

UN-Dekade mit Wirkung – 10 Jahre „Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung“ in Deutschland

Nationale Konferenz zum Abschluss der UN-Dekade
29. und 30. September 2014, Bonn

Bonn Declaration 2014

We, the participants of the national conference marking the end of the UN Decade of "Education for sustainable development" on 29th and 30th September 2014 in Bonn, adopt the following declaration and call to action:

I. We take note:

The United Nations Decade of "Education for Sustainable Development" (2005-2014) established the central role of education for sustainable development (ESD) and focused worldwide education systems more closely on the requirements of sustainable development. The Decade strengthened ESD stakeholders and networks, further developed the understanding of ESD as a concept with its comprehensive and transformative requirements of education systems, and documented and initiated numerous examples of good practice.

Considerable progress was made in Germany during the Decade: stakeholders from all sectors of society actively participated in implementing its objectives and clarified the multifaceted aspects of groundbreaking ESD. The structures devised in Germany for the implementation of the Decade and its goals as well as the wide scale mobilisation of networks, institutions, organisations and stakeholders have considerably increased awareness of the significance of ESD in our society, especially as an expression of a living culture of sustainable development. The UNESCO mid-term conference held in Germany in 2009 and the resultant Bonn Declaration provided important impulses for the global development of ESD.

Education is a key to achieving global sustainable development goals. ESD promotes "Gestaltungskompetenz" (shaping competence), dialogue abilities, orientation knowledge and the recognition of systemic correlations. ESD focuses on lifestyles, participation, values, global responsibility, and consumption and production patterns. ESD enables sustainable action and encourages readiness to accept responsibility for one's own actions. ESD marks a new culture of education and a new direction in the teaching and learning of content and methods. ESD emphasises creative and critical thinking, long-term approaches, innovations and the ability to deal with uncertainties, the solving of complex problems, and participation in shaping a democratic and culturally diverse society. Teaching and learning are devised along the learners' perspective, teachers assume a stronger learner role, and participative learning processes and methods are re-designed.

The messages of the World Summits in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and Johannesburg in 2002 were taken seriously. The final document of Rio+20 in 2012, "The future we want", also provided a new impulse for strengthening ESD after the Decade. Sustainable development and ESD have thereby gained significance on all political levels around the world. At the same time, education systems and institutions still face challenges in establishing sustainability as a model for educational and institutional development. At the 37th General Conference in November 2013

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the UNESCO member states therefore agreed to present a proposal of a Global Action Programme to the United Nations. The draft of the post-2015 Agenda for

Sustainable Development currently being negotiated also emphasises the importance of ESD. The contents of the Global Action Programme shall serve as key guidelines.

The necessity to further strengthen ESD as a cross-sectional task is also recognised in Germany. For instance, the government's coalition agreement for the 18th legislature period states that ESD shall be more firmly anchored in all areas of education. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research, further ministries, the Länder and civil society partners support the planned Global Action Programme and its implementation in Germany. The end of the Decade is therefore at the same time the starting signal for further cooperation in orienting education systems towards the requirements of sustainable development.

II. We acknowledge with gratitude:

that the UN Decade of "Education for Sustainable Development" was a success due to the cooperation of a broad alliance of various stakeholders. On the basis of a decision by the German Bundestag and under the leadership of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, various federal departments as well as the Länder, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, the Standing Conference of Environmental Ministers, local authorities, non-government organisations and numerous other civil society stakeholders were closely involved in the implementation of the Decade. The German Commission for UNESCO provided, with support from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the platform for cooperation between civil society experts, including the national committee initiated by the Commission, the annual round table discussions, the working groups and the awards given to projects, initiatives and local authorities. Over one thousand associations, institutions and civil society partner organisations have a considerable stake in the conceptualisation and implementation of the Decade. We thank them all for their active participation and multifaceted development of the joint goal.

III. We observe:

- a) that the UN Decade of "Education for Sustainable Development" has forged paths for the structural establishment of ESD in the German education landscape and has identified corresponding conceptual options;
- b) that the Decade has sharpened and better conveyed the concept of ESD as an integral element of education whilst at the same time being its comprehensive and systemic reorientation;
- c) that during the Decade a considerable amount of full-time and voluntary commitment and expertise was successfully mobilised for the goals of ESD;
- d) that viable networks of organisations and experts were formed and supported;

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- e) that local ESD initiatives were supported with awards for Decade projects and local authorities, their strategic orientation towards ESD was strengthened, the variety of existent good practice made visible and the transfer of the ESD concept into the mainstream has been started;
- f) that Germany has provided important impulses in the international implementation of the Decade. Using many measures, for example on European level and with bilateral and multilateral development cooperation, Germany has successfully contributed to globally highlighting the importance of ESD.

IV. We recognise the following challenges for the further implementation of *Education for Sustainable Development* faced after the Decade:

- a) the consistent establishment of ESD in formal and non-formal education; that applies both to curricular content as well as the learning environment and learning forms, cooperation between school and non-school educational operators, and the conceptualisation of whole-institutional and participative approaches;
- b) the establishment of ESD in the (further) training of teachers and education specialists at pre-school and school level, in higher education institutions and vocational and extra-curricular education, and other stakeholders;
- c) the continuation and transfer of successful projects, including the use of longer term and multi-topic and multi-sector promotion tools;
- d) the visibility of pioneers of change through awards and the further development of existing awards practice;
- e) the systematic consolidation and further development of local ESD projects into local and regional education landscapes;
- f) the attainment of new target groups, partner organisations and companies, and stakeholders for ESD, in particular from other educational and socio-political sectors;
- g) more intensive inter- and trans-disciplinary research on ESD, with particular reference to skills development, the transfer of good practice into the mainstream, and the contribution of ESD to education quality, including in overall research on sustainable development;
- h) the interlinking of national and international expert discourse on ESD with sustainability discourse, in order to promote the societal transformation process;
- i) more intensive, multi-departmental cooperation and increased political support for ESD on a federal and Länder level;

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- j) the establishment of ESD furthermore in all political processes on national, Länder and local level that are relevant to the central challenges of sustainable development, in particular in the respective sustainability strategies and corresponding progress reports;
- k) assessment of goal achievement using suitable indicators and a results-oriented reporting method;
- l) better international networking and exchange of experiences and good practice with ESD, including exchange between teachers and education specialists, as well as the development of international standards;
- m) an explicit establishment of ESD in the post-2015 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

V. We recommend:

We, the participants of the conference, welcome and support the declaration of the Global Action Programme by the United Nations and the catalogue of goals developed by UNESCO, the implementation agenda and the five priorities of the Global Action Programme. We shall make a concerted joint commitment to achieving the Global Action Programme goals in Germany in the five years until 2019:

- a) **Policy support:** Policy support in Germany, including the respective resources, shall be continued and wherever possible intensified. That particularly applies to multi-departmental coordination and an even more intensive exchange between the federal and Länder governments, local authorities and civil society. The available coordination and implementation structures must be further developed in order to achieve the jointly agreed goals. ESD shall be increasingly integrated into education, research and sustainability agendas in consultation with all societal stakeholders. New ESD financing instruments shall be evaluated.
- b) **Whole-institution approaches:** Education facilities shall cultivate a clear sustainability profile. Realistic goals and quality indicators shall be developed for the comprehensive sustainable orientation of formal and non-formal education institutions (facilities which encourage learning about sustainability and act sustainably themselves). Companies and other institutions shall include ESD in their apprenticeship, further education and further training programmes and CSR strategies.
- c) **Educators:** Particular attention should be paid to the ESD-related qualification of education specialists and teachers at pre-school, school and further education level, of training and apprenticeship personnel in vocational and extracurricular sectors, and of full-time and voluntary multipliers. This applies to first qualification in all training phases as well as apprenticeships and further training.

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- d) **Youth:** Youth shall be given the opportunity and encouraged to use their own initiative to assume responsibility for ESD. They should be given varied, innovative learning opportunities and freedoms and be involved in their design. They must be given more say in national committees and forums concerning the German implementation of the Global Action Programme in order to articulate their requirements of education and learning opportunities which fulfil their important and already active role as stakeholders in sustainable development; where possible, self-organised youth advisory committees should be set up on the various levels. Better structures and processes are required to enable youth to participate and contribute, including the use of digital media. All ESD stakeholders are called upon to enable their following generation to codetermine and shape their world, and support self-organised ESD activities. Where possible, young people shall be given budgeting responsibility for their projects.
- e) **Local communities:** As has been proved during the Decade, ESD is a particularly effective catalyst for the long-term sustainable development of regions. This especially applies to local and regional comprising school and extra-curricular institutions, including cultural institutions, NGOs and companies, institutes of higher education and local authorities. The participating stakeholders must agree on which contribution each makes according to abilities and area of activity, and they shall support each other. These local and regional cooperations ought to be equipped with appropriate structures and resources and be integrated in transregional networks. The accompaniment of multi-topic and multi-sector education processes and close coordination with concrete commitment for sustainability is a task that must be expanded for all multipliers in formal and non-formal education.

VI. We call upon

all stakeholders, networks, institutions and facilities that have made and will in the future make contributions to a stronger establishment of ESD in our society, to the United Nations, UNESCO and UNECE and their respective member states, to the European Union, the German Bundestag and the German government, to the Länder, local authorities and the German Commission for UNESCO, to intensify efforts in the implementation of ESD in line with this declaration.