

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

Revised by the fourth meeting of the Bureau¹

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 generations,²

Confirming the importance of the principle of sustainable development as the key to a globalization that secures environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources, poverty eradication, sustainable consumption and production, and enhances justice and civil rights, gender equality and the rights of children³,

Reaffirming the importance of education for sustainable development as a tool for capacity-building that enables 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 the environment and education sectors as well as all other relevant sectors and stakeholders, especially educators and non-governmental organizations, has contributed significantly to the successful start of the implementation of the Strategy,

Welcoming progress to date in implementing education for sustainable development in our countries and the advances in regional and subregional cooperation in this area,

Welcoming the significant contribution of non-governmental organizations of the UNECE region to the development and implementation of informal and non-formal education.

Recognizing that the implementation process is benefiting from the experience gained both within the region and globally, and welcoming the fruitful cooperation between 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 Development⁴ and brings a substantive contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals⁵ and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development⁶ (UN Decade of ESD), led by UNESCO at the global level,

Welcoming ESD-related developments taking place in the European Union and at subregional levels, including in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and particularly in Central Asia (EECCA), in South-Eastern Europe (SEE) and in the Mediterranean,

Supporting the streamlining of relevant initiatives and the strengthening of synergies among processes aimed at achieving ESD and sustainable development as well as between ESD-related activities taking place within the frameworks of the UN Decade of ESD, the UNECE Strategy for ESD, the “Environment for Europe” process, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development, the Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development and the European Union,

¹ Amendments are highlighted

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 As addressed by the Convention of the Rights of Child, United Nations, 1989.

⁴ Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002.

⁵ United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/55/2 of 18 September 2000.

⁶ United Nations General Assembly resolution 57/254 of 20 December 2002.

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 evolving concept and that its implementation can have both a short-term effect determined by favourable policies and a wider impact on society that 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 and partnerships. It should particularly address those areas with urgent needs, should aim to secure the participation of the countries of the region and beyond, and should be based on a set of common priorities and a long-term perspective;
3. Urge our Governments to take part in the further work on fostering national processes and to ensure that appropriate resources are made available in their respective countries for this purpose;
4. Urge our Governments to monitor the implementation process on the basis of 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 further strengthen cooperation with UNESCO, the lead agency of the UN Decade of ESD, in order to make use of all available synergies;
6. Invite UNECE to continue providing secretariat support to further the process in cooperation with all relevant international actors, thereby contributing to the UN Decade of ESD;
7. Decide to extend the mandate of the Steering Committee until 2015 and request it to prepare, with the support of the UNECE secretariat, a Work Plan of Implementation for Phase II of the Strategy, including specific assistance taking into account the results of the first report on the Implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD as well as needs identified by the subregional workshops for SEE and EECCA, and expressed by the member States;
8. Invite stakeholders as well as bilateral and multilateral donors to contribute to and support the implementation process; and;
9. Decide that our future ministerial segments should be held on a regular basis, preferably at the “Environment for Europe” conferences, as appropriate, providing a broad framework bringing together a wide range of stakeholders.
