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Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Cyprus Government, I have the honor to announce that Cyprus has developed its National Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development. This National Action Plan has been approved for implementation for the next five years, taking into consideration the basic principles, aims and actions included in the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development, and has been adapted by Cyprus, in Vilnius, on May of 2005.

Following the procedures of the ESD Strategy, the Cyprus National Action Plan is based on the evaluation of the progress of Cyprus regarding the domain of Education and Environment. Towards these revisions, and having in mind the particularities, demands and necessities of Cyprus and Mediterranean region environmental issues, as well as the Cyprus Educational System, the Strategy modulated from Cyprus' Ministry of Education and Culture through the conduciveness and cooperation of various sectors from governmental services, as well as from the dialogue with the civil society. The main actions of the Strategy follow the main axes of the UNECE Strategy of Education for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Chairman and fellow colleagues, even though Cyprus has made important progress in order to establish ESD as a priority in the Educational System, towards the preparation of an action plan, it has to confront various multifaceted challenges:

Firstly, providing the appropriate financial resources for implementing the actions is the main challenge for the effective establishment of the action plan. In this case, a national financial allocation plan, as well as the financial support of European resources is a prerequisite for implementing the action plan.

An effective mechanism which will represent stakeholders from various sectors, such as governmental, private and Non-Governmental Organizations will be established in order to reflect the synergy, the coherence and the consensus that is required for the effective implementation of action plan.

Creating net-workings amongst the civil society, stakeholders, teachers, and scientists for Sustainable Development issues confronted holistically and interdisciplinary towards various educational levels consists mainly a priority issue in our Educational System. For that reason, the most effective ways that will secure an open dialogue amongst all the interested parts will be established.

For that reason, I am very pleased to invite you in Cyprus next month where the conference "Shared Visions and Futures: Education Across Disciplines and Cultures" will be hosted in Nicosia, 15-17 of November 2007. The conference, which is co-sponsored by Unesco and hosted in University of Cyprus, is aiming to explore and emphasize the importance of factors responsible for sustainable development, in particular the role that can be played by formal and non-formal education.

Educators, policy makers, governmental and non-governmental organizations have been invited to rethink disciplinary links within the context of sustainability so as to

bring about a productive and ongoing dialogue across disciplines and with the broader local, regional, and international communities.

Regarding the promotion of research as well as the creation of linkages and partnerships in regional and sub-regional level, our efforts are focusing in utilizing opportunities that European Union and other regional net-workings are offered for having an open and in-depth dialogue, for working jointly and promoting solution to common problems. Specifically, for research I would like to add that our priority is to support institutions and universities to expand their research to the direction of Education for Sustainable Development, since they will have diagnoses the needs and priorities for establishing ESD in formal, non-formal and informal education.

Mr Chairperson, dear colleagues concluding, I would like to express the commitment of the Cyprus Government to work hard for setting Education for Sustainable Development to the core of every aspect of life. We are ready to consolidate our efforts with other countries and support our vision for the future, which is based on solidarity, equality and mutual respect and where a civil society will be actively involve for transmitting the vision of Sustainable Development to a reality.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.