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65th Session

65th session of the Economic Commission for Europe will discuss the shift to a sustainable future and the role of innovation in creating a dynamic and competitive economy

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will hold its 65th session from 9 to 11 April at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The Commission is expected to make strategic decisions on the UNECE programme of work. It provides a forum for policy dialogue on the economic developments in the region.

The first two days will be dedicated to two issues that are most pertinent to the current development debate and are at the core of UNECE's activities and member States' priorities:

1. Follow-up to Rio+20 and post 2015 development agenda

One panel will discuss **"The future of sustainability: from transition to transformation"**, looking in particular at whether current policy measures are conducive to a greener future; the crucial role that cities have to play in this evolution; the need to enhance food security and the contribution that trade can make to achieve it; and the shift from fossil fuels to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources and the need to accompany this long-term transformation via renewed efforts towards energy efficiency, which can deliver massive short and medium-term gains.

The second panel on **"Sustainable development governance: regional implications and perspectives for the post-Rio+20 institutional set up"** will address the following topics: lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); the contributions that the pan-European region, the most economically advanced and diverse region in the world, can bring to the global debate on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); which key elements should be at the core of the future SDGs; how to design the most efficient institutional set-up?

2. Economic developments and challenges in the UNECE region

The debate will be centred on **"The role of innovation in creating a dynamic and competitive economy"**. Panellists and delegates will discuss, among others, how to create an innovation ecosystem; the latest innovation trends in the forestry and paper sectors; how intelligent transport systems can provide solutions to transportation challenges, increase the safety of drivers and passengers, and help reduce pollution; and the role of research institutions in fostering an innovation-friendly economy.

The results of this panel discussion will serve as regional input to the 2013 ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review whose theme is "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the MDGs".

The Commission will also be called to adopt the outcome document of the review of the 2005 UNECE reform, which defines the strategic priorities for UNECE for the coming years.

The session and discussions are open to the public. □

The detailed programme and background documents are available at:
http://www.unece.org/commission/2013/65th_index.html.

Education for Sustainable Development: towards 2015 and beyond

Delegates from 28 member States, education associations and NGOs gathered in Geneva from 21 to 22 March for the eighth meeting of the UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

The general meeting of the Steering Committee reviewed the progress made in implementing the UNECE Strategy for ESD in 2012 and 2013 with regard to three priority areas:

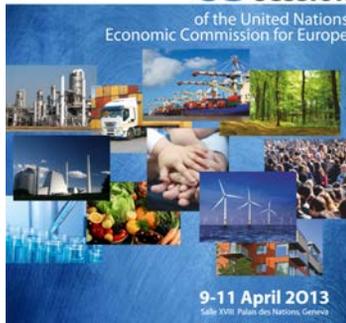
- ensuring that there is an ESD school plan in every school by 2015;
- promoting the introduction of ESD into teachers' education;
- mainstreaming ESD into technical and vocational education and training.

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UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

65th session

of the United Nations
Economic Commission for Europe



9-11 April 2013

Salle XIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva



UNITED NATIONS

Education



LEARNING
FOR
THE
FUTURE

Competences in
Education for
Sustainable Development

United Nations
Economic Commission for Europe
Strategy for Education for Sustainable
Development

Countries reported significant progress in introducing ESD into school planning and teachers' education. A working group was created to develop a UNECE school-planning framework for ESD. The Committee welcomed the newly launched publication "[learning for the future](#)" on educator competences in ESD as well as a series of workshops promoting the competences to be implemented in 2013. The Committee also requested the Bureau to draft a detailed framework that would allow for continuing the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD after the current implementation phase, which runs until 2015.

A joint segment with UNESCO reviewed the final assessment of the United Nations Decade of ESD and its follow-up. At its 190th session, the Executive Board of UNESCO had expressed its preference for a programme framework as follow-up to the United Nations Decade of ESD after 2014. Following this request, the UNESCO-UNECE regional consultations on ESD invited member States and observers to address the main challenges faced in implementing the Decade of ESD, to identify particularly successful ESD initiatives that should be considered for scaling-up in a post Decade framework as well as key priority areas. In addition, member States and observers were invited to provide suggestions for the preparation of the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development to be held in 2014. □

The report on the regional consultations will be released shortly on the UNECE ESD website: <http://www.unece.org/env/esd>.

Population

International experts examine how population dynamics could influence sustainable development

Experts from governments, academia, civil society and international organizations met in Vienna on 25 March to discuss the link between sustainability and population dynamics. This meeting was the first of three preparatory meetings being convened by UNECE and the United Nations Population Fund for the high-level UNECE regional conference "**Enabling Choices: Population Priorities for the 21st century**" in Geneva on 1 and 2 July.

At the meeting, the experts concluded that ongoing changes in population size and structure should not be seen as posing a threat to sustainable development. However, proper long-term strategies needed to be put in place.

The July conference concludes the review of the implementation of the programme of action adopted at the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development. □

More information on the conference is available at:

<http://www.unece.org/icpd-2014/unece-regional-conference.html>

For information on the global "ICDP beyond 2014" review, see:

<http://icpd-beyond2014.org/>.

Prospects bleak for universal primary education by 2015

Among the low- and middle-income countries¹ of the UNECE region, the percentage of schoolchildren who in 2010 didn't reach the last grade of primary education ranged from 0.2% in Kazakhstan to 5.1% in Latvia.

Between 2001 and 2010, the situation did, however, improve in nearly all countries. In Albania, it improved by more than 8 percentage points, and by around 5 percentage points in Bulgaria and Kazakhstan. Latvia and Ukraine are examples of the few countries that saw an opposite trend.

If we're to reach the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015, in most low- and middle-income countries in the region improvements will have to accelerate strongly. Considering that there are also children who don't go to school at all, universal education is certainly not likely to be achieved for the UNECE region.

The Millennium Development Goal has the following Target: "Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling".

An indicator to monitor progress towards this Target is the percentage of pupils starting grade 1 who reach the last grade of primary education. This measures the percentage of a cohort of pupils enrolled in grade 1 of the primary level of education in a given school year who are expected to reach the last grade of primary school, regardless of repetition. □

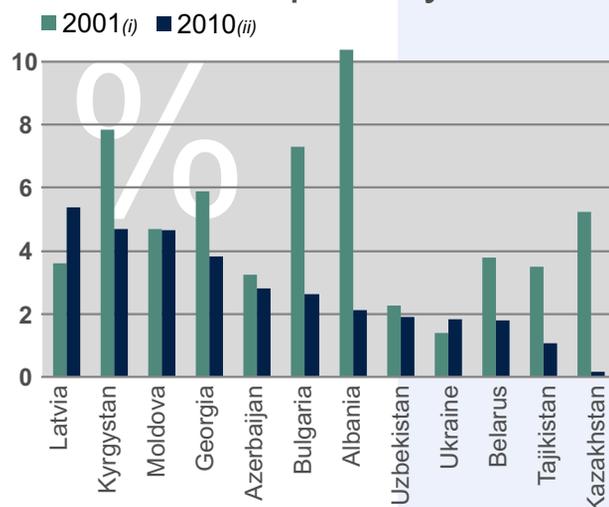
1/ As classified by The World Bank for 2012.

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Facts and Figures

Percentage of pupils who did not finish primary school



(i) Albania: 2000

(ii) Bulgaria, Georgia, Latvia: 2009