



Young ESD Voices from around the World

Results from Email Consultations prior to the
UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development

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Cluster I: Relevance of ESD for Key Sustainable Development Challenges

ESD can contribute substantially to addressing key sustainable development challenges. Indeed, without reorienting education, successfully confronting issues like water and climate change, among many others, will not be possible. Moreover, introducing sustainable development issues into all areas of education will help to make education more relevant. Engaging students and learners in contemporary questions related to development brings education closer to life and enhances the learning experience by stimulating motivation and interest.

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Objective 1. To highlight the essential contribution of ESD to all of education – Why is ESD relevant?

To meet the social, environmental, economic and political challenges of sustainable development and our MDGs, it is absolutely imperative that society is informed and well-prepared with knowledge, skills and willingness to act in a sustainable manner. ESD's contribution to all of education is essential in this transformation.

How do we mainstream ESD?

Through reorienting education using ESD tools; this critically involves changing the way in which knowledge is dispersed and exchanged (pedagogy) and the issues it covers.

Who should be involved in contributing to the re-orientation?

There is no clear hierarchy of involvement. On impulse, we might say that Member of States might be involved first, then schools and universities and then the public. However, in this case it is important to "permeate the educational community and the general public (citizens)," in order to be able to reap positive results quickly. The challenge lies in tipping the scales and obtaining a critical mass, from all levels; from individuals to Governments; we need ESD to be a government priority however we do not need to 'wait' for them to start mainstreaming change.

Limitations:

- 1) It is not easy to "reorient" curriculums with ESD in respect to key sustainable development challenges as established curricula have been adopted by educational institutions for a long time.
- 2) Funding the reorientation and delivery presents an obstacle for many institutions and governments.
- 3) In Cambodia, for example, those in extreme poverty do not attend school; as such ESD through formal education channels will not reach those who need it most and other channels must be used.

Objective 2. To promote international exchange on ESD - What can we learn from each other?

International exchange recognizes the importance of "learning from each other"; there are many dimensions of what we can learn from each other through international exchange on ESD and how it can meet key environmental, economic and social sustainable development challenges.

We can learn and exchange best practice through regional institutions who apply transdisciplinary and multisectorial approaches. At the government/policy formation level we can exchange best practice approaches for inclusion of ESD in regional and national development plans and strategies focusing on how to diffuse and infuse ESD through a transdisciplinary and multisectorial approach. Such approaches would also involve exchanging stories on ESD in conceptualization through to design and implementation stages of all



development work at the country level. To support this integration, it is important that we learn how to establish and strengthen Regional Centres of Expertise and other technical forums for greater impact on meeting key sustainable development challenges.

We can learn/exchange ideas on how to move ESD to the Centre of Education from the marginal position it occupies in many countries. Through learning and sharing our different strategies for ESD implementation in formal and non-formal contexts we can focus on strategies for mainstreaming ESD not merely at the policy and theoretical levels; but at the practical level across key development issues.

We can learn/exchange ideas on how to function as multipliers and how to stimulate broad based contributions to Global efforts. Key to engendering global contributions is connecting with International Steering Committees on ESD to ensure broad based local involvement in shaping future strategies for the implementation of ESD

We can learn/exchange ideas on how to create/support forums for exchanging information at the policy, institutional and implementation levels. International, regional, national and community based forums can provide unique platforms for sharing good practices, strategies and case studies, enabling coordinated bilateral cooperation, and 'twinning' projects.

We can learn/exchange ideas on how to address the inclusion of local and indigenous knowledge systems. This exchange can be achieved through support/participation in the Local and Indigenous Knowledge systems project and other international forums on Indigenous peoples.

We can also learn and exchange ideas on:

- How to ensure and address the participation of vulnerable and marginalized populations in ESD.
- How to engage development funds to support ESD and strategies to guide the work of development partners i.e. International Development Agencies and Funding Agencies.
- How to strengthen, monitor and evaluate the ESD work of NGOs, and CSOs.

Objective 3. To carry out a stock-take of DESD implementation – What have we achieved so far, what are the lessons learnt?

What have we achieved?

We have developed policies, programs and projects around the world supporting ESD implementation at all levels of education to address key sustainable development issues. Through this implementation we have:

- Generated a better understanding for and about ESD
- Increased participation and training of more stakeholders in ESD process
- Promoted youth participation on ESD
- Improved ESD mainstreaming in formal education



However, there is a lot more to do...

Lessons learnt

Some key lessons learnt from our countries and regions include:

- Regional approaches are effective when tailored to the country level - It is necessary to coordinate regional ESD frameworks with approaches tailored to individual countries.
- Importance of supporting practice with policy.
- It is necessary to include indigenous people, local communities and gender perspectives in ESD.
- Information and communication technologies can contribute to facilitate communication, information exchange between all actors in ESD.
- Young people play a very important role in the ESD process- they are promoting projects in their communities and making a difference and broad-based youth participation is critical to ensure greater impact and improved results in the ESD process.
- Non formal and formal education modes are able to mobilize many stakeholders in ESD, they are developing knowledge, skills and values, and it is necessary to strengthen and to support this process.
- Media plays a very important role in creating awareness and should be a key partner to promote ESD.

Key sustainable development challenges that lie ahead in the implementation

- Address poverty (and all MDGs) on a greater scale.
- Provide public and private funding for ESD.
- Creating a common and better understanding of ESD.
Coordination and partnership between governments, international organizations, civil society, private sector and communities.
Develop knowledge and skills adequate management for natural disasters, natural resources, and climate change.
- Strengthen global, regional, national and local ESD networks and networking/partnerships.
- Promote a cultural change with a rich vision of developing and transforming lifestyles, consumption and production patterns.

Objective 4. Develop strategies for the way ahead. Where do we want to go from here?

While much has been achieved in the first half of the DESD, the journey has only just begun. From here we need to focus on strengthening the foundations which have been built 2003-2009.

Strengthen existing structures and put in place new structures for the promotion of ESD tools and methods in alleviating key SD challenges. We can move closer to strengthening existing structures through:

- Strengthening and upwardly supporting existing Regional Centers of ESD expertise.



- Establishing new of expertise centers to enhance the ways we share ESD information, knowledge and best practice.
- Placing ESD tools/issues on the agenda of all UN agencies programmes.
- Bilateral and multilateral development agencies supporting new and existing ESD structures, policies and programs.
- Building stronger partnerships and collective regional and global momentum through promoting inter-regional and 'south- south' and 'north-south' ESD exchange and learning.

Facilitate better understanding for and about ESD and its role in SD challenges. Through strengthening ESD expertise centers we need to facilitate:

- Wider understanding of what ESD is and what ESD tools have to offer key sustainable development challenges & surpassing the MDGs.
- Increased ESD story sharing.
- Capacity building for ESD and DESD across all UNESCO sectors; advocacy and communication with international community.
- Capacity building for civil society to deliver ESD (on the ground) in formal and non-formal channels.

Increase utilization of the media to reach citizens.

Through strengthening ESD expertise centers we need to facilitate:

- The use of methods and implicit practices of ESD to engage with the media to engage with everyday citizens (the 'unconverted') and/ or the illiterate in poverty stricken areas,

For maximum impact on futures we need increased ESD mainstreaming in formal education.

- Continue to mainstream ESD learning and approaches across all primary and higher education institutions (both technical and non technical).

The road ahead requires broad based funding to deliver ESD

- Engage more effectively with funding agencies so they can acknowledge ESD as a valuable tool under all aid thematic areas.
- Engage more effectively with the corporate sector and encourage their contribution to sustainable development (CSR) through ESD.



Cluster II: Building Partnership for ESD

With sustainable development relating to all areas of society, reorienting education towards sustainable development must be a multi-stakeholder endeavour. Learning for sustainable development takes place not only in education institutions but also in many other sectors of society as well. Education stakeholders therefore need to reach out to other important actors and build strong partnerships. Because sustainable development is a global challenge, international partnerships and the integration of the local and the global are decisive elements for ESD as well.

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Introduction

Quality Education for All is one of the world's greatest challenges, and is both an objective of and a way towards Sustainable Development. In order to empower citizens to participate in the evolution of society towards sustainability, ESD first aims at improving access, quality and capacity building in education, and therefore supports the MDG “education for all”. On the other hand, ESD is also an answer to global challenges, which require global strategies. Young people today live in an interconnected world: our vision for Quality Education for All must acknowledge that partnerships and networks at all levels are essential to meeting these global challenges.

Objective 1

ESD challenges the very roles in education, requiring that the traditional narrative trend evolves to a committed one, involving everyone. ESD is **relevant to quality education** because it contributes to build up networks in the following ways:

- The contact with various partners implies a contact with the different, which will bring into pupils' experiences a better **sense of reality's complexity** and the need to indeed deal with it in taking advantage of the contribution and strengths of each individual or organization. Building partnerships bans sectarian or dogmatic perspectives and encourages a constructive approach to differences. It fosters knowledge and respect towards diversity, past and present, and contributes to a sense of **global citizenship** and **solidarity between generations**.
- Collaborations with external partners open up “teaching contexts” to “living contexts. Together with the fact that ESD takes into account relevant issues concerning people's everyday life, this opening helps education become **more relevant** to pupils and learning adults and fosters a **better transfer** between what has been taught and what is being used.
- In emphasizing collaboration rather than confrontation, in focusing on opportunities more than on problems, and in training participation, ESD opens up perspectives and motivates people to get involved and reflect upon their own reality. It therefore moves them from being life expectators to being **life actors**. Through partnerships, information, knowledge and technologies are shared. Network which fosters growing legitimacy of the movement and the feeling of **working together for a common purpose** gets stronger.
- ESD being based on life-long learning of every actor of the society, it makes links between formal, non formal and informal education. Partnerships inside different fields of education contribute to a better **coherence** in education, from pre-school level to post-graduate studies, and from manager schools to all other kinds of adult education.
- ESD can benefit from different educational movements (for Peace, Human rights, environmental education...), which **reinforce one another** in aiming at a common goal. Nevertheless, ESD is not an add-on to existing components, but a fundamentally new way of thinking and practicing education.



Objective 2

We cannot afford to tackle nowadays issues alone, we must share resources and best practices to accelerate societal change towards Sustainable Development. Partnerships allow building a critical mass, benefiting from different points of view, and supporting one another in ESD processes. The importance of establishing this kind of networks amongst ESD practitioners has already been acknowledged: more or less active networks already function, at regional or national levels. However, much still needs to be done to improve learning processes within existing networks, to diversify them and coordinate them:

- **Bring participants from both media and the corporate sector on board in existing networks.** It is paramount that the language used and approaches employed are mutually inclusive, seeking to engage these stakeholders too. It has to be clear that all stakeholders are part of the problem and can be part of the solution, and that it is also in the interest of media and the corporate sector to participate in and support ESD networks. Sensitization at local and global level is needed here.
- **Improve learning processes within the context of UNESCO Biosphere reserves.** In Zimbabwe, most studies on UNESCO biosphere reserves is done through research institutions and local universities, and what lacks is the dissemination of information regarding teaching and learning opportunities. This information is needed to support the reorientation of educational curriculum processes. In Switzerland, a private-public partnership has supported the creation of the reserve, and the interactions between the different stakeholders inside the reserve show the interdependencies between them in a very clear way. Other ESD stakeholders can benefit from the gained experience.
- **Consider the intercultural perspective.** One of the challenges to the required kind of cooperation is the different backgrounds, and therefore perceptions, of involved partners. As ESD has been conceptualized differently in various areas of the world, it may take time before we agree on the way forward and provide one another with the necessary support. It is therefore important to acknowledge that ESD partnerships will manifest in different forms, and to take into account the diverse socio-economic, political and cultural context in North-South, North-North and South-South partnerships. Technical, material and financial support is needed, especially in poor countries, and existing funding models and ways of working have to be reorientated to support new kinds of partnerships.
- **Guarantee the link to local knowledge and communities needs.** Research partnerships are needed to link research to practical community needs in order to create locally relevant and acceptable solutions that also recognize the inherent value of traditional knowledge systems.
- **Coordinate international exchange.** UNESCO must play a lead role in coordinating international exchange of best practices and experiences in ESD. UNESCO must extend its existing cooperation with other UN partners beyond UNEP and the UNU that have been active in the UNDESD.



Objective 3

The DESD has had a stimulating effect over the implementation of ESD worldwide and made it become a topic at several levels. It can be used as a reference for legitimizing ESD initiatives and contributes to the networking of stakeholders. However, little is known about how far it has reached. Therefore, monitoring and evaluating the results achieved is a key component of the Decade. What can be pointed out, however, is that there is still no global partnership for the DESD nor between countries to dialog on the implementation of ESD. Partnerships are essential for the promotion of mutual understanding and respect towards diversity and the production, critical assessment and sharing of information among the actors involved, globally and locally. Also, partnerships are important to legitimize ESD internationally and make it more accredited to donors, sponsors and national politicians, who need to be committed with the inclusion of ESD in political national agendas and the creation of a plan to diffuse ESD nationwide in a coordinated way.

Objective 4

The UNDESD requires a high level of investment over the next 5 years. The promotion of multi-stakeholder networks and resources to encourage the exchange of best practices is of great importance. ESD demands that we work with communities, local, state and national governments to address the challenges of ESD. **ESD must be on the agenda of all Regional and International Education forums** to highlight once again to the leaders of the world the critical role of education, in transforming our societies and equipping us to achieve Sustainable Development. Following elements can contribute to this:

- **A world of generalists educated in ESD has to be promoted**, rather than a world of specialists as we have traditionally favoured. The specialists will still be required, but it is the generalist who can understand the bigger picture and tie interlinked phenomenon together, and be an interface between several partners working together. This implies a better integration of ESD in the formal sector and in adult education.
- **Sustainability principles have got to be more present in and more influence on economical and financial decisions.** Clearly we are not living yet in a different paradigm. There should be much more investments in the integration of ESD in the curriculum of courses such as economics or accountancy so as to include these stakeholder in ESD networks. ESD should also be present in courses in the field of the media, allowing a public debate about predominant underlying values and the contradictions within the very idea of sustainable development in itself.
- The **role of young people** is yet to be significantly addressed. As the majority holders of the world's population we must foster leadership and develop capacity within our young people to help develop this new ways of building up partnerships for ESD.
- **Coordination** work is needed
- at international level (with on-line data base for projects, documentation and resource persons)
- between local, regional, and international level
- between formal, non-formal and informal education



Conclusion

In promoting learning and acting in networks, ESD equips society for the change of paradigm needed for reaching sustainable development. It trains the knowledge, the tools and the resources necessary to people of all age to participate in the process. How to really involve people remains a core issue, avoiding that in the end, there is imposition of ideologies and values upon countries and local communities, which can't be the meaning of partnerships. But the chance and the endless possibilities of people learning together for a sustainable future have to be taken.



Cluster III: Capacity Development for ESD

If ESD is to become a central aspect of all education, supporting structures at the global, national and local levels are required. Among other things, this implies political frameworks that enable the inclusion of sustainable development issues and principles into all areas of teaching and learning. The active involvement of civil society is equally key to introducing a broad concept such as ESD into education. Finally, ESD implementation itself must be a learning experience. Monitoring and evaluating progress must therefore be an important concern for all stakeholders.

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Objective 1. To highlight the essential contribution of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to all of education and to achieving quality education. Why is Capacity Development for ESD relevant?

Capacity Development is an essential process to achieving Education for Sustainable Development. The objectives of Capacity Development are to;

- Enhance, or more effectively utilise, the skills, abilities and resources available.
- Strengthen relationships: Address issues of values, attitudes, motivation and conditions in order to support sustainable development.
- Develop ownership: Developing capacity for ESD involves three key areas, these are;
- Stakeholders: As a result of the broadness of sustainability, no sector is left out when we talk of sustainability. Stakeholders include; the local people (village elders), different government departments, NGO's, Private sector, industries.
- Training: People who have recently been introduced to sustainable development need informal training on issues of ESD so that they can pass on the knowledge to others. There is also need to re- train those who have been trained in the past to maintain the motivation. Formal curriculum demands curriculum developers and teachers who have training in ESD so that it is infused into the different subjects taught in schools.

Why is Capacity Development for ESD relevant?

ESD is an upcoming concept (there is still no final answers in it), and we consider, that an important function of our capacity building programs is to serve as **platforms for discussion** about our “ESD journey” and joint reflexion (introspection) of the real progress reached.

ESD as a *political focus area*, give people practical skills and tools that will enable them to influence **public policy** (in the promotion of ESD itself). And can also encourage citizens to participate in political and environmental spheres as a dynamic civil society that can take concrete actions for Sustainable Development (protecting the planet from environmental hazards).

How do we implement Capacity Development?

This learning process (Capacity Development) must empower people to have a successful engagement in the society, which will not be accomplished unless all people have the following skills:

- Understanding what is happening around them locally and globally.
- Thinking critically and creatively of a certain incident. - Conflict management - Decision making - Problem solving - Monitoring and Evaluation

Limitations on Capacity Development for ESD

- **Reciprocity:** ESD capacity development can only work if the learning dynamics are considered by all the stakeholders involved as a reciprocal process of understanding and adaptation. The distance between such diverse actors as international institutions, national and local governments, non governmental organisations and communities, schools and private sector representatives can only be filled by acknowledging the reasons – and very often the values – behind the current patterns of behaviour adopted by each partner. Once the partners are all considered as important contributors to the ESD Capacity Development process, the enormous



potential of each actor can be more easily realised and fulfilled, as the capacities of the stakeholders gain visibility for both the other partners and the actors themselves. The capacities are in this sense 'developed' as the common awareness and understanding is improved through the exchange of existing knowledge. The difficulties of implementing such an approach are made even more evident by Language(s).

- **Language(s):** this issue is both a very practical and a more theoretical issue. The need of transmitting useful information – both ways, as I said above – for ESD capacity development implies the necessity of building and adopting whenever it is possible a shared language capable of including and respecting the variety of thought implicit in linguistic diversity. I am talking here about national and local languages to reach the maximum number of people, an essential tool in ESD Capacity Development, but also about the specific 'languages' used by ESD stakeholders in different sectors (e.g. academic or business): the relevance of ESD capacity development is essentially linked to the capacity of the actors involved in such a multi-stakeholders dynamic to act as translators from and to their own 'culture(s)' in a large sense.

- **Culture(s):** translation of ESD concepts implies in this sense a much greater challenge, as even with a shared set of concepts expressed in a common language the meaning they assume in diverse cultural contexts changes and affects enormously the work to develop each others' capacities of addressing in the most appropriate form the challenges of sustainable development. If we look at the diagram of sustainable development as suggested by UNESCO itself (at least in Asia-pacific), with the three pillars of *environment*, *society* and *economy* encircled by a fourth dimension – culture – we can easily understand how this fourth circle can shape the cultural meaning of the other three. We can even think that the circle itself can actually change in shape and 'colour', therefore cutting out of the specific understanding of environment, society and economy entire parts of what would be included in other cultures (an easy and relatively neutral example for the economic pillar could be the interdiction of bank interests under Islamic law); or colouring common concepts with specific and very important nuances, as with the 'scientific' and traditional or religious classifications of species and their relation to a different 'cosmology' and the place of humanity in it. In this sense, the risk is to forget that in ESD capacity development we all start as the blind men of the tale, touching an elephant to learn what it is like: each one of us only touches different parts of ESD, and only some parts, and it takes lot of work, and some interesting conflict, to come to a *common understanding* - which will most likely not look like an elephant at all, but that's another story.

Objective 2. To promote international exchange on ESD. What can we learn from each other?

a) Best practices - There is a lot of good work happening around the world on ESD and especially on capacity building on ESD. Sharing resources like training designs, session and workshop plans and modules can be beneficial in delivering quality capacity building interventions across the globe. Some concepts like Evgenia Postnova's concept of 3 C's of Curriculum, Campus and Community. Some of the interventions can be emulated/customized/reinvented according to local situations.



b) Lessons learned - The exchange of ideas will also speak about the 'worst practices' (read 'what not to do').

c) Mutual support for change/advocacy: International exchange would also support the interventions of people in countries where work on ESD is not given importance. With targeted international support, there can be enough pressure put on governments to bring about change/movement - advocacy. (Cf. MDG 8 - Development of a global partnership for development)

Objective 3. To carry out a stock-taking of DESD implementation. What have we achieved so far, what are the lessons learnt?

An important achievement of capacity building processes in ESD has been to transform a visionary concept, sustainable development, in a current and **popular idea**, or at the very least a matter of everyday discussion where everybody can have and propose an opinion, from the academicians in the universities to the people queuing at the bakery.

The fact that the basic theory of SD has reached lots of people has of course its 'parroting' risks, but can also be the starting point of a bigger change in mentalities, and support the crucial shift from an agreed theory to shared practices. In this sense the achievements in ESD capacity building may still be mainly in terms of **awareness**, but I consider that exactly what can make things move in a different direction: in fact, I think what is missing in most cases is not the practical ability to do something 'Sustainable', be it using traditional knowledge or hyper-technology, but the common agreement and shared decisions among all stakeholders on the best use to do of this immense knowledge cumulated over the centuries: as the poet more or less said, we have the water and we have the earth, and we are making mud!

The lesson learnt is that – ESD must be a hopeful project, a series of questions about **human intentions and actions**, but framed by possibilities, by the draw of imagining and creating an abundant, satisfying, **more equitable future** that nests within our supporting ecosystems.

Objective 4. To develop strategies for the way ahead. Where do we want to go from here?

- We should be more radical in our ESD programs

The required shift, from grudging incrementalism to wholesale integration of ESD is needed, It has massive implications for everyone involved in education today and especially for the young people who will have to cope with such a different world.

- Be careful with slogans, used for SD-ESD initiatives

We also need to be careful with so much-loved watchwords (such as 'Think Globally, Act Locally'), which are regularly parroted within ESD capacity building programs. If they are used with very limited understanding of what personal responsibility in the global economy really means, then best not to utter them at all.



- Think carefully about “green consumerism” idea in ESD programs. There are so many seductive illusions around (particularly in the area of 'green consumerism') that a little bit of truth-telling with young people becomes all the more important – indeed, an ethical imperative within capacity building programs on ESD.

Sustainability must be much more than saving on the school or college energy and photocopying bills, as it were. Choose the ideas, which really motivate people to move to SD. Capacity building programs should motivate people to contribute to sustainability, because “it is more bright, healthier and more faire future”, rather than based on arguments, such as “we should move to SD because on the other case it will be the end of human existence”. The more our capacity building programs represents something aspirational the more likely it is to be done by people, and done well.

Ideas for The road ahead... Action Plans

- To have **Training of Trainers workshops**, so that a considerable pool of trainers is built in each country to share resources and facilitate thinking on development within the country.
- Invest a greater effort towards integrating capacity building on ESD in our **regular trainings** done as a part of the education system in countries.
- To have **ESD clubs in institutions**, schools and colleges just like we have environment clubs, social work clubs etc.- Clubs which define/rethink development.
- To have platforms to discuss and share ideas and resources on capacity building on ESD
- **The joint project** which was being talked about- a good idea would be to start a blog/forum/website- where work and best practices on ESD are shared. We could share films and other audio- visual materials which document the best practices around.

Conclusion

Two major changes are then still needed:

One further step to switch the meaning of ESD from ESD to the Era of Sustainable Development. Capacity building in this frame means valorising and showing in a clear way the beauty – simple as this, the intrinsic aesthetic beauty – of sustainable development practices. To help shaping – or valorising, as many such examples exist and resisted despite our best efforts - specific cultural landscapes that correspond to the idea of humanity that is proposed by the concept of SD, examples that work and can become the living proof of the validity of this choice, should be the main objective of ESD capacity building. If this objective is to be attained, it also means (second relatively big change) that ESD capacity development could and should actually be mainly based on a positive approach and on the exchange of good practices. ESD capacity building activities need to acknowledge and stimulate the necessary interdependence among different stakeholders and the diversity of experiences in different regions and countries, facilitating peer (and non formal) education through thematic cooperation.



Cluster IV: ESD Contributions to Quality Teaching and Learning

The integration of ESD into education varies among different fields of teaching and learning. Requirements, practices and opportunities of ESD vary from one education setting to the other. Moreover, when addressing the role of ESD in education, the important question of how Education for All and ESD relate to each other must be considered.

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ESD is an essential contribution to quality teaching and learning, and a new paradigm for education that emphasizes long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability. ESD-related programmes are relevant to national and local contexts and support MDG Goal 2 (Universal Primary Education) and MDG Goal 8 (Environmental Sustainability) and complement EFA efforts, especially EFA Goal 3 (life skills) and Goal 6 (quality). ESD-related content and pedagogy fosters values for behavioural change and “social learning” and encourages individuals from all sectors of society, including government, schools, parents/family, and the local community, to develop and adopt the right values and attitudes for sustainable development through formal, non-formal and informal learning. ESD builds on current education programmes to foster responsibility and empower individuals to gain access to appropriate information, think holistically and make informed, appropriate decisions for their future.

Action Plan

As a follow-up to this Conference, we would like to call on the concerted action among government, non-government and the private sector to implement the following:

- 1) Advocate for the creation and implementation of an effective national and regional policy on Education for Sustainable Development, including the incorporation of ESD into national development plans and strategies, to guide and coordinate learning for sustainable development in the national context. At the same time, governments need to take their existing commitments to sustainable development at heart.
- 2) Advocate for the wider participation of ESD, not only in formal education (public and private), but also in non-formal education settings. Expanding reach means allocating funding for ESD from the government, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and UN Agencies.
- 3) Establish local and international funding sources for local ESD initiatives, exchanges and teacher training, in addition to incorporating ESD into national budget structures.
- 4) Establish capacity-building programs related to ESD:
 - a) Content. Build on current education programs to empower individuals to find information on relevant SD issues, think holistically and make informed, appropriate decisions for their future. Foster values for behavioral change and participatory, problem-based and social learning so that students can develop and adopt the “right” values and attitudes in any educational setting.
 - b) Scope. Capacity building on ESD is a must for all sectors of society including - but not limited to- government, schools, the religious sector, parents/family, the local community, non-government organizations, the private sector, cooperatives and the media.
 - c) School and Teacher Training. Provide continuous pre-service and in-service training on curriculum integration, teaching strategies, and innovations so teachers acquire knowledge, skills and principles for addressing sustainability issues.



- 5) Document and share examples of ESD through international exchange:
 - a) Conduct comparative ESD research on teaching, learning and integration processes and identify key learning points; research and practice should ensure that that ESD complements and does not over-burden the existing system.
 - b) Publish and make available practical ESD materials to schools, organizations, and other groups for formal and non-formal education.
 - c) Document and share 'good' practice examples using information technology resources, e.g.:
 - Create a website and make use of social internet networks (e.g. Facebook) with reference links to 'good' ESD practice around the world, videos of ESD-in-action, information on funding opportunities, etc. This includes a database on ESD organizations and networks;
 - Organize virtual ESD conferences.
 - d) Continue with ongoing national and international exchange efforts.
- 6) Promote investigation and innovations on teaching-learning strategies:
 - a) Recognize and encourage ESD actions of individual teachers or schools. Search for teachers and schools that have carried out teaching innovations to promote learning for sustainable development;
 - b) Conduct focus groups/workshops and interviews with teachers, students, and other appropriate audiences on current subject areas (e.g., citizenship, biology, geography, outdoor activities, arts, etc.) to gather evidence on how ESD can be practically integrated into teaching-learning processes.
- 7) Promote sustainable practices in schools:
 - a) Adapt a whole-school approach to connect individual action and whole school initiatives. A whole school approach would require capacity and willingness of school administrators to change toward more sustainable practices including an ESD philosophy, physical structures/architecture, policies, people participation (planning, training, implementation, and evaluation tool for teachers/staff), curriculum development and capacity building.
 - b) Develop a guide to developing an auditing instrument for ESD in all levels of education, from primary to higher education.
 - c) Focus on SD-related content that also goes beyond environmental issues to include topics such as health, food security, etc. These issues are all inter-related and complementary to building the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes associated with sustainable development.
 - d) Offer more courses at university level on education for sustainable development, sustainable development, environmental science and management.
- 8) Integrate ESD throughout the curriculum.
 - a) Recognize the local context. An interdisciplinary approach is crucial wherein schools link new topics to the existing curriculum and tackle issues like renewable energy, greening environment, water management, climate change, environmental justice, poverty, water scarcity, human rights and citizenship.
 - b) Utilize *learning networks*. Through meetings, online or in person, learning networks go through a process of competency building for integrating sustainable development into



- the curriculum. It builds a large basis of professional people who understand what sustainable development means in the local context, and how it can be connected to teaching and learning through curricula.
- c) Integrate sustainable entrepreneurship and employability to the educational curriculum in school and to the workplace.
 - d) Request UNESCO to research, document and publish guidelines on practical steps for integrating ESD into curricula in a variety of contexts.