ACCU - UNESCO Cooperation for the Asia-Pacific Regional Promotion of DESD

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(A paper to be presented at the UNESCO Expert Meeting on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Reorienting Education to Address Sustainability to be held for 1-3 May 2006 at Kanchanaburi, Thailand)

I. Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) and its Contribution to the UNDESD

The Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) is a non-profit organisation implementing regional activities in Asia and the Pacific in line with the principles of UNESCO, primarily focusing on the promotion of mutual understanding and cultural cooperation among peoples in the region. Since its establishment in Tokyo, Japan, in 1971, ACCU has been co-ordinating various regional cooperative programmes in the fields of culture, education and personnel exchange in close collaboration with UNESCO and its Member States in Asia and the Pacific. The Education Division of ACCU has been carrying out literacy and Non-formal Education (NFE) programmes with UNESCO and its Member States, Non-governmental Organisations and international agencies, in the areas of material development, human resource development, establishment of Literacy Resource Centres for Girls and Women (LRCs), and network building for the realisation of Education for All (EFA) and contribution to the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD).

In 2005, the UNDESD was launched with UNESCO appointed as the lead agency. ACCU has a strong history of developing materials and dissemination programmes and capacity building programme in the area of non-formal education, which are direct relevance to some of the main strategic themes of ESD, such as water pollution, forest conservation, waste management, disaster prevention, intercultural understanding and so forth. Further, it is expected that existing ACCU programmes of EFA and LRC can be extended to ESD, as ESD shares a primary concern for education of high quality, which is interdisciplinary and holistic, driven by values, and based on critical thinking and participatory decision making to ensure relevance at the local level.

In response to the inauguration of the UNDESD, ACCU has initiated an ESD programme in 2005 in addition to its previous programmes of EFA and LRC. The ESD programme has three pillars: (1) the ACCU-UNESCO Regional Meeting on ESD; (2) the Package Learning Materials on Environment (PLANET) series; and (3) the ACCU-UNESCO Asia-Pacific Programme for ESD under the UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust.

Firstly, ACCU plans to organise a series of Regional Meetings on ESD in cooperation with UNESCO Bangkok, with a view to exchanging views on how to contribute to the promotion of ESD in the region as well as planning and evaluating regional ESD programmes. The situation of ESD in respective countries in the region will be reviewed and regional activities will be discussed in the Meeting attended by experts and representatives from the UNESCO Member States.

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Secondly, the PLANET series was designed and launched in 1997, in collaboration with specialists in NFE, environment and cartoon animation in Asia and the Pacific region. It aims at raising environmental awareness and generating a sense of togetherness between nature and humankind throughout the world, thereby contributing to the promotion of ESD. The PLANET series provides a package of quality materials in different formats (posters, booklets, animated cartoon videos and facilitators’ guides) on specific themes. ACCU, in collaboration with a number of experts in the region, develops a prototype English version of the package, and then local versions of PLANET are produced with necessary modifications to suit the respective local contexts. Local versions of PLANET are used both in formal and non-formal settings, such as schools, community learning centres, adult literacy classes, and community development programmes. Furthermore, ACCU supports dissemination and utilisation of the local versions of the package to ensure that the materials are delivered to and enjoyed by the target learners.

Finally, in cooperation with UNESCO Bangkok, ACCU will also plan and implement the ACCU-UNESCO Asia-Pacific ESD Programme under the UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust for the Promotion of ESD, which encompasses “ACCU-UNESCO Asia-Pacific Innovation Programme for ESD” and “ACCU-UNESCO Asia-Pacific COE Programme for ESD”. The Programme intends to support innovative projects and organisations to serve as models for the promotion of ESD in Asia and the Pacific region, further contributing to developing the quality of education, as the ESD mirrors the concern for education of high quality. In this regard, the Programme emphasises the support of innovative projects and organisations. ACCU and UNESCO jointly implement some of the programmes, and accumulate wisdom from the experiences gained through the programme implementation for the promotion of ESD in the region.

It is hoped that the Programme will help enhance the quality of education for sustainable development and, as a result, will contribute to enhancing the quality of people’s lives and achieving sustainable development.

II. ACCU-UNESCO Asia-Pacific ESD Programmes

Objective of ACCU-UNESCO Asia-Pacific Innovation Programme for ESD:

- Support, technically and financially, an innovative projects to be implemented at the community level/sub-national level/national level in UNESCO Member States in the Asia-Pacific Region for the realization of principles of ESD; and
- Reinforce the concepts of ESD through the implementation of projects in different parts of the Asia-Pacific Region and share the experiences of various projects to further strengthen the regional efforts for ESD.

Objectives of ACCU-UNESCO Asia-Pacific COE Programme for ESD:

- Contribute to orient/re-orient implementation mechanism for the promotion of ESD through Non-Formal Education (NFE) approach;
- Contribute to the development of quality education through institutional capacity building, institutional arrangements and project implementation;
- Contribute to strengthening institutional ESD networks at national, sub-regional and the Asia-Pacific regional level; and
- Accumulate, share and disseminate the experience of COE to further strengthen the Regional efforts for ESD.

In details, see attached Prospectus of both ACCU-UNESCO Asia-Pacific Innovation Programme for ESD and ACCU-UNESCO Asia-Pacific COE Programme for ESD.