

Conclusion and Recommendation to the World Conference on ESD
by International Forum on ESD Dialogue 2008

5 December 2008

Tokyo, Japan

I. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014) was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly through Resolution A/RES/57/254 in 2002 and was launched in 2005. Since the inception of the Decade, for whose promotion UNESCO was designated the lead agency, the international community has discussed the needs, fundamental concepts and objectives of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), recognizing its key importance for future generations. UNESCO, its Member States, other UN bodies and a diverse range of partners will discuss the achievements and challenges of implementing the DESD as well as strategies for the remainder of the Decade at the World Conference on ESD in Bonn Germany (31 March – 2 April 2009)..

The International Forum on ESD Dialogue 2008 (Tokyo, Japan, 2 - 5 December 2008) was held for a number of purposes: to use our collective learning as a basis for enhanced future action; to identify results-oriented strategic projects for the second half of the Decade; to explore the possibility of a global consortium on ESD involving the private sector and NGOs; and to consider the contribution of research and innovation to the Decade. Furthermore, it considered inputs from a number of Member States in the Asia-Pacific region. It is expected that this Forum will contribute to the promotion of ESD in a systematic and comprehensive manner and to enhancing the visibility of the DESD.

The 2009 World Conference on ESD will be an important opportunity to strengthen the implementation of the DESD, including the leadership role of UNESCO. To this end, a list of recommendations to the Bonn Conference has now been compiled.

II. The International Forum on ESD Dialogue 2008, meeting in Tokyo from 2 to 5 December, 2008, Recalling the expectations for the DESD expressed by Member States in United Nations Assembly Resolution 57/254,

Also recalling UNESCO's role as the lead agency to promote the DESD, as set out in General Assembly Resolution 57/254,

Further recalling the comprehensive and strategic framework provided by the International Implementation Scheme (IIS) which was adopted by the 172nd Session of UNESCO's Executive Board in 2005,

Recognizing UNESCO's global leadership role and its implementation support based on the IIS over the past four years as well the valuable contribution of other UN agencies,

Also recognizing that education plays an important role in achieving sustainable development worldwide, as confirmed, among others international events, by the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation at the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002, and acknowledging the DESD as a unique opportunity for UNESCO and its Member States to educate for sustainable development,

Reaffirming that the DESD promotes quality education for all, which is at the heart of the Education for All (EFA) agenda, and contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Congratulating the Member States on the many initiatives they have implemented during the course of the DESD to date.

III. We, the participants in the International Forum, recommend to the Member States of UNESCO to:

1. Include the principles, values and practices of sustainable development as an important element of their strategies in all settings, types and levels of education;
2. Assist each other in implementation of the DESD through, among other things, exchange of good practices and innovations in ESD;
3. Make full use of schemes, frameworks, institutions and networks, such as the Associated Schools Project (ASP) Network, the UNEVOC Centre and its global network, the UNESCO Chairs network, UNESCO Category 2 Centres and UNU Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD (RCEs) as laboratories of ideas for innovative research, methods, teaching and learning in ESD, in particular, flagship projects which could guide stakeholders in implementing ESD and thereby enhance the visibility of the Decade;
4. Consolidate and strengthen partnerships with UN agencies, and build up closer connections with various stakeholders, in particular, higher education institutions, NGOs, the private sector and media.

IV. Participants in the Forum also call upon the Director-General of UNESCO to take the necessary steps so that UNESCO:

1. Promotes an accelerated implementation of the DESD, in line with the IIS;
2. Builds a stronger relationship between EFA and ESD;
3. Facilitates cooperation between Member States on ESD, including through implementation of flagship projects and exchanges between ASPnet schools, UNEVOC Centres, UNESCO Chairs and other networks for the promotion of North-South and South-South cooperation;
4. Facilitates intersectoral activities in ESD such as the Man and Biosphere Programme of Biosphere Reserves as learning laboratories for ESD;

5. Promotes worldwide cooperation mechanisms in favour of ESD, particularly by reinforcing partnerships between all stakeholders such as Member States ,NGOs, the private sector and media;
6. Assist Member States to develop ESD programmes well suited to their specific conditions and needs;
7. Strengthens efforts to raise the visibility and understanding of ESD in the international community.
8. Invites Member States to support the development of national research agendas and to strengthen the capacity of higher education institutions for ESD research and innovations, including incorporating relevant indigenous and local knowledge systems.