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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development

REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE BUREAU

Geneva, 23 February 2006

Prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson

1. The Bureau of the UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development held its second meeting on 23 February 2006 in Geneva. The following members of the Bureau participated: Mr. Michel Ricard (France), Ms. Nino Kizikurashvili (Georgia), Mr. Andreas Karamanos (Chairperson, Greece), assisted by Mr. Michael Scoullos (Greece), Mr. Andrea Innamorati and Ms. Monica Giasanti (Italy, for Mr. Paolo Soprano), Ms. Jyldyz Duishenova (Kyrgyzstan), Ms. Violeta Ivanov (Vice-Chairperson, Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Vesna Fila (Serbia and Montenegro).
2. Participating as observers were Ms. Victoria Elias (European ECO-Forum) and Mr. Günther Franz Pfaffenwimmer (Environmental and School Initiatives (ENSI)), assisted by Ms. Nicola Bedlington.

Opening and adoption of the agenda

3. The meeting was opened by the Chairperson, who made introductory remarks. The Bureau adopted its agenda as set out in the document SC-ESD/BUREAU-2/2006/1.
4. Ms. Christina von Schweinichen, Deputy Director of the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division, informed the Bureau about key issues of the UNECE reform and discussions at the sixty-first session of the UNECE (21–23 February 2006).

Input for the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (10–12 October 2007, Belgrade)

5. The Bureau discussed the proposal on the organization of the segment on education for sustainable development (ESD) prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson (SC-ESD/BUREAU-2/2006/2). The proposal was based on the mandate derived from the Kiev Conference (May 2003), the Vilnius High-level meeting (March 2005) and relevant outcomes of the meetings of the Steering Committee on ESD (December 2005) and the Working Group of Senior Officials (October 2005). Comments provided by Italy and the preliminary assessment of the organization of the work of the Belgrade Conference were also taken into account.

Organizational protocol

6. The Bureau stressed that, in order to give guidance to governments for assembling their delegations, it is highly desirable that the invitation concerning the ESD segment sends an encouraging message to the education sector addressing the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation with the environment and other relevant sectors. The invitation should also mention the need for governments to hold national/state consultations prior to the Conference in order to develop a consolidated position for their country.

Time, format and possible themes

7. To take advantage of the participation of Ministers of Education in the opening ceremony of the Conference, it is proposed that the segment take place on the first day of the Conference.
8. The Bureau agreed that the segment would consist of a formal session and an informal panel discussion. The Bureau strongly felt that the formal session should focus on the commitments made by governments regarding the implementation of ESD. It suggested giving the session a more attractive title. To facilitate the organization of constructive and focused discussions within the available time, the Bureau requested the secretariat to prepare guidelines for interventions that would be sent to governments and stakeholders prior to the Conference.
9. With regard to the informal panel discussion, the Bureau envisaged the panel as enabling a lively and practical exchange of experiences and views on emerging SD issues within the ESD context. Unlike the formal session, the panel discussion would touch upon experts' and

stakeholders' views and practical experiences. The Bureau recommended holding the panel discussion during a lunch break prior to the formal session, so that the key outcomes of the informal panel could be communicated to the formal session. The discussion would last about two hours. To ensure a thematic link with the overall agenda of the Conference, the discussion might focus on ESD's role in the solving of problems related to sustainable development in a specific area addressed by the Conference agenda.

Proposal on officers and panellists

10. The Bureau agreed on the procedure and criteria for selecting officers and panellists for the sessions. The European ECO-Forum was requested to hold consultations and, in consultation with the secretariat, propose panellists representing stakeholders. To allow more time for interactive discussion, the Bureau recommended reducing the overall number of panellists to five, with three representing governments and two representing stakeholders.

Documents

Document for decision (Annex II)

11. The Chairperson brought to the attention of the Bureau the first draft of a possible Ministerial statement and stressed that, to attract the attention of Ministers, the statement should be short, concise and have a strategic focus. In addition, it should not raise issues on which agreement had already been reached. The Bureau supported the proposal and gave comments on the content of the document. It requested the secretariat to prepare a revised version for distribution to the Steering Committee for consultations at the national/state level.

Background materials (Annex I)

12. The Chairperson brought to the attention of the Bureau a template for "Good Practices in ESD" prepared by the secretariat in cooperation with UNESCO. The Bureau decided not to limit this activity to national submissions but rather to invite stakeholders to fill in the template as well. It was agreed that each government and organization could submit up to three "good practices". The Bureau commented on the content of the template and requested the secretariat to prepare a revised version for distribution to governments and stakeholders, accompanied by guidelines for completing it.

13. The Bureau supported preparation of a first report on the progress in implementation of the Strategy as an important basis for discussion at the Conference. It also agreed on the proposed procedure for the preparation of implementation reports by volunteering countries.

14. The Bureau approved the proposed procedure and timelines for the preparation of the abovementioned documents.

15. The Chairperson summarized the outcomes of the discussion and requested the secretariat to revise the proposal for the Belgrade Conference accordingly. He informed the Bureau that he would present the proposal on behalf of the Bureau to the Executive Committee of the Working Group of Senior Officials for its consideration on 24 February 2006.

Financial issues

16. The secretariat briefed the Bureau on the contributions received and pledges made since the first meeting of the Steering Committee. It brought to the Bureau's attention the rather urgent need to secure funds for the implementation of activities contributing to the Belgrade Conference. Thus, the preparation of final outputs (e.g. a CD-ROM of "good practices", an independent report) would depend on the availability of financial support.

Future work of the Bureau

17. The Bureau agreed to work via e-mail before the second meeting of the Steering Committee and requested the secretariat to:

- inform the Bureau about the outcomes of the Executive Committee's discussion of the ESD segment (March 2006);
- inform the Steering Committee about the outcomes of the discussion by the Bureau and the Executive Committee of the ESD segment (March 2006);
- prepare, in consultation with the Chairperson, a revised proposal on the segment for the Belgrade Conference taking into consideration comments provided by the Bureau and the Executive Committee (March 2006);
- submit the proposal to the second meeting of the Working Group of Senior Officials on behalf of the Bureau (June 2006);
- inform the Bureau about the outcomes of the discussion of the segment by the Working Group of Senior Officials (July – September 2006); and
- amend (if necessary) the proposal in consultation with the Chairperson and the Bureau for submission to the second meeting of the Steering Committee on ESD (September 2006).
