will facilitate the work of UNESCO in setting strategic directions and mobilization of partners.
- A Monitoring & Evaluation Expert Group is being established to put in place a M&E Framework and a set of global M&E indicators. A first meeting of the M&E Expert Group will be organized during the first quarter of 2007.
- A UN Inter-Agency Committee (IAC) for the DESD was established to ensure harmonious international coordination of the DESD. The IAC had its first meeting in UNESCO Paris (mid-June 2006) and was attended by representatives of ILO, UNAIDS, UNEP, UN Habitat, UNICEF, UNU, World Bank and WFP. Other members of the IAC include FAO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNHCHR, WHO and WTO. The next IAC meeting is scheduled for May 2007 during the CSD and will be hosted by UNICEF.

At the regional level, an Asia Pacific regional inter-agency committee has been established and convened to implement the Asia Pacific regional ESD strategy.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM REGIONS & DESD REGIONAL STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTATION

EUROPE & NORTH AMERICA REGION

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Regional Strategy

UNESCO contributed and participated actively in the preparation of the UNECE Regional Strategy for Europe and North America Region, and will continue to cooperate with UNECE in the implementation of the UN DESD, in particular to mobilize governments and help them to promote education for sustainable development by integrating it into their educational strategies and action plans at appropriate levels. UNESCO is a member of the Expert Group on Indicators for Education for Sustainable Development set up by UNECE with a mandate to develop indicators to measure the effectiveness of the implementation of the Regional Strategy.

UNECE and UNESCO are currently collaborating on a common collection and dissemination of regional best practices on ESD.

Documents for more information

- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Regional Strategy: Europe and North America Region (www.unece.org/env/esd/welcome.htm)

ESD part of the conclusions of the European Union Education Council (May 2006)

The conclusions of the EU Education Council in May stressed the importance of including education in the revised EU sustainable development strategy. – as stated in the conclusions:

"Success in reversing unsustainable trends will to a large extent depend on high-quality education for sustainable development at all levels of education including education on issues such as the sustainable use of energies and transport systems, sustainable consumption and production patterns, health, media competence and responsible global citizenship.

...

In the context of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), Member States could further develop their national action plans, making in particular use of the "Education and training 2010" work programme, whose objectives are focused on quality and relevance, on access for all and on the openness of systems and institutions to society and the wider world. ... Special attention should be devoted to teacher training. They should also implement the UNECE Strategy for Education

for Sustainable Development adopted in Vilnius in 2005. Education for sustainable development should also be promoted at EU level."

At the beginning of 2006, the Austrian Presidency for the EU appointed the "Group of Friends of the Presidency" to review the EU strategy on sustainable development and ensure its coherence in including all sectors. Their consultation supported the Presidency in steering discussions in the different committees which were directly involved in the review of the strategy on sustainable development (eg. the Education Council).

From March 13 to 15 2006, the Austrian Presidency hosted a conference on education for sustainable development in Vienna: "*Education for Sustainable Development towards Responsible Global Citizenship*", thus linking to the focus of the Dutch Presidency "Education for Democratic Citizenship". This meeting addressed in detail and developed further the link between education and sustainability. An aim of the Austrian Presidency was to highlight the importance of Education for Sustainable Development and to agree to a strategic text on the role of education as a basis and a precondition for sustainable development in the revised EU strategy on Sustainable Development. This was achieved as a result of the Ministers' debate during the Education Council on May 19, 2006

International Symposium on "Progress and proposals regarding ESD"

France organized an international symposium on "*Progress and proposals regarding education for sustainable development*", in cooperation with UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the Francophone International Organization (OIF). The symposium was held June 14-16 at UNESCO Headquarters. (<http://www.decennie-france.fr/colloque/presentationEng.php>)

The conference provided a forum for an enhanced exchange of information and experience in the field of ESD, to communicate current progress in ESD, as well as for identifying good practices, in order to provide perspectives and guidance for possible future developments and networking in the framework of DESD implementation. Discussions focused on how to:

- ensure that policy, regulatory and operational frameworks support ESD;
- promote SD through formal, non formal and informal education;
- equip educators with the skills to include SD in their teaching;
- ensure that adequate tools and materials for ESD are accessible;
- promote research and development of ESD.
- strengthen cooperation on ESD at all levels.

International Workshop on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

An international workshop "*Education for Sustainable Development Worldwide – Commonalities and Differences*", organized by the German Commission for UNESCO, the State Government of North-Rhine Westphalia and other partners, will take place on 28-29 November 2006 in Bonn, Germany.

The main objective of this event is to reflect on how to make ESD heard in the political arena, nationally and internationally. For that, we need a clearly defined concept of ESD, and we should be able to specify where and which regional specifications are required. The workshop aims at developing a viable response to this challenge.

In the afternoon of 28 November and through the evening of 29 November, the German Decade Roundtable will come together for its annual meeting. Participants of the international workshop will be invited to take part in this meeting of around 100 German ESD initiatives and organizations.

ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Regional UN Interagency Steering Committee for the DESD

The Asia-Pacific Regional Interagency Steering Committee serves to coordinate the DESD activities in the Asia-Pacific Region. The current members of the Committee include ACCU, ADB, APCEIU, FAO, IUCN, SEAMEO, UNESCAP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNITAR, and UNU-IAS. The 5th Asia-Pacific Regional UN

Interagency Steering Committee Meeting was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 21 July 2006. The 6th Steering Committee Meeting will be held in Shanghai on 18 September. The Asia-Pacific Regional Interagency Steering Committee will launch an Asia-Pacific DESD website in September 2006 to promote the Decade of ESD regionally. The launch of Tongji Leadership Programme, in China, led by UNEP and supported by UNESCO will also take place in September 2006.

ESD and Youth

UNESCO Bangkok has launched a Youth ESD Envisioning Contest through the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet). The outcomes of this contest will be highlighted during the 10th International APEID Conference in Bangkok in December 2006. (www.unescobkk.org/education/esd/youth/)

ESD and Media

A media workshop on ESD was held in Sarawak, Malaysia on 26-28 June, 2006. This workshop aimed to emphasize the importance of the media in enhancing the knowledge of the community and dissemination of information relating to SD. The recommendations from the workshop include high-level regional media meetings in the future on ESD. Also, training for young reporters on ESD is needed, both on ESD in general and more specific within topic areas.

10th UNESCO-APEID International Conference

The 10th UNESCO-APEID International Conference, "*Learning Together for Tomorrow: Education for Sustainable Development*" will be held in Bangkok, Thailand on 6-8 December, 2006. This conference will serve as a platform for sharing information and knowledge, including innovative practices in education. This important conference will have a central focus on the relationship between APEID programme and ESD as a new inter-sectorial mandate for the organization. (<http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=4276>)

Regional ESD Monitoring and Evaluation Project

The UNESCO-IUCN DESD Indicators Project for the Asia-Pacific region is conducted in collaboration with IUCN-CEC and Macquarie University. The *Review Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Guidelines for National DESD Indicators* was held on 10-11 August in Hiroshima, Japan. This meeting provided an understanding of the processes and challenges associated with developing ESD indicators at the national level in the Asia-Pacific region. Twenty-five participants, including National Commissions representatives from the Asia-Pacific and international experts, took part in the meeting.

Monitoring and reporting mechanisms for the region will be established in cooperation with the AIMS unit at UNESCO Bangkok. This will include the development of a prototype DESD monitoring system established in pilot countries for full scale implementation, progressively rolled out to more countries as the Decade progresses. Guidelines, a framework and indicators will also be developed to measure the DESD at the regional level. This project would be expanded each year to incorporate the majority of countries in Asia-Pacific by the end of the Decade.

Documents for more information

- *Situational Analysis of Education for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific Region.* (www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/esd_situation_analysis)
- *Working Paper: Asia-Pacific Regional Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.* (www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/esd_working_paper)

PACIFIC REGION

Pacific Framework for Action on the DESD

A Pacific Consultative Meeting on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development was held in Apia, Samoa in March 2006. The purpose of the meeting was to bring together Pacific ESD practitioners and experts to develop a collaborative mechanism for the Decade in the Pacific islands region.

The framework for action on DESD in the Pacific was finalized in consultation with the key stakeholders in the region, including UNESCO National Commissions, educators, community leaders, media and sustainable development experts in the region.

The *Pacific ESD Framework* was endorsed by the Pacific Education Ministers Meeting in Nadi, Fiji on 21-22 September 2006. This framework puts the "Think global, act local" adage into practice by taking the international vision and a specific goal for the Pacific, and translating these into focussed priority areas and objectives for action at local, national and regional levels appropriate to the Pacific. The development of local ownership respecting local context and culture is an important aspect to implementation of ESD at all levels. The framework will serve as the coordinating mechanism for implementation of ESD in the region.

1st Pacific Youth Festival

UNESCO's participation at the 1st Pacific Youth Festival, which took place from 17 to 22 July 2006 in Tahiti, French Polynesia focused in particular on the theme of Education for Sustainable Development.

This first Regional Youth meeting (organized by the Government of French Polynesia and its youth structures) was attended by about 900 young participants from 25 countries and territories of the Pacific, who came together to share experience and promote their concerns and visions of how young Pacific islanders can take the lead in promoting positive change in their communities and make an impact on the agenda for regional development. The six-day Festival comprised a series of conference sessions, seminars and youth-led workshops, structured around nine major themes of particular concern to young people and aimed at producing a Pacific Youth Charter that sets out young people's priorities and recommendations for action in the region.

UNESCO took the lead in developing the theme of Education for Sustainable Development. An intersectoral team comprising colleagues from UNESCO/Apia, UNESCO/Bangkok and Headquarters was present throughout the event and responsible for the organization of two conference sessions and seven workshops and seminars highlighting priorities and approaches pertaining to Education for Sustainable Development, cultural diversity, national youth policies and communication and networking.

In the follow-up to the Festival, UNESCO will encourage the further development of communication networks between young people in the Pacific and support concrete youth-led follow-up initiatives pertaining to the DESD and the three different themes of the 'Youth Visioning for Island Living' initiative.

LATIN AMERICA REGION

Centro de Educación y Capacitación para el Desarrollo Sustentable

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, SEMARNAT, in Mexico has created a Center for Education and Training for Sustainable Development (CECADSU). This Center is responsible for promoting actions among individuals, groups and institutions to improve Mexico's environment and develop policies that will lead to sustainable development.

Latin America Regional Mobilization Meeting

UNESCO and the Earth Charter Center for Education for Sustainable Development (based at UPeace) are co-organizing a Latin American regional meeting to mobilize stakeholders in favour of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development which will take place 1-3 November 2006 in Costa Rica. This meeting will in particular stress the linkages with the UN Literacy Decade and the need to prevent the spread of HIV through education.

This meeting will address the following topics:

- Address the close linkage between the goals to advance literacy rates and ESD.
- Build on the DESD efforts to advance HIV prevention and related education.
- Help forge alliances and develop a common strategy for these complimentary initiatives in the Latin American region.
- Assess needed educational and training resources in the region, as well as sharing existing 'good practices'.
- Share the use of the Earth Charter as an important educational framework

CARIBBEAN REGION

Teachers Colleges meeting on ESD

Principals, deans and lecturers of sixteen teachers colleges of Jamaica, Belize and Turks & Caicos gathered in Montego Bay, Jamaica on 28 – 29 June 2006 to discuss how to re-orient teacher education to address sustainability. The meeting is held as the first of a series of workshops planned by the Joint Board of Teachers Education of the University of the West Indies, in cooperation with CIDA/Government of Jamaica ENACT Programme and UNESCO, to contribute to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean.

At the meeting, the UNESCO Guidelines and Recommendations to Address Sustainability was discussed, and teacher educators explored ways to infuse Education for Sustainable Development in teaching and learning curricula.

As a follow-up, a second Northern Caribbean workshop of the Re-orienting Teacher Education for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean project was held on 22-23 August 2006 in Kingston, Jamaica.

Documents for more information

- Caribbean Regional Conference on Education for Sustainable Development: New Approaches for the Future held in Kingston, Jamaica on October 18-20, 2005. (http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=28722&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

AFRICA REGION

Mainstreaming Environmental Education in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa

A MESA training of trainers workshop was organised by UNEP, in cooperation with the Global Virtual University, the Association of African Universities, the Global Higher Education for Sustainable Programme, the Environic Foundation International, Leadership for Environment and Development and the Nile Basin Initiative, from 4 to 9 May 2006 at the Kenya School for Monetary Studies in Nairobi (Kenya).

As a follow-up to this Kenya workshop, UNESCO Dakar in collaboration with UNEP is implementing the project "Mainstreaming Environmental Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (MESA)" in partnership with the Association of African Universities in 15 francophone countries in the region.

The MESA in francophone countries project will involve translation of the training kit and organizing a training of trainers workshop on the MESA kit. The project will be implemented by the Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa (NESDA).

Eastern Africa Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Network

To support DESD and ESD activities in the Eastern Africa sub-region, UNESCO-Nairobi is spearheading an Eastern Africa Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Network which was launched with government representatives from six countries in the region (Burundi, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda). The ESD Network is to be a collaboration with National ESD Steering Committees and stakeholders in member countries of the sub-region. It intends to create an Eastern Africa Learning Space for Sustainable Development by translating the objectives of the Decade into the context of local communities in the sub-region.

The Network's focus is on policy dialogue and strategic planning; vision-building, advocacy, public awareness; partnership-building; information-sharing such as exhibiting 'best ESD practices' and innovations; training and capacity-building; resource mobilization; research, monitoring and evaluation. Salient issues to be covered under the three pillars of ESD are:

- Society - human rights, gender equity, peace and human security, health, HIV/AIDS, governance, cultural diversity and inter-cultural understanding
- Economy - poverty reduction, corporate responsibility, market economy
- Environment - natural resources, climate change, rural development, sustainable urbanization, disaster prevention and mitigation.

The Network will also set-up a clearinghouse of documentation, compile and share a database of expertise in the region, facilitate exchanges and cross-border dialogue and linkages to the global ESD learning space.

Windhoek Southern Africa ESD Sub-regional Meeting

UNESCO HQ, UNESCO Dakar, UNESCO Windhoek and UNESCO Harare will organize a sub-regional meeting in November 2006 for the Windhoek and Harare cluster countries. This meeting will disseminate information on the Strategy of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Sub-Saharan Africa, facilitate advocacy and ownership in Southern Africa and support preparation of national action plans for the implementation of the DESD in the sub-region.

Proposal for a Kenya Regional Centre of Excellence

Kenya will be submitting an application to UNU-Institute for Advanced Studies for a Regional Centre of Excellence (RCE). The proposed vision and objectives of the Kenya Regional Centre of Excellence will be derived from the Kenya National Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Strategy.

The Kenya ESD strategy has evolved from a wide consultation process involving government, civil society, private sector with support from key educational institutions. An ESD National Steering Committee has spearheaded the process that has built incredible capacity along the way. The ESD National Steering Committee is expected to play a pivotal role in the implementation of the national ESD strategy in formal and non formal sectors at all levels of education and training. Kenyatta University will feature prominently in the work of the proposed Kenya RCE as it has gleaned valuable knowledge and experience from the MESA-UNEP university programme. The Kenya Institution of Education will be a driving force behind ESD curriculum development and transformative education.

The proposed Kenya RCE will evolve over time through local initiatives spreading out across the districts. The RCE's networking and outreach will be broad and above inclusive - mobilizing the range of ESD stakeholders. UNESCO-Nairobi will help facilitate the creation and development of the Kenya RCE and be a 'watch dog' for inclusiveness of stakeholder groups in the ESD process from grassroots up the ladder.

Documents for more information

- Draft African Regional ESD Strategy (www.adeanet.org/biennial-2006/BREDA-DOC/ASS%20draft%20ESD%20strategy%20english.pdf), and www.adeanet.org/biennial-2006/BREDA-DOC/Termes%20of%20reference%20and%20agenda%20meeting%20ASS%20Strategy%20ESD,%20%2026%20mars%202006.pdf)

ARAB REGION

Third Arab Conference on Education on Education and Sustainable Development

Held on 24-26 April, 2006 in Beirut, Lebanon, this is one of the first regional forums organized by the Arab region, following the regional launch of the DESD in Bahrain on 17 - 18 September 2005, and attended by Ministers and many other distinguished speakers from the Arab region.

INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS FOR THE DESD

"Educating for Tomorrow's World"

Issue 16 of the Education Today, UNESCO's Education Sector Newsletter focus on Education for Sustainable Development and the DESD. It is available in English, French, Spanish and Russian.

English - http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=46227&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

French - http://portal.unesco.org/education/fr/ev.php-URL_ID=46227&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

The DESD in brief

A leaflet on the UN DESD, what it is and UNESCO's role in leading the DESD is available in English and French. It will soon be published also in Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish.

- 📄 English - <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001416/141629e.pdf>
- 📄 French - <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001416/141629f.pdf>

ESD information sheet

As part of UNESCO's 60th anniversary celebrations, the week of 5-10 June 2006 was dedicated to Education for Sustainable Development. An information sheet on ESD was produced by the UNESCO Bureau of Public Information in English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish.

- 📄 English - http://www.unesco.org/bpi/pdf/memobpi39_sustainabledvpt_en.pdf
- 📄 French - http://www.unesco.org/bpi/pdf/memobpi39_sustainabledvpt_fr.pdf

International Implementation Scheme in brief

A user friendly booklet on the essential elements of the DESD International Implementation Scheme has been prepared and is available in English and French. It will soon be published also in Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish.

- 📄 English - <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001473/147361E.pdf>
- 📄 French - <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001473/147361F.pdf>

Guidelines for integrating sustainability issues in Teacher Education

Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability have been prepared by the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chair on Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability (York University, Toronto) and the International Network of Teacher-Education Institutions. These Guidelines are now available online in English, French, Spanish, Chinese and Arabic. The Russian version will soon be ready.

- 📄 English - <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001433/143370e.pdf>
- 📄 French - <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001433/143370f.pdf>

CD-ROM 'Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future'

A new revised and updated version of this multimedia teacher education program has been released. The program contains an introduction to the UN DESD and some 100 hours (25 modules) of professional development for use in pre-service teacher courses as well as for the in-service education of teachers, curriculum developers, education policy makers, and authors of educational materials.

- 📄 English – <http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf>

Education for Sustainable Development and Life Skills

A booklet *Contributing to a More Sustainable Future: Quality Education, Life Skills and Education for Sustainable Development* looks at quality education that fosters the knowledge, skills, perspectives, and values that lead to a more sustainable future. It is available in English and French.

- 📄 English - <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001410/141019e.pdf>
- 📄 French - <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001410/141019f.pdf>