



UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

Resolution of the 65th General Meeting of the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK), Bonn, 7th July 2005

Sustainable development is one of the great challenges of our time. It is our task to ensure that the natural conditions of existence for all living beings be preserved, and that opportunities for people throughout the world are fairly and justly distributed. Simultaneously, sustainable development requires that we work to make sure future generations enjoy the same chances to live a full life as we do. The road towards a greater degree of sustainability leads through education. Education must therefore be seen as an important instrument in overcoming environmental problems on a global scale. By encouraging the idea of ecologically, economically and socio-culturally enduring development to take root in all areas of the education system, the World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, called by the United Nations for the years 2005-2014, is intended to take significant steps towards greater sustainability. Education for sustainable development must allow the transmission of the necessary skills for people to take an active part in shaping a present and future for world society with respect for human dignity.

Alongside countless players from politics and civil society, the German Commission for UNESCO co-ordinates the practical implementation of the UN Decade in Germany. For this purpose, it has set up a German National Committee as the central steering and decision-making body.

I.

- The German Commission for UNESCO *welcomes* the Action Plan put forward by the National Committee as the starting point for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, containing four strategic objectives:
 1. To further develop and bring together activities, whilst spreading best practice extensively;
 2. Networking of players in the area of education for sustainable development;



3. Raising of public awareness of education for sustainable development;
 4. Strengthening of international co-operation.
- The German Commission for UNESCO *supports* in particular the integrative concept of education for sustainable development upon which the action plan is based, in which environmental, economic and socio-cultural dimensions must be brought together. This fully corresponds to the current stage in international debate, allowing new alliances to be created, and giving the initiative of education for sustainable development the necessary political weight.
 - The transformation of society towards sustainability may only be achieved in a decentralised manner and with the participation of all players in civil society. The German Commission for UNESCO *welcomes*, therefore, the broad spectrum of participants that has got the Decade off to such a successful start in Germany. The unanimous vote in the German Parliament, alongside the work of the Federal Government and the Federal States, has allowed Germany to play an international leading role in the implementation of the Decade.
 - The German Commission for UNESCO *calls on* the Federal Parliament and Federal Government, as well as the Federal States and all other participant bodies, such as educational institutions, non-governmental organisations and private enterprise, to further intensify their engagement for the implementation of the UN Decade in Germany. All players are called on to continue developing the activities which have started the Decade off in this country, throughout the duration of the Decade.

II.

- There are few political objectives for which international co-operation is as decisive a factor as it is in the case of sustainable development. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development shall only be successful if it is implemented as a global undertaking. The German Commission for UNESCO therefore *expressly calls on* UNESCO to fulfil its role in the international co-ordination of the Decade in a more active and visible manner.
- The key to the success of the UN Decade is intercultural dialogue. This involves taking account of similarities and difference in creating the frameworks and concepts of education for sustainable development. Thus, UNESCO must draft detailed proposals for international decision-making and co-ordination, whilst precisely defining and making public its own role in implementation. It must use its worldwide network and its skills in the area of education and sustainability to make the UN Decade a strong worldwide project of co-operation.

Sustainable development is an all-inclusive development concept which applies to all countries, to the countries of the global South as much as to those of the North. It is central to all efforts toward the humane shaping of globalisation. The success of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development will also depend on the extent to which it is possible to develop an internationally applicable concept of sustainability. UNESCO must also give substantial impetus in this area.