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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (2005-2014): STRATEGY FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE DECADE AND MID-TERM PROGRESS REPORT

SUMMARY

Pursuant to 171 EX/Decision 6, 172 EX/Decision 10, 177 EX/Decision 9, 34 C/Resolution 19, 181 EX/Decision 5(I), 182 EX/Decision 8 and 35 C/Resolution 13, the Director-General presents the UNESCO strategy for the second half of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014) and provides information on progress made in the implementation of the Decade.

This document has financial and administrative implications (see paras. 28-29).

Action expected of the Expected Board: decision in paragraph 30.

1. UNESCO is the lead agency for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014), which aims to integrate the principles, practices and values of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning.

The global context

2. The global financial and economic crisis, together with other crises linked to climate change, food and energy, have demonstrated the need for viable, long-term solutions.¹ This has given new relevance to debates on how education should respond to changing realities and contribute to a better future. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) lies at the heart of these debates.

3. Building green economies and sustainable societies requires more than clean technologies. Indeed, we will not solve today's problems with the same values and approaches that created them. A key advantage of the concept of sustainable development is that, through its social, economic and environmental pillars as well as its cultural and ethical dimensions, global challenges are understood in all their complexity. A case in point is climate change, the debate over which in recent years has drawn on scientific evidence regarding the impact of human

¹ See also documents 35 C/INF.11, 35 C/INF.27 and 35 C/INF.33.

activities on global warming. This debate highlights that the root causes of climate change (economic development models, industrialization, urbanization, consumption and lifestyle patterns, etc.), its effects (increased scarcity of resources, flows of refugees, etc.), and its means of mitigation (international conventions on carbon emissions, national green taxes, awareness-raising programmes, etc.) are not only environmental. This is why UNESCO promotes ESD as a valuable approach for addressing climate change issues through education.²

4. The DESD must be seen in the framework of the wider development agenda. As the reporting year for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the year 2015 will be crucial.³ ESD is closely linked to MDG 2 (focused on primary education), MDG 7 (concerning environmental sustainability) and MDG 8 (for a global development partnership), but contributes to the achievement of each of the other MDGs. However, it is important to recognize that ESD is a long-term endeavour that will continue far beyond the end of the Decade.

5. Indeed, ESD is transformative. It promotes a sense of both local and global responsibility, encourages future-oriented and critical thinking, integrates traditional knowledge, builds recognition of global interdependence and promotes reflection on new lifestyles that combine well-being, quality of life, and respect for nature and other people.

The UNESCO strategy for the second half of the DESD: development and implementation

6. UNESCO is committed to serving as a change agent through education to mobilize Member States, United Nations agencies, partners, communities and individuals to promote ESD and implement the Decade.

7. Developed through a multistakeholder consultative process, UNESCO's Strategy for the Second Half of the DESD aims to ensure ownership and commitment on the part of UNESCO programme sectors, institutes and field offices for an accelerated and focused implementation of the DESD, as well as support to the regional and national ESD strategies and frameworks currently in place.

8. Based on the recommendations from the resolution of the 35th session of the General Conference and the decision of the 182nd session of the Executive Board, extensive consultations have been conducted internally and externally, including with DESD technical and advisory expert groups and committees, such as the respective member agencies of the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee for the DESD. Details of the Strategy, reflecting the contributions of these wide and rich consultations, are available on the DESD website (www.unesco.org/education/desd).

9. The Strategy draws on the findings and lessons learned from the first phase of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process.⁴ It also builds on the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development and the Bonn Declaration (see document 181 EX/INF.15) as well as on the outcomes of other key international ESD meetings (see documents 179 EX/INF.4 Rev., 180 EX/5 (Part IX) and 181 EX/5 Add.1). Finally, the Strategy is shaped by the shared vision of education that emerged from the four UNESCO international education conferences held in 2008-2009 (see documents 35 C/INF.16 and 35 C/INF.28 Rev.⁵): a vision of holistic education systems that encourage equity and inclusion, quality learning, flexibility and innovation.

² See also UNESCO's Strategy for Action on Climate Change (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001627/162715e.pdf>); http://www.unesco.org/en/education/dynamic-content-single-view/news/education_for_sustainable_development_crucial_to_tackle_climate_change/back/9195/cHash/633f273139/, and ESD Day at 35th General Conference (http://www.unesco.org/en/education/dynamic-content-single-view/news/esd_day_at_unescos_general_conference/browse/1/back/9195/cHash/c8b38482f6/).

³ See <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>

⁴ As reflected in the 2009 DESD M&E report "*Learning for a Sustainable World: Review of Contexts and Structures for Education for Sustainable Development*" (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001849/184944e.pdf>). See also document 35 C/54.

⁵ See also <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001841/184163e.pdf>

10. The Strategy provides a set of focused priorities through which UNESCO will put knowledge into action and promote the further integration of ESD into all types and settings of education at all levels. In each area of strategic action, UNESCO will stimulate fresh initiatives, promote new forms of cooperation, boost the spread of good practices in ESD and enhance partnerships in ESD to better mobilize and engage with key stakeholder groups. The Organization will seek to create an enabling environment for promoting ESD and will develop the capacity of Member States and other stakeholders and partners to promote the goals of the DESD, thereby also contributing to the fulfilment of the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

11. The Strategy will be implemented in collaboration with UNESCO's DESD partners in line with the International Implementation Scheme (IIS) for the DESD and the Bonn Declaration. It will entail enhanced engagement with key stakeholders, including but not limited to National Commissions, youth, civil society including women's and faith-based organizations, the private sector and the media.

12. In implementing the Strategy, the particular challenges and opportunities that have been identified for each region through different regional conferences, consultations and strategies will be fully reflected.⁶

The UNESCO strategy for the second half of the DESD: areas of action

13. In 2010-2015, UNESCO will focus its efforts on four key areas of strategic action:

- (1) enhancing synergies with different education and development initiatives and strengthening partnerships among ESD stakeholders;
- (2) developing and strengthening capacities for ESD;
- (3) building, sharing and applying ESD-related knowledge; and
- (4) advocating for ESD, and increasing awareness and understanding of sustainability.

A. Enhancing synergies with different education and development initiatives

14. Achieving sustainable development requires a global change of mindsets, beliefs and behaviours, and education is vital to this task. Furthermore, sustainable development requires the building of partnerships at all levels – local, national, regional and global – and this certainly applies to education where creating synergies between different education initiatives and harnessing the expertise existing within United Nations agencies, funds and programmes are essential. Moreover, ESD has a demonstrable relevance to the wider development agenda, particularly the MDGs. The integrated and systemic approach adopted by ESD is especially well-suited to creating and enhancing such synergies.

15. In line with its role as a catalyst for international cooperation, UNESCO will:

- (a) strengthen its leadership and coordination role for the DESD, in cooperation with other entities such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UN-Habitat, the United Nations University (UNU) and the Education for All convening agencies (among others), through further enhancing:
 - coordination between United Nations agencies and other international and regional organizations for the implementation of DESD regional and national strategies and frameworks, as well as to incorporate ESD into “Delivering as One” United Nations strategies and MDG-related efforts;

⁶ See, e.g. the Asia-Pacific Regional Strategy for ESD at http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/esd/documents/esd_publications/working-paper.pdf

- inter-agency cooperation and engagement of the United Nations with the DESD, to foster closer synergies and linkages with other Decades, global initiatives and MDG-related processes;
- (b) continue and further extend dialogue with governments and other key stakeholders (in particular from civil society, the media and the private sector) in order to:
- facilitate South-South and North-South-South cooperation, exchanges of experience and partnerships, and enhance the role of civil society, media and the private sector in arranging new ESD partnerships;
 - promote national ESD coordination efforts, by enhancing the linkages between ESD and EFA actions as well as between ESD and gender, livelihoods, climate change and disaster risk reduction;
- (c) continue to integrate ESD into UNESCO programming processes by:
- further developing ESD intersectoral approaches, in particular through the ESD Intersectoral Platform, and by enhancing linkages between ESD and human rights education, inclusive education, water education, cultural diversity and gender equality;
 - further exploring and promoting linkages between the DESD and key international conventions focusing on biodiversity, climate change, desertification and cultural diversity;
 - enhancing synergies and complementarities with education initiatives such as the Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA), the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE).

B. Developing and strengthening capacities for ESD

16. Reorienting education so that it integrates sustainable development principles, values and practices must take place not only in formal education institutions but also in many other learning processes and social settings. Moreover, although creating an education that empowers people to address important sustainable development challenges is a multistakeholder endeavour – a task for the whole society – the primary responsibility rests with government. To support this task, UNESCO recognizes that suitable policies and well-designed programmes must be put in place. Reinforcing the abilities, competencies and professional knowledge of teachers and educators, and promoting a culture of monitoring and evaluation, are critical elements in this regard.

17. In line with its role as a capacity-builder, UNESCO will thus:

- (a) support Member States and other partners in implementing the DESD, particularly through:
- providing support to ESD national implementation, through capacity development and policy advice, conducting training workshops for key stakeholders, and developing ESD policy tools/briefs and rosters of experts;
 - supporting regional reviews of ESD integration into sector-wide policies, as well as interregional cooperation on the development of educational policies and quality through ESD;
- (b) support Member States to reorient teacher education and training programmes towards sustainability, in particular by:

- providing support to teacher education for all levels, settings and relevant subjects of education, in particular through assistance to Ministries of Education and higher education institutions in the analysis and revision of programmes and curricula;
 - strengthening ESD-specific teacher education, by reinforcing and supporting educators' communities of practice for adapting tools to local contexts, and exchanging on innovative approaches in ESD teaching and learning;
- (c) assist Member States in the further development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks, tools and indicators to assess ESD progress through:
- continued implementation of DESD Monitoring and Evaluation, in:
 - Phase II on processes and learning related to ESD (2010-2011);
 - Phase III on impacts and outcomes of the DESD (2012-2015);
 - conducting M&E capacity development activities to develop and support integration of ESD indicators in educational policies and poverty reduction strategies, and enhancing inter-regional cooperation.

C. Building, sharing and applying ESD-related knowledge

18. Knowledge is an essential component of education for sustainable development. Promoting research, supporting the development of scientific understanding, and sharing and disseminating the vast amount of available knowledge, including traditional and indigenous knowledge, are central activities within the DESD. UNESCO will support the development of national research agendas and assist in building the capacity of higher education institutions to engage in ESD related research and innovation.

19. In line with its role as a laboratory of ideas, UNESCO will:

- (a) promote ESD-related research through UNESCO's programmes, institutes and networks by:
- generating knowledge, sharing new approaches and enhancing evidence-informed policy dialogue, by promoting research programmes, initiatives, good practices and consultations in particular in areas like TVET, water education and public/private partnerships;
 - supporting the development of national research agendas, including further networking with communities of research and practice, and developing ESD policy research on curricular innovations and teacher training;
- (b) strengthen its performance as a clearing house by:
- promoting and disseminating information on ESD programmes, research, innovations, good practices, guidelines and learning materials, through various means;
 - pursuing the DESD publication series through further identification and dissemination of good practices, publication of technical papers, policy briefs, case studies and guidelines;
- (c) mobilize and make full use of the expertise that exists within UNESCO's programme sectors and its networks with a view to:
- continuing intersectoral activities and enhance cooperation between Intersectoral Platforms (ESD, Climate Change, PCPD, SIDS, Foresight and Anticipation, Science Education);

- promoting, build and share ESD knowledge and learning, by reinforcing cooperation with UNESCO networks, in particular UNESCO Chairs, the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), the MAB Network of Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage.

D. Advocating for ESD, and increasing awareness and understanding of sustainability

20. The success of the Decade rests on formulating and sharing a common vision of ESD and on mobilizing support for the DESD in both general and targeted ways. Civil society, the media and the private sector are vital partners for achieving large-scale mobilization. Increasing the visibility and improving the profile of ESD, especially among educators, policy-makers and young people, are needed to ensure that the sustainable development agenda becomes better known and more widely accepted.

21. In line with its role as a clearing house, guided by its task manager responsibilities for Chapter 36 (Promoting Education, Public Awareness and Training) of Agenda 21, and building on the revised DESD Communication Strategy, UNESCO will:

- (a) strengthen its lobbying/advocacy role to increase the visibility of the Decade by:
 - enhancing public outreach, awareness and mobilization through a multifaceted communication approach, including advocacy campaigns and events, training for media professionals, and communication at international and regional events;
 - support initiatives linking education to socio-economic development, encouraging the development of schools-community partnerships, and supporting stakeholders in lobbying for proper ESD implementation measures;
- (b) develop advocacy resource tools to highlight ESD's relevance and importance by:
 - highlighting ESD's relevance to global sustainability challenges by mobilizing around key themes and events, developing training and advocacy tools for different stakeholders, and documenting DESD implementation from local and global viewpoints;
 - advocating for the mobilization of adequate resources and funding for ESD, through information exchange on innovative tools for resource mobilization, development of fundraising strategies and identification of possible donors;
- (c) intensify its efforts and initiatives to put ESD higher on the international agenda through:
 - promoting the DESD by positioning ESD around relevant issues being debated, participating in key events on education and bringing ESD to the agenda of these meetings; and
 - highlighting the relevance and importance of ESD in major education and development forums and processes (such as G8, G20, CSD, EFA High-Level Group, E-9 initiative, United Nations Chief Executives Board, Davos Forum, 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), etc.).

Mid-term progress report and further reporting

22. In 2009, the DESD reached its mid-point. The DESD Monitoring and Evaluation Global Report for 2009, entitled "Learning for a sustainable world: review of contexts and structures for education for sustainable development", reports on progress made and obstacles encountered during the first half of the Decade in establishing provisions, strategies, mechanisms and contexts

that support the development and implementation of DESD.⁷ A summary of the main findings was also presented to the Executive Board at its 182nd session (182 EX/8, pages 3-9)⁸ and to the 35th session of the General Conference (35 C/54). These findings will serve as the basis for the mid-term progress report on the implementation of the Decade (as requested by United Nations General Assembly resolution 59/237), which will be presented, along with the Strategy, to the United Nations General Assembly at its 65th session in autumn 2010. Two additional DESD M&E global reports are planned: one in 2011 (on learning and processes related to ESD), and another in 2014 (on impacts and outcomes of the DESD).

23. Since the 182nd session of the Executive Board, and in parallel to the preparation of the Strategy, UNESCO has taken action within the framework of the DESD linked mainly to monitoring and evaluation (M&E), addressing climate change through ESD, and teacher education.

24. On M&E, Phase II of the DESD M&E (2009-2011) was launched at a joint meeting of the M&E Expert Group on 18-20 November. This phase will focus on processes and learning related to ESD, with “processes” referring to approaches, focus, teaching and learning styles, and “learning” looking at what has been learned by ESD students as by those funding or facilitating ESD. It will culminate in the publishing of the DESD M&E report 2011 on processes and learning.

25. On climate change, the DESD Secretariat organized a seminar on *Climate change through the ESD lens: Policy, pedagogical and ethical perspectives on global warming* as part of the Education for Sustainable Development Day (14 October 2009) held during the 35th session of the UNESCO General Conference. As a contribution to the 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Secretariat also produced and disseminated a special DESD Quarterly Highlights on climate change and ESD; participated, during the Young and Future Generations Day (10 December), in a side event on Education on Climate Change; and co-sponsored and organized, on 15 December, a half-day “*Working Forum on Climate Change: Engaging Stakeholders in Civil Society*” with the United Nations CSD Education Caucus, the Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future and the World Aquarium and Conservation for the Oceans Foundation.

26. On teacher education, work has been pursued on the identification and dissemination of good practices and materials in teaching and learning on climate change, such as the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network’s Sandwatch initiative,⁹ and on educating people, in particular youth, about the impacts of lifestyles on the environment, society and economy – for example through the joint UNEP/UNESCO YouthXchange initiative.¹⁰ A Teacher Education through ESD initiative is also being created with funding from the JFIT. In May 2010, as part of this initiative, a symposium of the international network of Teacher Education Institutions associated with the UNESCO Chair on Reorienting Teacher to Address Sustainability will be organized. Capacity development at the regional and cluster levels will also be undertaken in addition to preparation of a state-of-the-art review of teacher education and ESD issues.

27. Further information on progress made in the implementation of the Strategy is provided regularly through the Director-General’s report on the execution of the programme adopted by the General Conference (EX/4, including the 184 EX/4), as well as through specific progress reports to the 2011 and 2013 Executive Board sessions prior to the 36th and 37th sessions of the General Conference.

Financial and administrative implications

28. The DESD Secretariat will seek to increase and diversify extrabudgetary funds in order to support the implementation of the Strategy. Indeed, executing the strategy will require building up

⁷ See <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001849/184944e.pdf>

⁸ Consult <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001835/183537e.pdf>

⁹ See UNESCO Associated Schools second collection of Good Practices at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001812/181270e.pdf>

¹⁰ See http://www.youthxchange.net/main/b218_climate_change-a.asp

stronger ESD backstopping capacity at Headquarters, in regional bureaux and field offices. This may require UNESCO to seek assistance from external experts, possibly via extrabudgetary funding and secondments, and to strengthen partnerships and networking.

29. The financial and administrative implications of the activities proposed in this strategy for 2010-2011 therefore fall within the parameters of the current 35 C/5, while those for the following two biennia (2012-2013 and 2014-2015) will be taken into account in the planning and preparation of the biennial work plans. Furthermore, Member States are invited to make voluntary contributions to ensure the full implementation of the strategy.

Action expected of the Executive Board

30. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 171 EX/Decision 6, 172 EX/Decision 10, 177 EX/Decision 9, 34 C/Resolution 19, 181 EX/Decision 5(I), 182 EX/Decision 8 and 35 C/Resolution 13,
2. Having examined document 184 EX/11,
3. Invites all Member States to:
 - (a) participate actively in the implementation of the UNESCO strategy for the second half of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014);
 - (b) promote the goals of the Decade and incorporate the vision and practice of education for sustainable development (ESD) into their educational policies, plans and programmes in close linkage with education for all, the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally-agreed development goals;
 - (c) support and contribute to the monitoring and evaluation process with other key stakeholders and partners in their country and region;
 - (d) ensure appropriate funding for ESD activities and programmes at national level;
4. Calls upon the Director-General to:
 - (a) seek extrabudgetary funds to advance the goals of the DESD, including through increasing the human and financial resources available to UNESCO in support of its ESD-related work;
 - (b) mobilize all UNESCO's programme sectors and networks to enhance their contributions to ESD and the Decade;
 - (c) in close collaboration with all partners, present the strategy to the United Nations General Assembly at its 65th session in autumn 2010;
 - (d) report to the Executive Board on the implementation of the UNESCO strategy for the second half of the DESD in her regular reports prior to the General Conference sessions of 2011 and 2013.