



Supplement

5

Special Issue

For the UNESCO International Experts Meeting
"Learning for Work, Citizenship and Sustainability",
Bonn, Germany, 25 to 28 October 2004



UNEVOC Forum

UNESCO Guides Demand-Driven Policy Reform in TVET - Bonn Meeting (Seoul plus Five) to Assess Recent Progress

» The UNESCO international meeting of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) specialists 'Learning for Work, Citizenship and Sustainability' which will be held in Bonn, Germany, from 25 to 28 October 2004 in close co-operation with the Government of Germany, will have two broad objectives. First, it will seek to evaluate the extent to which UNESCO's standard-setting role in the field of TVET has benefited its Member States during the past five years. The results of this evaluation will be reported to one of the Organization's governing bodies – its Executive Board. Second, the meeting will launch a discussion on the role and contribution of TVET to Sustainable Development throughout the world. It will stress the importance of placing TVET at the heart of Education for Sustainable Development. The meeting is also expected to generate an agenda for TVET within the framework of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.

The gathering in Bonn will be a UNESCO Category VI meeting. According to the rules governing this category of meetings, participants are to be invited by the Organization's Director-General on the basis of their eminence as technical specialists in their field of competence. A total of about 120 specialists are expected to participate.

implemented a vigorous technical and vocational education (TVE) programme that included a significant standard-setting component. This programme was updated periodically, but with the advent of the twenty-first century the profound social and economic changes taking place necessitated a broader consensus on the direction that TVE should follow. In some parts of the world authoritarian governments were giving way to more liberal ones; technological developments were changing the nature of work in others; the pace of globalisation was being quickened by rapid developments in information and communication technology; and the prosperity differentials be-

*Mohan Perera,
Chief Section for Technical and
Vocational Education, UNESCO, Paris*

While the article in the UNEVOC Forum No. 4 focuses on the role and contribution that TVET must make to sustainable development, the present article describes the background to the assessment, which will reach its culmination at the meeting in Bonn, of recent TVET policy reform in the Member States. The content of the meeting's substantive sessions devoted to the assessment is also concisely explained.

between countries and even within the same country, were widening. In such an era, the demands of the labour market were also constantly changing. Since TVE is a branch of education directly concerned with the acquisition of the knowledge and skills required for the world of work, it was being increasingly challenged to adapt itself to the diverse and constantly changing needs of the labour market. In addition, the field of TVE was deemed to have a responsibility for the personal development of its learners, both young and adult, and for their effective participation in societies that were becoming increasingly inter-dependent and complex.

S tandard-setting

» One of UNESCO's roles is that of an international standard-setter. The Organization plays this role by making known to its Member States, the internationally acknowledged sound standards and practices in each of its fields of competence. These standards and practices are usually communicated through normative instruments or standard-setting documents. In the field of TVET, UNESCO has two normative instruments: the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989) and the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (2001).

For more than five decades UNESCO has



The Seoul Congress

➤ It was in this context that UNESCO convened the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education in Seoul in April 1999 in close collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Korea. The Seoul Congress had the theme 'Lifelong Learning and Training: A Bridge to the Future'. It brought together more than 700 participants from 130 countries, including forty Ministers of Education, to discuss how the field of TVE should adapt in order to meet the challenges of the world of work in the early years of the twenty-first century.

Besides the need to improve the quality and relevance of TVE programmes, the discussions raised numerous issues, some of them new in the domain of TVE, others that were not new but needed to be integrated more effectively in its mainstream. It was felt that TVE should function as an instrument for social cohesion and also address the needs of those young people who were excluded from the mainstream of education, particularly by offering them practical training that would empower them to engage in income generating activities. The importance of non-formal (or non institution-based) TVE for young people in developing countries was emphasised. It was also felt that TVE should be considered an

integral part of education for all throughout life. It followed that TVE was expected to develop close interfaces with other branches of education, creating seamless pathways between them, while remaining open for re-training to those who had already entered the world of work.

The Seoul Congress also stressed the need for TVE to actively seek the participation of groups that remained excluded, such as ethnic minorities, traditional communities, refugees, the disabled and former combatants in post-conflict situations. The need to overcome gender stereotypes in TVE by including both girls and boys in all disciplines was clearly enunciated. The flexibility of programmes had to be maximised by making them available through open and distance learning, particularly for the benefit of communities in remote areas.

There was broad agreement that information and communication technology applications could help to improve the quality of TVE programmes as well as ensure their delivery to vastly greater numbers of learners. At the same time, TVE had to instil in its graduates and practitioners the need to function in ways that contributed to environmentally sound sustainable development. Furthermore, since education and

training were complementary parts of preparation for the world of work and should not be perceived as distinct processes, it was proposed that the terminology should reflect this reality. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) was thus accepted as the more appropriate term. It was hoped that this terminology would help to foster increased co-operation between Ministries of Education and Labour in the Member States as well as between the corresponding United Nations Organizations – UNESCO and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

It was recognised that the responsibility for making the TVET system relevant and effective in each country should be shared by a broad range of stakeholders. The government, employers and the community would each contribute to varying degrees depending on the national or local need. In many countries, although the public sector is still the major provider of formal TVET, there has been extensive debate about the role of the government. It was agreed that providing leadership and vision, facilitating, co-ordinating, establishing quality assurance and ensuring that TVET is for all, were the most important roles for the government in a market-oriented economy.

Udated Normative Instrument

➤ The Seoul Congress produced a set of recommendations centred on these issues and addressed them to UNESCO's Director-General. These recommendations were further discussed at the 30th session of the Organization's General Conference the same year (1999). UNESCO then used these recommendations as the basis for updating its normative instrument, the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education that had been first adopted in 1962 and revised in 1974. Following further consultations with the

Member States and key non-governmental organisations working in this field, the updated normative instrument was adopted by UNESCO's General Conference at its 31st session in November 2001 as the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (2001).

Thus the Revised Recommendation, developed after extensive consultation with technical experts, the Member States and concerned non-governmental organisations, represents an internationally ac-

knowledged set of sound standards and practices in TVET. The primary objective of this whole exercise was to make available to the Member States a single set of sound standards and practices that may be implemented in their national TVET systems. Because it describes the norms for most areas of the discipline, the Revised Recommendation is expected to serve as an effective resource for improving and innovating TVET systems and making them more relevant to the constantly changing demands of the world of work.

Education and Training for Work – UNESCO and ILO Co-operation

➤ In view of the complementary nature of education and training in TVET and the need for Ministries of Education and Labour to co-operate in the management of national TVET systems, UNESCO and the ILO decided to produce in a single publica-

tion the UNESCO Revised Recommendation together with the ILO's Conclusions concerning Human Resources Training and Development which had been adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 88th session in 2000. This booklet, entitled Tech-

nical and Vocational Education and Training for the Twenty-first Century – UNESCO and ILO Recommendations, was published in 2002 and disseminated in the two Organizations' Member States. This gave all TVET stakeholders access to guidelines for

the entire continuum of education and training for the world of work in institutions, in the non-formal sector and the workplace.

With a view to making the advocacy, promotion and implementation of the UNESCO-ILO Recommendations in national TVET systems more effective, UNESCO in co-operation with the ILO then launched a series of regional and sub-regional training seminars for high-level policy- and decision-makers. The participants at these

seminars were in large part officials from Ministries of Education with the authority to implement policy reform. Ministries of Labour were also represented in some of the regions. From 2002 to mid 2004 seminars were held for the benefit of countries in Asia, the Pacific, Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Latin America, the Arab States, Western Africa and Central Asia. UNESCO expects to hold similar seminars for countries in Southern and Eastern Africa and the Caribbean.

The advocacy seminars served several purposes. They raised awareness among a broader cross-section of policy-makers concerned with education and work, about the existence of internationally recognised standards and practices in TVET; they served as capacity-building exercises for these officials; and helped to empower them to begin implementing policy innovations in their national TVET systems, using the Recommendations as their resource material and guidelines.

Preparing for Bonn

➤➤ Five years after the Seoul Congress, the UNESCO technical meeting "Learning for Work, Citizenship and Sustainability" (which has been called the Seoul plus Five meeting) will serve as a stock-taking event to determine how the Seoul Congress recommendations and the UNESCO Revised Recommendation have benefited Member States. In other words: Have these two sets of recommendations helped countries to establish new TVET policy and practice that will better prepare their young people and adults for the world of work? In order to find out, UNESCO's Section for Technical and Vocational Education launched a survey in all the Member States. This survey was not intended to be a comprehensive statistics gathering exercise. Rather, it was designed to obtain primarily qualitative information about national policy reform in selected broad areas of TVET, such as Access or Equity. The survey consisted of a

questionnaire that was sent to the UNESCO National Commission in each country, which in turn was expected to direct it to the national authorities best positioned to provide the required information.

The Member States' response to the survey has been encouraging. A high percentage of countries have answered the questionnaire with an impressive degree of detail. The numbers of returned surveys indicate the importance that both developed and developing countries attach to TVET for preparing their workforces for the future. Many countries have sent in copies of recently developed strategic documents for making their TVET programmes more relevant to the demands of the labour market.

UNESCO will analyse the returned questionnaires and synthesise summaries that attempt to convey a snapshot overview of

the state of policy reform in those countries. The analyses will of necessity be simple; they are not intended to be critical or prescriptive. Their objective will be merely to ascertain how many and which countries have benefited or been influenced by UNESCO's standard-setting initiatives, what difficulties these countries have encountered in implementing reform, and what innovations have been particularly successful. The analyses will provide the basis for discussion at the 10 ninety-minute sessions of the Bonn meeting that will be devoted to the policy reform assessment exercise. Countries that have put in place novel policies will have the opportunity to share their experience with other countries, especially those with similar developmental situations.

Substantive Sessions

➤➤ Each of the 10 ninety-minute sessions devoted to the assessment of progress since Seoul will focus on a broad theme such as Widening Access, Aligning TVET with Labour Market Demands, Skills for the Future, Developing Skills for Poverty Alleviation, TVET for Post Conflict Situations, and Measuring TVET Systems. Comprehensive

country reports on these topics will not form the main part of the discussions. Instead, 2 or 3 countries will be invited to give very brief (5 minute) presentations on their innovative policies related to the topic being discussed. The invitation to speak will, for the most part, be decided on the basis of the completed questionnaire re-

turned by each country. UNESCO resource persons will be on hand to give further insights and to guide the debate when it is opened for general discussion. The substantive sessions are expected to be very interactive so that the broadest spectrum of views may be heard.

EFA Goal 3

➤➤ A year after the Seoul Congress, the international community met in Dakar, Senegal, at the World Forum on Education whose objective was to monitor progress in the Education For All (EFA) process. The Dakar Forum on Education proposed that

education stakeholders should work towards six goals that would constitute mileposts in the effort towards achieving EFA. The third of these goals concerns providing young people and adults with the learning opportunities to acquire the life

skills they need. In many societies life skills are deemed to include the range of competencies and skills, cognitive, psychosocial and practical that are required for engaging effectively in an income-generating occupation. In other words, skills for liveli-

hoods must form a part of one's life skills.

Since TVET is concerned primarily with equipping young people and adults with the skills for engaging in livelihoods, it follows that TVET has a vital role in the EFA process. Furthermore, the increased enrolments in primary education in developing countries as a result of the EFA initiative will lead, in the near future, to increased numbers of young people looking for opportunities for further learning or income-generating work. Since some countries will be unable to provide secondary-level education for these products of primary education, there is an urgent need for work skills development programmes. This is another challenge for the field of TVET.

Programmes that equip rural people to engage in income-generating work that is based on agriculture or traditional crafts are considered in many developing coun-


tries as one of the vital roles for TVET. It is felt that such programmes would help rural people to alleviate their poverty without having to leave their community in search of work in urban centres.

In a broad-brush attempt to empower some of these excluded groups like girls in poor communities, rural people and the disabled, UNESCO's TVET programme and its International Institute for Education Policy Planning (IIEP) have been advocating, during the past several years, the integration of skills development programmes in national EFA Action Plans. Capacity building exercises have been implemented in several Least Developed Countries to train education policy- and decision-makers to include livelihood skills development in basic education. Thus, the link between TVET and the EFA process will be one of the key issues to be discussed at the Bonn meeting.

the formal education and training system. Novel methods of evaluation are called for if even a rough estimate of the numbers of learners, trainers and skills needs are to be obtained. At the Bonn meeting, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) will present the methodology it currently uses for measuring TVET systems in the Member States. It is hoped that this plenary presentation will stimulate discussion during the substantive sessions about more effective methods of

opment are expected to identify the priorities and responsibilities for the field of TVET if it is to contribute to the emergence of an age in which development delivers benefits to all, resources are used equitably and

Declaration together with an Action Plan that describes concrete steps for implementing it should place the field of TVET at the centre of Education for Sustainable Development initiatives. The activities to be undertaken by UNESCO Headquarters, its UNESCO-UNEVOC Centre in Bonn, the spe-

**UNEVOC**
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
for Technical and Vocational
Education and Training

The UNEVOC Forum is a supplement of the UNESCO-UNEVOC Bulletin and it is published in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish:

- >> as a **print version**;
- >> as a **digital version** in Adobe Acrobat (PDF format);
- >> on the **web pages** at www.unevoc.unesco.org/bulletin.

Publishers' addresses for the Arabic and Portuguese versions see imprint of Bulletin No. 9.

It may be downloaded, reprinted and further distributed free of charge, either in full or in part, by acknowledging the source.

Publisher: UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre).
Editor: Gertrud Auf der Mauer
Editorial Assistant: Natalia Matveeva

The authors are responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in the UNEVOC Forum and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organisation.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, city or area, or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

measurement, particularly of TVET in the non-formal setting. Sound new proposals for measuring TVET will be considered by UIS in its future data gathering exercises. These new methods may also be adopted for assessing TVET systems in preparation for future UNESCO meetings.

poverty and deprivation are no longer a trigger for social upheaval. This implies that TVET must play pivotal roles in all three pillars of sustainable development – economy, ecology and society.

cialised Institutes and its partner Agencies to implement the Bonn Declaration and its Action Plan will constitute continuous contributions to the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development that will commence in 2005.

M easurement

>> An important objective of the substantive sessions will be to strengthen the culture of measurement in the field of TVET. Because of the diverse nature of TVET in most countries, the measurement and management of TVET systems is a challenging undertaking. In developing countries and countries in transition, the problem is further compounded by the existence of a large informal economy that draws on workers whose training has been acquired outside

C onclusions

>> The essence of the discussions in the sessions concerned with TVET policy is expected to yield a picture of its current state in the various Member States. The discussions in the sessions on sustainable devel-

B onn Declaration

>> The composite of the two sets of discussions – the present status and the 'road map' for sustainability in the future – will lead to the formulation, on the final day of the meeting, of a Bonn Declaration that defines the role and contribution of TVET for Sustainable Development. The Bonn