

**United Nations Economic Commission for
Europe Steering Committee on Education
for Sustainable Development
Sixth meeting
Geneva, 8 April 2011 from 9.30 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

**Panel discussion: Taking stock and looking forward
- Education for Sustainable Development in the context of the
United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

Sustainable thinking

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“The world we have created is a product of our thinking. If we want to change the world, we have to change our thinking”.

Albert Einstein

“Rethink, refuse, reduce...”
Education for sustainability in a changing world - Ken Webster, FSC, 2004

- The challenges of consumerist and individualistic culture, rapid globalization and the clear presence of the effects of global warming, add to increasing inequality and loss of biodiversity”.

Plan of the presentation

Introduction of the theoretical concept of sustainable thinking based on existing reports, researches and reviews:

- with a particular focus on green thinking
- why this is important for greening the economy?

•How sustainable thinking is facilitated in practice in Central Asia

- Examples from Central Asia

Interrelations between different concepts:

- **Sustainable Development**
- **Education for sustainability**
- **Sustainable thinking**
- **Green economy**
- **Green thinking**

Sustainable development

- “...sustainable development is a complex issue, encompassing economic, environmental and social dimensions. In other words, development is essential to satisfy human needs and improve the quality of human life. At the same time, development must be based on the efficient and responsible use of all of society's scarce resources - natural, human and economic

Appendix 2 to the UNECE Strategy on ESD

Sustainable development

- Sustainable development requires a shift in the mental models which frame our thinking and inform our decisions and actions (UNESCO 2005; UNESCO 2009). This is reflected in national and international policies from around the globe as well as the goals of specific national and regional programmes.
- This combined understanding of sustainable development provides the foundation for ESD efforts and informs the intended contributions of ESD activities to sustainable development.

Education for Sustainable Development. An Expert Review of Processes and Learning. Prof. Daniella Tilbury (University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom) is the author of this publication commissioned by UNESCO, UNESCO, 2011

Sustainable development

•‘Sustainable development is a way of thinking about how we organize our lives and work – including our education system – so that we don’t destroy our most precious resource, the planet ... It must be much more than recycling bottles or giving money to charity. It is about thinking and working in a profoundly different way.’

Department for Education and Skills, UK, 2006, p.6.

Education for Sustainable Development. An Expert Review of Processes and Learning. Prof. Daniella Tilbury ,... UNESCO, 2011

What are the main linkages between ESD and the green economy?

- “Education, in addition to being a human right, is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development and an essential tool for good governance, informed decision-making and the promotion of democracy. Therefore, education for sustainable development can help translate our vision into reality”

the UNECE Strategy for ESD, 2005

What are the main linkages between ESD and the green economy?

- “ESD is the instrument for achievement of sustainable development, as well as mobilizing people for SD.
- The purpose of ESD is to empower individuals, groups, communities, organizations and countries to take actions towards sustainable development.
- Linked to different needs and living conditions of people as well as to local cultures, ESD at the same time promotes universal values and competences for good governance, informed decision-making and the promotion of democracy in order to make our world safer, healthier and more prosperous“

the UNECE Strategy for ESD, 2005

What are the main opportunities/ topics for creating synergies?

15. Key themes of SD include among other things poverty alleviation, citizenship, peace, ethics, responsibility in local and global contexts, democracy and governance, justice, security, human rights, health, gender equity, cultural diversity, **rural and urban development, economy, production and consumption patterns, corporate responsibility,** environmental protection, natural resource management and biological and landscape diversity. Addressing such diverse themes in ESD requires a holistic approach.

The UNECE Strategy for ESD, 2005

The second national implementation reporting, conducted in 2010, showed that

- still the environmental component of sustainable development largely prevails. As in phase I of the implementation of the Strategy, least attention is given to the economic conceptualization of sustainable development; in particular little attention is given to the issues of **corporate social responsibility and rural/urban development**. If these themes are addressed they solely find a place in the higher ISCED levels.

ISCED stands for International Standard Classification of Education as designed by UNESCO.

UNECE, Learning from each other: Synthesis report on the first mandatory reporting cycle. Advanced draft, (2011).

Main opportunities/topics for creating synergies - Sustainable thinking

12. The Green Economy Report, a comprehensive study written as part of the UNEP Green Economy Initiative, analyses the main economic sectors for greening the economy and defines necessary investments and policies.

This report spotlights that **a shift in economic thinking is of utmost importance**. Greening economic thinking entails a sociopolitical consensus about the importance of a sustainable use of natural, human and economic capital. ...

UNEP, Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication: Advanced online copy, (2011). Available from http://www.unep.org/GreenEconomy/Portals/93/documents/Full_GER_screen.pdf

Sustainable thinking

13. A prerequisite for achieving a shift in economic thinking is learning about and understanding of the concept of sustainable development as well as of the link between the multiple crises to unsustainable economic activities. It might entail a re-orientation of values and attitudes and has to encompass a broad variety of actors, ranging from the individual consumer, to policy makers and multinational corporations.

Discussion paper on the role of Education for Sustainable Development in shifting to a green economy

Sustainable thinking

14. In order to prompt and facilitate the re-thinking process, neither financial incentives, nor regulations or the pure transmission of knowledge about sustainable development will be sufficient.

Therefore the concept of ESD is a unique and valuable approach to greening the economy, since it is designed in a way to facilitate the development of values and to initiate the re-consideration of existing values and attitudes.

Discussion paper on the role of Education for Sustainable Development in shifting to a green economy

How can ESD in the UNECE region make an even stronger contribution to greening the economy?

15. However while the ESD concept addresses explicitly all three pillars of sustainable development, the practical implementation of ESD in the UNECE region is still very much focused on the environmental pillar. In 2007, the national implementation reporting under the umbrella of the UNECE Strategy for ESD has revealed that it is mostly the environmental component of ESD that is addressed in the region. Most sustainable development conceptualizations are of ecological and environmental nature.

UNECE, Learning from each other, (Geneva, 2007)

How can ESD in the UNECE region make an even stronger contribution to greening the economy?

16. While ESD is conceptually well equipped with shifting people's mind towards a greener economic thinking, there is the challenge and opportunity to further explore this area of ESD in the UNECE region in practice. **The green economy process could be a chance to advance a holistic implementation of ESD.** Embracing also the economic component of ESD might be necessary to foster the transition to a green economy in the region.

Discussion paper on the role of Education for Sustainable Development in shifting to a green economy

The role of ESD in shifting to a green economy

- *The working definition of UNEP describes a “green economy as one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities (...) a green economy can be thought of as one whose growth in income and employment is driven by public and private investments that lead to enhanced resource efficiency, reduced carbon emission, waste and pollution, and prevention of biodiversity loss and ecosystems degradation”.*

UNEP, Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication - A Synthesis for Policy Makers, (2011), p. 9.

The role of ESD in shifting to a green economy

- A similar, but broader definition is provided by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which states that a “*green economy can be defined as an economy where **economic prosperity can go hand-in-hand with ecological sustainability.**”*”

ESCAP, Conceptual Framework of Green Economy and Green Growth, (2011), p.1

The role of ESD for greening the economy

- ESD is one key element for achieving transformation, since it is able to change people's mind towards valuing sustainability.
- ESD and green economy are two sides of the same coin.
- ESD can contribute significantly to greening the economy because **it has the ability to equip people with values, competences, knowledge as well as skills** which are necessary for them to put the green economy concept into practice.

The role of ESD for greening the economy

- ESD should be a pillar for implementing the green economy concept, since key issues for the transition to a green economy, i.e. raised awareness, public participation, sustainable consumption as well as re-skilling the labor force - are essentially connected to a shift in people's attitude towards sustainable development.

A variety of views on the policies and sectors that should be at the centre of greening the economy

- Among countries and major organizations a variety of views persists concerning the policies and sectors that should be at the centre of greening the economy...*In addition there appears to be wide agreement that greening the economy needs to be adapted to regional and national needs.*

General Assembly, First Intersessional Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: Synthesis Report on Best Practices and Lessons Learned on the Objective and Themes of the Conference, (2011). Available from <http://www.uncsd2012.org/files/intersessional/Synthesis-Report-Final.pdf>

How can visibility of ESD and of its importance for greening the economy be promoted in the relevant international policy processes?

At all the levels:

- Global processes and conferences on SD, green economy, ESD (RIO+20)
- Ministerial Conferences “EfE” (Astana-2011)
- UN and UNECE conventions
- Asian-Pacific process of Environment and Development (MCED-6, Astana-2010)
- Sub regional processes of ESD – Mediterranean, Baltic, Central Asian, etc.
- National policies, projects, instruments (strategies, concepts, legislations, legal acts, educational materials)

At the regional level, the substantive document for the 7-th Conference “Environment for Europe”

- in order to achieve a green, inclusive and competitive economy in the UNECE region, a comprehensive policy-mix will be needed. The policy-mix follows an integrated approach, which includes major economic sectors such as transport, housing, energy and agriculture and also **the promotion of education as a cross-cutting issue.**

UNECE, Mainstreaming the Environment into Economic Development

How sustainable thinking is facilitated in practice in Central Asia:

- Specific CA examples:
 - ✓ Central Asian Initiative (WSSD, 2002)
 - ✓ “Green Bridge Initiative” of Kazakhstan (2010)
 - ✓ Green Growth – as a theme of the 6-th Asian-Pacific Conference in Astana in 2010 – MCED-6
 - ✓ Greening the Economy - as a theme of the 7-th Conference “Environment for Europe” in Astana in 2011
- Outstanding CAREC project results:
 - ✓ Course for bachelors of technical universities of Kazakhstan “Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Development” (2008-2009)
 - ✓ Courses for Sustainability for Kazakhstani and CA governmental officials (multi-sectoral cooperation)
 - ✓ Green Pack CD-ROM for Central Asia (2010-2011)

CA Initiative for SD

- Today ESD is a substantive component of the CA Agenda “Sustainable Development in the 21-st Century”, accepted by all CA countries to tackle sub-regional priorities.
- At the WSSD CA countries have adjusted cross-sector and sub-regional goals in the spheres of environment, water and capacity building and referred to the international community to support their efforts for achieving SD.
- That initiative has combined the experience of CA countries over the years since independence and it has been supported by the final decision of the Summit.
- The initiative covers the strengthening of cooperation mechanisms, the setting up of partner relations between the states, the private sector and international and public organisations in order to achieve common goals of sustainable development in the CA.

“Green Bridge Initiative” of Kazakhstan (2010)

The overall goal of the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative is to facilitate the establishment of a Europe-Asia-Pacific partnership that will outline the blueprints for a shift from the current conventional development patterns to green growth.

Thematic and Policy Areas for Cooperation

1. Thematic area 1. Eco-efficient use of natural resources and investment in ecosystem services
2. Thematic area 2. Low-carbon development and adaptation to climate change
3. Thematic area 3. Promotion of sustainable urban development
4. Thematic area 4. Promotion of green business and green technology
5. Thematic area 5. Promotion of sustainable lifestyles and improvement of quality of life

Asian-Pacific region – Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, Astana-2010:

- The purpose of MCED-6 was to secure renewed political commitment for SD, assessing the progress and remaining gaps to date, in the implementation of the international agreed development goals and MCED-5 outcomes, including **Green Growth strategy**, defining priorities and cooperative actions that should have been implemented by relevant governmental, non-governmental and other partners.

***Asian-Pacific region - MCED-6:
five themes of the Astana-2010' side events and
exhibitions:***

- Green decision making
- Green and competitive
- GloCal Green Growth
- Sustainable ecosystems
- Green Infrastructure
- Civil Society and Green Growth

Sub regional/National processes, projects for greening economy

1. New discipline “Energy Efficiency & SD” for the Higher Technical Education System of Kazakhstan (Chevron, GEF SGP) – 2008-2009
2. 40 governmental officials from 10 ministries are trained at the Course for Sustainability (REC, ITF, VIU, IMELS) – 2008-2009
3. 20 governmental officials from 3 ministries – education, environment and energy of Kaz, Kg, Tj, Trm, Uz are trained at the Course on SD and ESD (UNESCO) – 2009
4. Developed Green Pack CD-ROM for Central Asia (REC, Chevron, OSCE, UNESCO, GEF SGP) – 2009-2010. Approved & recommended for Kazakhstani education system.

A Course “Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Development”

- The project “*ESD & Energy Efficiency*” for the Higher Technical Education System of Kazakhstan was implemented in 2008-09 by CAREC, in cooperation with Chevron and SGP GEF UNDP.
- It promoted ESD in the pilot university, Kazakh National Technical University by introducing a Bachelor-level ESD course and developing recommendations for cross-curricular integration of SD theme.
- The overall objective of the project was to integrate ESD principles and to promote new technological approaches in KazNTU as the pilot technical HE institution.

How does ESD promote and facilitate Sustainable Development?

- Learning about Energy Efficiency provided opportunities for young people to become change agents for sustainability.
- In future years they will show leadership and advocacy to address climate change and energy efficiency in universities, offices and homes, and they will help to shift understanding and actions to promote energy saving.
- Students' new knowledge, skills and competences will lead to changes in behavior and decision-making processes on issues of sustainable energy, energy efficiency and the introduction of renewable energy sources in Kazakhstan. This will lead to informed decision-making and help to reduce negative impacts on the environment.

How does ESD promote and facilitate Sustainable Development?

- The most important and immediate effect of this project is to contribute to **challenging the citizens of Kazakhstan to reduce exploitation of natural environmental resources such as oil and gas,** and to introduce and promote more sustainable energy sources and energy efficient technologies, to serve the wellbeing of future generations.

Green Pack CD-ROM for Central Asia

- “Green Pack” for Central Asia covers 25 SD themes, including 3 special themes for CA: desertification, radioactivity and mountains/glaciers
- “Green Pack” is designed to enhance environmental awareness among the younger generation as well as boost the potential for green initiatives in Central Asia.
- “Green Pack” is an essential step forward to achieving sustainable thinking and green development.



Side-event "The Green Agenda: ESD in the Central Asian Network" 27 September, 2010, MCED-6



We hope that these green initiatives of the Central Asian sub region will encourage coordinated effort on behalf of CA governments, NGOs, businesses and international organizations and contribute toward greener development.

***Thank you very much for your
attention!***

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