

INTERVENTIONS BY ITALY

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Item 3. “Progress by UNECE member states in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD”

Under the broad framework of the UN Decade on ESD and as part of the implementation process of the UNECE ESD Strategy, the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea of Italy is promoting interministerial cooperation, defining agreements, developing activities at national and international level.

In particular:

- In August 2007, the State and Regions Conference adopted an agreement which has renovated the allocation of funds for the National Programme for Environmental Education, Information and Training (INFEA) for the period 2007-2009. Such initiative has represented since 2002 a best practice on environmental education, contributing to create a network environmental education centres spread throughout the national territory. INFEA has demonstrated the effectiveness of a strong and synergic cooperation between national and local authorities, which has allowed to promote projects on environmental education and ESD. Such initiatives have been developed considering the valuable contribution which local traditional, natural and cultural heritage provide in finding appropriate solutions to present environmental, social and economic challenges.

The Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea organised a National Forum on Education for the Environment and Sustainability, which took place in Turin (4-6 June, 2007). More than 250 delegates representing different ministries (environment, education university and research, finance, welfare etc), local institutions, media representatives, academic sector, civil society organisations and general public attended the forum, providing significant contributions to the debate. Such event represented the occasion to share experiences and establish a network of stakeholders involved in formal, non formal and informal learning education, to present activities and actions, commitments and investments in EE and ESD sector. The structure of the Forum in thematic roundtables, plenary sessions and in-depth workshops was intended to replicate the complexity of EE and ESD issues and to provide a significant contribution to the necessary changes needed to address effectively and with greater awareness the present global environmental and social challenges which we, neither as citizens nor as policy makers, can still ignore.

During the Forum the Ministry for the Environment presented the Ecological Alphabets, a guideline document to reorient education towards sustainability drafted by a group of experts coming from academic sector involved on education for sustainable development.

Ecological Alphabets represents a corner stone aimed at widening the perspective on ESD issues in particular in the process of drafting guidelines to introduce SD in formal curricula which the Ministry of Education should carrying out.

- Italy is chairing an international task force on education for sustainable consumption, launched in May 2006, with the aim of promoting, at an international and regional level, the introduction of SCP principles in formal curricula. Among the different initiatives that are being carried out by the TF, I would like to highlight the drafting of the document *Here and Now Education for Sustainable Consumption*, a collection of guidelines and recommendations for the introduction of SCP in formal learning processes. Such document is being drafted in coordination with UNEP and UNESCO and under the guidance of an expert nominated by the TF secretariat. A preliminary draft of the document will be presented at the CSD 16 side event on SCP and during the Annual Consumers Citizenship Network meeting which will take place in Tallinn in the beginning of May.
- An Interministerial Agreement among Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Education and Ministry for University and Research was signed on the 30th of January 2008 to promote ESD. The objectives of the agreement are to: 1) reorient formal, non formal and informal education towards sustainable development values and priorities; 2) Promote training programmes for school directors and teachers oriented to create knowledge and skills on sustainable development; 3) Increase awareness among families and entire school community on initiatives to promote sustainable lifestyles also by adopting new technologies tools; 4) Strengthen the academic curricula in order to develop professional skills on sustainable development widening the job demand on sustainability; 5) Promote specific projects to improve eco-efficiency in school buildings considering them as “learning places”.

Item 7. “Interlinkages and possible mutual benefits of the UNECE process and other ESD processes and activities”

The UN CSD represents the appropriate international fora where the interdisciplinary content of ESD can be emphasized due to its wide range potential of application as a tool of implementation. Governments, during UN CSD, should not underestimate the importance of promoting ESD and in particular the UNECE region, through the implementation process of the UNECE Strategy on ESD can bring forward tangible examples of the effectiveness of education both as a mean of implementation and as an accompanying measure in sectoral policies. The UNECE RIM represents an occasion to bring forward these issues, in particular with regards to education as a crosscutting issue, so as to provide a strong input from the region to the CSD and to other UN regional meetings.

Italy is supporting, through an international Task Force on ESC, the key role of education in promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns. The aim of the TF is to encourage the introduction of SCP principles into formal, non formal and informal learning processes. To this extent, the TF is drafting, together with UNEP and UNESCO, a document *Here and Now Education for Sustainable Consumption*, a collection of guidelines, recommendations and examples of curricula development on ESC. The objective is to submit to UNEP and UNDESA materials on ESC for both policy makers and educational authorities, which have been widely shared at international level, so as to allow them to be integrated in more political documents (e.g. 10 Year Framework of Programmes) to be discussed in UN International Meetings (UN CSD, Regional and International meetings on SCP, etc..).

Italy, in the context of the activities carried out by the international Task Force on ESC, has organised a workshop during the 4th International conference on Environmental Education (Tbilisi +30) which was held in Ahmedabad, India, (26th – 29th of November 2007). The working session was aimed at stimulating critical thinking and exploring what different actors in education and training do (or could do) to illustrate sustainable development through the day to day choices. The objective was achieved by: 1) developing a vision of how Education for Sustainable Consumption can contribute to a better understanding of environmental and sustainable development related challenges and by highlighting essential elements of ESC (rather than just ESD), in what they are unique, and what might be creative approaches for ESC. The workshop was also an occasion to present the Marrakech process and the Task force on Education for Sustainable Consumption chaired by Italy.