

**UNECE Strategy On Education for Sustainable Development**  
**First Steering Committee**  
**Geneva, 13-14 December 2005**

**Contribution of ITALY to the discussion**

(Paolo Soprano, Head of delegation)

Agenda Item 5 Input for the sixth “Environment for Europe” Conference  
(Belgrade, September – October 2007)

Italy agrees with the objective of the Strategy to strengthen capacity building and sharing of experiences and to this extent supported the last Mediterranean Regional Conference in Athens. Furthermore Italy considers cooperation and partnership as an important tool to promote and support a wider cohesion among the UNECE member states throughout the ESD process. In other words, Italy is convinced that working together in the ESD sector could contribute to reinforce a common culture for Europe based on shared scenarios, common objectives and equal opportunities. This could also contribute to the “Environment for Europe” Conference as it represents a common starting point.

To contribute to the Belgrade Conference in an appropriate way, Italy suggests to collect the compilation of national good practices around thematic areas as indicated also by the Working Group of Senior Officials in charge of organising the Conference.

Furthermore, as the Belgrade Conference will be held two years after the official launch of the Decade on ESD and two years after the starting of the implementation process of the UNECE Strategy, we consider this ministerial conference represents a good opportunity to share and find a common way to face difficulties on the implementation and to reinforce the challenges and achievements.

To this extent, we consider more appropriate a plenary session although it is not sufficient. We suggest to find occasions to deepen the role of ESD as a cross-cutting issue in a chosen thematic issue or priority area, for example energy for sustainable development or climate change. In other words, the scheme we suggest is articulated in two different sessions:

1. a plenary session where ministers of environment and education will report on the national progresses on the implementation of the Strategy (obstacles, challenges and achievements), using the reporting issues proposed and the indicators for the phase one;
2. a panel discussion, where a group of experts will debate with representatives of institutions involved in the implementation of the strategy, regarding the role of ESD as a tool of implementation in a predefined sector of policies in accordance with the Efe agenda. Substantially, this occasion for in-depth analysis will support, throughout suggestions and perspectives, the implementation of the Strategy, thus allowing its progress. In order to structure a profitable discussion we suggest that the secretariat or the Bureau of the Steering Committee calls for and collects a series of questions provided by the national Focal Points and aimed at stimulating the debate on the basis of their practical needs and specific national contexts regarding the implementation of the Strategy.

**UNECE Strategy On Education for Sustainable Development**  
**Second meeting of the Bureau**  
**Geneva, 23 February 2006**

**Inputs to the sixth “Environment for Europe” Conference (Belgrade, September – October 2007)**

**Additional proposals submitted by Italy**

**A. Integration of processes on SD and ESD.**

A number of countries, such as Italy, are strengthening linkages among international processes on Sustainable Development and UNECE process on Education for Sustainable Development in the framework of the UN Decade.

Considering these efforts, we think that the integration and introduction of ESD into different policy processes could be a good contribution to the EfE Conference.

The integration of ESD into different documents of ongoing processes (for example CSD cycle, Governing Council of UNEP, Marrakech process, regional sustainable development strategies, etc.) could be done considering it as a contribution to the UN Decade and a step towards the implementation of the UNECE Strategy on ESD at the international level.

This could represent not only a good way to answer to the Johannesburg recommendation aimed at integrating processes, but also, more practically, to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure the efficiency of investments in human and financial resources.

How can we represent this commitment at the next Belgrade Conference (ESD Segment)?

Firstly, it is necessary to coordinate the timing of different processes with the decade implementation, and when possible with the timetable set by UNECE ESD Strategy Plan of implementation.

Secondly, it would be useful if each country could prepare a list of its planned activities, which could integrate ESD issues, for contributing to different international processes. The compilation of best practices by each country, planned by UNECE Strategy for EfE Conference, could result more complete if, beside national activities on ESD, it would picture the complete overview of actions at international level that countries carry out and that could support and facilitate the UNECE ESD implementation process.

We would like to remind the different contributions planned by Italy (but it would regard many other countries) to different Institution, organisations or implementing processes in which we are working, as for example:

- the task force established by the Swedish government in cooperation with UNEP on sustainable consumption and production within the overall framework of the Marrakech process,
- the implementation of UNEP Tunza Program,
- different Type II Partnership Initiatives on issues directly or indirectly related to ESD,
- the integration of ESD into the preparatory documents to the CSD 14 session - both as a cross-cutting issue and as a tool of implementation on achieving SD objectives in each of the four thematic clusters.

We would like to suggest to the Bureau to consider the opportunity of widening the compilation of best practices by including the above mentioned issues. As an alternative these

issues could be included in a document of the ESD Segment of the EfE Conference outcomes as further input to the future implementation process.

#### B. Youth involvement in ESD segment of EfE Conference and in UNECE ESD implementing process of Strategy.

We would like also to invite the Bureau to reflect on the suggestion of organising a space or a side event, during the EfE Conference, to promote and encourage youth participation both at the ESD segment of EfE Conference and to the implementation of the UNECE ESD Strategy, accordingly with Chapter 25 of Agenda 21.

For example, the contribution of UN-ECE Governments to the UNEP Tunza Program could consist of promoting and supporting the youth participation at the Conference as it happened during the last Conference in Kiev.

However, Italy believes that it should be crucial to involve youth through national organisations on ESD issues. To this end we are preparing a proposal to involve the Italian Ministry of Education in this project.

This could also represent a contribution both to the UNEP Program and to the UNECE Strategy implementation and at the same time it could represent a significant contribution of ESD to EfE Conference.

Why is it important to involve youth in this process?

- Improving decision-making: Considering the most advanced pedagogical theory, which addresses teachers to improve youth participation in the organization of school programs, it would be appropriate to apply the same methodology also in the implementation process of ESD Strategy, leading to more accurate, relevant and transparent decisions regarding youth in particular;
- Improving young people's skills and developing skills working in partnership: Participation helps to develop skills that are useful for debate, communication, negotiation and decision-making.
- Enhancing democratic processes: Representative democracy can be strengthened by assuring to young people organizations the opportunity to play their role in SD; agencies and communities gain new opportunities in developing better services for children and young people.
- Promoting youth consideration: Participation is an important aid to young people protection and consideration. A recurring theme of successive inquiries highlights that often the lack to listen to the needs of young people leads to a failure of achieving sustainability. SD concept, as a matter of fact, is addressed to the future generations. We have to start considering first of all the young generations perspectives.

Should the Bureau consider these suggestions positively, it will be possible to actively involve national and international youth organisations to participate in organising the above mentioned side event at the EfE Conference.