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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development
Bureau
Seventh meeting
November 2007 (by e-mail consultation)

DRAFT ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE UNECE STEERING COMMITTEE ON ESD¹

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
from Thursday, 19 February 2009 at 10 a.m. until Friday, 20 February 2009 at 4.00 p.m.

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.
2. Progress by UNECE member States in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development.
3. Report on the progress made by the UNECE Expert Group for indicators for education for sustainable development:
 - (a) Guidance for reporting on the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development;
 - (b) Good practices in education for sustainable development;
 - (c) Competence in education for sustainable development.
4. Contribution to UNESCO World Conference on education for sustainable development.
5. Interlinkages and possible mutual benefits of the UNECE process and other education for sustainable development processes and activities.

¹ This document was not formally edited.

6. Addressing sustainable consumption and production through education for sustainable development.
7. Status of the education for sustainable development trust fund and resource requirements for 2009-2010.
8. Calendar of meetings.
9. Other business.
10. Closure of the meeting.

II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Pursuant to the adoption of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the framework for its implementation, the High-level meeting of Environment and Education Ministries (Vilnius, 17–18 March 2005) established a Steering Committee on ESD, as a governing body, to decide on the Strategy's implementation and review its progress in the UNECE region. The Steering Committee is composed of representatives of the environment and education sectors with a view to ensuring equal opportunity for participation and input from both sectors. Key stakeholders have been invited to participate as observers.

2. The Steering Committee has held three meetings² thus far with major outcomes such as the adoption of the two work plans of implementation for the phase I³ and for the phase II of the Strategy, the development of an innovative indicator-based reporting mechanism and carrying out the first pilot reporting, as well as the organization of a joint high-level segment on ESD at the Belgrade Ministerial Conference⁴. At the joint session Ministers of Education and of the Environment adopted a joint Statement on ESD providing commitment to the further implementation of the Strategy throughout the second and the third phases and beyond the year 2015. They extended the mandate of the Steering Committee until 2015 and requested it to oversee the regional implementation of the Strategy. The fourth meeting of the Steering Committee is expected to focus on the consideration of the two priorities identified for second phase, i.e. the development of national strategies/ action plans for ESD; and the development of competences in ESD in the education sector.

² 13–14 December 2005, 4–5 December 2006 and 31 March – 1 April 2008.

³ Implementation of the Strategy is a continuous approach; however, to facilitate assessment of its progress, the process is divided into three phases: phase I (2005-2007), phase II (2008-2010), phase III (2011-2015).

⁴ Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007).

Day I (Thursday, 19 February 2009)

Item 1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

(10 a.m. – 10.10 a.m.)

3. The Chairperson will open the meeting with introductory remarks and will invite the Committee to adopt the agenda of its fourth meeting as set out in the present document (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/1).

Item 2. Progress by UNECE member States in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

(10.10 a.m. – noon)

4. The Committee will be invited to hear reports by Governments on their activities regarding the implementation of the Strategy since the last meeting of the Committee, focussing on the following issues:

- (a) Coordination at the international and national/State levels (coordination of activities among ESD stakeholders, establishing consultative mechanisms and developing national⁵ strategies/ plans of action for ESD);
- (b) Developing tools and mechanisms at the national, subnational and local levels, with a view to strengthening the initial measures and developing competences in ESD; improving ESD teaching tools and materials and their content; and developing a more integrative conceptualization of ESD to move from environmental education to education for sustainable development; as well as raising awareness and building capacity on ESD at all levels.

5. The Committee will also be invited to consider possible solutions to enhance the cooperation at the national level among all ESD stakeholders. In this regard, it is of utmost importance to strengthen the cooperation between the UNECE Governmental National Focal Points for ESD and the representatives of the National Commissions for UNESCO. To begin with, a joint letter by UNECE and UNESCO could be sent out to both parties with a view to better engage them and encourage joint activities.

Item 3. Report on the progress made by the UNECE Expert Group on indicators for education for sustainable development

(noon–1p.m. and 3 p.m. – 4 p.m.)

6. The Chairperson of the UNECE Expert Group on indicators for ESD will be invited to report on the outcomes of the Expert Group's seventh and eighth meetings, which took place in Geneva from 8 to 10 July 2008 and in Paris from 15 to 18 September 2008, respectively (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/4).

⁵ For countries with a federal structure, national plans will be based on subnational/State inputs.

(a) Guidance for reporting on the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

7. The Expert Group finalised its work on indicators and the supporting tools for reviewing the progress in implementing the Strategy and prepared a comprehensive document – Guidance for reporting (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/5). The Guidance reflects comments by the seventh meeting of the Bureau of the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD (Geneva, 20 November 2008). The Committee will be invited to consider the Guidance that aims at facilitating the reporting exercises and the use of the set of indicators. The reporting format, the revisions of which were approved by the last meeting of the Committee, is now ready to be used for the mandatory reporting on the implementation of the second phase of the Strategy (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/10).

8. The Committee will also be invited to consider the publication “Education for sustainable development - is it happening in the UNECE region?”⁶ containing materials related to the Strategy and the review of its implementation. This publication can serve as a valuable contribution from the UNECE region to the UNESCO World Conference on ESD (Bonn, 31 March - 2 April 2009).

(b) Good practices in education for sustainable development

9. The template for good practices in ESD was revised, jointly with UNESCO, to adapt it to the reporting format with a view to be used in the future reporting exercises in order to illustrate the progress in ESD (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/6). The template reflects the comments received by the Bureau. A thematic collection of good practices in ESD could be undertaken jointly by UNECE and UNESCO with a view to publishing it at the end of 2009 or the beginning of 2010. This thematic collection could focus on addressing, through ESD, sustainable consumption and production, climate change, use of indigenous and traditional knowledge, sustainable urbanization, sustainable transportation, etc.. It could include one or several of these issues. For instance, the issues of sustainable consumption and production and of sustainable transportation are among the thematic clusters for the 2010-2011 cycle of the multi-year programme of work for the Commission on Sustainable Development, and such a collection could serve as a useful contribution from the UNECE region.

10. The Committee will be invited to consider undertaking such a thematic collection of Good Practices in ESD.

(c) Competence in education for sustainable development

11. The Committee will be invited to consider the proposal for establishing an Expert Group on Competences in ESD (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/7).

⁶ Provisional title, pending decision by the Bureau.

Item 4. Contribution to UNESCO World Conference on education for sustainable development

(4 p.m. – 5 p.m.)

12. The UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development “Moving into the Second Half of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development” is scheduled to take place in Bonn from 31 March to 2 April 2009. The Conference is organized by UNESCO and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research in cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO. Five years into the Decade, the Conference will focus on four objectives: highlighting the relevance of ESD to the all of education and to achieving quality education; promoting international exchange on ESD; reviewing the implementation of the United Nations Decade and agreeing on strategic directions for the way ahead. The Conference will comprise a high-level segment, plenary and workshop sessions, side-events, excursions and an exhibition of good practices. At the end of the Conference, a declaration reflecting the debates and proposing guidelines for the implementation of the United Nations Decade of ESD during its second half will be adopted. Detailed information is made available on the Conference’s website (<http://www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/en/home.html>).

13. The UNECE Strategy for ESD is the regional implementation pillar of the United Nations Decade of ESD; therefore, the progress in the implementation of the Strategy shows the progress in the implementation of the Decade in the UNECE region. The implementation of the Strategy was reviewed and a regional progress report was prepared on the basis of 36 national implementation reports for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference. The implementation of ESD in this region was considered successful; however, there are still many challenges ahead. The Strategy has now entered its second phase of implementation (2008-2010) with the two identified priorities (a) the development of competences in ESD and (b) the development of national action plans for ESD.

14. The UNECE member States should actively participate in the Conference by sharing their successful experience in addressing ESD, as well as learning from the other regions. Member States should ensure that the activities carried out in the framework of the Strategy are well reflected at the Conference. This can be done through statements by Ministers at the high-level segment, speeches and interventions at plenary and workshop sessions, as well as by referencing the Strategy in the Conference outcome documents, such as the Conference Declaration.

15. In addition, the UNECE region can contribute to the Conference with some information materials, such as the compilation of good practices in ESD in the UNECE region, the envisaged publication on the implementation of the Strategy and a leaflet with a summary about the Strategy’s aim, objectives, progress and perspectives. Also, a two page paper was prepared in accordance with the template received from the organizers. Revised in light of comments by the Bureau, the paper is put before the Committee for consideration and approval (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/9). Thereafter, the paper will be submitted to the Conference’s secretariat as a contribution to the draft Conference Declaration.

16. Furthermore, a side-event could be organized with a view to share the innovative experience in implementing the United Nations Decade of ESD in the UNECE region – the UNECE Strategy for ESD: successes, challenges, perspectives.

17. The Steering Committee will be invited to consider and decide on its possible contribution to this Conference.

Item 5. Interlinkages and possible mutual benefits of the UNECE process and other education for sustainable development processes and activities

(5 p.m. – 6 p.m.)

18. Delegations, in particular stakeholders such as international and non-governmental organizations, regional environmental centres and research institutions, may wish to inform the Steering Committee of activities related to the implementation of the Strategy that are currently being carried out or planned at the national and international levels, with a view to promoting coordination and synergies, including with relevant international Sustainable Development processes.

19. ESD has gained prominence during recent years and many organizations and institutions are carrying out activities related to ESD. Since the last meeting of the Steering Committee a considerable number of international events on ESD took place in the UNECE region. The major ones were the OECD Workshop on ESD (Paris, 11-12 September 2008), the International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, (Bordeaux, 27 - 29 October 2008), the International Workshop “Visions and preparations for a common blueprint on Education for Sustainable Development” (Gothenburg, 10-12 November 2008), the Seventh International Central Asian Conference for ESD (Almaty, 20-22 November 2008), Choose the Future - Education for Sustainability Conference (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 26 – 28 November 2008). Thus, it is very important to increase the cooperation and coordination between all ESD stakeholders for achieving mutual benefits and synergies and jointly advancing the implementation of ESD.

20. The Committee will be invited to consider mechanisms to enhance the cooperation among ESD stakeholders in the UNECE region. It is proposed to organize a coordination meeting for ESD stakeholders shortly after the Bonn Conference to take stock of each others’ on-going and planned activities, as well as identify opportunities to join efforts in making ESD a reality on the ground and ensure synergies and mutual benefits.

Day II (Friday, 20 February 2009)

Item 6. Addressing sustainable consumption through education for sustainable development

(10 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

21. Production and consumption patterns are one of the key themes of sustainable development (CEP/AC.132005/3/Rev.1, para.15). This issue has become more and more imperative for the sustainable development agenda; it is a central issue of the Marrakech process and the elaboration of a 10-Year Framework of Programmes on sustainable consumption and

production, which will be one of the main themes at the 18th and 19th sessions of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in 2010 - 2011. Education as a cross-cutting issue plays a crucial role in addressing production and consumption patterns. Under the Marrakech process, a Task Force on Education for Sustainable Consumption was established under the chairmanship of Italy. This Task Force, with support from UNEP, is developing a set of recommendations and guidelines (“Here and Now: education for sustainable consumption”). A draft of the recommendations and guidelines is already available and was considered, for instance, at the recent Bordeaux International Conference on ESD. This comprehensive document could serve as a basis for discussion by the Steering Committee on how the issue of sustainable consumption is addressed through ESD in various countries.

22. The Committee will be invited to engage in an interactive discussion on competences in addressing sustainable consumption through ESD. It is proposed to kick off the discussion by presenting the draft recommendations and guidelines on education for sustainable consumption. The above-mentioned presentation will be followed by an interactive discussion open to the floor based on several questions, e.g. how is sustainable consumption addressed through education systems at the national level (reflecting on on-going and planned activities in this area and on aspects such as general approaches, methodology and contents)? This interactive discussion will aim to identify existing gaps, as well as share good practices in the region that address sustainable consumption and production through ESD. To facilitate the discussion, a survey could be undertaken in time for the meeting. The survey will include 6-7 questions focused on sustainable consumption in line with the objectives of the Strategy. The answers received will be compiled in a document aimed at providing an overview of the situation in the region.

23. The Committee will also be invited to consider using the recommendations and guidelines to address this issue at the national level.

24. The results of this discussion will serve as a valuable contribution to the fourth UNECE regional implementation meeting on sustainable development to be held in November 2009. They will also provide a contribution to the workshop session on advancing sustainable lifestyles and responsible consumption through ESD planned for the upcoming Bonn Global Conference on ESD.

Item 7. Status of the Education for Sustainable Development trust fund and resource requirements for 2009-2010

(3 p.m. – 3.30 p.m.)

25. The secretariat will inform the Steering Committee on the received contributions since the last meeting of the Committee, as well as on the status of the ESD trust fund and resource requirements for 2009-2010.

26. The Ministers of Education and of Environment in their Joint Statement on ESD invited stakeholders as well as bilateral and multilateral donors to contribute to and support the implementation process. The Vilnius High-level Meeting agreed that a sound financial basis would be needed for an effective implementation of the Strategy. It would rely mainly on voluntary contributions from UNECE member States, international organizations, the private

sector and the international financial institutions. Delegations wishing to contribute (financial and in-kind support) to the implementation of the Strategy will be invited to inform the Steering Committee of their respective plans.

Item 8. Calendar of meetings

(3.30 p.m. – 3.40 p.m.)

27. The Committee will be invited to consider the schedule of its next meeting and those of its Bureau. It is proposed that the Committee hold its fifth meeting as a two-day meeting at the end of February 2010.

Item 9. Other business

(3.40 p.m. – 3.50 p.m.)

28. The Committee will be invited to discuss any other business that might be brought to its attention. Delegations wishing to propose items will be invited to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

Item 10. Closure of the meeting

(3.50 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.)

29. The Chairperson will make concluding remarks and close the meeting.
