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### United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development

Sixth meeting

Geneva, 7 and 8 April 2011

## Report of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development on its sixth meeting

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The sixth meeting of the Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development was held from 7 to 8 April 2011 in Geneva.

### **A. Attendance**

2. The meeting was attended by delegations from 31 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE): Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

3. From the United Nations system, representatives of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe attended.

4. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Centre in Bishkek was represented.

5. A representative of the European Commission also attended the meeting.

6. Representatives from the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) Turkey were present at the meeting.

7. In addition, representatives of the following associations attended the meeting: the European ECO-Forum; Planet'ERE; the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program; and the Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Rhine-Meuse/United Nations University.

### **B. Organizational matters**

8. The session opened with a welcome address by the Director of the Environment Division of UNECE, who highlighted that the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has made significant steps forward in its first two implementation phases. The Strategy was now entering the third phase of implementation, and a major goal of the meeting would be to consider and adopt the workplan for Phase III. Major challenges in that phase would be to strengthen multi-stakeholder coordination, as well as building capacity. Moreover, it would be of the utmost importance to create clear links between proposed activities and available resources.

9. The Chair of the Committee recalled that other main objectives of the meeting were to elect officers for Phase III; to consider the findings of the first mandatory reporting cycle; to assess the achievements of the Expert Group on Educator Competences; to consider possibilities for linking the Strategy to other international sustainable development processes; and to review the current status of the ESD trust fund.

10. The agenda, as presented in document ECE/CEP/AC.13/2011/1, was adopted.<sup>1</sup>

11. The Committee elected Mr. Gerald Farthing (Canada) as Chair and Ms. Zhyldyz Duishenova (Kyrgyzstan) as Vice-Chair. As members of the Bureau for phase III, Mr. Tural Huseynov (Azerbaijan), Ms. Marina Prelec (Croatia), Ms. Bianca Bilgram (Germany), Mr. Andreas Karamanos (Greece), Mr. Paolo Soprano (Italy), Mr. Jan Peter Stromsheim (Norway) and Ms. Iulia Adriana Oana Badea (Romania) were elected.

12. The Director of the Environment Division expressed his gratitude to the Chair of Phase I and II, Mr. Andreas Karamanos (Greece), for his leadership in significantly bringing forward the implementation of the Strategy during the past five years.

## **II. Progress achieved and challenges encountered in implementing Phase II of the Strategy and the way forward for Phase III**

### **A. Progress achieved by the member States since the fifth meeting of the Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development**

13. Governments reported on activities undertaken to implement the Strategy since the Committee's last meeting. To facilitate the exchange of experience, the secretariat had prepared a regional overview of national action plans for ESD based on the information made available by the countries in advance of the meeting (information paper No. 2) and had circulated guiding questions (information paper No. 1).

14. The Chair recognized that the country reporting showed a wide range of ongoing activities, which provided ample opportunity to learn from each other. Moreover, it revealed that an inclusive approach to ESD, involving a variety of stakeholders and partners, prevailed in the region. It appeared that many countries were struggling with establishing close linkages and coherence among ongoing ESD activities.

15. The Chair noted, furthermore, that creating more coherence among ESD activities appeared to be a main challenge. In addition, he highlighted the need to bring the process of developing National Action Plans and Strategies to a close, while recognizing at the same time that those documents would always be living documents.

16. The Chair asked countries to submit their interventions in written form to the secretariat, so that they could be uploaded to the UNECE website for ESD.

17. The Steering Committee meeting adopted the proposal of the Chair to change the format of progress reporting. Countries would be asked to submit their interventions in writing to the secretariat previous to meetings. The secretariat would review all submitted interventions and prepare a presentation, which would identify major themes and interesting developments with regard to ESD, as well as challenging areas. Outstanding good practices, which appeared to be particularly helpful and useful, would also be included in the presentation. The presentation, which should be approximately a half an hour in length, would be followed by an interactive question-and-answer session. The interventions provided to the secretariat should be uploaded to the UNECE website.

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<sup>1</sup> Documents and other materials from the meeting are available on the UNECE website at <http://www.unece.org/env/esd/SC.Meet.htm>.

## **B. Findings of the mandatory reporting cycle 2010**

18. The Chair recalled that in 2010 the first formal call for reporting had been launched, requiring the submission of national implementation reports (NIRs) by all countries addressing progress in the implementation of Phase II. While the original deadline for the submission had been 1 October 2010, that deadline had had to be extended to the beginning of January 2011, following the request of a number of member States. Due to that postponement, the evaluation report on the NIRs submitted could not be translated into French and English in time for the sixth meeting, but would be made available as soon as possible.

19. The author of the evaluation report presented the main findings of the NIRs. Thirty-six member States had submitted an NIR. All in all, the national implementation reports were of notably higher quality than in the pilot reporting cycle. Countries endorsing the UNECE Strategy appeared to be progressing in their efforts to implement ESD in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. The majority of countries had accomplished or were close to finalizing and putting in place policy, regulatory and operational frameworks that supported ESD. Serious attempts had been made to integrate ESD in formal education, resulting in a considerable coverage of ESD-related key themes, learning outcomes, methods and strategies. Also, the adoption of a whole-institution approach had advanced remarkably in the western European Union subregion. Countries were now clearly shifting their attention from the political to the practical: i.e., they were putting the Strategy into action. Over the run of Phase II, the visibility of sustainable development issues had also increased considerably in the media and the amount of research done in the sustainable development field had grown. Generally speaking, ESD activities in informal and non-formal learning were expanding successfully.

20. Main challenges, as outlined by the author of the evaluation report, include the need for improved communication between ministries involved and the design of intersectoral programmes. Moreover, there was a need to support the further development of a whole-institution approach and to clarify how ESD could contribute to the increase of overall educational quality. In addition, the awareness among decision-makers and tertiary educators should be raised.

21. The author furthermore presented the following core recommendations for further advancing the implementation of the Strategy:

(a) The development of an ESD 2020 Strategy, with a view to assisting Governments in adopting a long-term perspective and to assure successful implementation of ESD beyond 2015;

(b) The creation of synergy, networking and coordination;

(c) Investment in mechanisms that supported the dissemination of teaching methods, materials, research outcomes and experiences in the field of sustainable development, and in particular with regard to ESD;

(d) Support for the articulation of ESD competences in order to strengthen ESD professional development.

22. During the discussion of the evaluation report, the added value of the reporting process was noted by the Committee, in particular the identification of the main challenges and obstacles, since they could significantly guide the setting of priorities for Phase III. In addition, the subregional workshop for the Central Asian countries, organized by the Secretariat in 2010, was recognized as a valuable and effective instrument for building capacity and facilitating the reporting process. It was further stressed that the reporting process was not aimed at comparing countries, but would serve as an opportunity to learn

from each other; it was important to connect people, as learning happened first and foremost between people. It was also necessary to start considering how to promote ESD after the third phase of implementation ended in 2015.

### C. Achievements of the Expert Group on Competences

23. The Chair recalled that the Expert Group on Competences had been established by the Steering Committee at its fourth meeting and mandated to prepare general recommendations for policymakers as well as a range of core competences in ESD for educators (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/2, paras. 31–36).

24. The Co-Chair of the Expert Group thanked those countries that had hosted Expert Group meetings, namely, the Netherlands, Sweden and Ireland, as well as the secretariat for its support.

25. The Co-Chair of the Expert Group presented the outcome document “Learning for the future: Competences in Education for Sustainable Development” (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2011/6). By compiling that document and following its mandate, the Expert Group on Competences at its meetings in 2010 and 2011 had defined and drafted steps necessary to support the implementation of ESD competences, so as to provide policymakers with a tool to integrate ESD into relevant policy documents.

26. With a view to its mandate, the Expert Group focused on recommendations for formal education. At the core of all recommendations was the notion of educator empowerment, recognizing that educators were key to ESD and that they needed to have a sense of ownership of the work they accomplished. Around that notion, the Expert Group defined four main areas for policymaker recommendations — i.e., professional development in education; governing and managing institutions; curriculum development; and monitoring and assessment — and drafted concrete recommendations for each of those areas (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2011/6 paras. 15–38). The Co-Chair in particular underlined the significant role educational institutions played in promoting educator competences, as educators did not operate in isolation but within institutions of learning, which needed to fully incorporate the principles of ESD and were supportive of change.

27. The Co-Chair of the Expert Group highlighted that the Group had drafted recommendations so as to allow for flexibility and adaptability to national and regional needs, since the particularities of relevant policies and policymaking bodies varied from country to country.

28. With regard to educator competences, the Expert Group had produced a set of competences (hereafter “the Competences”), which were as far as possible concrete, and of a nature and character that could be monitored and reasonably assessed (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2011/6 paras. 39–54). The Competences drew on essential characteristics of ESD, namely on (a) the holistic approach: integrative thinking (i.e. integrative of disciplines, places, cultures and generation) and practice; (b) Envisioning change: past, present and future; and (c) achieving transformation: people, pedagogy and education systems. The Expert Group based its work on the extended Delors framework,<sup>2</sup> which included categories of learning experiences (learners’ competences), including: (a) Learning to know; (b) Learning to do; (c) Learning to live together, learning to live with others; and (d) Learning to be.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Delors et al., *Learning: The Treasure Within*, UNESCO (Paris: 1996).

29. The Co-Chair highlighted that it was now of utmost importance to localize the recommendations made by the Expert Group, i.e., to adapt them to local conditions and needs.

30. The Co-Chair furthermore presented, on the basis of information paper No. 6, the Expert Group's proposals for future activities to promote educator competences, namely: to widely disseminate the findings of the Expert Group; to integrate the Competences in the monitoring process of the UNECE Strategy for ESD; to create synergies with other international processes on sustainable development; and to promote research into ESD.

31. In addition, the Co-Chair presented the proposal that the mandate of the Expert Group be extended for one year with a view to developing two sets of tools in order to complement its work, as well as to address the recommendations of the Bureau, namely, that it develop tools supporting the implementation of the policy recommendations; and tools supporting the understanding of the competences (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2011/5, para. 18).

32. The Secretariat provided information on the financial implications of the proposal of the Expert Group, i.e., the estimated costs for three Expert Group meetings and of employing a researcher to support the compilation of the tools supporting the implementation of policy recommendations and the understanding of competences (see information paper No. 3).

33. The Steering Committee acknowledged the vital value of the Expert Group's work and highlighted that it had produced a very helpful and significant outcome. It had noted that educators were key in advancing ESD in the region. Furthermore, the importance of "localizing" the Competences, i.e., adapting them to local contexts and making them more specific, had been recognized; however, concerns were raised whether that should be done on the international level, by the Expert Group and a researcher, in particular in view of the limited financial resources available.

34. The Committee decided to encourage countries to use the outcome document of the Expert Group on Competences in ESD and work on the implementation and adaptation of these recommendations at the national level during the current year. Experiences on the localization process would be collected in early 2012. The secretariat was requested to send e-mails to the countries, enquiring about localization experiences. In February 2012, the Expert Group would convene again for one meeting to work on the analysis and compilation of the national practices and experiences to be presented in a structured way at the next meeting in March 2012. The Steering Committee extended the mandate of the Expert Group to that end. The Netherlands would provide financial support to cover the costs of the Expert Group meeting. Ireland and Sweden offered to facilitate the process of collecting countries experiences jointly with the Netherlands.

35. The Committee decided that the process would be relatively informal, with no formal commitment of resources from UNECE, and that any resources applied in the course of the next year would be on a voluntary basis.

36. Concern was raised that some countries might need assistance in localizing the findings of the Expert Group. It was proposed to explore options to offer expert assistance to countries facing problems in adapting the Competences to local contexts and needs.

#### **D. Draft workplan for implementation of Phase III**

37. The Chair noted that Phase III of implementation would require a road map of the activities to be undertaken to further ESD implementation at the national and international levels. A draft workplan for Phase III had been prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of

input provided by the Steering Committee members and the Bureau (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2011/4).

38. The Chair underlined that the overall objective of Phase III would be to make considerable and concrete progress in ESD, which would mean a shift in the focus from political frameworks to practical implementation. The workplan for Phase III contained three major blocks of activities: coordination and awareness-raising; capacity building and monitoring; and assessment. The following areas were particularly important for Phase III:

(a) Member States should commit to finalizing initial drafts by the end of 2011 and bring Phase I and II to a close. While recognizing that National Action Plans and Strategies were living documents, the initial drafts of those documents needed to be finalized to fully focus on practical implementation. The Chair asked the secretariat to follow up on that process;

(b) Coordination between education and environment departments, in particular, but also the coordination between governmental departments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), needed to be further strengthened. To that end, workshops should be organized in order to foster information sharing, as well as awareness-raising, which would ultimately lead to more cooperation;

(c) Promoting educator competences should be a central aspect in Phase III. Subregional workshops could be used as a means to specify and adapt educator competences, as developed by the Expert Group on Competences, to regional needs;

(d) Monitoring the progress and challenges in the region on an ongoing basis should be a priority in order to decide on the way forward;

(e) Planned activities should be closely linked to available resources. In particular with regard to subregional workshops, countries should explore possibilities to contribute financially or in kind, i.e., by providing staff time, to the implementation of such workshops. Furthermore, member countries were encouraged to contribute as much as they could to the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD and were also encouraged to particularly support activities that might be of special interest to them;

(f) The UNECE website for ESD should be further enhanced so as to be a more useful and more effective tool for capacity-building in the region. To that end, the Chair asked the secretariat to gather information and suggestions of the member States on what enhancements would be useful;

(g) A decision on how to promote ESD in the region post 2015 had to be taken as a matter of priority.

39. Drawing on the newly available findings of the evaluation report of the national implementation reporting, the Chair proposed to add two more activities to the workplan for Phase III to:

(a) Better connect policy to school activities, the member States should commit to install ESD plans in every school by 2015. That would put a focus on practical implementation and would foster coherence between the political and the practical;

(b) Collect evidence about the impact of ESD activities on student learning, research should be supported regarding student learning and attitudes.

40. The Steering Committee welcomed the priority setting as proposed by the Chair and adopted the workplan for Phase III, including the proposed additions (para. 39). The Chair requested the secretariat to circulate a revised workplan to the Committee.

### **III. Creating synergies with relevant international processes for sustainable development**

#### **A. Relevant international events for promoting education for sustainable development**

41. The Deputy Director of the UNECE Environment Division provided information about relevant international events for promoting education for sustainable development and pointed out opportunities for linking the Strategy to other sustainable development processes.

42. She noted that, in 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), would take place in Rio de Janeiro. The objectives of the summit were to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development; to assess progress towards internationally agreed goals on sustainable development and to address new and emerging challenges. Rio+20 would focus on two specific themes: a green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development; and an institutional framework for sustainable development. A regional preparatory meeting for Rio+20 would take place on 1 and 2 December 2011 in Geneva.

43. The Deputy Director moreover recalled that the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy at its sixteenth session had decided that “greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development” and “sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems” would be the main themes at the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference in Astana.

44. As for the format of promoting ESD at the Ministerial Conference in Astana, the Deputy Director pointed out the following options: a speaker could be nominated for the Ministerial discussions; an intervention on ESD could be organized at a round table discussion on greening the economy; and a side event on ESD could be held.

45. She furthermore highlighted that the regional preparatory meeting would be an excellent platform for the UNECE Strategy to promote ESD in the Rio+20 process. If a side event were to be organized in Rio 2012, it might be advisable to team up with other organizations to host a joint side event.

46. Moreover she observed there was a possibility to send contributions — e.g., findings of the Steering Committee’s discussions — for the global preparations for Rio+20 to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development secretariat by November.

47. The Chair provided details of the Bureau’s discussions concerning the promotion of ESD in Astana and within the Rio+20 process.

48. He presented the proposal by the Bureau to organize a side event in Astana on the theme “Greening the economy: ESD and the role of vocational education”. The format would be a multi-stakeholder event involving Government representatives from different ministries (education, environment, economics), including labour market specialists, skills development educators and trainers and others, as well as possibly representatives from the private sector and NGOs. The expected outcome would focus on generating policy recommendations on how to position vocational and skills development education so that it could play a critical and specific role in greening the economy. Potential questions that the side event could target were:

(a) What kind of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities might there be in a green economy which do not exist now?



(b) What kind of vocational/trade skills might be required in a green economy in order to take advantage of the new employment/entrepreneurial opportunities?

(c) How could an ESD framework perspective support that effort in both the short and long term?

49. The Chair moreover presented the Bureau's proposal to organize a round table as part of the regional preparatory meeting for Rio+20. The proposed topic was "transitioning to a green economy — the role of ESD". The discussion could encompass the outputs of the side event in Astana on the role of vocation education, but would also provide a platform to address the broader role of ESD in transitioning to a green economy. The format would be an interactive round table discussion. It would be a multi-stakeholder event involving Government representatives from different ministries (finance, economics, environment, education), NGOs, private sector representatives and other relevant groups. The expected outcome would foster a deeper understanding of the role ESD could and had to play in helping to clarify how to make the difficult economic transition to a green economy. Potential questions for the round table discussion were:

(a) What would be the main features of a green economy in broad terms. and how it would look different from the present economy?

(b) What would need to be done by Government and business to move to a green economy as quickly as possible?

(c) How could an ESD framework and perspectives support that effort in both the short and long term?

50. The proposals were unanimously accepted by the Committee. It was stressed during the discussions that, even if focusing on the role of ESD in greening the economy, ESD had to always be discussed as a holistic concept, which included a social, environmental and economic component.

51. The Steering Committee decided to mandate the secretariat to proceed with the planning of the proposed side event and round table discussion.

## **B. Panel discussion: Taking stock and looking forward — education for sustainable development in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

52. The Chair noted that since greening the economy had gained paramount importance in the international sustainable development process, the panel discussion would address the role of ESD in greening the economy. A discussion paper on the role of education for sustainable development in shifting to a green economy (information paper No. 5) had been prepared by the secretariat to facilitate the discussion.

53. The Chair observed that the term "green economy" could be defined and understood in different ways. In the context of their Green Economy Initiative, UNEP defined the term within a broad agenda. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development emphasized that green growth was about "maximizing economic growth and [social] development while avoiding unsustainable pressure on the quality and quantity of natural assets" (draft document ENV/EPOC/EAP(2011)3, para. 7). Those definitions would be compatible with the view increasingly espoused by the United Nations system that a green economy could be a tool to help achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty. Indeed, a green economy was at the heart of renewed efforts to integrate environmental and social considerations within the mainstream of economic decision-making in the run-up to the upcoming landmark Rio+20 Conference.

54. The Chair informed the Committee that the multi-stakeholder panel would briefly introduce areas where ESD could crucially contribute to greening the economy. Furthermore, the goal of the panel discussion was to identifying how ESD could best contribute to greening the economy.

55. The Chair noted that the key findings of the discussion could be sent to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development secretariat, as a contribution to the global preparations for Rio+20, and would also serve as an input to the regional preparatory meeting.

56. The CAREC representative gave a presentation on the importance of sustainable thinking for transitioning to a green economy. Key messages of her presentation included:<sup>3</sup>

(a) To transition to a green economy, a shift in economic thinking was of utmost importance. Greening economic thinking entailed a socio-political consensus about the importance of a sustainable use of natural, human and economic capital. Key issues for the transition — such as raised awareness, public participation, sustainable consumption and reskilling the labour force — were essentially connected to a shift in peoples' attitudes towards sustainable development;

(b) A prerequisite for achieving a shift in economic thinking was learning about and understanding of the concept of sustainable development, as well as of the link between the multiple crises to unsustainable economic activities. It might include a reorientation of values and attitudes and had to encompass a broad variety of actors, ranging from the individual consumer, to policymakers and multinational corporations;

(c) ESD could cater to such a shift, because it had the ability to equip people with the values, competences, knowledge and skills necessary for them to put the green economy concept into practice. It therefore needed to be recognized as a cross-cutting sector that was crucial to fostering an enabling environment for greening the economy.

57. The ESD Focal Point of Italy and Member of the Rio+20 Bureau gave a presentation about the preparatory process for Rio+20 and informed participants about the "Ten Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production". He highlighted opportunities for the UNECE Strategy to create close linkages and synergies with those processes. Key ideas of the presentation included:

(a) In both processes people needed to participate fully in decision-making, locally, nationally and internationally, through an increased ability to make informed choices, greater knowledge and awareness;

(b) In both processes the invisible hand of the market was not enough; it needed the guiding hand of society;

(c) The role of education was to provide knowledge, skills and the ability to make informed choices and to empower individuals as key actors for change;

(d) There was a need to promote sustainable thinking, recognizing the potential of a reorientation of values and attitudes to unlock wide behavioural change in society;

(e) ESD strengthened a sense of ownership of the process for all those who had to contribute to it: citizens, decision makers at all levels and civil society;

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<sup>3</sup> Full presentations held during the panel discussions can be downloaded from (<http://www.unece.org/env/esd/SC.Meet.htm>).

(f) ESD in formal, non-formal and informal learning processes in a lifelong perspective functioned as a key driver for change at national, regional and international levels.

58. The representative of the International Labour Organization gave a presentation on the challenge of meeting new skill needs as part of mitigation and adaptation efforts and supporting a fair transition to more sustainable production. Core findings of her presentation included that:

(a) Due to a green structural change, additional jobs would be created. However, some employment would be substituted, certain jobs might be eliminated without direct replacement and many existing jobs would be redefined. New jobs created would offset those lost, but those who would get green jobs were not necessarily those who would have lost their jobs;

(b) Skills shortages already posed a major barrier to green transitions and job creation. Required skills encompassed both technical and soft skills. Training was provided on multiple levels, e.g., by enterprises and industry, by Governments (mostly through the formal education and training system), by universities, NGOs and donors (mostly in developing countries);

(c) The green change was happening; therefore the identification of skills needs and adequate provision of skills was required. The success of response measures depended on policy coherence and the inclusion of a training component in policies for greening, as well as coordination among various actors and levels. Social dialogue played a key role in that respect.

59. The Chair thanked the panellists for their contributions. In the following discussion, Committee members and observers considered a wide variety of possible linkages and relationships, and raised a number of issues that related to a green economy and ESD, including the following core considerations:

(a) In order to shift to a green society and transform people's thinking towards these societies "culture" — in the sense of how people relate to each other, the way they interact and perceive things — would be a key element;

(b) Besides promoting a rethinking process based on changed values, self-interest should also be strengthened as a motivation, by making people act sustainably through, for instance, regulation and financial incentives;

(c) There was a need to rethink the measurement of wealth, for a new measurement system/instrument that considered wealth together with economic growth, which would consider in its valuation the quality of life in terms of the quality of services available, the quality of the environment and the quality of the urban environment. There was also discussion regarding how far ESD should go in questioning the currently predominant economic models;

(d) There was a need to exchange experiences on realizing and extending university programmes in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency, which were issues of particular importance in the UNECE region;

(e) There was a need for core skills to be taught to children, including also environmental awareness, which needed to be introduced at the beginning of the education system in order to facilitate the smooth transition to a green economy;

(f) The concern was raised that there is the danger of ESD becoming fragmented. If ESD was to have a transformative role, it had to teach systemic thinking. It was pointed out that at the moment a more fragmentary teaching approach was developing, e.g., natural disaster teaching, climate teaching, etc. As a result, the holistic approach was

weakened. Focusing ESD solely on greening the economy might therefore also endanger its transformative potential. A green economy needed to be addressed through the overarching concept of sustainable development and thereby would also have to be seen through a social lens;

(g) Concerns about whether a green economy would also lead to a social economy were linked to the importance of connecting citizens with the economy. It was highlighted that the participation of citizens was very important during the process of deeply changing society. ESD could play a role in connecting citizens to the economy.

#### **IV. Relevant activities of international and regional organizations**

60. The representative of Planet'ERE informed participants about the launch of a European Union-financed Tempus project on ESD. Five universities of European Union member States and seven universities from the Near East were participating in the project, which aimed at the reorientation of university curricula towards ESD. The three-year project had started in December 2010.

61. The representatives of the Regional Environmental Centre Turkey presented the Green Railway Wagon project, which promoted teacher trainings on education for sustainable development. The project, which was carried out in a railway wagon, encouraged people to choose sustainable solutions in particular with regard to transportation.

62. Representatives of the Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Rhine-Meuse on ESD said that the RCE aimed to connect schools, companies and governmental institutions to advance the implementation of ESD at the local and subregional levels. While acting locally, the RCE planned to work together with ESD initiatives regionally and globally. To that end, RCE Rhine-Meuse together with five more RCEs was organizing an international conference on ESD in the Netherlands, which would take place in 2011.

#### **V. Status of the trust fund**

63. The secretariat reported on the status of the ESD trust fund. Pursuant to the request of the Steering Committee at its fifth meeting, the secretariat had made successful efforts to raise funds. The active fund-raising throughout the year had resulted in funding sufficient to service activities under the Strategy, including the meeting of the Committee and the operation of the secretariat in 2010 and 2011.

64. The secretariat presented its report on the operations of the trust fund in 2010–2011 (information paper No. 3). It drew to the Committee's attention that very limited resources were available for the implementation of Phase III and that there remained a need to raise further funds to ensure the implementation of the workplan. Moreover, there would be a need to prioritize activities and to link proposed activities closely to available financial resources.

65. The Steering Committee members provided, as far as possible, an outlook on contributions that would be made in 2011. The following pledges were made by the members of the Steering Committee:

- (a) Azerbaijan would probably be able to make a financial contribution;
- (b) Belgium would probably be able to contribute the same amount as in 2010;

- (c) Canada would try to contribute US\$ 20,000;
- (d) The Czech Republic planned to contribute between US\$ 3,000 and US\$ 5,000;
- (e) Denmark would probably be able to contribute the same amount as in 2010;
- (f) Estonia would probably be able to contribute the same amount as in 2010;
- (g) Kyrgyzstan planned to contribute around US\$ 500;
- (h) Malta would probably be able to double the amount it had contributed in 2010;
- (i) The Netherlands would contribute in terms of hosting an Expert Group meeting;
- (j) Norway planned to contribute around US\$ 15,000;
- (k) Romania planned to contribute as a medium donor;
- (l) Slovenia planned to contribute the same amount as in 2010.

66. The Steering Committee requested the secretariat to send an official letter to the member States asking for financial contribution for the implementation of Phase III.

67. The Chair thanked Germany for financing a Junior Professional Officer to support the operations of the secretariat and highlighted that thereby the staff costs had been considerably reduced in 2011.

## **VI. Dates of the next session and closure of the meeting**

68. The Steering Committee decided that its next meeting would be held in March 2012. Following the confirmation of the availability of a meeting room with interpretation, the exact date of the Steering Committee meeting would be confirmed by the secretariat.

69. The Bureau and the secretariat were requested to follow-up on the Committee's decisions. The secretariat was asked to finalize the report and the list of participants for circulation to delegates after the meeting. Those would also be posted on the UNECE website. The Chair thanked the Committee for its constructive and efficient work. He then closed the meeting.

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