



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

CEP/AC.13/2005/3/Rev.1
23 March 2005

ENGLISH/ FRENCH/ RUSSIAN

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)

**UNECE STRATEGY FOR EDUCATION
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

adopted at the High-level meeting

Vision

Our vision for the future is of a region that embraces common values of solidarity, equality and mutual respect between people, countries and generations. It is a region characterized by sustainable development, including economic vitality, justice, social cohesion, environmental protection and the sustainable management of natural resources, so as to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.¹

Education, in addition to being a human right,² is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development and an essential tool for good governance, informed decision-making and the promotion of democracy. Therefore, education for sustainable development can help translate our vision into reality. Education for sustainable development develops and strengthens the capacity of individuals, groups, communities, organizations and countries to make judgements and choices in favour of sustainable development. It can promote a shift in people's mindsets and in so doing enable them to make our world safer, healthier and more prosperous, thereby improving the quality of life. Education for sustainable development can provide critical reflection and greater awareness and empowerment so that new visions and concepts can be explored and new methods and tools developed.

¹ See also World Commission on Environment and Development, "Our Common Future", 1987.

² See also Statement on Education for Sustainable Development; fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", Kiev, 2003.

Introduction

1. The mandate to develop the Strategy derives from the statement made by the UNECE Environment Ministers at their fifth “Environment for Europe” Conference (Kiev, May 2003). The Strategy benefited from experience gained both within the region and globally. It is a contribution to and in line with the Framework for a draft implementation scheme for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and should be used as a foundation for the regional implementation of the Decade and outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.
2. The Strategy was developed through a participatory process involving governments, educational institutions, NGOs and other stakeholders of the UNECE region as well as international organizations.
3. This Strategy should facilitate the introduction and promotion of education for sustainable development (ESD) in the UNECE region and thereby contribute to the realization of our common vision.
4. The UNECE region encompasses countries with a rich cultural diversity and with different socio-economic and political conditions. The prospects of sustainable development depend to a great extent on changing lifestyles and patterns of consumption and production, respecting at the same time the needs of countries where poverty alleviation is still a major concern.
5. The region has both preconditions and needs for implementing the Strategy. Most countries in the region have established education systems employing professional educators, ensured access to basic education and equal rights to education for all, achieved high levels of literacy, developed a scientific potential and provided for the participation of civil society. However, there are still challenges to be met in order to implement ESD effectively. Education systems should be improved to address the interdisciplinary nature of ESD, the involvement of civil society should be strengthened and adequate institutional and material provisions should be mobilized.

I. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

6. The aim of this Strategy is to encourage UNECE member States to develop and incorporate ESD into their formal education systems, in all relevant subjects, and in non-formal and informal education. This will equip people with knowledge of and skills in sustainable development, making them more competent and confident and increasing their opportunities for acting for a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature³ and with concern for social values, gender equity and cultural diversity.

³ The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development states that human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development, and that they are entitled to a healthy and productive life, in harmony with nature (See also Plan of Implementation, World Summit on Sustainable Development, UN, 2002).

7. The objectives of this Strategy, which will contribute to the achievement of the aim, are to:

- (a) Ensure that policy, regulatory and operational frameworks support ESD;
- (b) Promote SD through formal, non-formal and informal learning;
- (c) Equip educators with the competence to include SD in their teaching;
- (d) Ensure that adequate tools and materials for ESD are accessible;
- (e) Promote research on and development of ESD;
- (f) Strengthen cooperation on ESD at all levels within the UNECE region.

II. SCOPE

8. The Strategy will be adopted by interested UNECE member States. States outside the region are also encouraged to follow it.

9. The Strategy is addressed to governments, motivating and advising them on how to develop policies and practices that incorporate sustainable development into education and learning with the involvement of educators and other stakeholders. Since education for sustainable development must take account of local, subnational, national and regional circumstances, it may place varying degrees of emphasis on the different aspects of sustainable development, depending on the country and the field of education. This Strategy will serve as a flexible framework for the countries of the region, given that its implementation is driven by countries' priorities and initiatives addressing their specific needs and circumstances.

10. The Strategy encourages interdepartmental⁴, multi-stakeholder cooperation and partnerships, thereby stimulating investment of material and human resources in ESD.

11. The Strategy encompasses the basic provisions of Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments⁵.

12. The Strategy supports the implementation of the communication, education, public-participation and awareness-raising provisions of multilateral environmental and other relevant agreements. It should also support the implementation of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Aarhus Convention⁶,

⁴ Between State bodies.

⁵ The Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO, 2000.

⁶ The UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, Aarhus (Denmark), 1998.

the United Nations Millennium Development Goals⁷ and Quality Education⁸ by promoting transparent, inclusive and accountable decision-making as well as people's empowerment.

III. PRINCIPLES

13. There is a need to consider the evolving meaning of SD. The development of a sustainable society should, therefore, be seen as a continuous learning process, exploring issues and dilemmas, where appropriate answers and solutions may change as our experience increases. Learning targets for ESD should include knowledge, skills, understanding, attitude and values.

14. ESD is still developing as a broad and comprehensive concept, encompassing interrelated environmental, economic and social issues. It broadens the concept of environmental education (EE), which has increasingly addressed a wide range of development subjects. ESD also encompasses various elements of development and other targeted forms of education. Therefore, environmental education should be elaborated and complemented with other fields of education in an integrative approach towards education for sustainable development.

15. Key themes of SD include among other things poverty alleviation, citizenship, peace, ethics, responsibility in local and global contexts, democracy and governance, justice, security, human rights, health, gender equity, cultural diversity, rural and urban development, economy, production and consumption patterns, corporate responsibility, environmental protection, natural resource management and biological and landscape diversity⁹. Addressing such diverse themes in ESD requires a holistic approach¹⁰.

16. While implementing ESD, the following areas should be addressed: improving basic education, reorienting education towards sustainable development, increasing public awareness and promoting training¹¹.

17. ESD should foster respect for and understanding of different cultures and embrace contributions from them. The role of indigenous peoples should be recognized and they should be a partner in the process of developing educational programmes. Traditional knowledge should be valued and conserved as an integral part of ESD.

18. Learners at all levels should be encouraged to use systemic, critical and creative thinking and reflection in both local and global contexts; these are prerequisites for action for sustainable development.¹²

⁷ United Nations Millennium Declaration, The General Assembly, 8th plenary meeting, 2000.

⁸ Ministers of Education Joint Communiqué, 32nd General Conference of UNESCO, 2003

⁹ See also Framework for a draft implementation scheme for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO, 2003.

¹⁰ See also Statement on Education for Sustainable Development.

¹¹ See also Agenda 21.

¹² See also Statement on Education for Sustainable Development.

19. ESD is a lifelong process from early childhood to higher and adult education and goes beyond formal education. As values, lifestyles and attitudes are established from an early age, the role of education is of particular importance for children. Since learning takes place as we take on different roles in our lives, ESD has to be considered as a “life-wide” process. It should permeate learning programmes at all levels, including vocational education, training for educators, and continuing education for professionals and decision makers.
20. Higher education should contribute significantly to ESD in the development of appropriate knowledge and competences.
21. ESD should take into account diverse local, national and regional circumstances as well as the global context, seeking a balance between global and local interests.
22. ESD could also contribute to developing rural and urban areas by increasing access to education and improving its quality. This would be particularly beneficial to people living in rural areas.
23. Addressing the ethical dimension, including issues of equity, solidarity and interdependence in the present generation and between generations, as well as relationships between humans and nature and between rich and poor, is central to sustainable development and, therefore, vital for ESD. Responsibility is inherent in ethics and becomes a practical matter for ESD.
24. Formal ESD should be permeated by experience of life and work beyond the classroom. Educators¹³ involved in ESD play an important role in facilitating this process and in encouraging dialogue among pupils and students and the authorities and civil society¹⁴. In this way, ESD presents an opportunity for education to overcome its isolation vis-à-vis society.
25. ESD involves initiatives for developing a culture of mutual respect in communication and decision-making, shifting the focus away from solely transmitting information towards facilitating participatory learning¹⁵. ESD should therefore be recognized for its contribution to interactive and integrated policy- and decision-making. The role of ESD in developing and enhancing participatory democracy¹⁶ should also be considered, in particular as a contribution to resolving conflicts in society and achieving justice, including through Local Agenda 21.
26. ESD requires multi-stakeholder cooperation and partnership. The main actors include governments and local authorities, the education and scientific sectors, the health sector, the private sector, industry, transport and agriculture, trade and labour

¹³ Educators are teachers, lecturers, trainers and all other professionals with educational tasks, as well as voluntary education leaders.

¹⁴ See also Statement on Education for Sustainable Development.

¹⁵ Thessaloniki Declaration; Thessaloniki, Greece, 1997. Some countries use the term “social learning” for participatory learning.

¹⁶ Agenda 21.

unions, the mass media, non-governmental organizations, various communities, indigenous peoples and international organizations.

27. ESD should promote provisions of multilateral environmental agreements and relevant international agreements related to SD.

IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

28. ESD demands a reorientation away from focusing entirely on providing knowledge towards dealing with problems and identifying possible solutions. Therefore, education should retain its traditional focus on individual subjects and at the same time open the door to multi- and inter-disciplinary examination of real-life situations. This could have an impact on the structure of learning programmes and on the teaching methods, demanding that educators change from being solely transmitters and learners change from being solely recipients. Instead both should form a team.

29. Formal education institutions play an important role in developing capacities from an early age, providing knowledge and influencing attitudes and behaviour.. It is important to ensure that all pupils and students acquire appropriate knowledge of SD and are aware of the impact of decisions that do not support sustainable development. An educational institution, as a whole, including pupils and students, teachers, managers and other staff as well as parents, should follow principles of SD.

30. It is important to support non-formal and informal ESD activities, since they are an essential complement to formal education, not least for adult learning. Non-formal ESD has a special role as it is often more learner-oriented, participatory and promotes lifelong learning. Informal learning in the workplace adds value for both employers and employees. Therefore, the cooperation among the different actors involved in all forms of ESD should be recognized and encouraged.

31. Appropriate initial training and re-training of educators and opportunities for them to share experiences are extremely important for the success of ESD. With heightened awareness and knowledge on sustainable development and, in particular, SD aspects in the areas where they work, educators can be more effective and lead by example. Training should also be closely linked to the relevant research findings on SD.

32. Teaching and learning in ESD are greatly enhanced by the content, quality and availability of instruction materials. Such materials, however, are not available in all countries. This is a problem for entire sector of formal education as well as non-formal and informal learning. Therefore considerable efforts should be devoted to developing and reproducing them. Coherence between the instruction materials of formal and non-formal education should be encouraged and the challenge is to ensure that they are relevant to SD and locally affordable.

33. To be effective ESD should:

(a) Be addressed in two ways: (i) through the integration of ESD themes across all relevant subjects, programmes and courses; and (ii) through the provision of specific subject programmes and courses;

(b) Focus on enabling meaningful learning experiences that foster sustainable behaviour, including in educational institutions, the workplace, families and communities;

(c) Increase cooperation and partnerships among members of the educational community and other stakeholders. Further involvement of the private sector and industry in educational processes will help to address rapid technological development and changing working conditions. Learning activities in close relation with society will add to learners' practical experience;

(d) Provide an insight into global, regional, national and local environmental problems explaining them by means of a life-cycle approach and focusing not only on the environmental impact, but also on the economic and social implications, addressing both the natural environment and that modified by humans;

(e) Use a wide range of participatory, process- and solution-oriented educational methods tailored to the learner. Apart from the traditional ones, these should include among other things discussions, conceptual and perceptual mapping, philosophical inquiry, value clarification, simulations, scenarios, modeling, role playing, games, information and communication technology (ICT), surveys, case studies, excursions and outdoor learning, learner-driven projects, good practice analyses, workplace experience and problem solving;

(f) Be supported by relevant instruction materials, such as, methodological, pedagogic and didactic publications, textbooks, visual aids, brochures, cases studies and good practices, electronic, audio and video resources.

34. Governments should be supportive of non-formal and informal learning because informed citizens and knowledgeable consumers are essential in enacting sustainability measures through their choices and actions, including local Agenda 21.

35. Non-formal and informal learning, including public awareness programmes, should aim to provide a better understanding of the links between social, economic and environmental issues in local and global contexts, including a time perspective. Communities, families, the media and NGOs are important actors in raising public awareness on SD.

36. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are important providers of informal and non-formal learning, able to implement processes of civil empowerment as well as integrating and transforming scientific knowledge and facts into easily understandable information. Their role as mediators between governments and the general public should be recognized, promoted and supported. Partnerships among NGOs, governments and the private sector would add significant value to ESD.

37. Mass media is a powerful force in guiding consumer choice and lifestyles, especially for children and young people. The challenge is to mobilize their know-how and distribution channels to pass reliable information and key messages on SD-related issues.

38. All sectors of the workforce can contribute to national, regional and global sustainability. The development of specialized training programmes to provide professionals and decision makers with the knowledge and skills to contribute to SD has been identified as a critical component of education for sustainable development.¹⁷

39. Thus, vocational and continuing education have a very important role to play and should therefore be offered to decision makers and all professionals, especially those with a role in planning and management. It should be aimed at building knowledge and awareness of SD. Continuing education has two main activity areas: (a) upgrading knowledge and skills; and (b) providing new competencies needed in different professions and in different situations. Continuing education is one of the areas that would benefit from cooperation among the education sector, stakeholders and the community at large.

40. Training programmes should address the key themes of SD, but at the same time take into consideration the needs of different professions and the relevance of these themes to their areas of work. Special attention should be given to subjects linked to the primary responsibility of a profession and its economic, social and environmental impacts.

41. For ESD to become part of an agenda for change towards a more sustainable society, education itself must be subject to change. Research that might contribute to ESD should be encouraged. There is a need for increased cooperation and partnerships between stakeholders in research and development activities, ranging from identifying issues to working with new knowledge and making it known and used. The results of research and development efforts should be shared with actors locally, regionally and globally, and be incorporated into different parts of the education system, experience and practice.

V. FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1 National/State implementation

42. Each country is responsible for implementing this Strategy. To include SD perspectives throughout education, strong political support will be necessary at all levels of governance. To that end, it is recommended that countries should translate this Strategy into their official language(s), and, as appropriate, language(s) of minorities, and distribute it to the relevant authorities and designate a focal point.

43. Effective implementation of the Strategy requires its provisions to be integrated into the planning, investment and management strategies of the State and local government for all levels of education and for all educational institutions and organizations. At the same time, the implementation should be in accordance with and benefit from other relevant State, bilateral and multilateral initiatives. The legal,

¹⁷ See also Framework for a draft implementation scheme for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

economic and communication instruments should be adapted to the State's circumstances. Thus, countries would implement the provisions, as appropriate, in relation to their legislation, policies and operational frameworks.

44. Countries should identify their existing obligations regarding communication, education and public participation and awareness raising in international environmental and other relevant agreements in order to address these in a coherent manner through ESD.

45. The education sector consists of a broad field of actors with different regulatory management systems in different countries. It is also geared to people of different ages and in different positions in life. The challenge will be to address and implement necessary reform of policy-making and the operational framework of the education sector on a basis of trust, inclusivity and subsidiarity, and to encourage self-evaluation. It is important that those responsible for formal, non-formal and informal education cooperate with other relevant State authorities in implementing this Strategy.

46. The cooperation, shared responsibility and leadership of all relevant State bodies should be recognized as an important mechanism for good governance and be strengthened. Education and Environment Ministries, in particular, should cooperate and take the lead in initiating and encouraging the further integration of SD concerns into formal education policies, programmes and curricula at all levels and assess the implementation of the Strategy. However, close and effective cooperation with other public authorities as well as with stakeholders is also required, in particular with authorities responsible for economy.

47. There is a need for a coordination mechanism for implementing the Strategy at the State level, as well as for sharing information and stimulating partnerships among different actors¹⁸. One option is to set up a "national ESD platform" possibly under the umbrella of the councils on sustainable development or other relevant bodies, bringing together professionals from different sectors.

48. National¹⁹ (State) implementation plans should serve as a core element of implementation. Countries should decide on a body that will be responsible for drafting their national implementation plan.

49. The national implementation plan should be developed with a participatory approach. Thus, all relevant stakeholders should be involved. It should take into consideration the actual situation in a country. Recognizing that countries may wish to set their own priorities and schedules for implementation in accordance with their needs, policies and programmes, the provisions of this chapter could serve as a guide for this work. National implementation plans should address objectives, activities, measures, tentative timetable, means of implementation and evaluation instruments.

¹⁸ Some countries have introduced the "knowledge management" approach.

¹⁹ For countries with a federal governmental structure, all references to national plans apply to State and sub-State plans, when appropriate.

2. Areas for actions

Ensure that policy, regulatory and operational frameworks support the promotion of ESD

50. Policy, legislation, operational frameworks and curricula should include and support ESD. Key actions to achieve this could be to: adopt frameworks for ESD for all levels of education; stimulate the development of interdepartmental and multi-stakeholder cooperation, including the establishment of consultative mechanisms, as appropriate; to integrate SD principles into the study programmes and special courses at all levels of higher education, especially in initial teacher training; improve the provision and management of education facilities towards SD and strengthen the connection between natural, economic, political and social sciences in interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and specialized studies. Interdisciplinary and specialized studies should be properly balanced.

Promote SD through formal, non-formal and informal learning

51. Raising public awareness of SD in and through institutions of formal education as well as communities, families, the media and NGOs should be encouraged.

52. Professional skills and knowledge of sustainable development should be improved continuously and, consequently, be part of the lifelong learning of individuals including those in sectors such as public administration, the private sector, industry, transport and agriculture. The development of new knowledge and the need to introduce new skills in order to give more specific substance to the concept of SD will remain a constant need, as many areas of expertise are constantly developing.

53. Key actions to achieve this could be to: offer SD-related learning opportunities in continuing education for professionals, including those in planning, management and the mass media; encourage and support community-based SD-awareness-raising activities; develop cooperation with NGOs and support their educational activities; promote cooperation among formal educational institutions and non-formal organizations as well as informal activities; encourage the media to inform and debate issues for SD to reach the general public.

Develop the competence within the education sector to engage in ESD

54. Educators, leaders and decision makers at all levels of education need to increase their knowledge about education for sustainable development in order to provide appropriate guidance and support. Therefore, competence-building efforts are necessary at all levels of both formal and non-formal education.

55. Key actions to achieve this could be to: stimulate competence development for staff in the education system, including actions for the leaders to increase their awareness of SD issues; develop criteria for validating professional competence in ESD; introduce and develop management systems for SD in formal educational institutions and non-formal education settings; include SD-related issues in training

and re-training programmes for educators for all levels of education; and encourage educators, including those involved in non-formal and informal education, to share experiences.

Ensure that adequate tools and materials for ESD are accessible

56. Materials for ESD at all levels need to be developed, both for general courses and specialist education and for self-study and be adapted to the local conditions and needs.

57. Key actions to achieve this could be to: stimulate the development and production of materials for educators, learners and researchers for all levels of education and training, especially in local languages; encourage the development and use of electronic, audio, video and multi-media resources and visual aids for both learning purposes and sharing information; facilitate access by electronic means and the Internet to resources and information relevant to ESD; ensure coherence between materials for formal, non-formal and informal learning, develop relevant dissemination strategies.

Promote research on and development of ESD

58. There is a need for research and development activities in different areas of ESD, such as effective learning methods, evaluation tools, formation of attitudes and values, school/institutional development and implementation of ICT. Research and development on ESD should offer a continuing basis in developing ESD.

59. The results of research and development efforts should be shared with actors locally, regionally and globally, and incorporated into different parts of the education system.

60. Key actions to achieve this could be to initiate and promote research on and development of: the content of ESD and teaching and learning methods; the economic effects of and incentives for ESD; ways of including aspects of SD and their local context in different subjects, giving priority to research that brings together the different dimensions of SD; indicators and evaluation instruments for ESD; and share the results of research and examples of good practices.

3. International cooperation

61. Cooperation on education for sustainable development, apart from contributing to the strengthening and improvement of ESD in countries, could help to ensure mutual understanding, strengthen trust and develop respect for cultural values, thereby building friendly relations between peoples and nations and contributing to peace and wellbeing.

62. There is a need at the regional level to review and facilitate the implementation of the Strategy and support cooperation on ESD. The regional process should take into account other developments that take place in connection with the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development and be seen as a contribution to the global initiatives on ESD.

63. The region has a wealth of experience in international cooperation on education, especially in higher education. A number of national and subregional networks, education, working groups, networks and associations of universities, programmes and partnerships have started work on the development of multidisciplinary forms of education to devise solutions to the problems linked to sustainable development. The challenge is how best to use their experience and potential to promote ESD. Another challenge is research into ESD-related issues, which still does not have a prominent role internationally. There is also a need for international cooperation on ESD in pre-school and school education.

64. Regional and subregional forums that bring together members of the education community, such as civil servants, educators and researchers, and other relevant actors to share their experience and good practices on SD- and ESD-related issues should receive high priority.

65. The complex nature of ESD requires that, in addition to the education community, other relevant international actors should be invited to work in partnership to implement the Strategy. This is especially relevant for international cooperation aimed at improving SD-related knowledge and skills for different professionals and decision makers.

66. Experiences and needs vary in different parts of the UNECE region. Subregional cooperation needs to be strengthened. This would make it possible to work closely on those issues that are of high importance for a given subregion, thereby helping countries to attain the best practical results.

67. Further assessment of the needs in different subregions is required. Special emphasis should be given to the countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)²⁰ and South-Eastern Europe in solving their main problems in environmental education and in education for sustainable development. Some of their problems are lack of adequate instruction materials, the inefficient use of the capacity of higher education and research institutions, the shortage of skilled educators and insufficient awareness raising as well as a lack of interdepartmental and multi-stakeholder cooperation on ESD. Another challenge that should be addressed in South-Eastern Europe and EECCA is the poor quality of education for children living in rural areas and the lack of financial and human resources to develop ESD in those areas. Thus, providing capacity building, financial assistance and support to education, research and public awareness programmes on SD in countries with economies in transition should be recognized as an important issue and be considered by governments, relevant organizations and donors accordingly²¹.

68. Key actions could be to: strengthen existing regional and subregional alliances and networks working on ESD and encourage twinning programmes, bilateral cooperation and partnerships; use, as appropriate, existing international legally binding instruments such as the Aarhus Convention and other relevant agreements to raise

²⁰ See also Environmental partnerships in the UNECE region: Environment Strategy for countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Strategic Framework; Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", Kiev, 2003.

²¹ See also Plan of Implementation; World Summit on Sustainable Development.

awareness of SD; facilitate the sharing of good practices and experiences, innovations and information of national experiences and projects in development cooperation on ESD-related issues, e.g. by using ICT tools and the web site of UNECE; include ESD in relevant bilateral and multilateral programmes; encourage the participation of NGOs and other major groups in international cooperation on ESD; encourage and coordinate international events for SD-awareness raising; and encourage the share of experience.

69. To ensure efficient regional governance and communication, the establishment of ESD focal points in all UNECE member States and in relevant international organizations is required. A steering committee consisting of representatives of the education and environment (or other relevant) sectors might be established to follow up the implementation of the Strategy. The “Environment for Europe” process might be used as a partnership platform for regional cooperation on ESD and the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy as a body to review progress in the Strategy’s implementation in accordance with the Committee’s work programme.

70. At their “Environment for Europe” Conferences, Ministers may wish to discuss progress in the Strategy’s implementation based on national and other relevant reports. Environmental performance reviews may also include an assessment of the reviewed country’s efforts on ESD.

4. Roles and responsibilities

71. Governments should play a proactive role in promoting and facilitating the Strategy’s implementation in their countries. They should assess and regularly follow up its implementation at all levels of governance.

72. Local educational authorities and institutions of formal education are encouraged to take on responsibility for implementing the relevant provisions of the Strategy and monitoring it.

73. Relevant stakeholders, including local authorities, the education and scientific sectors, the health sector, the private sector, industry, transport and agriculture, trade and labour unions, the mass media, non-governmental organizations, various communities, indigenous peoples and international organizations should be invited to define their priorities and take responsibility for implementing and following up the Strategy.

5. Financial matters

74. Ensuring adequate financial means to implement the Strategy is an important precondition for its success. To assess accurately the costs of implementing measures that are necessary to achieve the objective of the Strategy and the return on this investment, it is essential to understand the value of education in introducing SD policies and practices in society. Education should be seen as an investment that will pay off in the long term.

75. The cost of implementing this Strategy should, in general, be borne by each country. Governments should therefore ensure that appropriate resources are available. Many of the proposed actions can be incorporated into ongoing development work in

the education sector. Some actions could be more easily carried out as subregional or region-wide projects.

76. Governments should consider using budgets and economic incentives to finance ESD for all forms of education, including introducing scholarships on ESD and capacity building in educational institutions. Efforts should be made to include ESD components in relevant bilateral and multilateral programmes. Partnerships may be formed and should be encouraged to seek support, including contributions in kind, from international funding agencies and the private sector. At the first stage of implementation of the Strategy, financial assistance to some parts of the region, in particular EECCA and countries of South-Eastern Europe, is crucial to help those countries to start the process.

6. Evaluation and timetable

77. To assess the implementation of the Strategy, a time frame should be set and indicators be developed. Enabling people to act in favour of SD is a matter of quality of education and result of their studies. Introducing SD aspects into all forms and levels of education is a long process and the outcome can, therefore, be measured only over a long period of time.

78. Implementation of the Strategy should be seen as a continuous process. However, in order to facilitate assessment of its progress three phases for implementation are proposed:

Phase I (by 2007): good basis to start implementation, it is recommended that each country should identify what it is already doing that would fit within the remit of the Strategy. This would include a review of current policies, legal and operational frameworks, financial mechanisms, and educational activities, and would also include identification of any obstacles or gaps. Remedial action should be considered to overcome weaknesses and a relevant national implementation plan drafted. Evaluation methods and indicators for the implementation of ESD, in particular qualitative ones, should be developed. At their "Environment for Europe" Conference, Ministers can demonstrate their commitment to the Strategy, celebrate successes, share issues and concerns, and report on progress of their national/State strategies.

Phase II (by 2010): the implementation of the Strategy's provisions, as appropriate, should be well under way. In this respect, countries should review progress made in the implementation of their respective national/State strategies and revise them, if necessary.

Phase III (by 2015 and beyond): countries should have made considerable progress in implementing ESD.

79. To help process-oriented evaluation and benchmarking of the Strategy a number of issues should be considered. This includes the following samples: identification of leaders and coordinators to drive the Strategy; policy, legal and operational frameworks to support the Strategy; framework for intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder cooperation and partnerships; relevance of formal curriculum and learning programmes; initial and continuing training on SD-related issues, in particular

for educators; tools and materials for ESD; research and development on ESD; the development of non-formal and informal education; and the involvement of the media and the impact on learners.

Note

Two background documents are available for information: one on past and ongoing international processes on education for sustainable development (CEP/AC.13/2004/8/Add.1), and another to clarify some terms used in the strategy (CEP/AC.13/2004/8/Add.2).
