PARIS, 13 August 2012
Original: English

Item **9** of the provisional agenda

UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: LOOKING BEYOND 2014

SUMMARY

Pursuant to 36 C/Resolution 16, the Director-General provides information on possible options for transforming the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014) into an institutionalized process beyond 2014 with a view to transmitting them to the United Nations General Assembly.

The financial and administrative implications of the reported activities fall within the parameters of the C/5.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 10.

Introduction

1.   Pursuant to 36 C/Resolution 16, the Director-General presents two possible options for follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014).

2.   The document is based on an extensive review of the follow-up processes to comparable United Nations (UN) decades and global initiatives. Furthermore, the findings from the 2012 DESD Monitoring and Evaluation Report, Shaping the Education of Tomorrow,[1] as well as the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, 20-22 June 2012), The Future We Want,[2] have contributed to the analysis. Consultations were also undertaken with a range of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) stakeholders and partners, notably the International Steering Group for the UNESCO World Conference on ESD in 2014, the DESD Reference Group, the DESD Monitoring and Evaluation Expert Group, the Working Group of UNESCO Chairs on ESD, the UN Interagency Committee for the DESD, and the members of the Seventh UNESCO Youth Forum. The recommendations of the International ESD Workshop "Horizon 2015" (Germany, 27-28 February 2012) were also taken into account.

3.   These reviews and consultations provided important insight into not only possible follow-up modalities, but also the remaining challenges for ESD and the priorities to be given within the follow-up.

Challenges and priorities for ESD beyond 2014

4.   Particularly in recent years, the DESD has generated considerable progress towards ESD. Increasingly, ESD is becoming an integral part of the global debates and discourses on education and sustainable development. The inclusion of substantial passages on ESD in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development demonstrates this. The increasing number of Member States making a variety of efforts to address ESD is another important sign that it is being considered a critical component of governments' efforts to improve the quality of education and to make progress towards sustainable development.

5.   At the same time, there is a continued need for strategic advocacy in favour of ESD with a broad range of stakeholders. This includes ensuring that ESD is duly reflected in the expected follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All objectives. The outcomes of the UNESCO World Conference on ESD (Japan, 2014) will be particularly important in this regard. Effective advocacy must be evidence-based. More work is needed to make the case that ESD is a key element of quality education and that it is one of the most effective ways of confronting challenges such as climate change or the loss of biodiversity. Similarly, continued and regular monitoring of ESD implementation will be required.

6.   Moreover, there is a need to move from an emphasis on coordination towards more concrete action and larger scale implementation on the ground. Good practices identified in individual cases must be scaled up. Innovative pedagogical practices by teachers and students need attention at the policy level, with a view to wider and more systematic dissemination. Moreover, ESD must be integrated into all areas of education and learning and at all levels of the education system, in particular through "whole-institution approaches". There are, furthermore, frequent calls for an increased emphasis on local or "community-owned" activities as well as activities involving youth.

Options for follow-up to the DESD

7.   The first possible option for follow-up to the DESD is the launch of a **second decade**. A United Nations or international decade is declared when the international community sees the need for concerted advocacy efforts and for a framework for activities during a limited period of

---

1   http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002166/216606e.pdf
2   http://www.uncsd2012.org/thefuturewewant.html

time and regarding a particular issue. A second decade is often opted for when it is felt that the objectives of the first decade have not been sufficiently met and/or when new needs emerge during the first decade. Some examples are the current Second Decade of World's Indigenous People (2005-2015)[3] and the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017).[4] Proclaiming a second decade, however, may send the signal that the first decade fell short of expectations and failed to achieve its objectives. This is not the case of the DESD which is widely seen as comparably successful. Furthermore, this potential negative connotation of proclaiming a second decade may be difficult to accept among the stakeholders involved in the first decade.

8.   The proclamation of a **programme framework** is another option for follow-up to a decade. Similar to a second decade, a programme approach highlights the importance of the issue in question at the global level and provides a framework for activities at all levels. Unlike a decade, it is open-ended and allows for changing emphases. It can be seen as building on the successes of a decade and signalling a move from awareness-raising to more concrete and larger scale implementation, particularly at country level to create solid impact. Being open-ended, it also provides Member States with an opportunity to pursue long-term objectives, which cannot be achieved in just 10 years. The proclamation of a programme framework requires the establishment of a new name or "label" and may partly require new or adapted mechanisms. For example, when the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) came to an end, the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing) was launched which is structured in consecutive phases, each with their own action plan.[5]

Timeframe for deciding on follow-up to the DESD

9.   United Nations General Assembly Resolution 65/163 requests the Director-General of UNESCO to submit a review of the implementation of the DESD to its seventieth session (autumn 2015). However, in order to prevent a gap between the end of the DESD at the end of 2014 and the beginning of a possible follow-up, UNESCO Governing Bodies may wish to present the recommendation for the way forward for the consideration of the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session (autumn 2014). The way forward will also be further elaborated at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD to be held in November 2014 in Japan.

Action expected of the Executive Board

10.   In the light of the above report, the Executive Board may wish to consider the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

1.   Recalling 36 C/Resolution 16,

2.   Having examined document 190 EX/9,

3.   Takes note of the two options for follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014);

4.   Encourages all Member States to continue to strengthen their efforts to implement the UNESCO strategy for the second half of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development at the international, regional, national and local levels, and to contribute to the preparation of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, to be organized jointly by UNESCO and the Government of Japan in 2014;

---

3   http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/SecondDecade.aspx
4   http://social.un.org/index/Poverty/UNDecadefortheEradicationofPoverty/
        SecondUNDecadefortheEradicationofPoverty.aspx
5   http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/programme.htm

5.   <u>Expresses</u> its preference for a _____ as follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development after 2014;

6.   <u>Requests</u> the Director-General to develop, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, the proposal for a _____, led by UNESCO, and submit it to the Executive Board at its 192nd session and to the General Conference at its 37th session, with a view to transmitting it to the United Nations General Assembly for a decision at its 69th session in 2014 in order to ensure seamless follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and continued UNESCO leadership in education for sustainable development (ESD) beyond 2014;

7.   <u>Invites</u> the Director-General to ensure that the proposal for follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development duly takes into account the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the preparations of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in 2014 as well as the ongoing formulation of the post-2015 agenda;

8.   <u>Also invites</u> the Director-General to make efforts to duly reflect the follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in the expected follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the education for all (EFA) goals as well as the formulation of possible sustainable development goals.