

**Honourable Ed Picco
Minister of Education for Nunavut
Chief Spokesperson for Education
Canadian Delegation**

- Mr. Chair, your Excellencies, Ministers, Ladies and Gentleman, I am very pleased and honoured to have this opportunity to speak to you. I bring you greetings from Nunavut in the Canadian Arctic. The traditional home of the Inuit, who for millennia have provided excellent stewardship of the Arctic land and water. Today, the land of the polar bear is changing, and in that context I speak to you.

First, I wish to congratulate the UNECE Secretariat and officials whose hard work has culminated in a strategy for education for sustainable development, indicators for measuring progress, and a web site where good practices are shared.

- Canada is encouraged by the close collaboration between UNECE and UNESCO, especially in the area of monitoring progress through country reports. I am pleased to be able to state that Canada's report has now been submitted to UNECE and will also be submitted to UNESCO.
- I'd like to address some of the challenges facing educators in Canada in the area of incorporating sustainable development ideas into school curricula and also in monitoring progress in that area.
- First, I will briefly provide a context for education in Canada. In Canada, there is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. Canada is a federation and education is the constitutional responsibility of the ten provinces and three territories. Ministers of education do, however, have a mechanism through which we exchange information and undertake nation-wide programs. It is that organization that I am representing at this meeting, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.
- Sustainable development and education for sustainable development are not new ideas within provincial and territorial governments. They are represented in policy documents, action plans, and frameworks.
- For example, in Manitoba, the minister of education publicly stated at the start of the school year that his department is moving forward with an in-depth Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) strategy, linked to the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.
- This strategy will complement Manitoba's climate-change action plan and provide for teacher workshops on Education for Sustainable Development.
- In Québec, a new curriculum is being implemented in secondary schools. All school programs take into account Education for Sustainable Development. In addition,

beginning in June 2009, students must pass an environmental science and technology course in order to obtain a high school diploma.

- In my jurisdiction, the territory of Nunavut, whose population is 85% Inuit, we set out to build schools within the context of Inuit *Qaujimaqatuqangit*, which is translated as “that which is long known by Inuit”. One of its basic principles embraces the concepts of stewardship and environmental well-being.
- Sustainable development in its broadest definition is a core value of Inuit life and thus is becoming the foundation of education in Nunavut. One example is the grade 12 General Science course, based on the reality of community life in the North that promotes a close interconnection between the environment and its inhabitants.
- We need to find ways to help teachers teach ESD – to determine where it can be taught in existing curriculum as well as develop new curriculum, identify learning resources, and provide professional development.
- The strategy for education for sustainable development now more than ever is paramount in what we do to ensure our home, our planet, and our earth survives and indeed thrives into the new millennia.
- In summary, the Land of the Polar Bear is changing; and Sustainable Development and Education are key in our global world. We all have to play a part and this conference has to be that bridge to a cleaner and sustainable future.
- Thank you, Mr. Chair.