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UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (2005-2014) FRAMEWORK FOR THE INTERNATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION SCHEME

OUTLINE

In December 2002, resolution 57/254 on the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and UNESCO was designated as lead agency for the promotion of the Decade. This document contains elements for developing a draft international implementation scheme with a timetable for activities up to December 2005.

I. OBJECTIVE OF THE DOCUMENT

1. This document shares elements of a framework for developing a draft international implementation scheme for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in close consultation and collaboration with our partners at local, national, regional and international levels. A timeline for activities from July 2003 until the end of the next biennium in December 2005 is also suggested.

2. In order to contextualize the above concept of sustainable development endorsed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (Johannesburg, 26 August to 4 September 2002) is explained. The concept of education for sustainable development and its relationship with Education for All (EFA), the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is clarified. These illustrate that quality education is a prerequisite for education for sustainable development at all levels and in all modalities of education.

II. UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (2005-2014)

3. The World Summit on Sustainable Development recommended to the United Nations General Assembly that “it consider adopting a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development starting in 2005” (para. 117d, Plan of Implementation). In December 2002, resolution 57/254 on the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development beginning 1 January 2005 was adopted by consensus. The resolution had been introduced by Japan and co-sponsored by 46 countries.

4. The United Nations General Assembly resolution designated UNESCO as the lead agency for the promotion of the Decade and requested the Organization to develop a draft international implementation scheme.

5. The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development aims to promote education as a basis for a more sustainable human society and to integrate sustainable development into education systems at all levels. The Decade will also strengthen international cooperation towards the development and sharing of innovative education for sustainable development programmes, practices and policies. Specific objects and targets for many stakeholders will be developed in the implementation scheme.

WSSD and education for sustainable development¹

6. Education as the foundation of sustainable development was reaffirmed at the Johannesburg Summit, as was the commitment embodied in Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 of the Rio Summit, 1992. The Plan of Implementation establishes the linkages between the Millennium Development Goals on universal primary education for both boys and girls, but especially girls, and the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All. The creation of a gender-sensitive education system at all levels and of all types – formal, non-formal and informal – to reach the unserved is emphasized as a crucial component of education for sustainable development. Education is recognized as a tool for addressing important questions such as rural development, health care, community involvement, HIV/AIDS, the environment, and wider ethical/legal issues such as human values and human rights.

7. Education for sustainable development is a dynamic concept that utilizes all aspects of public awareness, education and training to create or enhance an understanding of the linkages among the

¹ Sources for this section were the WSSD Documents 1. Political Declaration, 2. Plan of Implementation. These documents can be found in the following website: http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/summit_docs.html.

issues of sustainable development and to develop the knowledge, skills, perspectives and values which will empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating and enjoying a sustainable future.

8. Education for sustainable development has four major thrusts.

9. *Promotion and improvement of basic education.* Access to basic education remains a problem for many, especially girls and illiterate adults. The quality of basic education must improve to focus on imparting knowledge, skills, values and perspectives throughout a lifetime that encourage and support citizens to lead sustainable lives.

10. *Reorienting existing education programmes.* Rethinking and revising education from nursery school through university to include more principles, knowledge, skills, perspectives and values related to sustainability in each of the three realms – social, environmental, and economic – is important to our current and future societies. This should be done in a holistic and interdisciplinary manner. The best chance of success of education for sustainable development lies not in a separate programme but in embedding its vision within other initiatives.

11. *Developing public understanding and awareness of sustainability.* To make progress towards more sustainable societies requires a population that is aware of the goals of sustainability and has the knowledge and the skills to contribute towards those goals. Informed citizenry and knowledgeable consumers can help communities and governments enact sustainability measures and move towards more sustainable societies.

12. *Training.* All sectors of the workforce can contribute to local, regional and national sustainability. The development of specialized training programmes to ensure that all sectors of the workforce have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their work in a sustainable manner has been identified as a critical component of education for sustainable development.

13. There is no universal model of education for sustainable development. While there will be overall agreement on the concept, there will be nuanced differences according to local contexts, priorities and approaches. Each country has to define its own priorities and actions. The goals, emphases and processes must, therefore, be locally defined to meet the local environmental, social and economic conditions in culturally appropriate ways. Education for sustainable development is equally relevant and critical for both developed and developing countries.

14. As the United Nations lead agency in education, UNESCO must play a key role in setting quality standards in education for sustainable development. It needs to reorient its own programmes to include the changes required to promote sustainable development. Improving the quality of education and reorienting its goals to recognize the importance of sustainable development must be one of UNESCO's and the world's highest priorities.

15. A key WSSD outcome was the "Type 2 Partnerships" which were entered into, voluntarily, between Agencies (including the United Nations), non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. Three such partnerships in which UNESCO has major responsibilities were launched at the Summit: International Marketing Communications Initiative for Sustainable Development (based in the Science Sector); FAO/UNESCO Flagship Programme for Rural People (based in the Education Sector and directly linked to EFA); Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership Initiative (based in the Education Sector).

16. There is clear common ground between Education for Sustainable Development, Education for All and the United Nations Literacy Decade. All three relate to the Millennium Development

Goals. Considered from any of the three perspectives, education is a central strategy for sustainable development. They all place emphasis on local context, bridging the school and community divide, partnerships with civil society, stakeholder engagement in policy and the role of the Government as enabler. Further common ground exists in the critical issues which each initiative identifies – poverty alleviation, gender equality, human rights and biodiversity.

17. As pointed out by UNESCO, “It is evident ... that ESD, EFA and the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) are mutually supportive. All six goals of EFA and the objectives of the Literacy Decade are integral parts of ESD. In the same way ESD approaches must be incorporated within EFA and the Literacy Decade strategies and programmes in order for any one of the three interlinked movements to succeed”.² ESD will be a key element in attaining the Millennium Development Goals, particularly Goals 2 and 3.³ Years of programme implementation, gathering information and analysis show that increasing education, especially of women, enhances the well-being of entire families.

III. WORKING TOWARDS A DRAFT INTERNATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION SCHEME FOR THE DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

18. UNESCO has a dual role to play in relation to education for sustainable development: one as a substantive implementer of ESD, and the second as the lead agency for the Decade. As a substantive implementer UNESCO will determine how best to contribute to the fulfilment of the WSSD educational objectives, selecting strategic projects, programmes, activities and efforts to maximize quality and impact with available human and financial resources. As the lead agency, UNESCO must play a catalytic role in dialogue and consensus-building to make recommendations on the draft implementation scheme and to facilitate the work of the Decade.

19. Several key themes are critical priorities for planning programmes and activities in support of the Decade, and need to be kept in mind while elaborating the Implementation Scheme. Among the more important are biodiversity, fresh water management, environmental conservation and protection, rural transformation, health promotion, sustainable production and consumption, human rights, peace and international understanding, and the cross-cutting themes of poverty alleviation and gender equality. Attempts should be made to use Information and Communication Technology in the service of ESD even in very traditional learning situations. Actions that will be in the implementation scheme will be related to the educational aspects of topics, issues, and problems that are relevant to sustainable development.

20. This section outlines the processes, players, outputs and strategies from which the Implementation Scheme will be developed through a consultative process over the next 12 months. This scheme, when developed, will be presented to the United Nations General Assembly in 2004.

21. *Processes.* In developing the draft International Implementation Scheme, UNESCO will:

- Engage in wide consultations with as many partners and stakeholders as possible in developed and developing countries;
- Operate in a cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary manner, integrating contributions from all stakeholders;

² *Promoting Quality Education: Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy; Education for Sustainable Development; Curricula, Educational Tools and Teacher Training* (doc. 166 EX/INF.6, para 33).

³ Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education; Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.

- Use a *bottom-up approach* emphasizing field perspectives and challenges;
- Use an *evidence-based approach*, involving the use of case studies of good practices and new approaches combining the results of research and field experiences.

22. *Players/Stakeholders*. The Decade represents a new era of cooperation and coordination, and a serious attempt to strengthen UNESCO's partnership with all those engaged in international cooperation, primarily with the institutions of the United Nations system and the other specialized agencies and also with international and regional intergovernmental organizations as well as National Commissions for UNESCO, the broad non-governmental organization community and the private sector. Other key players that UNESCO will invite to assist in the development of an implementation scheme are:

- Academic and other research institutions;
- NGOs and civil society organizations (local, national and international);
- Special interest groups such as youth groups and women's groups;
- Faith-based organizations;
- Private sector (defined broadly);
- Media groups.

The perspectives, abilities, experiences and advantages that each partner brings will be consolidated through a schema that incorporates what the stakeholders say they can do, when they can do it, and who their partners are.

23. *Expected outputs*. The implementation scheme will be developed to achieve the following outputs:

- Specific actions to reinforce commitment to the six EFA goals, the Literacy Decade goals and cross-cutting issues such as poverty alleviation, gender and human rights;
- Guidelines for governments on how to adopt a holistic and transdisciplinary approach to education for sustainable development and how to integrate it in their education policies and systems;
- International, regional and national alliances and networks with a broad range of partners, including universities and civil society, in support of education for sustainable development programmes widened and strengthened;
- Teacher education strengthened and reoriented to address sustainability;
- Shared responsibility among formal, non-formal and informal sectors of the education community for the Decade.

24. *Strategies*. In developing the international implementation scheme UNESCO will:

- Identify ways to integrate the education for sustainable development perspective into national education policies and strategies through EFA, UNLD and MDGs programmes and provide guidance to Member States;

- Develop and integrate quantitative and qualitative indicators for measuring progress on education for sustainable development into ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for EFA and the Literacy Decade;
- Identify and involve new partners in promoting education for sustainable development;
- Involve information and communications technologies and the media to implement education for sustainable development programmes;
- Develop national capacities for education for sustainable development.

IV. A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO THE DECADE

25. As the agency designated to take the lead in coordinating the Decade, UNESCO has to build broad ownership at the very start, through a clear articulation of the value added by each partner. It also has to build momentum and participation and sustain the same throughout the Decade. In this section, through a series of mostly self-explanatory tables, the framework of the draft International Implementation Scheme emerges.

26. *Partners.* UNESCO must develop, through extensive consultation, an overall shared vision of education for sustainable development before the commencement of the Decade. As Table 1 shows, there are partners at all levels – subnational (local, community), national, regional and international, and from all spheres – governmental, civil society and NGOs, and private. The list will be added to or modified during the process of consultation.

Table 1: A sample list of potential partners in the Decade

	Governmental	Civil society and NGOs	Private
Subnational and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provincial/state/district departments of education and development sectors • municipal authorities • schools, adult learning programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based organizations • local sections of NGOs • faith-based groups • village development committees • adult learning groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local business • clans and families • individuals
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national government departments of education and development sectors • universities and research institutes • EFA networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national NGOs and NGO coalitions • branches of international NGOs • faith-based organizations • teachers' associations and trade unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • private sector businesses • business associations
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regional inter-governmental groupings • regional EFA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regional civil society and NGO groupings and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regional business associations

	Governmental	Civil society and NGOs	Private
	networks		
International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSD¹ • EFA High-Level and Working Groups • UNDG² member agencies • Millennium Project Task Forces • Official/semi-official watchdog bodies • Literacy Working Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable development education networks • NGO UNESCO Liaison Committee • CCNGO/EFA³ • Global Campaign for Education • international environmental NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • international associations of businesses (e.g in the extractive sector) • TNCs (e.g. media corporations)⁴

¹ Commission for Sustainable Development

² United Nations Development Group

³ Collective Consultation of NGOs for EFA

⁴ Trans-National Corporations

27. *Building momentum and participation.* Participation, ownership and commitment will build the Decade's momentum. How can this be promoted? What mechanisms can be identified to structure the necessary communication and dialogue? Leadership and inputs at all levels are necessary to initiate such processes. Certain proposals are made below following the "bottom-up" approach. Tables 2 through 5 provide suggestions at the community, national, regional and international levels.

28. *Community-based processes at local level.* The term "community" is used here in a broad sense to indicate those who share a common milieu and therefore face an interlocking set of challenges in sustainable development. Table 2 illustrates examples in terms of individual action and broader cooperation.

Table 2: Community-level cooperation

Community-based institutions and organizations such as	Working individually to	Cooperating in ad hoc or formal local groupings to
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schools, school support groups, cultural associations, youth organizations, cooperatives, faith-based groupings, self-help groups, development committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrate ESD into regular learning activities and programmes • identify and implement learning strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify local sustainable development challenges • integrate local knowledge and skills into ESD • exchange ESD experiences and learn lessons for better practice

Table 3: National-level cooperation

Actors at national level	Working individually to	Working together as a national ESD task force to
Education ministry and other relevant ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a national policy framework for ESD • budget and mobilize resources • support subnational departments • foster public awareness on education for sustainable development and sustainable development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • debate and recommend ESD policy options which reflect local-level experience and challenges • integrate ESD into EFA and UNLD planning in the context of the EFA forum • provide a forum for exchange of experience, positive and negative, in ESD • identify research issues in ESD and plan cooperative research projects • identify capacity-building needs and the actor best placed to meet them • develop relevant monitoring indicators for ESD
NGOs, NGO and civil society networks and alliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitate exchange and information sharing among their members about ESD practices and experiences 	
Media groups and agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrate ESD and sustainable development awareness building into media strategies 	
Private sector companies and trade associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a forum to identify sustainable development challenges they face, and identify necessary learning needs 	

29. *Regional processes.* Wider regional grouping for education for sustainable development will be useful coordinating bodies too.

Table 4: Regional-level processes

Actors at regional level	Working individually to	Working together as a regional ESD group to
National government representatives	(see national level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct regional consultations on priorities for the Decade • share policies, practices, knowledge and progress • identify common challenges • learn from diverse strategies • forge consensus on regional challenges and action • organize cross-national training and capacity-
Regional intergovernmental organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support national-level policy-making • foster exchange of experience and information 	
Regional civil society and NGO networks, coalitions and alliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foster exchange and learning among member networks and organizations 	
Regional media groupings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share media strategies for SD and ESD 	
Regional private sector associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote cooperation of private sector with other actors in ESD 	

Actors at regional level	Working individually to	Working together as a regional ESD group to
Regional representatives of international agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn and communicate common lessons from cross-national experience • facilitate cross-national exchange on ESD 	building
Regional representatives of bilateral cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess ways to support national and regional ESD initiatives 	

30. *International Processes.* There are already several forums where ESD issues can and should be prominently and regularly on the agenda. For example, the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD), relevant conferences of all United Nations agencies, programmes and organizations, NGO networks and various EFA and literacy meetings. Many more useful suggestions will be made and included before the finalization of the draft International Implementation Scheme.

Table 5: International-level cooperation

Actors at international level	Working individually to:	Working together in various fora to:
International ad hoc working group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gather information on developments in ESD and emerging priorities • promoting the Decade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advise UNESCO on developments and emerging priorities in ESD • assist UNESCO in forming partnerships and developing projects in support of the Decade
Intergovernmental agencies (United Nations and others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribute to inter-agency task force • integrate ESD planning into relevant work plans and initiatives • participate in international and regional forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep ESD high on the CSD agenda • mobilize political will and strengthen mutual commitment, through CSD, or an inter-agency task force • integrate ESD into EFA agendas (<i>EFA Global Monitoring Report, High-Level and Working Groups</i>) • foster global exchange of practice, policy and progress • organize international, regional and subregional capacity-building
UNESCO (DESD Lead agency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotion and capacity-building for ESD and the Decade within and across UNESCO sectors • advocacy and communication with international community • building partnerships and collective momentum 	

Actors at international level	Working individually to:	Working together in various fora to:
Civil society and NGO networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote inter-regional exchange and learning • inform members of ESD developments 	workshops, and conferences to advance the Decade and ESD
Bilateral and multilateral development agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrate ESD into programmes and budgets • promote research in ESD 	

31. *Monitoring.* Ongoing monitoring is a prerequisite for a purposeful and well coordinated Decade. This can be accomplished by integrating the monitoring of education for sustainable development into EFA and the UNLD monitoring mechanisms at all levels. It might be useful to consider an inter-agency task force to meet as needed, but to maintain regular electronic contact, to monitor how far education for sustainable development issues are firmly and visibly on the agenda of the international agencies, to harmonize initiatives and to avoid overlap.

32. *Communication and advocacy.* UNESCO should develop a detailed communication and marketing plan to cover at least the next 18 months before the start of the Decade. Within UNESCO, the intersectoral consensus-building process has already begun. The UNESCO Consultative Committee has been formed and has met. However, there is a need to integrate more fully all UNESCO sectors into this collaborative work so that the strengths and experiences of all sectors are mobilized to support the Decade by a house-wide UNESCO initiative.

33. UNESCO should also work with countries and international partners to plan launches of the Decade at the start of 2005, with the emphasis being on national-level launches.

V. TIMELINE FOR UNESCO

34. The proposed activities are recommended actions for UNESCO in its role as lead agency to initiate and catalyse the Decade among other United Nations and international agencies and organizations, countries and civil society. They are grouped around the two roles of communication and advocacy, and building momentum and support. The recommended activities cover the period from July 2003 to December 2005 and include tasks, meetings and events proposed in this paper, as well as some international events already programmed, e.g. EFA events. Timings and durations are indicative and are divided into three-month segments for convenience.

Proposed timeline: July 2003 – December 2005

	2003 July – Sept.	2003 Oct. – Dec.	2004 Jan. – March	2004 April – June	2004 July – Sept.	2004 Oct. – Dec.	2005 Jan. – March	2005 April – June	2005 July – Sept.	2005 Oct.– Dec.	
Communication and advocacy	Promotion and capacity-building for ESD and the Decade within and across all UNESCO sectors, field offices and centres, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • internal capacity-building within UNESCO so that the organization as a whole is mobilized to fulfil its role as lead agency; • dissemination of information on the Decade to all UNESCO staff so that they can include appropriate reference to and discussion of it in papers and presentations that they make in international forums. 										
	Extensive consultation on framework of implementation scheme	Formation of international ad hoc working group	Meeting of international ad hoc working group	Develop and distribute the vision statement Acceptance of International Implementation Scheme by international partners	Develop and distribute guidelines and multi-media package to support national planning and launches	International and national launches	Sustainable development theme in Global EFA Week	International Experts' Consultation Meeting on education for sustainable development (30 years after Belgrade, to prepare for Intergovernmental Conference in 2007 (30 years after Tbilisi))			
	Design Communication and advocacy strategy	Presentation of the Framework to the General Conference	Decade website launch								
	Design UNESCO's Decade website	Presentation of report to United Nations General Assembly		Develop, maintain and disseminate a calendar of international, regional, subregional and national activities Develop and maintain website as major international vehicle for news and networking on activities and discussion							

	2003 July – Sept.	2003 Oct. – Dec.	2004 Jan. – March	2004 April – June	2004 July – Sept.	2004 Oct. – Dec.	2005 Jan. – March	2005 April – June	2005 July – Sept.	2005 Oct. – Dec.
Building momentum and participation	<p>Consultation on and development of the framework of the draft implementation scheme with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFA Working Group • Meeting of the Heads of United Nations Agencies • Member States • International NGOs and specialist ESD community 	<p>Presentation of a proposal for a framework of a draft International Implementation Scheme to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESCO General Conference • EFA High-Level Group (Nov.) 		CSD 12	EFA Working Group inter-agency ESD Task Force	EFA High-Level Group	.	CSD 13	EFA Working Group	EFA High-Level Group
			UNESCO leads regional/subregional workshops to build awareness and regional and country-level commitment to planning of activities for the Decade				Governments host subnational/local stakeholder consultations Meetings of national Decade working groups			
			UNESCO facilitates consultations with regional/subregional organizations, and national governments, where appropriate, to build awareness and regional and country-level commitment to planning of activities for the Decade							
			UNESCO develops and disseminates guidelines and multi-media package to support national planning and launch of programmes and activities							
			Planning of support structures and strategies for managing the Decade by: governments, international agencies, regional organizations, civil society organizations and professional bodies							