



**REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND SPORTS**

**Address by Dr. Radovan Fuchs, Deputy Minister at the
Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”
Belgrade, Serbia, 10 – 12 October 2007**

Dear Ministers,
Distinguished representatives of international institutions,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to thank the Serbian authorities for hosting this important conference.

The dawn of the 21st century has brought new challenges and responsibilities to nations throughout the world, which they must be willing to adapt to in order for the development of their societies to be sustainable.

Sustainable development is crucial for achieving successful economies, which would not be possible without overcoming poverty, promoting environmental conservation and protection, health, rural transformation, as well as human rights, intercultural understanding and peace, cultural diversity and sustainable production, and consumption, among others. The Croatian Government considers addressing these issues as essential in developing responsible government policies.

Having this in mind, the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports is well aware of the *pivotal role of education* in raising awareness of each citizen towards our planet. Therefore, our educational projects carried out as part of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development fulfill a key goal: turning the youths of today into responsible young adults and citizens of tomorrow, who have respect for the world around them; nature, culture and society.

Croatia has been active within various environmental projects, such as the Southeast Mediterranean Environmental Project (SEMPEP), the Mediterranean Information Office for Environmental Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE) and the GLOBE program.

Our country's participation in the GLOBE program is reflected in the fact that Croatia is among countries with the largest number of schools that are active participants in the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment program. Consequently, we have been given the honor to host the GLOBE teacher training conference in Dubrovnik in November of this year.

As of 2007 Croatia is a member of Environment and School Initiatives (ENSI), and this will lead to the implementation of the Criteria of Quality for Education for Sustainable Development.

Within regional efforts in enhancing education for sustainable development, the role of the Stability Pact Agency for Education Reform Initiative of Southeastern Europe should be mentioned. This Agency, with its seat in Zagreb, acts as an instrument for educational cooperation between the European Union and the region of Southeastern Europe, and Croatia, by hosting the ERI SEE Agency, displays its commitment to spreading EU educational standards throughout the region. These also include education for sustainable development, and the recently signed Memorandum of understanding between the Ministers responsible for education, science and research in Southeastern Europe also provides a regional cooperation framework.

Clearly, the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development provided a necessary global framework for the enhancement of policies leading to implementation of such projects. Croatia has been implementing the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development by drafting an action plan and establishing a State Committee at the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports for creating an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) strategy. The Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA) has been implementing various ESD projects with different NGOs as well as with national and nature parks. Since 1999, ESD training has been carried out within the National Program for Human Rights Education.

The goal of the UN Decade of Education is to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning, which will encourage changes in behavior that will create a more sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations.

I am fully convinced that our meeting here in Belgrade will not only contribute to the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development, but that it will also ensure that education has a leading role in establishing a better future of all our societies.

Thank you for your attention.