

## Armenia

### Training sessions and round tables for decision-makers on sustainable development

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FOCUS	Education/Learning Overcoming Poverty Economy	Environment Water Climate Change Biodiversity Disaster Reduction Sustainable Consumption Sustainable Tourism	Peace, Human Rights & Security Policy, Regulation, Governance Intercultural Understanding Regional / international cooperation
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#### DESCRIPTION

<i>Type</i>	Governmental and non-governmental
<i>Working language(s)</i>	Armenian, Russian and English
<i>Target group(s)</i>	Total of 103. Deputies (in general) and experts of the National Assembly (Parliament), as well as deputy ministers of the Republic of Armenia – 46 people Members and experts of the Constitutional Court, as well as judges of the Republic of Armenia – 57 people
<i>Starting year &amp; duration</i>	September 2004 to September 2005
<i>Budget &amp; funding sources</i>	€6,750 from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and \$1,000 from the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP)
<i>Partner organisations</i>	OSCE, UNDP, the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, UNDP/II (media support), Earth Council (international experts), the Århus Centre, Centre for Constitutional Law
<i>Stakeholders</i>	After the main presentations by the national and international experts on Armenia's obligations, international experience and possible ways of implementing that experience in Armenia, the participants discussed the issues raised and sought to elaborate the best possible solutions.



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- OBJECTIVES**
1. Raising the awareness of the deputies and experts of the National Assembly of Armenia about the paradigms of sustainable development, the progress in shifting civilization's focus to sustainable development, and the challenges that Armenia faces, in particular in the field of legislation.
  2. Raising the awareness of the members and experts of the Constitutional Court of Armenia about the paradigms of sustainable development, the progress in shifting civilization's focus to sustainable development, international experience in reflecting the principles of sustainable development in national constitutions, and the proposals for an amended draft constitution of Armenia.

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- METHODOLOGY**
- Presentations on the main themes using slides;
  - Study of positive experience;
  - Packages of materials for distribution (the Rio and Johannesburg Declarations, Implementation Plan of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Earth Charter, the Charter of European Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability, Kofi Annan's report *In Larger Freedom*, Armenia's sustainable development guidelines drawn up by non-governmental organizations and the scientific community, Armenia's national reports for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and on world environmental conventions, the text of the Århus Convention, OSCE publications on the environment and security, materials from the Kiev Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" and the Draft UNECE Strategy for Sustainable Development, etc.);
  - Projection of video films showing international and local experience of sustainable development.

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**RESULTS & EVALUATION**

- Results* Decision-makers' awareness of the issue of sustainable development was raised; A temporary parliamentary commission was established within the Armenian National Assembly, with the task of ensuring minimum reflection of the principles and ideas of sustainable development in Armenian legislation; A number of proposals for reflecting the principles of sustainable development were included in the new amended draft constitution of the Republic of Armenia and, furthermore, approved by a national referendum.
- Strengths* Working directly with decision-makers has the greatest effect in resolving the given tasks
- Weaknesses & risks* The Parliament will be re-elected in 2007. A culture of continuity has not been fully established in Armenia, so it is possible that the new set of deputies will have to start from scratch with a number of issues (as already happened once with the Association)
- Why do you consider this a*
1. The decision-makers' awareness of sustainable development was raised.
  2. A temporary parliamentary commission was created within the Armenian

*good practice?*

National Assembly which has been entrusted with ensuring the sustainability of the results attained.

3. Understanding of the exceptional importance of the issue was ensured, as a result of which the opposition, which is boycotting Parliament, sat down at the same table as the pro-Parliament coalition for the first time in one and a half years.

4. Representatives from the Armenian National Assembly (the Vice-Speaker, leaders of the political parties and commissions) took part in debates at the Constitutional Court at which the results of the corresponding debates at the Parliament were presented.

5. Proposals put forward by national experts were included in the draft constitution, with amendments.

6. Materials from both training sessions/round tables were printed in brochures which are widely used in Armenia in the formal (university) and informal education sectors:

- *Theory and practice of sustainable development: international experience and Armenia's tasks* (based on materials from the debates at the National Assembly);
- *Constitutional safeguards on sustainable development* (based on materials from the discussions at the Centre for Constitutional Law with members of the Constitutional Court and judges).

7. Both events were widely covered in the media, which helped to raise the level of awareness of the Armenian public.