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UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda

**REPORT ON PROGRESS MADE BY THE UNECE EXPERT GROUP
ON INDICATORS FOR EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Report by the Chairperson of the Expert Group¹

1. The Expert Group was established by decision of the High-level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries (Vilnius, 2005) with the mandate to develop indicators to measure the effectiveness of the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Experts from the following countries participated in the Expert Group's work: Armenia, Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Participating organizations included the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Intergovernmental Central Asia Working Group on Environmental Education and ESD, the Environment and Schools Initiative Network (ENSI) and European ECO-Forum, a coalition of citizens' environmental organizations. To enable an efficient exchange of experiences and promote synergies in related activities, several meetings were attended by experts from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Asia-Pacific ESD monitoring project, as well as, by the Chair of the UNESCO Monitoring and Evaluation Expert Group (MEEG). The Expert Group was chaired by Mr. Roel van Raaij (Netherlands).

¹ This document is submitted after the official deadline for documents due to time constraints.

2. The UNECE Steering Committee on ESD, at its second meeting, acknowledged with appreciation the substantive results achieved by the Expert Group and endorsed the set of indicators. The reporting format, based on the set of indicators, was tested during the pilot reporting exercise. The exercise resulted in the first report on progress in implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD prepared for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference² (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/INF/3 - ECE/CEP/AC.13/2007/2). At its third meeting in 2008, the Steering Committee considered the revisions to the indicators set following the pilot reporting exercise and endorsed the revised reporting format. It also welcomed the criteria developed to assess success in the implementation of the Strategy.

3. In addition the Steering Committee decided to extend the mandate of the Expert Group until the Committee's next meeting in 2009, and requested that the Expert Group undertake the following tasks (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2008/2, paras. 22 and 27):

(a) To finalize the draft list of descriptors as a tool to support the reporting format. This would include revising the template for good practice (i.e. adapting it to match the reporting format) to make for more efficient use of the submitted good practices, with a view to sharing lessons learned in implementing the Strategy;

(b) To prepare, for consideration by the next meeting of the Steering Committee, a proposal for a mandate, including the terms of reference and human and financial resources required, for a possible expert group on competences in ESD.

4. In accordance with this mandate, the Expert Group held its seventh and eighth meetings from 8 to 10 July 2008 in Geneva and from 15 to 18 September 2008 in Paris, hosted by UNECE and UNESCO, respectively. For its eighth meeting, which focused on competences in ESD, additional experts were invited.

5. The work of the experts, at their seventh and eighth meetings, resulted in the following:

(a) A comprehensive guidance for reporting, comprising the description/explanation of the available tools to support the review of implementation, as well as a set of annexes providing these tools and information relevant to them (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/5);

(b) A revised template for Good Practices in ESD (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/6);

(c) A proposal for the establishment of an expert group on competences in ESD (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2009/7).

6. The details of the work carried out by the Expert Group are contained in the three outcome documents mentioned in paragraph 5 above.

² The Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, 10-12 October 2007).

7. With respect to the first mandatory reporting exercise scheduled for 2010³, the Expert Group recommended organizing a workshop for the National Focal Points (NFPs) for ESD with the objective of building capacity in the field of reporting on ESD, including the use of the reporting format. The organization of such a workshop for the subregion of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) was recommended by the first workshop on the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD for EECCA subregion (Moscow, 8-9 November 2006). A stronger necessity for such a workshop for the entire UNECE region, or a series of subregional workshops, emerged as a result of the pilot reporting exercise that took place in 2006 – 2007.

8. At its eighth meeting, the Expert Group also considered the draft table of contents of a publication “Learning from each other – UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development” aiming to provide user friendly access to various materials related to the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy. In addition to the available material related to the implementation of the Strategy, the Expert Group proposed to write a reflective chapter on learning through developing indicators for ESD. This chapter would address issues such as the working approach and methodology, challenges and lessons learned. The publication will be prepared by the UNECE secretariat. The additional chapter will be prepared by Mr. Paul Vare, ESD expert and member of the Expert Group in co-operation with the Chairperson the Expert Group and the secretariat. The financial support for writing this chapter is provided by the University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom.

9. The Steering Committee will be invited to consider the documents mentioned in paragraph 5 above. The Committee will also be invited to consider the organization of one or more workshops for NFPs, for which additional resources would be required. If the Committee agrees to organize such workshops, the secretariat would develop a more detailed proposal, addressing the substance and the financial and human resource implications. In this context, countries are invited to express their interest in hosting such workshops.

³ Please refer to the Work Plan of Implementation for Phase II of the UNECE Strategy for ESD (2008-2010) (ECE/CEP/AC.13/2008/5, Part C., paras. 29 – 34, and Annex II).