

**WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNECE STRATEGY FOR EDUCATION
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE SUB-REGION OF EASTERN EUROPE,
CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA**

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Presentation by representative of Belarus

Conceptual organizational issues of education for sustainable development are stipulated in the National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2020. The document envisages the following measures to be undertaken within the period:

- updating of normative and legal basis for environmental education and awareness raising;
- including environmental protection issues as well as formation of ecological culture, environmental education and awareness raising, sustainable development into national, regional and local programs of social and economic development, including special-purpose programs;
- ensuring environmental training as well as retraining of pedagogical staff at all the levels of compulsory and extended education;
- quickening interest of entrepreneurial business in the transition to sustainable development based on the principles of "Agenda XXI";
- reinforcing material and technical base for professional training of ecologists.

Plans for the first period (up to 2010) envisage the following:

- elaborating mechanism of interaction and activity coordination of all stakeholders involved in the system of continuous environmental education taking into account the objectives of sustainable development: cultural and educational institutions, environmental protection structures, educational administration bodies and other institutions of executive and legislative branches, nongovernmental organizations;
- reinforcing the role of NGOs and citizens in the decision making process and implementing measures to solve these tasks;
- elaborating a Concept and a National educational plan on the basis of the UNECE education strategy taking into account the priorities of sustainable development;
- undertaking efforts to create unitary informational, ecological and educational space;
- reinforcing the role of mass media and NGOs in the process of awareness raising for sustainable development;
- including the aspects of sustainable development into all the programs of basic training of teachers as well as into retraining programs.

The second stage involves transition to education for sustainable development by means of integrating the aspects of sustainability at all the levels of the national system of education and awareness raising.

The system of environmental education created in the Republic of Belarus started its active development in 1991. It includes pre-school, basic schooling and secondary school, vocational, higher and post-graduate education as well as extra curriculum activities, advanced training and retraining. The primary aspect in the framework of activities carried out by all educational institutions is to ensure that the minimum of environmental knowledge necessary to form ecological culture of the citizens is

acquired. It is ensured by means of compulsory teaching of the foundations of environmental protection and environmental management. Moreover, there is a system of referential kindergartens, schools and libraries.

Environmental education of the population is carried out by all educational establishments and cultural institutions. For the former the target groups are children and students. Parents and other close relatives are also involved along with the pedagogical staff themselves. Among cultural institutions there are museums, zoos, botanical gardens. Libraries and NGOs are also involved in the process. Mass media, including television, play a substantial role.

There is no separate legal act on environmental education in the Republic of Belarus. However environmental aspect is an important component of the state educational policy. It is reflected in the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Education", the Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Environmental Protection", the latter containing the Article "Education, awareness raising and scientific research in the field of environmental protection".

Concept of environmental education has been elaborated and already two national programs on this matter have been implemented. The programs declare the ideas and principles of sustainable development as basic for education. In all the regions of the country there are local programs on environmental education and awareness raising for children. Practice of elaborating local Agenda XXI is being expanded, including such schools.

Information distribution is an important element, complementing the process of environmental education and awareness raising. Information support system in the country was created to increase the efficiency of environmental management and environmental protection mechanisms. The Republic of Belarus has ratified the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (The Aarhus Convention) and undertaken measures for its implementation. The Aarhus center was set up and is actively operating. Thus in the first half of 2006 three educational seminars for the teachers of vocational schools and technical colleges of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. The programs of the seminars included two-hour blocks on education for sustainable development.

In 2001 the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection established the Public Coordinating Ecological Council. The same councils have been established in all the country's regions and the city of Minsk. This became an important step in the development of democratic process of decision making.

A whole number of events has already been implemented in the framework of the UNECE decade on education for sustainable development.

Thus before signing the Strategy, a special edition of scientific pedagogical magazine "Narodnaya Asveta" ("Narodnoye Prosveshcheniye") came out of print.

On the 5-6th of April, 2005 at the premises of the Belarusian State University an international forum "Education for Sustainable Development" was held under the auspices of UNESCO and the Council for cooperation of the CIS countries in the field of education. Representatives of the leading educational establishments of the CIS countries participated in its work.

On the 12-14th of September, 2006 an international conference "Environmental education as an important provision for sustainable development" was held at the premises of the National ecological center for children and youth. The first one took place in 2004.

Moreover, programs to introduce aspects of education for sustainable development are implemented in 6 leading higher educational establishments of Belarus in the framework of the activities of the Baltic University.

Work is also being carried out in the sphere of informal education.

On the 28th of June 2005 a “round” table “Education for sustainable development. Perspectives in the Republic of Belarus” was organized for NGOs in Environmental informational center “Eco-info” of the Central scientific library of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Belarus. Tasks and implementation methods of the UNECE Strategy of education for sustainable development for the non-governmental sector of Belarus were outlined there and a Resolution was adopted.

A festival of informal education was carried out on the 15-17th of September, 2006 at the Minsk international educational center with a “round” table “Education for sustainable development” and a workshop “Education for sustainable development, what do we know about it” held in its framework.

At present active work is being carried out in the Republic of Belarus to create a Coordination Council on Education for Sustainable Development at the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus and elaborate a corresponding scientific and methodical basis for it.

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