

**Economic and Social
Council**Working Paper No. SC-ESD/BUREAU-2/2006/2
10 February 2006

ENGLISH ONLY

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development
Bureau
(Second meeting, Geneva, 23 February 2006)**PROPOSAL ON THE SEGMENT ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT¹**
Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 2007)**Introduction**

1. The Working Group of Senior Officials, the preparatory body for the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, October, 2007), at its first meeting agreed that the Conference would focus on implementation and should become a conference of delivery. Three major components within this context were identified: (a) assessment of the effectiveness of agreed commitments and tools; (b) analysis of problems in the implementation of existing commitments and their root causes; and (c) presentation of success stories and good practices to be built on for further progress in capacity building and in the implementation of existing commitments. Education for sustainable development (ESD) received strong support, as a potential agenda item, but it was stressed that any proposal should be prepared in a way that it warrants the attention of Ministers.
2. Pursuant to these outcomes, the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD at its first meeting (December, 2005) discussed a possible proposal on ESD for the Belgrade Conference. It suggested a general plenary session that would address cooperation on ESD between Environment and Education sectors and regional cooperation for the Strategy’s implementation. The session could be combined with a thematic panel discussion on ESD’s role in solving emerging SD-related problems. As background materials for the session the following could be prepared: a compilation of good practices; pilot reporting by volunteering countries using the selected set of indicators; and a first report with an overview of implementation progress based on the responses from countries. One of the issues for a decision by Ministers could be the continuation of the process.
3. The timing for the preparatory process is as follows: an intermediate draft proposal for the Belgrade Conference could be already discussed by the Working Group of Senior Officials in June 2006 and the final input to the Belgrade Conference should be ready by the beginning of April 2007.
4. The Committee mandated its Bureau: (a) to follow up on these proposals keeping in mind the timeframe for the preparation to the Belgrade Conference and financial resources available to carry out these activities; (b) to present these proposals to the Working Group of Senior Officials; (c) to report to the next meeting of the Steering Committee on the results.
5. Based on the experience derived from the previous “Environment for Europe” Conferences and the preliminary assessment of the organisation of work of the Belgrade Conference, the time available for the

¹ This document was not formally edited

formal session on ESD would be three hours maximum. It could be combined with an informal panel discussion that would be organised in the format of a side-event. In addition, there could be other ESD-related events, like exhibition which would allow for the exchange of materials on ESD; presentation by youth representatives; etc.

6. This paper is meant to facilitate the Bureau's discussion and preparation of its proposal for the consideration by the Working Group of Senior Officials.

I. Organisational protocol

7. In order to ensure equal participation of education and environment sectors the ESD segment would have its own organizational protocol.

8. The segment will be open to the participation of representatives of environment and education sectors and other relevant sectors of 55 member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Other interested member States of the United Nations may also participate. The expected level of participation is ministerial or equal to ministerial. Members of respective delegations should represent the consolidated positions of their national/state governments in the work of the segment.

9. Representatives of relevant stakeholders, including international, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business and academic institutions will be invited to participate as observers. The protocol for stakeholders' participation, as well as the size of delegations and general registration procedure would be in accordance with the overall requirements of the organizational protocol of the Belgrade Conference (see "Organizational issues for the Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (see WGSO/EXECOM-2/2006/5).

II. Format and possible theme(s)

10. The segment would be composed of the following elements: (a) Formal session and (b) Informal panel discussion.

2.1 Formal plenary session: "First steps of implementation: achievements, challenges and the way forward"

11. The session will be opened by a Chairperson (one of the participating Ministers), followed by keynote addresses by the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson (5 minutes each; the Chair and the Vice-Chair should represent the different sectors). Delegates will be invited to engage in interactive discussions from the floor (up to 3 minutes per intervention). They are expected to discuss the main concerns in relation to the implementation of ESD with a focus on achievements, challenges and future steps in terms of reaching the sixth objectives of the UNECE Strategy for ESD. Thus, points for discussion could include:

- Support of ESD by policy, regulatory and operational frameworks (including cooperation between Environment and Education sectors and other relevant sectors)
- Promotion of SD through formal, non-formal and informal learning
- Building competence of educators
- Ensuring accessibility of tools and materials for ESD
- Promotion of research on and development of ESD
- Cooperation for the Strategy's implementation (regional; sub-regional; links with relevant initiatives in other regions and with global processes; needs of countries with economies in transition)

12. The Chairperson will summarize the discussion and will present it in the form of the Chair's summary. The Chair's Summary will focus on particular obstacles encountered and major breakthroughs made in implementation. The summary would also highlight ways to improve the effectiveness of ESD implementation in the ECE region and globally.

13. One of the issues for the decision by Ministers could be the strategic direction for the continuation of the process after the Belgrade Conference. A short statement on the matter could be adopted by the Environment and Education Ministers (for the draft elements for the proposal, see Annex II). Environment Ministers may also wish to address ESD in their possible Declaration to be adopted as an outcome of the Belgrade Conference.

2.2 Informal panel discussion (side-event)

14. A panel discussion on ESD's role in solving emerging SD-related problems (*problem(s) to be identified*) could be organized.

15. The panel is expected to discuss the major developments that are taking place at both regional and global levels in relation to the issue. It could address: the experiences in the region; how can they contribute to the achievement of progress at the global level and; if there are common priorities which are relevant in all regions. Points for discussion could include:

- Roots of a problem (*to be identified*) and to which extent poor implementation of ESD is part of the root causes
- Whether political and social differences, including aspects of culture, justify a differentiated approach to the implementation of ESD
- Specific challenges for governments and stakeholders
- Possible frameworks for future partnerships and dialogue between stakeholders, different regions and at the global level
- Other....

16. The format for the panel discussion will be: (a) a short opening statement by each of the panellists (up to five minutes); (b) comments, questions and reactions from the floor; (c) responses by the panellists; and (d) concluding remarks by the Chairperson-moderator.

17. Panellists will be requested to keep their opening statement to a maximum of five minutes, but provide the secretariat with a longer version of the statements, in writing, for the circulation to delegates prior to the meeting.

18. Participants will be invited to take part in the debate and to respond spontaneously to the points raised by the panellists as well as addressing other relevant issues. For reporting purposes, they will be invited to submit to the secretariat, prior to or during the meeting, a brief outline of their interventions. Interventions should not exceed three minutes.

19. The *proposal regarding the composition of the panel* is as follows:

Chairperson-Moderator: One of the participating Ministers (the number of participating governments from the same sub-region will be reduced accordingly).

Panellists:

- (a) Governments: 1 North America, 1 Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, 1 South-East Europe, 2 other UNECE member States; 1 invited guest from another sub-region (e.g. Africa, Latin America, Asia)

- (b) Stakeholders: 1 IGO (UNESCO), 1 NGO or academic/research, 1 representative of business, 1 representative of indigenous people, 1 representative of youth

2.3 Indicative timeframe

<i>Formal plenary session</i>	
15 min	Opening by the Chairperson of the session and keynote addresses by the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the session
2 h 15 minutes	Interventions from the floor
15 min	Adoption of the statement
15 min	Concluding remarks by the Chairperson
<i>Total: 3h</i>	
<i>Informal Panel Discussion (side-event)</i>	
50 min	Opening statements by the Chairperson-moderator and by the panellists
1h 30 minutes	Interventions from the floor and responses by the panellists
10 min	Concluding remarks by the Chairperson-moderator
<i>Total: 2h 30 min</i>	

III. Proposal on the Officers and Panellists

20. The main criterion for the proposal for the Chairs and Vice-Chair and for the panelists representing governments is to ensure equitable geographical representation of the UNECE member States and balanced representation of environment and education sectors. Other criteria include commitment and activity shown by a country in the implementation of the Strategy; and the potential to share good practices or the severity of problems in the matter. The panel should ideally include articulate and stimulating speakers.

21. Stakeholders would be identified on the basis of their experience and active performance in the ESD activities at the regional level, as well as the need to include stakeholders with different profiles and experience.

22. It is suggested that Chairs, Vice-Chair and panellists representing governments would be identified through informal intergovernmental consultations. The Chair of the Steering Committee might wish to lead this process with the assistance of the Secretariat. The proposal on panellists representing stakeholders will be prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair of the Steering Committee. A consolidated proposal on candidatures of the officers and panellists would be communicated to the Bureau for its consideration. Based on the recommendation by the Bureau, the final proposal on candidatures will be submitted to the second meeting of the Steering Committee for its approval.

IV. Documents

(a) Input documents

- *Document for decision:* Draft Statement on future of the process
- *Background materials:* a compilation of good practices; pilot reporting by volunteering countries using the selected set of indicators; and a first report with an overview of implementation progress based on the responses from countries

(b) Output documents:

- Adopted Statement
- Chair's summary of the formal session
- Report of the formal session

ANNEX I

**TIMEFRAME FOR THE PREPARATION OF POSSIBLE INPUT DOCUMENTS FOR THE
SEGMENT ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”, Belgrade, 2007**

1. Document for decision: draft Statement, a short document (up to 2 pages) for possible adoption by Ministers addressing the strategic directions for the continuation of the process

- February 2006: key elements to be discussed by the Bureau on the basis of the outline prepared by the secretariat
- March 2006: a first draft to be sent on behalf of the Bureau to the members of the Steering Committee for national consultations and comments
- September 2006: a revised draft, based on the comments received, to be submitted to the second meeting of the Steering Committee for the consideration
- September-December 2006: further comments by countries on the draft submitted to the Steering Committee
- December 2006: Steering Committee to consider the draft statement and decide on the follow up process for the preparation of its final version
- April 2007: final draft to be completed for translation into official languages and reproduction for the Conference

Financial implications: funds for the travel of delegates from countries with economies in transition to the meetings of a possible drafting group

2. Background materials

(a) Compilation of good practices in ESD

- February 2006: a template prepared by the secretariat in cooperation with UNESCO to be discussed by the Bureau
- March 2006: an invitation to complete the template is sent to the members of the Steering Committee
- October 2006: deadline for the receiving completed templates
- November 2006-April 2007: preparation of the compilation (e.g. CD format or hard copy)

Financial implications: Consultancy fee (translation, formatting and designing)

(b) A first report with an overview of implementation progress based on the responses from countries

- September-October 2006: a questionnaire to be prepared and sent to the members of the Steering Committee
- October 2006 - December 2006: responses from countries to be submitted to the secretariat

- January-March 2007: preparation of the report by an independent expert with the assistance of the Secretariat

Financial implications: Consultancy fee for the preparation of the report

(c) Pilot reporting by volunteering countries using the selected set of indicators

- September 2006: the selected set of indicators prepared by the Expert Group together with the format for reporting is sent to the interested countries
- April 2007: reports to be submitted to the secretariat for reproduction and dissemination

ANNEX II

DRAFT ELEMENTS FOR A POSSIBLE STATEMENT ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BY THE MINISTERS OF EDUCATION AND OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE UNECE REGION

Preamble

We, Ministers of Education and of the Environment from the region of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE),

Confirming our vision for the future which is of a region that embraces common values of solidarity, equality and mutual respect between people, countries and generations²,

Reaffirming the importance of education for sustainable development as a tool for capacity building that enable people to make this vision a reality,

Celebrating the successful adoption and the start of the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development - a practical instrument to promote sustainable development through education,

Emphasizing that close cooperation between environment and education sectors as well as all other relevant sectors has contributed significantly to the successful start of the implementation of the Strategy,

Welcoming progress made so far in implementing education for sustainable development in our countries and the advancement in the regional and sub-regional cooperation in this area,

Recognizing that the implementation process is benefiting from the experience gained both within the region and globally and welcoming the fruitful cooperation between the UNECE and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the implementation process,

Acknowledging with satisfaction that our regional work on education for sustainable development furthers the implementation of the relevant outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development³

² UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (CEP/AC.13/2005/3/Rev.1), High-level meeting of Environment and Education Ministries, Vilnius 2005

³ Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002

and brings a substantive contribution to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development⁴ (UN Decade of ESD), led by the UNESCO at the global level,

Supporting the streamlining of relevant initiatives and the strengthening of synergies between ESD-related activities taking place within the frameworks of the UN Decade of ESD, the UNECE Strategy for ESD and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development,

Acknowledging that education for sustainable development should consider diverse local, regional and national circumstances and encouraging the involvement of all stakeholders including public authorities, the educational community, non-governmental organizations, business, youth and the media,

Recognizing that education for sustainable development is a complex and an evolving concept and that outcomes of its implementation can be seen only over a long period,

Taking into account concerns and needs expressed by the member States during the first phase of the implementation process and acknowledging that some countries, particularly countries with economies in transition, may need donor support to carry out relevant activities,

1. Strongly support the continuation of this challenging endeavor and confirm that the implementation of education for sustainable development should be well under way by 2010, as stated in the Strategy;
2. Agree that the further process should seek to build a broad political platform for regional and subregional cooperation. It should particularly address those areas with urgent needs and aim at the participation of the countries based on a set of common priorities and a long-term prospective,
3. Invite our Governments to take part in the further work on fostering national⁵ processes and ensure that appropriate resources are made available for this purpose;
4. Invite our Governments to monitor the implementation process using indicators developed by the Expert Group and report on national progress to UNECE. This would also serve as a report to UNESCO on the implementation of the UN Decade of ESD;
5. Invite UNECE to continue providing secretariat support to the further process in cooperation with all relevant international actors, contributing to the UN Decade of ESD;
6. Decide to extend the mandate of the Steering Committee and request it to develop and start implementing, with the support of the UNECE, an assistance programme taking into account the needs expressed by the member States;
7. Invite stakeholders as well as bilateral and multilateral donors to contribute to and support the implementation process;
8. Decide that our future ministerial conferences should be held on a regular basis every four or five years, back to back with the “Environment for Europe” Conferences, as appropriate, providing a broad framework bringing together a wide range of stakeholders.

⁴ United Nations General Assembly resolution 57/254 of 20 December 2002

⁵ For countries with a federal governmental structure, all references to “national” apply to “State”, as appropriate