Highlights on DESD Progress to Date

**March 2008**

The DESD seeks to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects of learning to encourage behavior changes that allow for a more sustainable and just society for all, through four objectives:

- Facilitate networking, linkages, exchange and interaction among stakeholders in ESD;
- Foster an increased quality of teaching and learning in education for sustainable development;
- Help countries make progress towards and attain MDGs through ESD efforts;
- Provide countries with new opportunities to incorporate ESD into education reform efforts.

**IN FOCUS – Fourth International Conference on Environmental Education « Environmental Education towards a Sustainable Future - Partners for DESD »**

The 4th International Conference on Environment Education started on 24th November, 2007 in Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Ahmedabad, India. It was hosted by the Government of India and co-sponsored by UNESCO and UNEP.

Over fifteen hundred participants from ninety seven countries came together to attend the conference. There were eight plenary sessions and thirty working group sessions. The outcomes of these participatory sessions were fused to form the final declaration of the conference. The event ended on 28th November, 2007 with the final declaration which was endorsed by the participants.

In his address, the Director-General focused on the importance of the meeting to UNESCO’s action in education for sustainable development (ESD). He drew attention to the Organization’s role as lead agency and international coordinator of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), highlighting how UNESCO had developed a framework for implementing the Decade that was broad, inclusive and responsive to the interests and needs of the different stakeholders, in particular Member States. “Member States must be firmly in the driving seat”, the Director-General underscored.

Mr Matsuura then went on to outline what he saw as the ten major themes that, from UNESCO’s perspective, had emerged from the Conference. First, was the importance of environmental education to ESD and the DESD. “The Decade can only be enriched by the contributions of environmental education through research, education and training, advocacy and networking”, Mr Matsuura said.

Second, was what the Director-General described as the “palpable sense of urgency for the right decisions to be made and the right actions to be taken in a timely way”. This, he said, “is not alarmism but realism”, drawing attention to the work of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in boosting international understanding of the urgency of the situation.

The third theme Mr Matsuura highlighted was the need to harness all teaching and learning modalities. This means that non-formal and informal approaches to environmental education and ESD should be recognized as just as important as the formal education system, and that those responsible for delivering these different forms of education need to be respected.
“Teachers are the cornerstone of effective ESD programmes”, said the Director-General, introducing the fourth theme: the need to prepare teachers in the area of environmental education and ESD, and ensure that they draw on local inputs, contexts and values.

The fifth theme related to the importance of unpacking the category “learners” in order to devise and implement suitably targeted approaches, and to look carefully and strategically at what we really want different types of learners to learn and for what purposes.

Turning to his sixth theme, Mr Matsuura spoke of the importance the Conference had given to research into ESD and to the effective dissemination and utilization of research results. “Given the scarcity of resources, it is essential to determine a research agenda with priorities of focus and emphasis”, he said.

The seventh theme regarded the importance of work under the DESD on monitoring and evaluation and on the development of indicators. Participants had recognized the progress made in these areas, though as Mr Matsuura pointed out “there are significant methodological and capacity development issues here that need to be addressed urgently”.

Eighth, was the dynamic relation between the global and the local, and the very different ways of engaging with ESD, from school-based initiatives through municipal agreements to national government strategies.

The need to transcend boundaries was the ninth theme – be these the boundaries of sectors, study, gender, religion or nations. These, the Director-General said, “are artificial constructs that constrain our common humanity”. In this regard, he described ESD as “a great vehicle for respecting our differences and building a common vision”.

The final theme was that of the importance of youth: both literally – as taken to refer to the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of young people; and metaphorically – referring to the spirit of creativity, experiment and openness needed to achieve sustainable development.

Mr Matsuura concluded by saying that these ten points, together with the Ahmedabad Declaration that was adopted during the Valedictory Session and the recommendations that arose from the plenary and working sessions, would “provide very good guidelines for UNESCO’s action in education for sustainable development over the next ten years, as well as for the activities of our partners”.

@ full text - http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001556/155695e.pdf
@ Conference website - http://www.tbilisiplus30.org/

HIGHLIGHTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

WITHIN UNESCO

UNESCO attaches great importance to an inter-sectoral “one UNESCO” approach to the DESD.

**DESD Global Monitoring & Evaluation Framework**

In fulfilling its role as the lead agency in the coordination and mobilisation of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), UNESCO is expected to present a global progress report on
the implementation of the DESD to the UNESCO Executive Board and General Conference at the end of each Biennium and a mid-December progress report to the UN General Assembly in 2010. A Monitoring and Evaluation Expert Group (MEEG) composed of experts with sound experience and from various regions around the globe has been constituted. A global monitoring and evaluation process has been put in place to fulfill the reporting obligations and to learn more about what ESD means to countries and to their local realities all over the world. The Global Monitoring and Evaluation Questionnaire is an effort to gauge the status of the DESD at country level and to learn about the context and structures in place to implement the DESD and to promote ESD as we approach the mid-point of the Decade.

Three key reports will be produced during the period 2008 – 2015 using the Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework:

- In 2009, a report focusing on the context and structure of work on ESD;
- In 2011, a report focusing on processes and learning initiatives; and,
- In 2015, a report focusing on impacts on outcomes.

The idea of a comprehensive global M&E framework emerged at the first meeting of the Monitoring and Evaluation Expert Group (MEEG) in Paris in January 2007. This meeting decided on three interconnected approaches to monitoring:

- A set of indicators, to monitor and evaluate DESD implementation. A questionnaire comprising of ten main issues, in turn to be further broken down into sub-questions, will be developed to facilitate the development of the indicators.
- Research studies which will look at changes over time in local level engagements, difficulties, and changes relating to implementation, adaptation and contestation.
- A process of multistakeholder participation

The DESD Secretariat has sent out the questionnaires for preparing the 2009 report. Furthermore, in collaboration with the MEEG, is developing a detailed operational plan that will highlight the modalities of data collection; data analysis and detailed timelines.

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**AT GLOBAL LEVEL**

**3rd World Congress of Biosphere Reserves**

The future of biosphere reserves was at the heart of the third World Congress of Biosphere Reserves which took place in Madrid (Spain) from 4 to 9 February. Its purpose: take stock of the current Biosphere Reserves Programme and define objectives for the five years ahead.

In 2008, there are 529 biosphere reserves in 105 countries (69 in Africa, 24 in the Arab States, 95 in Asia-Pacific, 254 in Europe and North America and 101 in Latin America and the Caribbean). Biosphere reserves are terrestrial or coastal zones that reconcile preservation and biodiversity, natural resource management and human activity. They are structured in three parts: a core, buffer zone and a transition zone. The core designates the landscapes, the ecosystems and the species it contains. The transition zone welcomes the human habitats and the agricultural land. The buffer zone helps attenuate the effects of human presence on the core.

The Congress closed with the adoption of a Declaration that stresses the role of biosphere reserves as places “for investments and innovation to mitigate and adapt to climate change, (and) to promote the greater use of renewable energy”. The Madrid Declaration calls for capitalization of “the potential for action of biosphere reserves to address new challenges” such as the loss of traditional knowledge and cultural diversity, demography, loss of arable land and climate change. To that end, the
Declaration recommends building effective partnerships through cooperation among all governmental levels, the private sector, media, civil society organizations, indigenous and local communities, research and education centers and other such institutions. In addition, the Madrid Declaration recommends the creation of “an innovative mechanism for sustainable funding” aimed at reinforcing biosphere reserves, and urges the development of cooperation between the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and UNESCO’s other intergovernmental scientific programmes.

Congress participants numbered over 800: representatives from biosphere reserves, private and state institutions working with them and civil society organizations. They also adopted the Madrid Action Plan, mapping out the MAB programme’s strategy for 2008-2013. Consisting of 31 goals and 62 actions, the plan underlines the need to use biosphere reserves as places to demonstrate effective responses to such challenges as climate change, growing urbanization, poverty and desertification. Concrete activities called for by the Action Plan include facilitating integration of urban areas of the reserves; organizing training related to the different ecosystems; establishing pilot reserves in order to evaluate their economic contribution at local level; involving the private sector; and promoting the biosphere reserve brand for products.

@ http://www.madrid2008mab.es/

@ http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=41728&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

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**International Year of Planet Earth**

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed the year 2008 to be UN International Year of Planet Earth. The Year’s activities will span the three years 2007-2009. UNESCO has been designated to organize activities during the Year, in collaboration with UNEP and other relevant United Nations bodies, the International Union of Geological Sciences and other Earth sciences societies and groups throughout the world.

@ http://www.yearofplanetearth.org/

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**Cities around the World international campaign**

"Cities around the World" is the fifth Veolia Environnement international sustainable development awareness campaign. This initiative is sponsored by UNESCO, the French National Commission for UNESCO, the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 - 2014), the French committee of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the Succession Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Air France/KLM and ACCOR, and will be implemented internationally in over twenty countries.

With "Cities around the world" children will give their city the opportunity to have its say: they find out more about their city, they discover its desires and dreams and express what people could do so that it keeps living in harmony with the Earth.

@ http://www.veoliaenvironnement.com/globe/en/

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**International Year of the Reef (IYOR) 2008**

The International Coral Reef Initiative decided to designate 2008 as the International Year of the Reef with the goals of:

- strengthening awareness about the ecological, economic, social and cultural value of, and critical threats to, coral reefs and associated ecosystems; and
• generating urgent action at all levels to develop and implement effective management strategies for conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems.

@ http://www.iyor.org

AFRICA

Dakar meeting
Need info on the Daker meeting.

Education for Sustainable Development Mobile Learning Resources program
The aim of this facilitated mobile educational outreach activity by UNESCO Nairobi Office and Jacaranda Designs Nairobi is to effectively contribute towards the achievement of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development in Kenya - through development of learning/training materials on ESD; curriculum support, educational outreach and capacity-building activities thus enhancing quality of education and inclusion. This initiative will be launched as part of the EFA Global Action Week 2008: “Quality Education to End Exclusion”
In brief, the project involves driving the audio-visual and sound system equipped and staffed vehicle to pre-arranged sites within reach of children and youth groups. Interacting with an audience of children and youth, trained animators and group facilitators will work to instill productive attitudes, demonstrate a variety of learning skills and equip students, young people with skills and ideas for self-directed positive and sustainable living. Within the pilot project period of nine months, each site will be visited between two and three times to provide follow-up and further capacity building support. The hallmark of this project will be its direct impact on children and youth, who at this point have experienced violence and prejudice, thus lack trust and inspiration for a sustainable future. The project will endeavor to speak up for peace through building skills for conflict resolution and tolerance. Will showcase through teaching and learning practical life skills, care for the environment and the advancement of quality of life standards based on the principles of ESD.

@ http://www.education.nairobi-unesco.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1649&Itemid=56

ARAB STATES

Regional Workshop
Need some info on the Amman workshop, with web site if possible.

ASIA & THE PACIFIC

ACCU-UNESCO Asia-Pacific ESD Programme
The ACCU-UNESCO Asia-Pacific ESD Programme was developed in response to the launch of the DESD as an exemplar model for activities that would promote education for sustainable development
in the Asia-Pacific region. Supported by the UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust for ESD, the Programme consists of two sub-programmes: 1) institutional-based Centre of Excellence (COE) programme for ESD and 2) project-based Innovation programme for ESD, implemented in close cooperation with the National Commissions for UNESCO concerned.

As the catalysts for ESD, the five appointed COEs advocate integrating the ESD agenda into policy and programmes at various levels while empowering the communities to address ESD issues. Under the Innovation Programme, grassroots efforts and national initiatives are being supported through formal and non-formal education approaches as pioneering ESD practice.

@ ACCU ESD programmes - http://www.accu.or.jp/esd/projects/index.html

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**International Workshop and Symposium for Promoting ESD held in Japan**

On 3rd February 2008, Nagoya University held the International Workshop and Symposium for Promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). This event was organised by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology (MEXT), Graduate School of International Development and Graduate School of Environmental Studies at Nagoya University, and co-organised by Nagoya Environmental School and Chubu University.

In the morning sessions, the following three areas were discussed bringing together 160 people: environmental education, peace & human rights education and gender equality education. It is worth mentioning that integrating sustainability in higher education institutions was discussed during the sessions.

In the afternoon, Professor Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, Dean of the Donald Bren School of Environmental Science and Management at the University of California, Santa Barbara, USA, made a key note speech entitled “ESD and Factor 5”. Followed by the key note speech, Professor Hisae Nakanishi at Nagoya University gave a lecture on “ESD and the Future Global Citizen”, and she emphasised the significance of ESD in today’s society. More than 300 people came to this International Symposium and many questions and comments were raised from the audience.

@ http://www.gsid.nagoya-u.ac.jp/global/research/seminar/index-en.html

@ http://www.gsid.nagoya-u.ac.jp/global/research/seminar/doc/esd_e.pdf

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**EUROPE & NORTH AMERICA**

**New Environment for Europe information resource service available**

A new website about the “Environment for Europe” process is now available, which aims at providing fast access to relevant and reliable information on the "Environment for Europe" process.

The website features detailed information on the sixth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (Belgrade, Serbia / October 10-12, 2007), as well as information on the history of the "Environment for Europe" process, current mandates and organizational arrangements of implementing institutions, and summaries of completed and ongoing work implemented in various work areas (themes) of the process, including Biodiversity; Education for sustainable development; Sustainable consumption and production; Water supply and sanitation.

@ http://www.environmentforeurope.org/
“Sustainable Planet” Film Festival launched
US based eco-consultant and environmental economist Pamela Peeters has launched a green film festival. The first edition of “Sustainable Planet™” - a film festival that promotes sustainable development – took place in 2007. It is the platform where moviemakers meet with for-profit and non-profit organizations in order to watch movies and discuss sustainable solutions for a selected theme in an entertaining way. In its first year, the festival already connects 12 countries worldwide and has obtained a partnership with the Nobel Prize for Peace Wangari Mathai. Film Movement, the North American film distribution company for independent and foreign films in the United States, awards the winner of the Sustainable Planet Film Festival’s youth film competition with a distribution deal.

@ Pamela Peeters - www.pamelapeeters.com
@ Film Movement - www.filmmovement.com

US Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development expands its outreach efforts
The US Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development, a non-partisan organization, brings together a variety of actors (individuals and organizations) in the USA to promote education for sustainable development. The US Partnership counts over 300 organizations, including emerging leaders and well-known sustainability experts in each sector. A few key national non-profit organizations took the lead in helping the US Partnership catalyze the higher education sector including the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF) and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). The US Partnership has supported several projects to promote awareness of sustainable development among academia.

@ US Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development - www.uspartnership.org
@ Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF) - www.ulsf.org
@ Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) - www.aashe.org

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN
No info received

UPCOMING EVENTS

Global Youth Forum on Development 2008
(6-12 April, Nairobi, Kenya) annual event that brings young people of 35 years and under to showcase to the world what they can do towards hastening the realisation of MDGs 2015
@ http://www.gyfod2008.org/
Global Action Week 2008 on “Quality Education to End Exclusion”
(21-27 April; worldwide)
@ http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=55868&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

10th International Congress of Educating Cities “Building Citizenship in Multicultural Cities”
(24-26 April - Sao Paulo, Brazil)
@ http://www.bcn.es/edcities/aice/estatiques/angles/sec_congresses.html

6th International Conference Sustainable Development, Culture and Education: Collaboration
on Education for Sustainable Development
(4-7 June at Anadolu University, Eskişehir- Turkey) hosted by 9 universities: Tallinn University (Estonia),
Daugavpils University (Latvia), Vilnius University (Lithuania), Debrecen University (Hungary),
University of Joensuu (Finland), University of Vechta (Germany), Rhodes University (South Africa),
York University (Canada) & Anadolu University (Turkey).
@ http://bbcc2008.anadolu.edu.tr/home.php

Expo Zaragoza 2008 “Water and Sustainable Development”
(14 June to 14 September - Zaragoza, Spain)
@ http://www.expozaragoza2008.es/Home/seccion=3&seccionRaiz=3&seccionDesplegar=3&idioma=en_GB.do

Tunza International Children’s Conference
(17-21 June - Stavanger, Norway)
@ http://www.unep.org/Tunza/children/events/icc_2008/

SELECTED RESOURCES FOR THE DESD

25 000-km Great Australian Cycle Expedition (GRACE) story published
One of UNESCO’s first projects selected as a Demonstration Activity for the Decade of
Education for Sustainable Development has now been chronicled in a new book.
In 1993, Kate Leeming became the first woman in history to cycle the breadth of the ‘New
Russia’, when she organised, led and completed the five month, 13 400 kilometre Trans-
Siberian Cycle Expedition aiding the children of Chernobyl. Ten years later, she organised
the Great Australian Cycle Expedition (GRACE), a 25 000-kilometre journey through her
own country, 7000 km of which were to be ‘off road’ on isolated tracks. The purpose of the
9 ½ month expedition was to promote the importance of, and contribute towards education for
sustainable development.
Out There and Back is Kate Leeming’s personal chronicle of the GRACE Expedition. At the same time
it raises awareness of the importance of education for sustainable development, underpinned by the
author’s beliefs and fuelled by her experiences cycling across Russia. This detailed, often graphic,
account of an amazing journey into the heart of Australia is told with style, humour and insight. A
highlight is Kate’s description of the first bicycle crossing of the Canning Stock Route (CSR) by a
woman. The CSR, the world’s longest, most arduous stock route, bisects four deserts and
approximately one thousand sand dunes.
@ http://www.graceexpedition.org
“EARTH” – a series of ecology maps

For an accurate understanding of the state of the world, humanitarian and environmental issues cannot be separated. The Earth collection is an integrated collection of over 100 colorful charts and maps (all viewable on the website) summarizing the conditions of the world’s natural ecology and human cultures, their interactions and impact on each other which make obvious the connections between apparently disparate topics. Topics include core statistics on forests, soil, fresh water and ocean fisheries as well as data on climate change, carbon dioxide emissions, wealth and power, food supply and oil supply, military budgets, population density, health, poverty, access to clean water and life expectancy.

@ http://www.theglobaleducationproject.org/earth/index.php

Italian Portal on Education for Sustainable Development launched

Il Portale Italiano dell’Educazione Sostenibile is the new Italian webportal on ESD has been created and offers access to information on ESD issues in Italy.

@ http://www.educazionesostenibile.it/portale/index.php

May issue of NORRAG NEWS to focus on ESD

NORRAG (Network for Policy Research, Review and Advice on Education and Training) is a free-to-join network, supported by DFID, SDC and NUFFIC, committed to encouraging critical analysis of international development especially in the field of education and training through a network of researchers, policymakers, donor agencies and NGOs. Its main tool is NORRAG NEWS (NN), a digital newsletter that is produced twice per year. It has a large number of concise papers, focusing on policy implications of research findings and/or on the practical implications of new policies formulated by multilateral agencies or donors. The next issue, NN40 (May 2008), will be on ‘Education for sustainable development? Or The sustainability of education investment?’.

@ http://www.norrag.org

DESD PARTNERS CORNER

Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)

As an advocate of cultural diversity and literacy for empowerment, the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU), a non-profit organisation based in Tokyo, Japan, strives to contribute to ESD by supporting community-based activities and linking such local efforts with global partnership towards a more just, sustainable and peaceful world. With the support of the UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust for ESD, ACCU was entrusted by UNESCO at the end of 2005 to oversee the Asia-Pacific regional programme consisting of the institutional-based Centre of Excellence (COE) Programme and the project-based Innovation Programme for ESD. In addition, ACCU has mainstreamed ESD perspectives into its multi-media educational materials on the environment called the PLANET, using them as a teaching and learning tool, mainly through non-formal education approaches, to translate knowledge into action for sustainable development.
Most recently, ACCU held an ESD Photo Message Contest titled "Letters to Tomorrow 2007-Celebration of Our Living Culture" focusing on the underlying cultural dimension of ESD. More than 3,200 entries were received from 38 countries of the Asia-Pacific region, cherishing the rich and diverse cultures that are instrumental in building a sustainable future. Award-winning works will be displayed at worldwide traveling exhibitions in 2008.

@ ACCU’s ESD programmes - http://www.accu.or.jp/esd

UNESCO’S LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION ROLE FOR THE DESD

UNESCO will use its DESD coordination role to:
- catalyse new partnerships with the private sector, with youth, and with media groups;
- encourage monitoring and evaluation;
- encourage a research agenda and serve as a forum for relevant research on ESD;
- serve as forum for bringing together important stakeholders in the Decade such as: representatives of key multinationals, faith-based institutions, youth associations, indigenous people, etc.;
- share good ESD practices;
- link Member States that have put in place ESD curricula, policies, research, etc., with those Member States that are requesting help;
- convene flexible working groups on particular topics; and
- fulfill its strategic role with regard to ESD.

This document highlights developments of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) which are only a small reflection of the extraordinary number of activities, events, networks and support for the DESD from countries, regions, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and stakeholders from all over the world.

Its compilation is supported by the Funds-in-Trust for ESD established by the Government of Japan to support UNESCO’s efforts in the global leadership and coordination of the DESD.

Section for DESD Coordination (ED/UNP/DESD)
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