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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development

Fourth meeting

Geneva, 19–20 February 2009

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FOURTH MEETING

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
from Thursday, 19 February 2009 at 10 a.m. to Friday, 20 February 2009 at 5.00 p.m.*

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.
2. Progress made by member States in implementation of the UNECE¹ Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.
3. Report on progress made by the Expert Group for Indicators for Education for Sustainable Development:

New accreditation procedures have been introduced for all delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations. Delegates are therefore requested to complete the registration form available from the UNECE website (<http://www.unece.org/env/esd/SC.Meet.htm>), and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat no later than two weeks before the meeting by e-mail (esd@unece.org). On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva's Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see map available at: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 1502.

¹ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

- (a) Guidance for reporting on the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development;
 - (b) Good practices in education for sustainable development;
 - (c) Competence in education for sustainable development.
4. Contribution to the UNESCO² World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development.
 5. Addressing sustainable consumption through education for sustainable development.
 6. Interlinkages and possible mutual benefits of the UNECE process and other education for sustainable development processes and activities.
 7. Status of the trust fund and resource requirements for the period 2009–2010.
 8. Calendar of meetings.
 9. Other business.
 10. Closure of the meeting.

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Pursuant to the adoption of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the framework for its implementation, the High-level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries (Vilnius, 17–18 March 2005) established a UNECE Steering Committee on ESD, as a governing body, to decide on the Strategy's implementation and review its progress in the UNECE region. The Steering Committee is composed of representatives of the environment and education sectors to ensure equal opportunity for participation and input from both sectors. Key stakeholders have been invited to participate as observers.
2. The Steering Committee has held three meetings³ thus far with major outcomes such as the adoption of the two workplans of implementation for the phase I⁴ and for the phase II of the Strategy, the development of an innovative indicator-based reporting mechanism and execution of the first pilot reporting, as well as the organization of a joint high-level segment on ESD at the Belgrade Ministerial Conference⁵. At the joint session, ministers of education and of the

² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

³ The three meetings were held on 13 and 14 December 2005, on 4 and 5 December 2006 and on 31 March and 1 April 2008.

⁴ Implementation of the Strategy is a continuous approach; however, to facilitate assessment of its progress, the process is divided into three phases: phase I (2005–2007), phase II (2008–2010), phase III (2011–2015).

⁵ Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007).

environment adopted a joint Statement on ESD which expressed their commitment to the further implementation of the Strategy throughout the second and the third phases and beyond 2015 (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/4/Add.1). The ministers extended the mandate of the Steering Committee up to 2015 and requested it to oversee the regional implementation of the Strategy. The Steering Committee's fourth meeting is expected to focus on consideration of the two priorities identified for second phase, i.e. development of national strategies/action plans for ESD and of ESD competences in the education sector.

Thursday, 19 February 2009

Item 1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

(10 – 10.10 a.m.)

3. The Chairperson will open the meeting with introductory remarks and will invite the Steering Committee to adopt the agenda as set out in the present document (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/1).

Item 2. Progress made by member States in implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

(10.10 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

4. The Steering Committee will be invited to hear reports by Governments on their activities regarding the implementation of the Strategy since the Committee's last meeting, focusing on:

(a) Coordination at the international and national/State levels (coordination of activities among ESD stakeholders, establishing consultative mechanisms and developing national⁶ strategies and action plans for ESD);

(b) Developing tools and mechanisms at the national, subnational and local levels, with a view to strengthening initial measures and developing competences in ESD; improving ESD teaching tools and materials and their content; and developing a more integrative conceptualization of ESD to move from environmental education to ESD; as well as raising awareness and building capacity at all levels with respect to ESD.

5. Given the limited time available each of the countries will have up to three minutes for interventions from the floor. To have a better overview of progress achieved since the Steering Committee's last meeting, a concise questionnaire (with seven-eight questions concerning the Strategy's main objectives) will be sent out to countries. The answers will be compiled in an informal paper (information paper 1) and made available in time for the meeting with a view to providing an overview by country of progress made with respect to ESD.

6. The Steering Committee will also be invited to hear a presentation by a member State that has already developed a national action plan for ESD and is now implementing it. After the presentation, the Committee will have the possibility to ask questions. Subsequently, the Committee will be invited to consider ways to advance the development of national action plans.

⁶ For countries with a federal structure, national plans will be based on subnational/State inputs.

The secretariat will provide an overview of countries that have already developed national action plans (information paper 2), in line with the information made available to the secretariat (<http://www.unece.org/env/esd/NAP.htm>).

7. The Steering Committee will also be invited to consider possible solutions to enhance cooperation at the national level among all ESD stakeholders. In this regard, it is of utmost importance to strengthen cooperation between the UNECE governmental national focal points for ESD and representatives of the UNESCO National Commissions. As a first step, a joint letter from UNECE and UNESCO could be sent out to both groups, with the aim of better engaging them and encouraging joint activities.

Item 3. Report on progress made by the UNECE Expert Group on Indicators for Education for Sustainable Development

(3 – 5 p.m.)

8. The Chairperson of the UNECE Expert Group on Indicators for ESD will be invited to report on the outcomes of the Expert Group's seventh and eighth meetings (Geneva, 8–10 July 2008 and Paris, 15–18 September 2008; ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/4).

(a) Guidance for reporting on the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

9. The Expert Group has finalized its work on indicators and the supporting tools for reviewing the progress in implementing the Strategy and has prepared a comprehensive guidance for reporting (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/5). The guidance reflects comments by the Steering Committee's Bureau. The Steering Committee will be invited to consider the guidance, which is intended to facilitate reporting exercises and use of the set of indicators. The reporting format, the revisions of which were approved at the Committee's last meeting, is now ready to be used for the mandatory reporting on implementation in the Strategy's second phase of (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/10).

10. The Steering Committee will also be informed on progress made in preparing the publication, "Education for sustainable development – making it happen in the UNECE region"⁷, a compilation of materials related to the Strategy and review of its implementation. This publication can serve as a valuable regional contribution to the UNESCO World Conference on ESD (Bonn, Germany, 31 March–2 April 2009).

(b) Good practices in education for sustainable development

11. The template for good practices in ESD was revised in cooperation with UNESCO. The goal was to adapt it to the reporting format so that it could be used in future reporting exercises to illustrate progress made in implementing ESD (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/6). The template reflects the comments received by the Bureau. To support ongoing collection of good practices

⁷ Provisional title, pending decision by the Bureau.

in ESD, this revised template has been made available on the UNECE website (<http://www.unece.org/env/esd/GoodPractices/index.html>).

12. A thematic collection of good practices in ESD could be undertaken jointly by UNECE and UNESCO as a contribution to the 2010–2011 cycle of the multi-year programme of work for the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. For instance, sustainable consumption and production and sustainable transportation are among the thematic clusters for the next cycle; good practices could focus on addressing these two issues through ESD. This collection could be produced in time for the fourth UNECE regional implementation meeting for sustainable development, scheduled to be held in November 2009⁸ and could serve as a background document facilitating discussions at the meeting. Another thematic collection could be envisaged for 2010 which would focus on addressing, through ESD, climate change, the use of indigenous and traditional knowledge, sustainable urbanization and other topics.

13. The Steering Committee will be invited to consider undertaking such thematic collections of good practices in ESD.

(c) Competence in education for sustainable development

14. The Steering Committee will be invited to consider the proposal for establishing an expert group on competences in ESD (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/7).

Item 4. Contribution to the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

(5 – 6 p.m.)

15. The UNESCO World Conference on ESD (“Moving into the Second Half of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development”) is being organized by UNESCO and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research in cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO. The Conference will focus on four objectives: (a) highlighting the relevance of ESD to the entire education sector and to achieving quality education; (b) promoting international exchange on ESD; (c) reviewing the implementation of the United Nations Decade of ESD; and (d) agreeing on strategic directions for the way ahead. The Conference will comprise a high-level segment, plenary and workshop sessions, side-events, excursions and an exhibition of good practices. A declaration reflecting the debates and proposing guidelines for the implementation of the United Nations Decade during its second half will be adopted. More information is available at: <http://www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/en/home.html>.

16. The work under the Strategy should play a significant role in the Conference. The UNECE Strategy for ESD is the regional implementation pillar of the United Nations Decade of ESD; therefore, progress in its implementation is the exemplar of progress in implementing the Decade in the UNECE region. The Strategy’s implementation was reviewed and, on the basis of 36 national implementation reports, a regional progress report was prepared for the Belgrade

⁸ Subject to approval by the Economic Commission for Europe at its sixty-third session (Geneva, 30 March–1 April 2009). The deadline for preparing the compilation of good practices will be the end of August 2009. The deadline for countries to submit the good practices to the secretariat will be 1 June 2009.

Ministerial Conference. The implementation of ESD in this region was considered successful, although there remain many challenges ahead. The Strategy has now entered its second phase of implementation (2008-2010) with the two identified priorities: (a) the development of competences in ESD and (b) the development of national action plans for ESD.

17. UNECE member States should actively participate in the Conference by sharing their successful experiences with ESD, learning from the other regions and ensuring that activities under Strategy are well reflected in the Conference. This can be done through statements by ministers at the high-level segment, speeches and interventions at plenary and workshop sessions and referencing the Strategy in outcome documents such as the Conference Declaration.

18. The UNECE region can further contribute to the Conference by disseminating information materials, e.g. the compilation of good practices in ESD in the UNECE region, the envisaged publication on the implementation of the Strategy and a leaflet summarizing the UNECE Strategy's aims, objectives, progress and perspectives. A two-page paper was also prepared in accordance with the template received from the organizers. Revised in the light of comments made by the Bureau, the paper (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/9) will be presented to the Steering Committee for its consideration and approval. Thereafter, the paper will be submitted to the Conference secretariat as a contribution to the draft Conference Declaration.

19. In addition, a side-event could be organized to give participants the opportunity to share innovative experience in implementing the United Nations Decade of ESD in the UNECE region, e.g. the UNECE Strategy for ESD: successes, challenges and perspectives. A draft agenda has been prepared in consultation with the Bureau and will be submitted to the Steering Committee for consideration (information paper 3).

20. The Steering Committee will be invited to consider and decide on possible contributions to the Conference.

Friday, 20 February 2009

Item 5. Addressing sustainable consumption through education for sustainable development

(10 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

21. Production and consumption patterns are one of the key themes of sustainable development (CEP/AC.13/2005/3/Rev.1, para. 15): they have become more and more pertinent for the sustainable development agenda, and are central to the Marrakech process and the elaboration of a 10-Year Framework of Programmes on sustainable consumption and production. Production and consumption patterns will also be one of the main themes at the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in 2010–2011. Education as a cross-cutting issue plays a crucial role in addressing production and consumption patterns. Under the Marrakech process, a Task Force on Education for Sustainable Consumption was established under the chairmanship of Italy. This Task Force, with support from the United Nations Environment Programme, is developing of a set of recommendations and guidelines (“Here and Now: education for sustainable consumption”). A draft of these recommendations and guidelines is available and was considered, inter alia, at the

recent International Conference on ESD. This comprehensive document could serve as a basis for discussion by the Steering Committee of how sustainable consumption can be addressed through ESD in various countries.

22. The Steering Committee will be invited to engage in an interactive discussion on the topic of competences in addressing sustainable consumption through ESD. It is proposed to kick off the discussion by presenting the draft recommendations and guidelines on education for sustainable consumption. The above-mentioned presentation will be followed by an interactive discussion, open to the floor and based on several questions, e.g. how is sustainable consumption addressed through education systems at the national level (reflecting on ongoing and planned activities in this area and on aspects such as general approaches, methodology and contents)? This interactive discussion will aim to identify existing gaps as well as share good practices in the region that address sustainable consumption and production through ESD. To facilitate the discussion, a survey will be undertaken in time for the meeting, with six-seven questions focused on sustainable consumption in line with the Strategy's objectives. The answers received will be compiled in a document providing an overview of the situation in the region.

23. The Steering Committee will also be invited to consider using the recommendations and guidelines to address this issue at the national level.

24. The results of this discussion will serve as a valuable contribution to the fourth UNECE regional implementation meeting on sustainable development. They could also serve as a contribution to the workshop session on advancing sustainable lifestyles and responsible consumption through ESD, planned for the upcoming UNESCO World Conference on ESD.

Item 6. Interlinkages and possible mutual benefits of the UNECE process and other education for sustainable development processes and activities

(3– 4 p.m.)

25. Delegations, in particular stakeholders such as international and non-governmental organizations, regional environmental centres and research institutions, may wish to inform the Steering Committee of activities related to implementation of the Strategy that are currently being carried out or planned at the national and international levels. The goal is to promote coordination and synergies, including with relevant international sustainable development processes.

26. ESD has gained prominence during recent years and many organizations and institutions are carrying out ESD-related activities. Since the Steering Committee's last meeting, a number of international events on ESD have been held in the UNECE region, the major ones being: the OECD⁹ Workshop on ESD (Paris, 11–12 September 2008), the International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, (Bordeaux, France, 27–29 October 2008), "Visions and preparations for a common blueprint on Education for Sustainable Development" (Gothenburg, Sweden, 10–12 November 2008), the Seventh International Central Asian Conference for ESD (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 20–22 November 2008) and "Choose the Future – Education for

⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Sustainability Conference” (Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, 26–28 November 2008). It is essential to increase cooperation and coordination between all ESD stakeholders so as to achieve mutual benefits and synergies and jointly advance ESD implementation.

27. The Steering Committee will be invited to consider mechanisms to enhance cooperation among ESD stakeholders in the UNECE region. It is proposed to organize a coordination meeting for ESD stakeholders shortly after the UNESCO Conference, to take stock of the various ongoing and planned activities as well as identify opportunities to link efforts (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/8).

Item 7. Status of the trust fund and resource requirements for the period 2009–2010
(4 – 4.30 p.m.)

28. The secretariat will inform the Steering Committee about contributions received since the Committee’s last meeting, and also about the status of the ESD trust fund and resource requirements for the period 2009–2010.

29. In their Joint Statement on ESD, ministers of education and of environment invited stakeholders as well as bilateral and multilateral donors to contribute to and support the implementation process. The Vilnius High-level Meeting agreed that a sound financial basis would be needed for an effective implementation of the Strategy, and that it should rely mainly on voluntary contributions from UNECE member States, international organizations, the private sector and the international financial institutions. Delegations wishing to contribute (financial and in-kind support) to the implementation of the Strategy will be invited to inform the Steering Committee of their respective plans.

Item 8. Calendar of meetings
(4.30 – 4.40 p.m.)

30. The Steering Committee will be invited to consider the scheduling of its next meeting and those of its Bureau. It is proposed that the Committee hold its fifth meeting as a two-day meeting at the end of February 2010.

Item 9. Other business
(4.40 – 4.50 p.m.)

31. The Steering Committee will be invited to discuss any other business that might be brought to its attention. Delegations wishing to propose items will be invited to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

Item 10. Closure of the meeting
(4.50 – 5 p.m.)

32. The Chairperson will make concluding remarks and close the meeting.
