AFRICA REGIONAL CONSULTATION TO SUPPORT PLANNING FOR AN ESD PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK TO FOLLOW ON THE UN DECADE OF ESD IN 2014

OUTCOME DOCUMENT

ABIDJAN, IVORY COAST

MARCH 4 - 5, 2013

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1. Introduction

At its 190th session, the Executive Board of UNESCO expressed "its preference for a programme framework as follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development after 2014". The Board requested the Director-General "to develop, in consultation with Member States, and in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, the proposal for a programme framework, led by UNESCO, which should cover at least the period of the forthcoming Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021." Furthermore, the framework should "address education at all levels and in all forms, be based on a comprehensive sustainable development agenda, while also encouraging strategic focus and national commitment."

To this end, UNESCO, as the lead agency for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), organized expert consultations in all five UN regions between January and Mai 2013. The regional consultations are a crucial element in collecting positions on the post-2014 ESD programme framework and preparing a final assessment of the DESD. In addition to the consultations, Member States and other stakeholders had the opportunity to individually provide input for the post-2014 framework via a questionnaire that UNESCO sent out in January 2013.

The UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar organised the Africa regional consultation on 4-5 March 2013 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. The 32 expert participants from across the continent adopted the following outcomes and recommendations for the development of a post-2014 ESD programme framework.

ESD thrusts and implementation strategies

Discussions of the meeting were based on guiding principles and strategies for ESD implementation within the Decade drawing on the four thrusts formulated in Chapter 36 of Agenda 21:

- promoting and improving quality education at all levels for sustainable development by improving basic education to include lifelong learning for sustainable livelihoods, with emphasis on access, opportunity and quality;
- reorienting education at all levels to promote the social, environmental, cultural and economic knowledge, skills, perspectives and values inherent to sustainability;
- enhancing public understanding and awareness of sustainable development, with emphasis on the roles of the media and civil society; and
- building capacity for sustainable development by providing opportunities for knowledge and skills development for all through training programmes for imparting skills to promote sustainability practices.

Expert participants also acknowledged the seven strategies of the International Implementation Scheme for the UN DESD (2005-2014) and stressed their continued relevance for stakeholders in different contexts and countries as a guiding framework for ESD implementation:

1. Vision-building and advocacy;
2. Consultation and ownership;
3. Partnership and networks;
4. Capacity-building and training;
5. Research and innovation;
6. Use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), and
7. Monitoring and evaluation.

Major challenges to take into consideration while developing a post-2014 framework highlighted were: moving ESD initiatives from pilot to policy; from small scale to large scale; and from margin to mainstream. Key building blocks identified were advances in policy and on the practice level.

2. Challenges to ESD implementation in Africa and possible solutions

Expert participants discussed challenges to ESD implementation. They highlighted the most important challenges to be addressed in a post-2014 ESD programme framework and suggested possible ways to address them.

Policy level/programme implementation

With regard to policy and programme implementation the need to particularly address the following challenges in a post-2014 ESD programme framework was highlighted:
- Insufficient integration of ESD in national development policies and sectoral plans (education, health, agriculture etc.) at national and regional levels;
- Lack of awareness and awareness raising on ESD by different stakeholders;
- Poor inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination between different stakeholders on ESD implementation as well as insufficient use of synergies;
- Inadequate mobilisation of resources to support ESD implementation.

Proposed solutions to address policy level challenges beyond 2014 were:
- Mainstream ESD in national and sectoral plans (education, health, agriculture etc.) at national and regional levels;
- Advocate for ESD policy development at national and at regional levels. The development of ESD policies at regional level would support ESD implementation across regions and UNESCO Member States;
- Build capacity of policy makers and practitioners to enable them to mainstream ESD in their institutional operations and activities;
- Include ESD implementation in national development agendas to pave the way for budgetary allocations in support of ESD implementation.

Capacity level

Lack of capacity was noted as a challenge for implementing ESD, namely:
- Inadequate capacity of teachers to implement ESD programmes;
- Inadequate learning materials to support ESD implementation;
- Under-utilisation of sustainable indigenous knowledge, values and practices;
- Under-utilisation of sustainable faith–based knowledge values and practices.

Proposed solutions to address challenges at capacity level beyond 2014 were:
- Build capacities of education planners and curriculum developers to be able to mainstream ESD in policies, strategic plans and curricula;
- Develop the capacity of teacher education institutions well as teachers to apply ESD pedagogies through pre and in-service training;
- Mainstream ESD in teacher education for all levels of education;
- Build capacities of education planners, curriculum development specialists and teacher educators to mainstream faith-based values and indigenous knowledge and values that contribute to learning for sustainability into education policies, strategic plans and curricula;
- Develop and disseminate ESD materials to support ESD implementation.

Multi-stakeholder engagement and networking

The following challenges were identified with regard to multi-stakeholder engagement and networking:
- Inadequate partnerships and networking to support ESD implementation;
- Inadequate consultation and vision-building to promote ESD as a strategy to contribute to achieving sustainable development;
- Inadequate use of non-traditional media, notably community radios for advocacy, sensitisation and information sharing;
- Poor engagement and participation of key stakeholders.

Proposed solutions to address challenges of multi-stakeholder engagement and networking beyond 2014:
- Enhance networking; e.g. establish more ESD networks at national level and within Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa;
- Build capacity of policy makers and practitioners;
- Advocate for the development of ESD policy at national and regional levels;
- Make use of non-traditional media e.g. social media, ICTs, cinema, music, cartoons; engage journalists in ESD activities;
- Sensitize and mobilize all stakeholders (governments, donors, civil society actors etc.) on ESD;
- Finance mainstreaming of ESD at national and regional level as well as at the level of Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Research and innovation

The following continuous challenges on research and innovation in ESD were identified:
- Inadequate ESD research and innovation both in academic institutions and among other stakeholders including the business sector in search for more sustainable innovative technologies and products;
- Inadequate planning for monitoring and evaluation of ESD implementation by different stakeholders at all levels.

Proposed solutions to address challenges with regard to research and innovation beyond 2014:
- Support more and involve universities and research institutions;
- Develop research and self-assessment tools that allow monitoring and evaluation of ESD at institutional, national and regional levels.

3. Priority Areas for ESD Activities post-2014

The 32 expert participants from across Africa recommend the following priority areas to be included in a post-2014 ESD programme framework. Priority areas were grouped according to the seven strategies of the International Implementation Scheme for the DESD.

Vision-building and advocacy

Participants recommended promoting the mainstreaming of ESD into national education and sectoral policies and into curricula at all levels of education and training. This would create an opportunity for ESD concerns to be taught at all levels of education and also to be mainstreamed across different sectors.

Festivals and events for communities and education institutions to celebrate ESD should be promoted. This will create a platform for ESD advocacy in addition to creating a platform for sharing good practices and innovations on ESD.

Culture was highlighted as an underlying dimension of all pillars of sustainable development. Cultural dimensions were recommended to be considered by ESD activities in different contexts.

Participants noted that ESD promotes societal values such as respecting oneself, others as well as the environment. ESD should be used as a tool and means to strengthen democracy, security as well as peace and intercultural understanding in the African region.

Consultation and ownership

Strengthening governance for ESD in the African region and fostering multi-stakeholder consultation were highlighted as overarching pillars in support of ESD implementation in Africa.

Engaging more with Regional Economic Communities, such as ECOWAS, EAC, SADC and CEMAC, was noted as a success factor for ESD implementation in Africa, as most countries implement regional policies of the Economic Communities.

Resource mobilization for ESD in national budgets should be promoted to ensure ESD implementation across sectors.

A number of African countries have UNESCO National Commissions that are responsible for ESD implementation. It was recommended that ESD needs to be anchored in different government departments and ministries. This can help pave the way for establishing ESD strategies across sectors and institutions.

Partnership and networks

Expert participants emphasized the need to sensitise companies and organizations towards Corporate Sustainability Responsibility and Practices. The private sector should become more engaged; e.g. through creating Public Private Partnerships for sustainable development.

Networking and partnerships for sustainable development should be further strengthened through UNESCO Associate Schools, the Eco-Schools programme, ESD Model Schools, Eco-villages, and through Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs) on ESD.

Capacity-building and training

Teacher education and training towards skills development on learning for sustainable development and for behaviour change should be strengthened in a post-2014 ESD programme framework. This must include ESD pedagogies that promote participation, values, democratic decision-making skills and collaborative action oriented learning.

Providing training for national education planners and curriculum developers is needed to enable them to mainstream ESD in national plans and programmes.

Mainstreaming ESD into national qualification frameworks was recommended as a strategy to strengthen ESD implementation in teaching and learning institutions.

Capacity building for business and industry stakeholders should be supported in order to help reduce unsustainable production practices contributing to climate change. Much work is needed on greenhouse gas emission control and use of clean technologies and cold storage area and customs, and toxic and hazardous waste management strategies and so forth.

Sharing information and engaging more with media were noted as key to supporting ESD implementation in the African region.

Building capacities of civil society actors (NGOs and CBOs) was another strategy suggested to promote ESD and to help scale up and disseminate ESD on the ground.

Research and innovation

A post-2014 ESD programme framework should strengthen research on ESD topics and innovation capacities of ESD practitioners and higher education institutions. This was a key concern highlighted by participants.

Strengthening mainstreaming ESD in universities within the different Regional Economic Communities in Africa should be a priority of post-2014 ESD work. For example, the Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities (MESA) programme could be extended. This would contribute to increasing the number of African university graduates with relevant skills for the job market as well as values and attitudes in favour of promoting sustainable development in different sectors of the economy.

Strengthening the ESD research and innovation agenda should however be promoted both with teaching and learning institutions as well as the private sector. Supporting research and innovation to build capacities of business and industry stakeholders was recommended, especially with regard to the environmental pillar of sustainable development. Furthermore, a strengthened research and innovation agenda would not only allow increasing the quality of products, but also mainstreaming sustainability concerns in operational processes and the entire life cycle of products.

Use of Information Communication Technologies

Engaging with media as agents for ESD and sustainability was noted as a priority area to focus on after 2014. All forms of media, including community radios that promote local cultures and languages as well as social media and mobile phones should be used.

Monitoring and evaluation

A post-2014 ESD programme framework should further focus on the development of indicators to assess ESD implementation at local, national, sub-regional, and regional levels in Africa. It was noted that at present there exist many uncoordinated ESD activities. Defining terms of reference and indicators for monitoring and evaluation at different levels would help assessing the status of ESD implementation at all levels and feed into the global monitoring and evaluation of ESD progress.

The need to continue monitoring, evaluating and disseminating good practices such as the Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities (MESA) programme, Associated Schools, Eco-Schools, and Eco-villages, and others, across Africa was highlighted.

4. ESD initiatives that could be scaled up in a post-2014 programme framework

The meeting noted that a lot still needs to be done in Africa to improve the quality of education and enable learners to contribute to shaping sustainable development:

- ESD policies should be developed for countries in Africa that have not yet developed ESD implementation strategies. Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Lesotho and South Africa are some of the countries that have already developed national ESD strategies and can serve as

examples. Based on their experience, ESD policies could be scaled up in other African countries. The different regions should engage with the Regional Economic Communities as drivers of governance within the region. The recently started process for developing an East African Community (EAC) ESD policy will provide a regional anchor for mainstreaming ESD into respective governments and could serve as an example for other regions.

- The successful integration and mainstreaming of ESD in universities and other higher education institutions' curricula and operations by the MESA programme offers a good opportunity to scale up the programme to other higher education institutions throughout the African region.

Participants recommended further research on ESD approaches and innovations that have worked well within the region in order to understand their functioning and impacts. Experts recommended scaling up the following initiatives in a post-2014 ESD programme framework:

- Whole-school/institution approaches used by the Eco-schools and ESD Model Schools in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda as well as in higher education institutions in the MESA programme have proven to be successful. Whole-institution approaches to learning for sustainability need to be scaled up in a post-2014 ESD programme framework as they not only integrate sustainability principles into all areas of the institution, starting with teaching content, decision making processes and green campus management, but also involve the entire school/institution's community. This has the power to spread good practices to surrounding communities leading to entire community transformation towards sustainable development.

The following African initiatives promoting public understanding and awareness on sustainability were recommended to be scaled up in a post-2014 framework:

- ESD celebration days such as the annual "Regional ESD Day" celebrated on a rotational basis and being officially recognised by the East African Community countries has helped to anchor ESD in the East African Community:
- Regional Centres of Expertise in for example, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Swaziland, Tanzania, South Africa etc. have proven to be successful in raising public understanding and awareness for ESD. The meeting recommended setting up more Regional Centres of Expertise in different regions of Africa, primarily within Francophone countries. The achievement of RCEs to serve as a networking platform bringing together diverse stakeholders to share good practices and innovations on sustainable development was acknowledged.
- Eco-School programmes promoting eco-responsibility for youth in several countries have proven to be successful and could be taken as examples to follow in other countries;
- ESD-villages in East Africa that are based on six pillars to foster ESD, including pursuing a holistic approach towards ESD, participation, governance structure and follow up, education and learning, cooperation and partnership, management and innovations for sustainable development, could serve as examples to follow;
- Partnerships with media as proactive agents for ESD should be scaled up; e.g., partnerships with the African Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, the Federation of African Journalists and the International Federation of Journalists working together to contribute to climate change education.

Capacity-building for sustainable development was recommended for further action in a post-2014 ESD programme framework. Capacity-building must include the production of ESD materials to support teaching and learning that incorporate key ESD cornerstones including

pursuing a holistic approach towards ESD, focusing on learners, promoting multiple-perspective approaches, using democratic working methods as well as promoting lifelong learning and reflection.

- The ECOWAS Reference Manual including seven modules focusing on education for peace, citizenship, democracy, gender, HIV, environmental education and African integration offers a possibility to be further promoted. There are seven training modules for trainers of trainers, for teachers and learners complemented by a brochure capturing the social component of SD.

- The East African version of the World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) methodology book "Learning Sustainable Ways" could be adapted for other regions in Africa. The ESD methodology book is being used by educators to conduct training on ESD pedagogies and methodologies in East African countries. Eco-School Guides on Water, Health and Sanitation were produced for use in East African countries.

Youth Empowerment on Sustainable Development in Africa was recommended as a key issue and activity to be taken forward in a post-2014 ESD programme framework. Youth empowerment was particularly highlighted in view of the fact that youth make up more than half of the African continent's population. A recommended example to follow in promoting youth engagement was the 'Pan African Youth Strategy on Learning for Sustainability' developed by WWF in consultation with African youth and other stakeholders. The strategy aims to guide diverse stakeholders on how to engage with youth towards learning for sustainability and empowering them to contribute towards shaping green economies and sustainable development in Africa.

In West Africa, the 'Sandwatch' project was successfully implemented in Senegal, Cape Verde, Gambia and Guinea Bissau and built capacities of teachers and learners from UNESCO Associate Schools on ESD and costal environmental challenges. This project was judged very relevant and needs to be scaled up and shared in other regions.

5. Key partners to involve in a post-2014 ESD framework

The meeting identified the following organizations and institutions as key partners to involve in a post–2014 ESD programme framework:

- Governmental institutions (departments, ministries and institutes);
- Regional Economic Communities such as SADC, ECOWAS, EAC, CEMAC;
- International Development Agencies, including UN agencies such as UNESCO, UNEP, UNDP etc.;
- Civil society partners (NGO's/NPO's /CBO's);
- Regional programmes in Africa such as SADC REEP, ESD EA Programme by WWF (coordinating the development of the Pan African Youth Strategy on Learning for Sustainability), MESA programme, UNU's RCE Network, EA Network for ESD Practitioners;
- Regional University Associations such as the Interuniversity Council for Eastern Africa within the EAC, the Association of African Universities, and others;
- Media networks and organisations such as the African Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, the Federation of African Journalists, the International Federation of Journalists, etc;
- Local Community Based Organisations.

6. Suggestions for preparing the 2014 ESD World Conference

In light of the upcoming ESD World Conference to be held in 2014 in Japan, UNESCO representatives presented a brief overview of on-going preparations and outlined the four conference objectives:

1. Celebrating a Decade of Action to capture *"What have we achieved, what are the lessons learnt?"*
2. Reorienting Education to Build a Better Future for All to address *"How does ESD reinforce quality education?"*
3. Accelerating Action for Sustainable Development reflecting on *"How are sustainability challenges addressed through ESD?"* , and
4. Setting the Agenda for ESD beyond 2014 to address *"What are the strategies for our common future?"*

Expert participants from the African region made the following suggestions for preparations of the 2014 ESD World Conference:

- It should be ensured that highly qualified representatives from the Africa region attend the conference. Participants should be well informed and involved in consultative meetings and there should be a gender balance. More consultative meetings may be required to plan for the conference.

- The African region needs to prepare well for the conference in liaison with UNESCO Regional Bureaux in Africa, especially with regard to participation in different thematic working groups, side events, exhibitions etc.

- The currently on-going ESD monitoring and evaluation process, research, and consultations need to be coordinated at regional and national levels to enable developing a comprehensive final report on the Decade and accurate projections of the post Decade agenda.

ACRONYMS

CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DESD	Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
MESA	Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
RCEs	Regional Centres of Expertise
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SADC REEP	Southern Africa Development Community Regional Environmental Education Programme
SD	Sustainable Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ToTs	Trainer of Trainers
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNU	United Nations University
WESSA	Wildlife and Environmental Society of Southern Africa
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature