



## Highlights on Progress to Date



### January 2006

*This document highlights developments of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) which are only a small reflection of the extraordinary number of activities, events, networks and support for the DESD from countries, regions, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and stakeholders from all over the world. Every day, UNESCO Headquarters receives e-mails, phone calls and letters to share ideas and concrete initiatives, including artistic expressions, in support of the DESD. All these activities are creating immense energy and attention for the DESD.*

**Vision: Quality of Education as the chief element for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to succeed and the overarching goal of UN DESD is to advance the quality of education at all levels.**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2002, Resolution 57/254 on the *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)* was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (57<sup>th</sup> Session) and UNESCO was designated as the lead agency for the promotion of the Decade. This resolution requested UNESCO to develop a *draft international implementation scheme, clarifying its relationship with existing educational processes*, in particular the Dakar Framework for Action and the United Nations Literacy Decade. In consultation with the United Nations Agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders, UNESCO was required to provide recommendations for governments on how to promote and improve the integration of education for sustainable development in their respective educational strategies and action plans at the appropriate level.

## GOALS OF THE UN DECADE ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The overall goal of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) is to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects of learning to encourage changes in behavior that allow for a more sustainable and just society for all.

The basic vision of the DESD is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation. This translates into four objectives, to:

1. Facilitate networking, linkages, exchange and interaction among stakeholders in ESD;
2. Foster an increased quality of teaching and learning in education for sustainable development;
3. Help countries make progress towards and attain Millennium Development Goals through ESD efforts;
4. Provide countries with new opportunities to incorporate ESD into education reform efforts.

## UNESCO'S RESPONSES TO UN RESOLUTIONS 57/254, 58/219 & 59/237

- An **International Implementation Scheme** for the DESD was prepared through consultation with other United Nations Agencies, international organizations, governments, NGOs, universities, individuals and the private sector. It was presented at the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly (New York, September-October 2004). It was on the agenda of the UNESCO Executive Board in April 2005, which took note of the text and made some recommendations. The draft was further discussed and approved at the UNESCO Executive Board session in September 2005. The International Implementation Scheme is online at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001403/140372e.pdf>. UNESCO has also started preparing an outline for a UNESCO Action Plan for its own contribution for the DESD, the draft of which can be consulted at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001403/140381e.pdf>
- A **document on linkages between the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), Education For All (EFA) and the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD)**, was developed by the Division for Promotion of Quality Education, the Bureau of Strategic Planning and the Division of Basic Education. The purpose of this document is to clarify UNESCO's relationship with the educational processes already in existence, which is one of the key tasks requested of UNESCO in the Resolution. A brochure entitled "*Links between the Global Initiatives in Education*", gives an overview of the similarities and differences among the four initiatives and includes suggestions for mutual support and collaboration. (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001408/140848m.pdf>)

## DESD HIGH LEVEL PANEL

UNESCO's Director-General, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, convened in a High-Level Panel on the DESD, to provide guidance and advice to UNESCO on the DESD. It is composed of leading experts in the field: Dr Akito Arima, Senator and Former Minister of Education, Science, Sports and Culture of Japan; Prof. Alpha Omar Konaré, President of the Commission of the African Union and former President of the Republic of Mali; Mr Carl Lindberg, former Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kingdom of Sweden and Mr Steven Rockefeller, Chairman of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

## LAUNCHES OF THE DECADE

### INTERNATIONAL LAUNCH OF THE DESD: 1 March 2005

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development was officially launched on March 1 2005 in New York, by UNESCO's Director General Koïchiro Matsuura.

### REGIONAL, NATIONAL LAUNCHES OF THE DESD, LAUNCHES AT SPECIAL EVENTS:

DESD launches are being prepared at the regional, sub-regional, national and even sub-national levels. Whenever regional conferences on ESD and DESD are taking place during 2005 it is suggested to have a regional launch and to promote the Decade.

Many countries have expressed interest hosting their own national launches for the DESD following the international launches. Guidelines regarding national launches, national DESD committees and national DESD websites have been prepared, widely disseminated and available online on the DESD UNESCO website.

#### *Regional / sub-regional launches*

- Europe/North America region at the High-Level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries (Vilnius, Lithuania 17-18 March 2005)
- CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) region at the CIS Education Minister's Conference (Minsk, Belarus 5 - 6 April 2005)
- Asia/Pacific region at UNU/UNESCO International Conference in Nagoya, Japan on June 28<sup>th</sup> 2005
- Latin America region at the Ibero-American Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, from May 31- June 2, 2005.
- Arab region, in Bahrain on 17 - 18th September 2005
- Caribbean region, at a conference on ESD in Kingston, Jamaica, on 18-20 October 2005
- Mediterranean region at an International Conference in Athens, Greece on 26-27 November 2005
- Africa region at the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Biennial meeting (Libreville, Gabon 27 - 31 March 2006)

#### *National / sub-national launches*

- Germany (Mainz, Germany - 13 January 2005) [www.dekade.org](http://www.dekade.org)  
*Note : the current President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Horst Köhler (former Managing Director of the IMF) is the patron of the DESD in Germany.*
- Chile (Santiago – 12 to 14 January 2005), organization of the *"II Seminario Internacional Educacion para el desarrollo sostenible"* for the national launch
- New Zealand (Auckland - 5 March 2005)
- Japan (6 March 2005) launching event organized by ESD-J (Japan Council on the UNDESD)
- Canada (Toronto - March 10-12, 2005) at the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian National Commission on the theme of 'Sustainable Development: Learning to Live Together'
- Mexico (Mexico City – March 11, 2005), national launch and signature of a National Commitment for DESD, in presence of President Vicente Fox and representatives of all sectors of society.
- Norway (Hamar – 15 March 2005) on the theme of 'YouthXchange and the UN DESD national and global challenges for sustainable consumption'
- The Netherlands (The Hague - 5 April 2005)
- Quebec Province, Canada (Quebec City, May 19-20, 2005) at the 'Carrefour de la citoyenneté responsable' ([www.csq.qc.net](http://www.csq.qc.net))
- French speaking community, Belgium (Mons-Frameries - 1 June 2005), during the 'Forum de lancement de la Décennie de l'Education vers un Développement Durable en Communauté française de Belgique' ([www.educa21.net/custom/forum-juin](http://www.educa21.net/custom/forum-juin))
- Scotland, UK (Stirling - 3 June 2005)

- China (Tongji University, in collaboration with Chinese National Commission for UNESCO – 10 September 2005)
- Finland (fall 2005 – national DESD seminar, to be confirmed)
- UK (London – 13 December 2005), UK Launch Conference for the Decade on Education for Sustainable Development at the Institute of Education hosted by the UK National Commission for UNESCO
- Viet Nam (Hanoi – spring 2006, tbc), national launch and installation of a national committee

## DESD REGIONAL LAUNCHES & STRATEGIES

### EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA REGION

- ➔ *United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Regional Strategy: Europe and North America Region* ([www.unece.org/env/esd/welcome.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/esd/welcome.htm))

The DESD Regional Strategy was prepared for Europe and North America under UNECE's leadership, to facilitate the introduction and promotion of education for sustainable development in the UNECE Region, which encompasses 55 countries with rich cultural diversity, and with a wide range of socio-economic and political conditions. The UNECE Regional Strategy was built on its members' partnerships, including United Nations Agencies, International Organizations, Governments, NGOs and universities to promote a comprehensive approach, seeking to strengthen cooperation on ESD at all levels within the region. It is a contribution in line with the DESD Draft International Implementation Scheme and should be used as a foundation for the regional implementation of the Decade to facilitate the introduction and promotion of ESD in the UNECE Region.

The final draft of the UNECE Regional Strategy was adopted at the High-Level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministers (Vilnius, Lithuania 17-18 March 2005) [www.unece.org/env/esd/HLmeetMarch12005.htm](http://www.unece.org/env/esd/HLmeetMarch12005.htm).

### ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

- ➔ *UNESCO Office in Bangkok and Regional Bureau for Education: Asia and the Pacific Region*

UNESCO Bangkok facilitated the drafting of a regional implementation strategy for DESD which was launched at the Asia-Pacific Regional Launch of ESD in Nagoya, Japan in June 2005. The strategy was finalized based on the results of a regional situational analysis of ESD.

The *Situational Analysis of Education for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific Region* provides a snapshot view of the extent to which ESD has been integrated across various educational settings. Moving from Environmental Education to ESD will be a key challenge for the Decade. Youth, rural and indigenous communities, civil society, media and the private sector are all important stakeholders in meeting this challenge. ([www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/esd\\_situation\\_analysis](http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/esd_situation_analysis))

The *Working Paper: Asia-Pacific Regional Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development* serves to help guide the implementation of ESD throughout the Asia-Pacific region. It is an open document that is adaptable for revision according to the changing needs of stakeholders and emerging issues throughout the Decade of ESD. ([www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/esd\\_working\\_paper](http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/esd_working_paper))

### LATIN AMERICA REGION

The Ibero-American Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, from May 31- June 2, 2005, marked the launching of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UN-DESD) within Latin America. The initiative was held by the Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development (CEBDS) in partnership with UNESCO, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), UNEP, World Bank and Brazilian Government.

The Ibero-American Conference on Sustainable Development represents a milestone in the integration of the region into the new concept that conciliates economic, social and environmental needs without compromising the future of any one of these. In Brazil, government authorities, representatives of public and private institutions, business people, non-governmental organizations and academic communities from all of the Ibero-American countries gathered for an ample debate and exchange of experiences with the objective of encouraging joint actions by the government, civil society and corporations in order to promote sustainable development in society.

## **CARIBBEAN REGION**

➔ *Caribbean Regional Conference on Education for Sustainable Development: New Approaches for the Future held in Kingston, Jamaica on October 18-20, 2005. ([http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=28722&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=28722&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html))*

This regional conference served as the Caribbean regional launch of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The main objectives of the conference were to:

- Provide a forum to discuss and address the issues of ESD
- Launch the decade of ESD in the Caribbean
- Prepare action plans for implementing ESD in the region
- Build partnerships among formal and non-formal educators within the region

Participants included teachers, educators and administrators from pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in the Caribbean; youth representatives from Youth-Path and other organizations; non-government organizations; government ministries; UNESCO and other organizations; private sector.

The meeting highlighted that while environment has been seen within SIDS and UNESCO for some time now as encompassing physical, biological, social, cultural and economic aspects, this is certainly not the case in the Caribbean educational system, where it is viewed only in physical and biological terms. Thus one of the main challenges of ESD in the region and perhaps an important goal for the Decade is to use the strengths of existing environmental educational activities and to integrate into them the social, cultural and economic aspects.

## **OTHER REGIONS**

Contacts have been made with the Africa and Arab States regions in order to prepare Regional Strategies for the DESD. Many initiatives are taking place or are under development in the different regions.

## **SOME HIGHLIGHTS**

- UNESCO is more and more seen as an indispensable partner for ESD. A number of other meetings and workshops are taking place at various levels, regions and countries, regarding ESD and DESD with the backup of UNESCO (Headquarters, Regions and Field Offices).
- Cooperation between the Education for Sustainable Development Section and other UNESCO sectors has been enhanced to insert ESD concepts and concerns in various key initiatives; such as: Small Island Developing States, Decade on Water for Life, Associated Schools Project Network. An information exchange and sharing mechanism has been set up between UNESCO Headquarters and field offices in the different regions involved in ESD activities. Focal points have been appointed in the different Programme sectors of UNESCO.
- It is increasingly recognized at agency meetings, workshops and government consultations that ESD is a complex matter comprising many different facets. It is not simply another term for Environmental Education (EE), even though proponents of EE have been active in pushing for a DESD. Although EE is an integral component of ESD, ESD is more holistic in its approach and in the diversity of the issues

covered. In many consultations and meetings, it has been argued that in addition to the environmental, economic and social pillar of sustainable development, culture must also be recognized as a dimension of sustainable development.

- Increasing support has been received from NGOs, associations, the private sector and civil society to contribute to the ESD efforts and promote ESD at the regional and national levels. For example, in the Asia-Pacific region, first steps have been taken by NGOs, civil society, the private sector and UN agencies to establish a regional alliance or network that will be essential in sharing information and supporting the coordination of the regional implementation of the DESD.
- UNESCO's partners such as the "Ubuntu Alliance" and the United Nations University (UNU) are providing their expertise in preparing for the Decade. UNESCO participates in "Type 2 Partnerships" launched at the 2002 WSSD:
  - FAO/UNESCO Flagship Program for Education for Rural People ([www.fao.org/sd/erp/index\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/index_en.htm))
  - Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP) has initiated the development of a Toolkit/Resource Center project to provide effective change on strategies for reorienting higher education toward sustainable development. ([www.ulsf.org/GHESPResourceProject/index.html](http://www.ulsf.org/GHESPResourceProject/index.html))
  - "Educating for sustainable living with the Earth Charter" partnership which seeks to ensure that the concept and principles of sustainable development are incorporated into educational systems as well as local community programs. The resolution adopted by the 2003 UNESCO General Conference on the Earth Charter reinforces UNESCO's implication in this global partnership, which involves the growing network of educators working with the Charter and aims to facilitate the further development of the Earth Charter as an educational framework. ([www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org))
- Recommendations for a Partnership strategy between the DESD and the private sector have been elaborated out of a cooperation between UNESCO and the 'Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris'.

## COMMUNICATION, INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS FOR THE DESD

### **UNESCO DESD website ([www.unesco.org/education/desd](http://www.unesco.org/education/desd))**

Since the beginning of October 2003, UNESCO has had an interactive website in English, French and Spanish with a highly appreciated mascot ("DD" seen right). The website gives visibility to local, national and international ESD activities, initiatives and events and is updated weekly with information in all three languages. Criteria and conditions for participation in the UNESCO DESD website have been developed.



### **Official UN DESD logo**

The UN DESD logo, along with *Guidelines for the use of the UN DESD logo*, has been prepared and released. Both logo and guidelines are available on the UNESCO DESD website. An information note concerning the logo and guidelines has been sent to all National Commissions, all Permanent Delegations, national DESD focal points, all Heads of UNESCO field offices, and all NGOs in consultative status with UNESCO.

### **Information folder on ESD**

A folder of ESD information briefs has been prepared in English and French in order to clarify and communicate the key concepts and messages of ESD, and also available for downloading. The collection of information briefs provides analysis on several issues including: *Education for Sustainable Development; The World Summit on Sustainable Development; The evolving concept of Sustainable Development; ESD and Transdisciplinarity; UN DESD 2005-2014; Partnerships for ESD; Small Island Developing States; Agriculture, Biodiversity, Gender, Health, Poverty and Water.*

### **UNESCO and Sustainable Development brochure**

A brochure on “UNESCO and Sustainable Development”, prepared with the Bureau of Strategic Planning, outlines UNESCO’s actions for sustainable development in its different fields of competence. It is available in English and French.

### **Guidelines for National DESD launches and activities**

Guidelines regarding national launches, national DESD committees and national DESD websites have been prepared, widely disseminated and available online on the DESD UNESCO website.

### **Guidelines for integrating sustainability issues in Teacher Education**

*Guidelines and Recommendations for Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability* have been prepared by the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chair on Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability (York University, Toronto) and the International Network of Teacher-Education Institutions. These Guidelines are available online on the DESD UNESCO website.

### **Other publications related to Education for Sustainable Development**

- Posters for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
- The publication ‘**Educating for a Sustainable Future: Commitments and Partnerships**’ brings together the contributions of a wide range of educationalists including representatives of civil society, higher education institutions, non-governmental organizations, private companies, other UN agencies, Ministers of Education and Heads of State. This publication is a UNESCO Publishing publication and can be ordered through UNESCO Publishing (see [http://publishing.unesco.org/details.aspx?Code\\_Livre=4225](http://publishing.unesco.org/details.aspx?Code_Livre=4225)).
- **CD-ROM ‘Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future’**, a multimedia teacher education program. The program contains 100 hours (25 modules) of professional development for use in pre-service teacher courses as well as for the in-service education of teachers, curriculum developers, education policy makers, and authors of educational materials. Also available online at [www.unesco.org/education/tlsf](http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf).
- **CD-ROM and booklet ‘The Population in Sub-Saharan Africa’**, to guide and facilitate population education programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa.