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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

High-level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries
(Vilnius, 17-18 March 2005)
(Agenda items 5 and 6)

**VILNIUS FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNECE
STRATEGY FOR EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**
adopted at the High-level meeting

1. The Task Force on Education for Sustainable Development recognized that various projects in relation to education for sustainable development (ESD) are taking place in the region and that these should be taken note of and used in support of the implementation of the Strategy. At the same time, it agreed that there are still challenges in implementing education for sustainable development effectively, including strengthening cooperation among governments and stakeholders, improving education systems to address the interdisciplinary nature of education for sustainable development, improving and streamlining formal, non-formal and informal learning, and mobilizing adequate institutional and material provisions for education for sustainable development. The UNECE Strategy for education for sustainable development is a useful tool for addressing those issues.
2. Furthermore, the Task Force noted that experiences and needs varied in different parts of the UNECE region. It is, therefore, important to further assess the needs in different subregions and strengthen subregional cooperation. This would make it possible to concentrate on those issues that are particularly important for a given subregion, thereby helping countries to attain the best practical results. The countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-Eastern Europe emphasized their need for support to implement the strategy. Partnerships with these countries for the implementation of the Strategy should be encouraged.
3. At its eleventh session (13 - 15 October 2004), the Committee on Environmental Policy discussed the proposal of the Task Force and there was broad

support for continuing the process. The Committee agreed that the framework for implementation should be further discussed at the High-level meeting on 17-18 March 2005.

4. Once the Strategy has been adopted at the High-level meeting, member States should begin to implement it without delay. The UNECE secretariat will, resources permitting, facilitate implementation. Activities will be pursued in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, regional environmental centres, relevant NGOs and other organizations and institutions.

5. The Strategy for education for sustainable development could also help to further the EECCA Environment Strategy.

6. The implementation of the Strategy is a continuous, long-term process, with three major phases:

(a) **Phase I** (until 2007): countries will identify what they are already doing that fits within the remit of the Strategy and also identify priorities for further action required to implement the Strategy. This will include a review of current policies, legal and operational frameworks, financial mechanisms, and educational activities. It will also include the identification of obstacles and gaps. Remedial action should be considered to overcome weaknesses. Countries should approve national implementation plans as a framework and operational tool for implementation. Evaluation methods and indicators for the implementation of ESD, in particular qualitative ones, should be developed. The results should be presented to the "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference in Belgrade in September-October 2007;

(b) **Phase II** (until 2010): the implementation of the strategy should be well under way. Countries should review progress made in the implementation of their national/State strategies and revise them, if necessary;

(c) **Phase III** (until 2015): countries should have made considerable progress in implementing education for sustainable development.

7. This paper was prepared on the basis of the considerations expressed by the Task Force and taking into account comments provided by the Committee on Environmental Policy. It suggests activities that aim at facilitating the start of the implementation of phase I and, in some cases, beyond. These activities are focused on: coordination, sharing experience and good practices; capacity-building; raising public awareness; and strengthening subregional cooperation. It is also suggested to develop a set of indicators to measure the effectiveness of the implementation.

I. ACTIVITIES

A. Subregional workshops

8. Subregional workshops (e.g. EECCA, South-Eastern Europe, North America and Western Europe) would facilitate work on specific issues that are particularly important for a given subregion and strengthen subregional cooperation. These activities should be organized and coordinated with relevant events that take place within other processes, including those of the Council of Europe, the Bologna process, EU, Baltic 21, etc. Broad involvement of NGOs is essential.

9. Funds are required to cover the organizational expenses and the travel of eligible delegates from countries with economies in transition and NGOs to the respective subregional workshops.

B. Compilation of national good practices

10. Governments will be invited to provide the secretariat with examples of their good practices in education for sustainable development. A compilation could be prepared (up to 120 pages) and published electronically (CD-Rom) and in print. Funds are required to cover translation into English, French and Russian, and a consultancy fee for formatting and designing the publication. Printing would be at the expense of the United Nations. Costs might be reduced if countries provide input in three languages. Alternatively, this compilation could be in electronic format only and be posted on the UNECE web site. This activity could be an input to the Belgrade Conference.

C. Development of indicators

11. The High-level Meeting may establish a small group of experts to develop indicators to measure the effectiveness of the implementation of the Strategy. Its members should have extensive experience in national and international environmental and education policies, in environmental education and in education for sustainable development. Its composition should ensure equitable geographical representation of the UNECE member States. Representatives of international organizations and major groups could be invited to join. The group would hold about four meetings in 2005 and 2006. Funds are required to cover travel costs of one person from up to five eligible countries and one NGO representative. Member States may wish to host meetings (for terms of reference, see annex II).

D. Use of a web portal

12. A web portal on education for sustainable development would be an important tool to facilitate the sharing of good practices, innovative approaches, experiences, projects and other information. UNECE could explore the possibility of having link to or using jointly the web portal on ESD developed by UNESCO. The funds required to cover possible expenses can be estimated at a later stage.

II. COORDINATION AND REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION

13. To ensure efficient regional governance and communication, focal points for education for sustainable development are required in all UNECE member States and in relevant international organizations. The High-level Meeting proposes to set up a steering committee on ESD to decide on the Strategy's implementation and review its progress. The steering committee would include representatives of both sectors environment and education, as well as observers from relevant stakeholders. It could hold annual meetings or meet less frequently if deemed appropriate. In order to streamline logistics and budgetary concerns its meetings could be organized back to back with the meetings of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy. Funding would be provided to one person per eligible country to participate in these meetings (for terms of reference, see annex I).

14. The "Environment for Europe" process could be used as a platform for the regional high-level promotion of the implementation of the Strategy. At their "Environment for Europe" Conferences, Ministers may wish to discuss and assess progress in the Strategy's implementation based on national and other relevant reports (e.g. NGO reports). Ministers for Education should be invited to participate in these sessions. The first meeting could be held as part of the Belgrade Conference in 2007 or back-to-back with it. Funds required to assist delegates from the eligible countries to participate in this meeting should be considered within the preparatory framework for the Belgrade Conference.

15. Environmental performance reviews in both the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNECE programmes may also include an assessment of the implementation of policies for education for sustainable development.

16. Continuity is essential for the success of the Strategy. To carry out the above-mentioned tasks, extrabudgetary resources will be needed to cover the salary of a P3 post for 28 months to manage the process and provide substantive documentation.

III. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

17. Effective implementation of the Strategy depends, *inter alia*, on the availability of sufficient financial and human resources. There is a need for stable and predictable sources of funding, and a fair sharing of the burden should be the guiding principle of any financial arrangements established for this purpose.

18. A voluntary scheme of contributions, in cash or in kind, by countries and other interested donors could provide an effective and workable solution in the short to medium term. The proposed scheme is: for "big" donors to contribute €20,000 or more, for "medium" donors to contribute €2,000 or more, and for "small" donors to contribute €200 or more. The Meeting may consider establishing stable and predictable financial arrangements through this interim, voluntary scheme of contributions. A budget is set out in the annex III.

Annex I**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE UNECE STEERING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT****Mandate**

1. Pursuant to the adoption of the Strategy for education for sustainable development, the High-level Meeting establishes the UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to decide on the Strategy's implementation and review its progress.*
2. The UNECE secretariat will provide secretariat support to the Steering Committee in accordance with UNECE rules and practices.

Composition

3. The members of the Steering Committee will be designated by Governments of the UNECE member States. The Steering Committee will include at least representatives of both sectors, environment and education, and will be open-ended. Its members will be responsible for representing the consolidated national position in the work of the Steering Committee. The candidatures for membership should be submitted to the secretariat by June 2005. Representatives of international organizations and non-governmental organizations will be invited as observers, as decided by the Steering Committee. UNESCO will be a permanent observer.

Purpose

4. The Steering Committee will constitute the principal decision-making body for the activities on the Strategy for education for sustainable development in the UNECE region and be responsible for giving guidance and strategic directions to the implementation of the Strategy. It will also review the progress of its implementation. In particular, it will:
 - (a) Promote and coordinate the implementation of the Strategy with other international activities, seeking synergies and avoiding overlaps;
 - (b) Monitor the progress of the implementation of the Strategy; prepare assessments of progress made and propose priorities for actions, identify issues and propose corrective measures, where appropriate;
 - (c) Liaise and cooperate closely with relevant intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations that are active in education, the environment and sustainable development;
 - (d) Facilitate cross-sectoral coordination and international cooperation of public and private institutions;

* For relevant related information, see the website of the UNECE Steering Committee for Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme, <http://www.thepep.org/en/committee/committee.htm>

- (e) Establish ad hoc working groups, task forces and other bodies as needed to implement the activities;
- (f) Provide guidance on the need for possible new instruments promoting education for sustainable development;
- (g) Serve as a forum for the consideration of issues related to education for sustainable development at regional and international level;
- (h) Prepare ESD-related inputs for the Commission for Sustainable Development and other relevant processes;
- (i) Liaise, as required, with the other United Nations regional commissions for matters related to its competence;
- (j) Keep the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy informed about its activities, unless it is decided otherwise.

Officers

5. At each ordinary meeting, a chairperson and a vice-chairperson will be elected from among the representatives of the UNECE member States present at the meeting. Officers should represent different sectors (e.g. environment and education). They shall serve as the officers of the Steering Committee until their successors have been elected.

Meetings

6. The meetings of the Steering Committee will be convened by UNECE . They will ordinarily be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), unless there is a feasible proposal by a member State to host the meeting. In order to streamline logistics and budgetary requirements, the meetings of the Steering Committee could be organized back to back with the meetings of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy. If resources permit, funding will be provided to one person per eligible country to participate in these meetings, in accordance with the rules established by the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy. The Steering Committee will take decisions by consensus and vote on decisions, if required.

Duration

7. The UNECE Steering Committee on ESD will be in office until the High-level Meeting in conjunction with the next Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (tentatively October 2007).

Annex II**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON INDICATORS****Mandate**

1. Pursuant to the adoption of the Strategy for education for sustainable development, the High-level Meeting establishes the ad hoc group of experts to develop indicators to measure the effectiveness of the implementation of the Strategy. The report of the group will be presented for endorsement to the Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development.
2. The UNECE secretariat will provide secretariat support to the group in accordance with UNECE rules and practices.

Composition

3. The members of the group should have extensive experience in national and international environmental and education policies, in environmental education and in education for sustainable development. Its composition should ensure equitable geographical representation of the UNECE member States.
4. The members of the expert group will be designated by Governments. Representatives of international organizations, in particular UNESCO, and non-governmental organizations can be invited as observers. Candidatures should be submitted to the secretariat by June 2005.

Annex III

**UNECE EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
TENTATIVE BUDGET**

(in United States dollars¹, calculations are based on the United Nations scale of assessments)

Report on the use of funds:**I. CONTRIBUTIONS**

A	Beginning balance as at 1 January 2003 (Sweden)	15 000
B.	Received in August 2003 (Sweden)	34 200
	Received in January 2004 (United Kingdom)	53 300
	Received in April 2004 (Italy)	24 600
	Received in August 2004 (United Kingdom)	19 900
	Received in November 2004 (Austria)	13 000
<u>Subtotal (B)</u>		<u>160 000</u>
C.	Received in December 2003 (Netherlands) – is obligated for salary of staff	59 980
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS (A + B + C)		219 980

II. EXPENDITURES

A.	Travel of eligible delegates to two meetings of the Task Force and four meetings of the drafting group	37 530
B.	Staff travel to the relevant meetings	8 400
C.	1 P3 staff salary (part-time) ²	59 980
<u>Subtotal (A+B+C):</u>		<u>105 910</u>
D.	Programme support costs: 13% of US\$ 105 910	13 770
TOTAL EXPENDITURES (A + B + C + D)		119 680

¹ Figures are rounded.

² Expenditures for staff are calculated from February 2004 to July 2005 (inclusive).

III. BALANCE (1st December 2004) **+ 100 300**

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES FOR DECEMBER 2004 – NOVEMBER 2007:

1.	A joint high-level meeting, March 2005 ³	70 000
2.	Subregional workshops ⁴	150 000
3.	Compilation of national good practices ⁵	25 000
4.	First meeting of the steering committee, 2006 ⁶	30 000
5.	Expert group on indicators ⁷	40 000
6.	Process management ⁸	290 000

Subtotal: 605 000

Programme support costs: 13% of US\$ 605 000 78 650

TOTAL **683 650**

BALANCE (brought forward; as at 1st December 2004) **+ 100 300**

TOTAL REQUIRED (by November 2007, inclusive) **583 350**
(TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES - BALANCE)

³ Funding will be provided to two persons per eligible country for a meeting of one day and a half.

⁴ The total estimated funds should cover organizational expenses and travel of delegates from countries with economies in transition and NGOs to the subregional workshops.

⁵ The sum covers translation into English, French and Russian and consultancy fee for formatting and designing the publication.

⁶ Funding will be provided to one person per eligible country to participate in the meeting.

⁷ Funding will be provided to one person from up to five eligible countries and one NGO representative for four meetings.

⁸ 1 P3 staff salary (US\$ 275 000) and travel (US\$ 15 000) for 28 months: August 2005 - November 2007 (inclusive).