



S T A T E M E N T

by COPERNICUS-CAMPUS

at the UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development

First meeting

Geneva, 13-14 December 2005

Mr. Chairman,

With reference to Item 6 (Interlinkages and possible mutual benefits of the UNECE process and other ESD processes) I wish to draw the attention to the endeavours undertaken since 1999 by the European Ministers responsible for Higher Education for establishing a European Higher Education Area by 2010 and promoting the European system of higher education worldwide, better known as the Bologna Process. In this context, the European Ministers stated in the Bergen Communiqué, which was adopted at their last conference in Bergen in May 2005, that the Bologna Process should be based on the principle of sustainable development. COPERNICUS-CAMPUS as the European University network for sustainable development, representing more than 320 universities and institutions of higher education from 38 countries across Europe, welcomes very much this decision taken by the European Ministers responsible for Higher Education which marks a real breakthrough for Education for Sustainable Development.

In view of the further implementation of this decision, COPERNICUS-CAMPUS is taking up leadership in the European Higher Education Area to mobilize universities and academia around the theme of sustainability and to support higher education institutions in the implementation in relation with the Bologna Process. For that reason, COPERNICUS-CAMPUS will develop Guidelines for the incorporation of sustainable development into the European Higher Education Area. These strategic guidelines will be presented in due time for the next conference of the European Ministers responsible for Higher Education which is scheduled for May 2007 in London. The elaboration of the Guidelines is being supported by the European Commission.

The elaboration process of the Guidelines embraces three main steps: Firstly, a public consultation addressing all European universities and institutions of higher education as well as organizations and experts from the higher education community. This first step has already started. Secondly, a group of experts will summarize the results of the consultation and will draft a first set of the Guidelines. Finally, the Draft Guidelines will be discussed at an International Conference entitled "Sustainable Development in the European Higher Education Area", to be held 11-14 October 2006 at the University of Oldenburg (Germany).

Mr. Chairman, we do hope that the Guidelines for the incorporation of sustainable development into the European Higher Education Area will become another milestone for European higher education similar to the COPERNICUS University Charter for Sustainable Development in 1993. Furthermore, it is our strong belief that this part of the Bologna Process could create synergy with the UNECE Strategy. Therefore we invite the distinguished delegates to channel this information into their national higher education systems.

Thank you very much.