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**Written Statement of dr Zarko Obradovic
Minister of Education of the Republic of Serbia
The UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable
Development (ESD)
“Moving into the Second Half of the UN Decade”**

In accordance with Declaration of the UN General Assembly that the period 2005-2014 proclaim UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia dedicates to intensifying efforts to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into education and learning.

Moving into the Second Half of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia continuously working on implementation of endorsed international documents:

- The Lisbon Convention
- The Bologna Declaration
- The Strategy of Vocational Education Development
- The Strategy of Adult Education Development.

The following documents are under preparation:

- National Qualification Framework (in accordance with European Qualification Framework)
- The Strategy of Development of Education in the Republic of Serbia
- The Strategy of Inclusive Education of Children with Special Needs
- The Strategy of Education of Talented Children
- The Relevant Laws in order to create legal framework to implementation of above mentioned strategy documents.

The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia, in order to achieve the highest standards of social aspect of UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development has adopted and implements the following documents:

- The Poverty Reduction Strategy
- The Millennium Development Goals
- The Education of All
- The European Language Portfolio
- The National Action Plan for Children
- The Unique Action Plan for Roma Education.

Gender issue principles, human rights and social values are promoted true curriculum (obligatory and optional), with accent of interdisciplinary approach to learning process.

Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia takes special care of deprived groups of children, such as: children with special needs, children from poor and rural environments, members of the Roma population, and children from national minorities' communities.

National minorities are organized in 15 national councils of national minorities (Bosnians, Bulgarians, Bunjevci, Vlasi, Greeks,

Egyptians, Macedonians, Hungarians, Germans, Roma, Rumanians, Rusins, Slovaks, Ukrainians and Croats) and Association of Jewish Municipalities.

National minorities' national councils' education boards participate in preparation of curriculum for obligatory subject "Mother Tongue" and for elective subject matter "Mother Tongue with Elements of National Culture".

The Republic of Serbia has an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach to education for environmental protection.

Inclusion of contents related to environmental protection in school curricula in the Republic of Serbia was started 15 years ago, and it is a continuous process within the general educational reforms.

Contents of environmental education has been implemented in various subject matters in elementary and secondary schools: World Around Us, Guards of Nature, Civic Education, Biology (with Ecology), Chemistry, Geography, Physics, but also in social sciences subject matters, such as: History, Philosophy, Sociology and various project activities and experiments in schools.

Continuous training of teachers and production of textbooks for teachers represent support in realization of teaching in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development.

Universities in the Republic of Serbia (7 state-owned and 7 private ones) especially deal with the fields of ecology and environmental protection. Cathedras and sections for studying of these fields have been founded, as well as postgraduate and doctoral studies.

Government of the Republic of Serbia has produced the Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Republic of Serbia and, in accordance with it, the Draft of Action Plan for Sustainable Development, expected to be adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia.

Within the Action Plan, the Education for Sustainable Development has been dealt with in the separate chapter, being one of the basic pillars in achieving the sustainable development of individuals and the society as a whole.

Within the Action Plan the five basic objectives of the Education for Sustainable Development are emphasized:

1. Promotion of quality education in function of sustainable development, which will ensure higher efficiency and effectiveness of education, enlarge level of students achievements and competencies important for knowledge based economy;
2. Provide overall encompassment and facilitate access to education and acquiring qualifications for all, especially deprived category of population and reduction of drop outs from educational system;
3. Increase of percentage of those with completed higher education in Serbia and creation of conditions for their development and professional engagement in the country;
4. Promotion of openness of educational system and enlargement of its capability to influence other parts of society, its recognition and exchange of influences in regional and international framework;
5. Enlargement of level of information and education of population for environmental protection by programs of formal and informal education, professional development, life long learning and overall awareness raising of individuals on importance of environmental protection.

International organizations and developed countries have to provide support and undertake concrete steps in implementation of Education for Sustainable Development in underdeveloped countries, such as: government officials training, creation of forums for Education for Sustainable Development, planning activities, support for implementation of priority activities, curriculum and teaching materials development, teacher competencies development, support to research projects, strengthening of existing regional and sub-regional networks.

Having in mind that the Republic of Serbia respects its international obligations, we believe that European Union will support, through its pre-accession funds and also international organizations, projects of the Republic of Serbia aiming to facilitate successful implementation of the second half of UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.

Please allow me to express, in this written statement, my gratitude to the organizers, as well as the hope that implementation of the second half of UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development will be more recognizable, efficient and successful.

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