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*Towards sustainable development –
Learning for a world qualified for
the future*



*A discussion paper of the Association of German
development non-governmental organisations (VENRO) on
the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
2005–2014*

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VENRO is the Association of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating in the area of development. It comprises around 100 German NGOs working as executing agencies of private or church development co-operation, emergency relief and educational, public relations and lobbying activities relating to development cooperation.

Towards sustainable development – Learning for a world qualified for the future

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SUMMARY

Education is an important key to shape the process of globalisation in a sustainable manner. This is why the promotion of education for sustainable development has to be made a priority of education and development policies. The International Decade “Education for Sustainable Development” 2005–2014, proclaimed by the United Nations, provides a framework for a global initiative towards a new orientation of education in view of new global challenges. All people are to be offered educational opportunities enabling them to acquire the necessary competencies for sustainable development.

The Association of German Non-Governmental Development Organisations (VENRO) approves the early creation of institutional prerequisites for an efficient implementation of the Decade in Germany thanks to the initiative of the German Commission for UNESCO. The Association supports the objectives of the National Action Plan. VENRO calls upon its member organisations to join the “**Allianz Nachhaltigkeit Lernen**” (Alliance Learning Sustainability) and to actively engage in the International Decade in cooperation with governmental bodies, industry and civil society.

VENRO's participation in the Decade addresses the following objectives:

- ...✦ **to effectively position the model of sustainable global development in our education system**
- ...✦ **to give an enhanced profile to the dimension of global development in education for sustainable development**
- ...✦ **to strengthen the participatory opportunities of civic organisations and initiatives in the implementation process of the Decade.**

This discussion paper is intended to define the position of non-governmental organisations in the field of development with regard to the challenges of the UN Decade. It determines the underlying concepts of education and lists the main focuses of VENRO's involvement in the German action programme.

VENRO's approach is based on the **model of sustainable development**, which equally includes the dimensions of social justice, economic efficiency, good governance and ecological balance. It connects the demand of intergenerational justice with the demand of justice among the people living today. Environment and development are understood as two fields of equal importance which must be reconciled. In VENRO's view, it is crucial that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the definition of objectives towards a desirable development of society.

For this reason, sustainable development requires a participatory concept of politics. Measures must be given priority which overcome social exclusion, liberate people from constraints caused by poverty, expand their scope of action, and encourage them to advocate for their own interests. Sustainable development is mainly about empowerment from this point of view. Empowerment describes a process which encourages people and enables them to assume responsibility for their own concerns. The potential of critical community participation, gained within the context of education for sustainable development, can contribute to defending the principle of sustainable development against adulteration or misuse.

Committing education to the model of sustainable development represents a double challenge:

- ...✦ **to focus on competencies needed to contribute to a sustainable development and**
- ...✦ **to fulfil the universal human right of access to education**

Education for sustainable development has to provide adequate educational opportunities for everyone, but especially for disadvantaged groups of society with lower levels of education, here as well as in developing countries. It should also support the influence such groups have on the social development process. Education for sustainable development needs to strengthen self-organized learning and community participation as well as cooperation between civil society and schools.

The non-governmental development organisations understand their educational work as consistent with the concept of **global education** (Globales Lernen), which, under the influence of globalisation, has developed over the last two decades from both theory and practice of development education (Entwicklungspolitische Bildung). Global education deals with the far-reaching challenges in the fields of individual learning and education processes that are provoked by global change. As globalisation turns the world into a global risk community, education must qualify children and young people to think and act within the context of a world horizon. Education must impart not only civic responsibility but also the values and perspectives of a world community. Global education focuses on social justice throughout the world, without losing touch with the other dimensions of the sustainable development model. Global education is directed towards an understanding of the interaction between the local socio-cultural context and global processes and fosters competencies towards the development of a sustainable life as well as democratic participation in the development of a society qualified for the future.

VENRO is therefore committed to an enhanced profile of the global perspective, to human rights as well as international justice and intercultural exchange and communication in the context of the National Action Plan of the Decade. In agreement with the guidelines of UNESCO, VENRO supports the approach of understanding the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development as part of the worldwide movement for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, as these provide the framework for global politics at the beginning of the new millennium.

VENRO and its member organisations focus their contributions to the Decade on:

- 1. strengthening people – fighting poverty – promoting sustainable development**
- 2. making globalisation fair**
- 3. strengthening international solidarity and global responsibility**
- 4. realizing "Education for all"**
- 5. protecting cultural diversity and promoting intercultural understanding**
- 6. securing peace and resolving conflicts non-violently**

I. DECADE "EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT"

The United Nations General Assembly in its 57th Session proclaimed the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development for the period 2005–2014. Thus, the United Nations meet one of the central recommendations of the Earth Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. With the proclamation of the Decade, the global community has emphasized that education is essential to initiate sustainable development and the achievement of current global development goals.

The German National Committee, appointed by the German Commission for UNESCO and based on a decision taken by the German Bundestag on 1 July 2004, began the implementation of the Decade by presenting a National Action Plan which will align German activities and define common strategic goals. The Action Plan will also become part of the German Government's Sustainability Strategy.

VENRO appreciates that with the Action Plan, the appointment of the National Committee, the creation of an office as well as the establishment of a Round Table, adequate working structures were provided at an early stage which will allow for a timely and qualified German participation in the international education initiative.

VENRO emphasizes its support for the objectives of the Action Plan, which is to establish the idea of sustainability in all fields of education. We approve the efforts to create a broad alliance of interested stakeholders from governmental bodies, the education system, the media, industry and civil society in order to achieve that goal. The Association and its member organisations have been actively working in the field of global education and public relations for development policy for many years. The development organisations will therefore be actively involved in corresponding to national and international programmes and will prepare individual initiatives as well.

VENRO calls upon its members to join the "Allianz Nachhaltigkeit Lernen", to strengthen the dimension of development in education for sustainable development and to expand international networks with partner organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Promoting education for sustainable development must become a priority of education policy as well as development cooperation if the overarching goal of the Decade is to be achieved, which UNESCO as the lead agency defines by the vision "of giving everyone educational opportunities to acquire knowledge and values, behaviour and lifestyles which are required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation". VENRO and its member organisations are already involved in many different national and international activities which contribute to the fulfilment of this vision. We want to increase and interlink these efforts within the context of the Decade and focus our attention on disadvantaged groups of society with lower levels of education in the North and the South who must be given access to both quality basic education and learning opportunities for sustainable development.

The Decade "Education for Sustainable Development" is expected to give fresh impetus to an overdue new orientation of our education system in the context of global challenges. It provides a platform for the stakeholders of global education to translate their innovative educational approaches into action and develop and interlink them with other reform-oriented perspectives on education. As an international Decade, it also provides an excellent framework to focus public and political attention on the demands of globally sustainable development and combine the efforts of the various stakeholders towards making the process of globalisation just, socially responsible and environmentally friendly at both national and international levels. Civil society movements committed to development must by all means seize this opportunity.

This discussion paper aims to define the position of non-governmental development organisations with regard to the challenges and tasks of the UN Decade. It shows the central ideas and main focuses of the contributions planned by VENRO and its member organisations, which will be part of the implementation and development of the German Action Programme during the Decade. VENRO's education principles, which were presented and adopted in 2000 under the title "Global Education as Task and Field of Action of Non-Governmental Development Organisations", form the basis of the planned activities.

II. THE MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

THE FOUR PILLARS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The mission and the objective of the UN Decade are bound to a model acknowledged all over the world as a normative framework for political action since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. The signatory states of the Rio Declaration agreed to guide their policies towards the model of global sustainable development. In future, all fields of politics at local, national and international levels shall take the demands of sustainable development into account. These goals are part of a global action programme, **Agenda 21**, which was adopted in Rio and is designed to show the world community a way out of the current economic, social and ecological impasses brought about by numerous failing developments and inadequate or unsuccessful policies.

In the sense of Agenda 21, sustainable policies are those that reconcile environmental and developmental concerns, seeking a balanced and integrated approach to economic, ecological and social goals. Agenda 21 defines two main problems to be resolved by the model of sustainable development: the depletion of natural resources and the widening gulf between rich and poor in the world. Sustainable development is to combine the elimination of poverty with the protection of natural resources essential for human life, thus linking the demands of our generation with the demands and opportunities of future generations. Sustainable development as an ethical guideline for political action combines intergenerational justice and justice for the people of the present day.

The model adopted in Rio has since seen considerable modifications. The effort of systematically implementing the normative ideal of sustainable development is accompanied by the integration of additional dimensions and objectives considered indispensable for a feasible and substantial concept of development. Following an indicator system developed by the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD), adding a fourth pillar to the original three-pillar model became common in the international debate¹: Apart from the cornerstones of economic efficiency, ecological sustainability and social justice, another dimension which is institutional, political and process-related has to be taken into account as a component of equal importance. This political pillar of sustainability chiefly stresses the principles of good governance and democratic participation as indispensable prerequisites for sustainable development.

German development policy follows the same concept of sustainability. The Federal Government's development policy approach derives four interlinked dimensions of develop-

ment policy objectives from the model of global sustainable development²:

...✦ **social justice: poverty-reducing structural conditions and policies aimed at social conciliation**

...✦ **economic efficiency: poverty-oriented growth strategies and economic cooperation**

...✦ **political stability: peace, human rights and democracy and equal rights**

...✦ **ecological balance: preservation of the natural resource base essential for life**

VENRO's work is based on the same concept, following the four dimensions as a point of reference towards a development policy focused on sustainability.

OVERCOMING POVERTY – PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT: THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The Implementation Scheme adopted by the Earth Summit on Sustainable Development refers to the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations as a central document, in addition to the principles of Rio and the Agenda 21, in order to put sustainable development into practice. The Millennium Declaration derives eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from the agreements of the world conferences of the nineties and provides precise quantitative and temporal guidelines for these goals. They are binding for all UN member states and ought to be achieved by the year 2015:

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women**
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality**
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health**
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**
- Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development**

The German Federal Government has developed the "Action Programme 2015" translating the international goals

- 1 See Daniel Eisermann: "Die Politik der nachhaltigen Entwicklung. Der Rio-Johannesburg-Prozess. InWEnt Themendienst 13, Bonn 2003.
- 2 See BMZ: Elfter Bericht zur Entwicklungspolitik der Bundesregierung. Materialien Nr. 111. Berlin 2001, p. XVII.

into a national strategy focusing mainly on poverty reduction. VENRO supports these efforts within the scope of the campaign "Armutsbekämpfung braucht Beteiligung" (Poverty Reduction Needs Participation) with attentiveness. Furthermore, VENRO campaigns with the "Global Call to Action Against Poverty" for a more determined effort among government bodies to meet the MDGs.

UNESCO's International Implementation Scheme for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development³ explicitly supports understanding the Decade as part of this worldwide campaign, supported by the United Nations, for the implementation of the Millennium Goals, as these goals provide the central framework for global policy at the beginning of the new millennium.

SUSTAINABILITY: A COMPLEX VISION OF DEVELOPMENT

The Implementation Scheme of the Earth Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002) stresses the need to put the struggle against poverty, as "the biggest challenge for the world at present", at the centre of common efforts for sustainable development even more than Agenda 21. In addition, the "modification of unsustainable methods of production and consumption habits" as well as the "protection and restoration of the natural resources" are mentioned as overarching objectives of sustainable development.

Furthermore, the Implementation Scheme of the Johannesburg Summit takes other factors into account that have been disregarded in the discourse on sustainability so far but are considered indispensable to the current model of sustainable development: "*Peace, security, stability, the respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms including the right of development as well as the respect for cultural diversity are indispensable in order to achieve sustainable development and to guarantee that everyone can benefit from it*" (Part 5). The UNESCO guidelines for the international implementation of the Decade of Education also take these principles as a point of reference, declaring that peace-keeping and the peaceful co-existence of all people, the fulfilment of human rights and especially the protection of cultural diversity and the respect for cultural differences are fundamental goals of the Decade.

According to the International Implementation Scheme (2004) culture is the basis of mediation between the central dimensions of sustainable development – society, environment and industry. This is why education for sustainable development, as UNESCO sees it, is fundamentally about

fostering values and attitudes of respect: "*respect for others, including those of present and future generations, for difference and diversity, for the environment, for the resources of the planet we inhabit*" (IIS 2004, p.4). Cultural diversity was already defined as an essential feature of sustainable development in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and in the Declaration of the European Council (2001).

The international discussion shows that sustainable development must be seen as a multidimensional and complex model going beyond the concept of ecological modernisation. This also means that sustainability policy has to take its numerous impacts on the most diverse areas of life at local, national and global levels into account. The German discussion on sustainability has concentrated on the demands of the environmental compatibility of economic growth, a focus which reflects a narrow concept of sustainable development unable to deal with all dimensions of the model and long inconsistent with the international agreements of past years.

CONFLICTS OF AIMS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The current discussion on the model of sustainable development obviously attempts to take ecological, economic, cultural, social, political, gender and human rights concerns into consideration and calls for an appropriate coherence of all fields of politics. This should not lead us to ignore the numerous conflicts of aims between different areas of sustainable development. The popular belief of an integrated global development effort able to reconcile numerous different demands and interests obscures the complex conditions of the real world.

Rather, sustainable development is a conflict-laden process attempting to reconcile, time and again, numerous conflicting demands representing competing interests of various stakeholders. Education for sustainable development must accomplish the important task of making these conflicts of goals and interests visible while at the same time showing ways to deal with them constructively.

The progressing ramification and amplification of the concept of sustainable development defined in Rio also holds the danger of overcharging the model and thus turning it into a formula without specific content. The inflationary use of the sustainability formula in politics, industry, the media, education and advertising has long made it possible to make use of the word for almost anything. The National Sustainability Council is right when warning against a "de-blathering" of the term. The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development must not contribute to blurring the outlines of the global model of sustainability any further in politics and in the public or to invalidating the substance of the internation-

3 UNESCO: United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2004–2014. Draft International Implementation Scheme. Paris, October 2004

al action plans developed along these normative guidelines. To this end it will be necessary to specify the tasks of sustainable development on the basis of international agreements, and to establish corresponding priorities to the achievement of which the Decade can contribute realistically in the time-frame set.

However, any attempt to find a generally accepted definition of sustainable development describing a global vision of a better world down to the smallest detail and across all regional differences would be doomed to fail. According to the Enquete Commission of the German Bundestag "Schutz des Menschen und der Umwelt" (Protection of Humanity and the Environment), we understand "sustainable development" as a "*regulative idea*" for which only provisional objectives can be provided. The ideas on sustainable development prevalent in society inevitably depend on historical and cultural conditions and are therefore subject to change. This does not rule out the possibility of reaching agreements through international treaties, which provide basic guidelines for all signatory states. It is crucial to give all people the opportunity to contribute to the definition of objectives towards a desirable sustainable development of society. Participation in the process of making decisions on development objectives is a fundamental feature of sustainable development in itself.

In many countries of the world, the necessary opportunities are still not given. The majority of people in poor countries do not have the necessary resources to participate in local, national or global sustainability strategies. Frequently, there are political restrictions or a lack of democratic culture preventing them from getting involved. However, sustainable development requires participation – not only for the implementation process, but already for the definition of goals. Therefore, those measures which overcome social exclusion, remove constraints caused by poverty, enabling people to benefit from their options for action and participation, and encourage and empower them to advocate for their own interests together with others and without fear, have to be given priority. Poverty reduction, good governance and education are some of the crucial instruments of an empowerment strategy for sustainable development.

THE WORLD IS NOT ON COURSE

If we want to use the Decade to place the model of sustainable development at the centre of all educational activities, we should not disregard the following: the global community is far from putting that vision into practice. Despite the United Nations having adopted the concept of sustainable development as a global guideline in 1992, and confirming that conviction in many declarations and conventions since, and despite the frequent use of the term, the indicators for

sustainable development have deteriorated further during the last decade.

The world is not on course, neither in relation to the agreements of the Agenda 21 nor in relation to achieving the MDGs. Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, saw himself forced to confirm this fact in his progress report on the implementation of the Rio Process at the end of the first decade after Rio: "*Progress towards the goals established at Rio has been slower than anticipated and in some respect conditions are worse than they were ten years ago.*" This can be applied not only to the global context, but also to the German context in particular. The National Sustainability Council comes to the same conclusion in its latest report "Momentaufnahme Nachhaltigkeit und Gesellschaft" (Snapshot of Sustainability and Society): "*Germany is not on a good path towards sustainable development.*"⁴

The gulf between poor and rich has widened even further all over the world, and even at national level⁵; many global environmental perils caused by humankind have increased and in many cases politics surrender to the power of the market economy and transnational capital. If the current tendencies continue, the majority of the World's poorest countries, with about a quarter of its population, will miss more than half of the MDGs by the year 2015. The MDGs, which have been adopted by all member states of the United Nations, can only be achieved if the global community gives priority to the fight against poverty and the protection of the natural resources. Unfortunately, the conditions for common strategies to resolve the global community's pressing environmental and developmental problems have got worse since the global security situation changed with September 11th, with international terrorism, and with anti-terror war and war in Iraq. Many resources which would have been necessary to finance development tasks have been used for arms budgets and military action. Furthermore, progressing economic liberalisation and the globalisation of goods, services and capital markets have intensified national competition and limited the scope for the independent shaping of policies with socio-ecological objectives even more. Many people in Germany notice the impacts of these processes as well, but they rarely understand their origins. Fears, like those provoked by the threat of unemployment, often serve the purpose of enforcing far-reaching decisions. A general commercialisation of our educational institutions and living conditions is in opposition to cultural and ethical values.

4 Rat für nachhaltige Entwicklung: Nachhaltigkeit im Visier. Texte 9, Berlin 2004, 6.

5 See UNDP: Human Development Report 2003. Millenniums-Entwicklungsziele: ein Pakt zwischen Nationen zur Beseitigung menschlicher Armut. New York/Bonn 2003; Lebenslagen in Deutschland. Zweiter Armuts- und Reichtumsbericht der Bundesregierung, BMSG, Berlin 2005.

A change of course is needed if the global community is to take the route towards a global partnership for sustainable development outlined in Rio. A prerequisite for the reversal of the trend and for a reorientation towards sustainability is to recognize and overcome those obstacles which have impeded sustainable development so far. Learning for sustainable development has to start with an analysis of the reasons, forces and interests that continue to fuel the persisting trend of unsustainable development. Why is it that, in spite of a worldwide binding consensus about the principles of sustainable development, politics and society still fail to implement these guidelines? Which obstacles, whose individual and collective incapacity, and which interests block the way towards sustainability?

We also have to critically analyse the part of the current education system in the perpetuation of unsustainable development. Recent studies indicate that common teaching materials, curricula and possibly even educational structures

in school contribute to attitudes and conducts which rather impede a reversal of the trend and a reorientation towards sustainable development⁶.

The political reality has to be compared with its own critical resolutions. The model of "sustainable development" contains a potential of criticism and innovation as long as we keep the difference between reality and pretensions in view. Adopting that approach, all forces of society, including the individual citizen and civil society movements, will have to account for their efforts in coping with their proclaimed social and ecological responsibility. This potential to criticize the concept of sustainability must be intensified and defended in the context of education for sustainable development against political rhetoric which uses the call for sustainability to justify the continuation of neo-liberal globalisation and to hide the contradictions and disparities caused by that process.

6 See Wendy Goldstein: Education for Sustainable Development – State of the International Discussion. Stiftung Bildung und Entwicklung Zurich. Presentation at the Congress "Macht die Schule nachhaltige Entwicklung?" November 2002; and Lynn Davies: Education and Conflict. London 2004.

III. STRENGTHENING THE PEOPLE – EMPOWERMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Rio Process has succeeded in introducing a new conception of global politics, which for the first time stresses the importance of civil society's involvement at global level as well. A change towards sustainable development cannot be expected to succeed only through a new orientation of national or international politics. Agenda 21 confirms that the notion of sustainability has to be established in all parts of society. The participation of a broad public, active involvement of civil society and the competence and responsibility of all citizens are indispensable to sustainable development.

THE KEY ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Agenda 21 assigns a key role to community mobilisation and the involvement of non-governmental organisations in the implementation of this ambitious action programme. About one third of the agreements in Agenda 21 are dedicated to cooperation with non-governmental stakeholders and the promotion of a stronger involvement of civil society and public awareness. The enhancement of civil society is a response to diminishing influence on traditional regulatory instruments. The active involvement of civil society has become a necessary element of transnational domestic policies in a complex global society, which cannot leave the task of shaping the structural conditions of human life only to the governments and multilateral organisations.

The efficient involvement of all groups of society and the necessity to develop new forms of participation must not only be seen as instrumental strategies for the achievement of sustainable development; rather, these strategies themselves are essential for the model of sustainable development. Sustainability requires participatory political systems and citizens' **empowerment**. Empowerment strategies aim at the organized self-empowerment and self-enabling of people affected by problems and, thus, at the active attempt of citizens to influence social change and to shape social conditions⁷. Empowerment defines a process in which people feel encouraged and enable themselves to advocate for their interests.

Experience in development cooperation shows that it is not possible to overcome poverty without the empowerment of the poor. Poverty is not only about a lack of material resources, but also about social, political and personal inability. Only with more power, with empowerment at individual and collective levels, can the poor be given more opportunities

to get involved, and only then can their vulnerability in situations of crisis and need be reduced. Of course empowerment is not only necessary in the field of development cooperation. We as industrial nations need it as well, since industrial nations have to develop sustainable production methods and new consumption habits, as they have to start a reform process towards a justice-oriented society in global terms and to work against increasing problems of social exclusion.

The active involvement of civil society and the strengthening of inclusive citizenship are fundamental prerequisites for the sustainability of democratic societies⁸. Still, the National Sustainability Council rightly criticizes the fact that "*the existing potential for sustainability in our society*" is "*only used insufficiently*". In view of the National Sustainability Council, "*NGOs and networks*" are "*the decisive institutions of sustainability*". The National Council of Sustainability concludes: "*The capital of self-organisation, appreciation and participation could give a new profile to sustainability policy in Germany.*"⁹

A further strengthening of the involvement of civil society depends, above all, on extending the institutional capacities for the self-organisation of society. We need conditions that promote commitment and corresponding structures and opportunities to get involved in our education system and in the world of employment. Furthermore, we must shape the institutions at all levels of society in a way that they promote participation. In the process of strengthening the active involvement of civil society for sustainable development, disadvantaged groups of society with a lower level of education must be given special attention. Experience with the Local Agenda 21 in Germany, for instance, shows that it is mostly relatively well-off people with a high level of education who get involved. The involvement of young people or disadvantaged groups like migrants or jobless people has not been sufficient so far. The idea of a sustainable civil society must not degenerate into an exclusive elite project.

ORIENTING TOWARDS GENDER JUSTICE

Sustainable development will only become possible if women equipped with equal rights get involved in sustainability concepts. It has to be realized that, on a world scale, women

7 See Klaus Seitz: Empowerment für eine zukunftsfähige Entwicklung. In: Jasmin Godemann/Gerd Michelsen (ed.): Handbuch Nachhaltigkeitskommunikation, Munich 2005 pp. 308–319

8 See Enquete Commission of the German Bundestag: "Zukunft des Bürgerschaftlichen Engagements": Bürgerschaftliches Engagement: auf dem Weg in eine zukunftsfähige Bürgergesellschaft. Bericht. Opladen 2002.

9 See National Sustainability Council: Nachhaltigkeit im Visier. Texte 9, Berlin June 2004. 6.

represent 70% of the poor and 2/3 of the illiterate, that they account for 2/3 of all working hours and that they only have 10% of the overall world income and 1% of the world property at their disposal. Economically and politically they are still powerless. Their insufficient inclusion in development and sustainability processes reduce the scope and effect of governmental and civil activity. Sustainable development requires the inclusion of gender aspects in policies, planning, implementation and education. After all, social processes such as education are not gender neutral. Therefore, the policy of gender mainstreaming has to become a constitutive element of education for sustainable development which must take into account its effect on gender justice and equal opportunity. Education is of great importance for the objectives of gender justice, an issue that has so far been neglected in the Agenda-21 process, although, according to Agenda 21, participation of civil society is closely interrelated with the subject of gender justice. As traditional gender relationship is continually reproduced in processes of teaching and learning, educational methods paying attention to gender aspects are needed.

LEARNING AS TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION

On the one hand, empowerment for sustainable development is necessary at the collective, institutional level, to promote self-organisation and interlinks between the involved groups and movements. On the other hand, it also requires the responsible and competent participation, and corresponding competencies, of the citizens in the shaping of a sustainable model of development. Seen in this way, "Gestaltungskompetenz"¹⁰ as an educational concept becomes the individual precondition of empowerment. Both levels, the collective as well as the individual, are of course closely connected: "Gestaltungskompetenz" cannot be gained without social and political participation in cooperation with other people. On the other hand, it is obvious that learning experiences made by people incidentally, in an informal way in a self-organized context of civic involvement – in the World Shop, in action and neighbourhood groups, in partnership initiatives organized by the church – are fundamental elements of individual "Gestaltungskompetenz".

Although it is evident that an important part of the learning experiences necessary for the sustainability of our society are made outside educational institutions, it is still and especially, the **education system** which must qualify learners for responsible conduct in accordance with sustainable development. It is true that the new curricula of some Federal States have included the new concept of self-responsible and

self-organized learning as requested by the latest discussions on education, but schools still seem to have problems with putting these acknowledged objectives into practice. Self-responsible schooling is widely regarded as a goal of education policy, but normally, the institutions do not have the required staff, time and resources at their disposal to turn the quick succession of political guidelines into self-organized sustainable educational concepts.

Agenda 21 was already calling for a consistent "Reorientation of education towards sustainable development" (Chapter 36) in 1992, claiming that education should be a pace-maker and catalyst for global change towards sustainability. The implementation scheme adopted ten years later at the Johannesburg Summit confirms the approach ("*Education is crucial for the promotion of sustainable development*", p. 116) and calls for special efforts on the part of the global community in order to guarantee that by 2015 at the latest, all children of the world will have the opportunity to finish basic education.

The "Vision" of the United Nations concerning the International Decade of Education for Sustainable Development mentioned in the introduction to this paper follows that approach too. The commitment of education to the model of sustainable development therefore contains a double challenge:

...✚ **the consistent orientation of education towards knowledge, attitudes and abilities which learning people, especially the younger generation, need to participate in sustainable development**

...✚ **and the universal fulfilment of the human right to education**

The fact that, worldwide, more than 113 million children, above all girls, do not have the opportunity to attend school shows the dimensions of the challenge. The goal of giving everyone access to education has to be an equally important concern of the German contribution to the International Decade as the anchor of the model of sustainability in all areas of the German education system. This includes the fulfilment of the right to education of refugees living in Germany.

We think that education for sustainable development above all has to be committed to the empowerment of people, which means that it should strengthen their activities and their capacities and empower them to actively cooperate with others and get involved in efforts for a change in society towards a world of greater justice and sustainability. Our view on education is in accordance with important international documents regarding a definition of the tasks of education for sustainable development, especially the International Implementation Scheme of UNESCO and the studies

¹⁰ Gestaltungskompetenz: Competence to play an active role in shaping a sustainable future and to participate in society's efforts to achieve sustainable development.

and contributions of the World Conservation Union (IUCN)¹¹. *"Education for Sustainable Development is an emerging but dynamic concept that encompasses a new vision of education that seeks to empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future"*, as stated in the UNESCO assessment report at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg¹².

Empowerment in education processes cannot be imposed from outside. Rather, we should see people as subjects of their own way of life and learning. If we understand education as empowerment, the main stress must be put on the following aspects:

...✧ **Education for sustainable development must not only impart knowledge about sustainability, but aim at**

social change, as education for transformation, which takes into account changes of attitude and conduct as well as structural and institutional reforms.

...✧ **Education for sustainable development also refers to the process of transformation of society. It has to provide follow-up options for individual activities in everyday life and participation in democratic processes of collective decision-making.**

...✧ **Education for sustainable development must open ways for disadvantaged groups of society with a lower level of education, here and in developing countries, and support them in the process of advocating for their own interests and influencing social development.**

¹¹ See D. Tilbury, R. Stevenson et al. (eds.): *Education and Sustainability: Responding to the global challenge*. IUCN, Gland 2002

¹² UNESCO: *From Rio to Johannesburg*, Paris 2002, 1

IV. THE CONTRIBUTION OF GLOBAL EDUCATION TO EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The non-governmental development organisations and third-world initiatives forming VENRO have adopted a profile of global education (Globales Lernen) in their educational practice. They have founded their education work both in school- and outside-school-related contexts on an international education concept developed from the theory and practice of development education in the face of globalisation over the past two decades. The starting point of global education are the far-reaching challenges to individual learning and education posed by the globalisation process. Global education advocates a far-reaching expansion of the educational context because the traditional educational horizon, still reflecting the era of nation states, has turned out to be too narrow in light of disappearing limitations of social structures. Facing the growth of the world into a global risk community, education must enable the coming generation to think and act globally and convey global civic values and perspectives beyond traditional civic responsibility.

GLOBAL EDUCATION: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

The idea of global education has been widely established, conceptualised, and politically legitimized within the international discussion on education. It follows among other things the recommendation by UNESCO on "Education for International Understanding, Cooperation, and Peace" dating from 1974. The Maastricht Global Education Declaration adopted under the umbrella of the European Council in 2002 a common European strategy promoting global education in Europe and defined it as follows: "*Global Education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all.*"¹³

VENRO comprehensively explained its understanding of global education in a position paper in 2000 which forms the basis of the practical work of its member organisations and guides the association's lobbying activities¹⁴. It characterizes the concept of global education as follows:

...✚ **Model:** Global education follows the model of sustainable development as established in Agenda 21 and developed further in the course of time.

...✚ **Image of humanity:** Global education advocates empowerment, i.e. the strengthening of self-organisation and self-competencies as a prerequisite of human development.

...✚ **Content:** The content of global education focuses particularly on the subject areas of social and economic development, related to ecological, political, and cultural aspects as well as interactions between local and global realities.

...✚ **Method:** Global education mainly uses action-oriented methods, allowing changes of perspective and intercultural communication, conveying a sense of orientation in complex contexts and attempting to address all human dimensions of experience.

...✚ **Education target:** Global education strengthens the ability and willingness to perceive global contexts, promotes the competencies for sustainable life and provides the tools needed to participate democratically in the development of a sustainable society. Conveying knowledge, motivation, and ethical direction and encouraging the respective learning processes, global education enables individuals to participate actively and responsibly in the shaping of global society and to contribute within their individual life environment to sustainable development.

In a similar manner to other approaches and concepts of education for sustainable development, global education refers explicitly to the model of sustainable development established in the Rio Process. Consequently, there is a large intersection of common educational contents, methodical approaches and competency targets. However, global education is not identical with other approaches of education for sustainable development and therefore not interchangeable. It has its roots in civil society and its own traditional lines, as reflected to date in the different designs of its educational contents and methods.

Global education is characterized by its global approach to education subjects and by its principle to evaluate all decisions according to how they affect the opportunities of disadvantaged population groups in the world community. Global education is focused on global social justice without losing sight of other dimensions of the model for sustainable development. The approach is rooted in development education, which is closely connected with structures of the Third World movement and governmental as well as non-governmental development organisations, whereas large parts of education for sustainable development – in the national and international context – evolved from traditions of environmental education, which are represented in society by ecological and environmental organisations.

13 See. Eddie O'Loughlin, Liam Wegimont (eds.): Global Education in Europe to 2015. North-South Centre Lisbon 2003.

14 VENRO: Globales Lernen als Aufgabe und Handlungsfeld entwicklungspolitischer Nichtregierungsorganisationen. Arbeitspapier Nr. 10. Bonn 2000.

We see the different origins and the diversity of perspectives represented and interrelated in the educational approaches under the umbrella of the Decade and further complemented by experiences in health, mobility, or democratic education, as an important enrichment of all educational and political efforts to meet the requirements of a globally sustainable development¹⁵.

The multidimensionality of approaches reflects the complexity of the task. We view the *"integrative approach of education for sustainable development"*, expressed in the National Action Plan (p. 10) in this light. The point is not to merge all subareas but to intensify the networking and collaboration of these individual education approaches in pursuit of the model of sustainable development. Global and environmental education have developed their collaboration concerning concepts and contents at different levels. Discrepancies, which have led to conflicts, result from the as yet unbalanced establishment of both areas in the governmental education system and from their different resources. Against this backdrop, the justified appeal of the German Bundestag (decision of 29 June 2000) must be seen as a call to further cultivate development education (respectively global education) in addition to environmental education as the second pillar of an education for sustainability¹⁶.

COMPETENCIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Currently, intensive national and international efforts are being undertaken in education sciences and politics to define competencies or competency areas and education standards, which are to be taken as a model for the development of future curricula. Equally, various drafts for the competency goals of global education have been developed. However, the present proposals draw upon different, partly inconsistent, competency models, and the procedures by means of which the competency goals can be developed and implemented are also inconsistent and controversial issues. From our point of view, the present state of discussion does not yet allow the setting up of a comprehensive, theoretically well-founded and operational competency profile for global education or education for sustainable development. Nevertheless, as in other areas of education, pragmatic solutions should be found until these deficits have been removed, i.e. concepts which connect global education to lessons with a stronger orientation towards competencies, and which show that education for sustainable development is about the acquisition of essential basic competencies, have evolved. Education experts from non-governmental development

organisations are participating intensively in the efforts to theoretically establish competency areas like those presently discussed in the context of the KMK (German Conference of Ministers of Cultural Affairs/BMZ) project, which is working on the development of a referential curriculum for the educational field "Global Development".

VENRO considers the approach developed within the framework of the BLK model-project "Education for Sustainable Development", combining relevant sub-competencies under the term **"Gestaltungskompetenz"**, to be, at least temporarily, a helpful orientation, which is also useful in the context of global education. The differentiation of these sub-competencies was further continued after a joint conference of experts, hosted by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Umwelterziehung (German Association for Environmental Education) and VENRO in May 2000, and complemented by competency goals taking an international and intercultural perspective into account¹⁷. However, the discussion about which competencies the coming generation needs in order to live a fulfilled and responsible life in the context of a complex world risk society cannot in the least be viewed as concluded. In any case, the representatives of global education and education for sustainable development, or environmental education, could identify far-reaching common objectives in their collaboration and discussions. The still existing conceptual differences do most likely only play a secondary role for teachers in their practical work, since there is only a minor emphasis on global education and environmental education in the curricula of most German Federal States. This fate is shared with a number of other educational fields relevant to education for sustainability, like peace, human rights, or health education.

Despite the recent convergence achieved in the German debate, it is striking that a number of concept documents on education for sustainable development presented in the international arena put more emphasis on experiences made in international education work, set different emphases and thus have a stronger tendency to be guided by global education, intercultural education, and peace education, than it is the case in Germany. This is especially true for the International Implementation Scheme, presented by UNESCO for the worldwide implementation of the Decade, but also for approaches developed under the umbrella of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) as well as for the British discussion on "Education for Sustainable Development" (ESD).

Thus, following a revision of the English national curriculum, ESD was included as early as 2000. ESD is to enable students *"to develop the knowledge, values and skills to partici-*

15 See Jörg-Robert Schreiber, Stephan Schuler: Wege Globalen Lernens unter dem Leitbild einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung. In: Praxis Geographie 4/2005, p. 4–10.

16 Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 14/3319.

17 See Gerhard de Haan/Klaus Seitz: Kriterien für die Umsetzung eines internationalen Bildungsauftrages. In: Journal 21, edition 1 (part 1) and edition 2 (part 2), Munich 2001.

pate in decisions about the way that we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future".

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the British government commission on education for sustainable development have established curriculum instructions for the implementation of this guideline and identified seven key concepts for ESD¹⁸, among them "citizenship and stewardship" (recognize our rights and responsibilities to participate in democratic decision-making procedures) and "diversity" (understand the meaning and value of diversity and differences – in the cultural, social, economic, and biological fields).

Equally, the fifteen socio-cultural, ecological, and economic perspectives listed in the International Implementation Scheme (IIS) giving guidelines for education for sustainable development take the approach of global education more clearly into account than the German National Action Plan has so far. However, the IIS does not specify the competencies to be promoted by education for sustainable development in the same context. Rather, it outlines the diversity of education fields and subjects characterized by them: *human rights, peace and human security, gender equality, cultural diversity and intercultural understanding, health, HIV/AIDS, governance, natural resources, climate change, rural transformation, sustainable urbanisation, disaster prevention and mitigation, poverty reduction, corporate responsibility and accountability, market economy.*

POLITICAL EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Considering this broad approach, it becomes evident that education for sustainable development in Germany should be established more strongly in the field of political education and should be given the profile of education for global citizenship. According to the BLK-21 programme evaluation, education for sustainable development is clearly underrepresented in the subject of political education and is rarely perceived by teachers as a didactic concept for political education¹⁹. Sustainability is a social project based upon political participation and the capacity of all citizens to act and has to be understood and conceptualised essentially as the task of political education. Insofar as it is the goal to develop perspectives for a socio-ecological shaping of global domestic policies and to unfold the contributions that can

be made by learners assuming political responsibility, the Decade provides an opportunity to promote a new orientation of political education in the context of "post-national constellations" towards a perspective of global citizenship. The growing complexity of political circumstances and the growing importance of international contexts of action require the positioning of the competency for political participation and the assumption of political responsibility not only within the national but also the European and even the global context. The "European Year for Citizenship through Education" and the BLK programme "Learning and living democracy" provide adequate points of connection, which ought to be taken up by education for sustainable development.

In particular, the establishment of a global perspective, as well as a reference to human rights, international justice and the necessity of intercultural understanding ought to be emphasized more strongly in the Action Plan. In their contributions to the Decade, VENRO and its member organisations will stress the importance of emphasizing these points. We recommend the inclusion of the fifteen perspectives presented in the IIS and the key concepts developed by the QCA in the continuation of the Action Plan and to ascribe greater importance to a well-founded derivation and differentiation of competency profiles.

Clearly, attention will have to be paid in order not to further soften the outline of education for sustainable development through an inflationary use of the term. Undoubtedly, a single education project cannot integrate all of the perspectives mentioned here at the same time. It is the art of didactics, valid also for education for sustainable development, to make appropriate concretisations and reductions. However, the above-mentioned multidimensionality of sustainable development as well as the integration of all development processes into the network of global interdependencies should not be neglected. Therefore, a natural study school-pond project will not automatically be able to use the title of "education for sustainable development" (or of a Decade Project), just as little as a lesson on a West African country will.

GLOBAL EDUCATION AS AN INTERNATIONAL MISSION

The Decade is a common international task and it is inseparably connected to a number of international agreements and binding action programmes, to which those active in education are to make key contributions through support and implementation. As referential documents, the International Implementation Scheme (IIS) explicitly mentions the UN Millennium Declaration and the Dakar Resolutions on "Education for all" in addition to Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Action Plan. The range of the frame of action con-

18 See. Office for standards in education (OFSTED): Taking the first step forward. Towards an education for sustainable development. London 2002

19 See Gerhard de Haan: Politische Bildung für Nachhaltigkeit. In: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte B7-8/2004, p. 39-46.

tained within these documents must be reflected reasonably in German activities regarding the Decade.

From the perspective of global education, it is essential to understand sustainable development as a cooperative and global task and to position it in a global frame of action. This directs our attention to the question of the international compatibility of all decisions and developments, including those in the local arena. Global education helps to decipher the complex connections of local action and global processes. It reveals how the individual's life is intertwined with global events.

The work of development organisations is particularly focused on the question of social justice, taking into account the equal importance of economic, social, ecological, and political goals. The orientation towards global social justice includes the task of shaping our conditions in such a way that all human beings can live their lives in dignity and that the circumstances particularly of the worst-off population groups can improve. Above all, global education must contribute to the development of a prosperity in affluent nations which is based on social justice and the empowerment of the poor. Overcoming poverty requires fundamental reforms of international institutions, including the global trade and finance regimes, according to the principles of sustainable and cooperative global domestic policies. Therefore, questions concerning global structural policies and the critical analysis of the predominant trends of globalisation will have to be addressed in a reasonable manner within the context of education for sustainable development.

KEY ELEMENTS OF GLOBAL EDUCATION

The contribution of global education within the framework of the Decade "Education for Sustainable Development" can be effected particularly well through the following key elements. At the same time, these subject areas represent fields of action to which central importance is ascribed in the work of the non-governmental development organisations forming VENRO:

1) Strengthening the people – fighting poverty – promoting sustainable development

Here, the emphasis lies on creating an understanding for the Millennium Development Goals, to which the community of states has committed itself, and the willingness to mobilise support for the action programmes initiated by the government and non-governmental organisations in order to implement these goals, particularly the goal of overcoming poverty in the world. Questions such as: "What is poverty?" "What are its causes?" "Why is the divide between rich and poor

increasing in our country and in the global context?" "How can poverty be overcome?" count among essential issues to be considered. The key, however, is an understanding of the preconditions which need to be met so that the poor can take charge of their fate themselves. A multitude of well-suited lesson materials covering these issues can already be accessed at non-governmental development organisations. Examples from the international work of non-governmental organisations show how social movements which contribute to the empowerment of the poor and disadvantaged can bring about a positive social change. The adoption of this subject area by schools is therefore particularly dependent upon collaboration between schools and civic organisations.

2) Making globalisation fair

An understanding of the complex relations between individual life and the globalisation process can be illustrated well by analyzing concrete intersections reflecting consumer decisions in day-to-day life, which are connected with global conditions or produce transnational effects. This can be done by analyzing global production chains using examples such as textile or sports products or cell phones, or by looking at the origins of international youth culture. In addition to the exploration of ways in which individuals can contribute in their consumer behaviour to a sustainable and just, and particularly a gender fairer design of globalisation, an emphasis also has to be put on gaining an understanding of mechanisms, opportunities, and risks of the globalisation process, on defining the requirements of global structural policies (global governance), and on addressing questions such as how society can politically influence these factors. The important international political topics in the years to come include particularly the necessity of restructuring world trade policy towards a just, ecological, and democratic world trade order, control of the continuing liberalisation of the trade of services and the privatisation of public goods, the strengthening of multilateral environmental policy, a resolution of the debt crisis, the reform of the United Nations, securing food and peace, and the establishment of an inclusive global information society.

3) Strengthening international solidarity and civic global responsibility

The implementation plan of the Johannesburg Earth Summit (2002) explicitly points to the central importance of the ethics of sustainable development (number 6). The UNESCO IIS defines education for sustainable development as more than just ethical education or a form of learning whose key element is attention to values and responsibility. The question of how social justice can be understood in the global context and beyond institutionalized structures of solidarity, the

question to what degree we have responsibility in a merging world, even for those furthest away, and the question of whether there can be a basic global consensus within the context of a "global ethic" in light of the cultural plurality of moral values, are key elements of controversies in the political philosophy of international justice. These controversies need to be opened up for educational development projects as well. It seems necessary for ethical education to leave the traditional limited context of ethics and extend the principle of responsibility towards a perspective of global citizenship. This includes specific areas of application of a "global ethic" in individual consumer behaviour (fair trade, ethical financial investments) or the economic field (corporate social responsibility).

4) Implementing "Education for all"

Education enables people to improve their social, cultural, societal, and economic situation. Everyone has a right to education. The questions of why many people are deprived of this basic right and why education opportunities are distributed unequally in Germany as well as worldwide indicates a problem which has to be addressed continually in education processes themselves. Current controversies over the market-oriented restructuring of education in the North and the South and the emergence of a global education market should be addressed by educational institutions. The Global Campaign for Education, undertaken by many development organisations and teacher associations worldwide opens up a host of opportunities for action and participation within an international network (e.g. yearly action weeks) for schools and other educational institutions.

5) Protecting cultural diversity and promoting intercultural understanding

Cultural freedom is a central element of human development, i.e. the ability of humans to determine themselves who they are. According to statements at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002, the protection of cultural diversity has a similar importance for the sustainable development of the world community as the protection of biological diversity.

The agreement sought by UNESCO on the protection and promotion of cultural diversity under international law will spawn many far-reaching debates in the years to come. The contribution of education is to promote respect of other cultures and to strengthen the ability of understanding among cultures. This is especially important with respect to the model of sustainable development since it cannot be applied without regard to cultural aspects. Voices from other cultures which can be made heard in our society via the international network of non-governmental organisations in our society can contribute to a recognition of the dependency of individual ideas of sustainable development on local views and help to see one's own positions on global questions from other perspectives. Successful cultural and educational projects such as the "Kinderkulturkarawane" (Büro für Kultur- und Medienprojekte), "einfach anders" (Arbeitsstelle Weltbilder Münster) or "Grenzenlos – Globales Lernen im Dialog" (World University Service) provide specific connection points for innovative education processes at the intersection of intercultural education and "learning sustainability".

6) Securing peace and resolving conflicts non-violently

Peace is a decisive prerequisite for sustainable development. But the extent and intensity of violent conflicts have further increased in past years. The far-reaching destruction caused by violent conflicts in many regions of the world not only subjects the civil population to immeasurable suffering but also poses an essential obstacle to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Prevention of violence, consolidation of peace and civil conflict resolution must have priority in international policy and developmental cooperation. The competency of resolving conflicts non-violently and constructively is needed not only at political level but also in individual contexts. Education plays a key role in the promotion of a culture of peace and the prevention of violence. Peace education has produced valuable experience in how to strengthen individual and collective abilities for peace which should be used in the context of education for sustainable development. Furthermore, approaches of peace education must be taken more into account in development cooperation, and educational cooperation in general should be geared towards crisis prevention.

V. EDUCATION STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN DECADE IN GERMANY

Under the umbrella of the German Commission for UNESCO, stable structures have been established with the support of the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (Federal Ministry of Education and Research) for the duration of the Decade. These form a strong basis for the qualified implementation of Decade activities in Germany and the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders within the context of a broad alliance. Representatives of VENRO are working actively in the National Committee and at the Round Table and also in other contexts of the "Allianz Nachhaltigkeit Lernen" (Alliance Learning Sustainability).

The participation of VENRO in the implementation of the Decade in Germany is driven mainly by the commitment to:

- ...✚ **effectively anchor the model of a globally sustainable development in our education system,**
- ...✚ **give an enhanced profile to the global and development policy dimension of education,**
- ...✚ **strengthen the possibilities for participation of civic organisations and initiatives in the implementation of the Decade.**

In order to better meet these requests which are in accordance with the mission of the common international task in the context of German Decade activities, additional work groups should be set up at the Round Table of the "Allianz Nachhaltigkeit Lernen" as a complement to the already existing working groups, set up in line with educational structures and relevant subjects, to deal specifically with the contribution of global education to education for sustainable development. These working groups could provide the appropriate platform to establish concepts, themes, and measures to strengthen the North-South dimension of sustainable development.

Concerning the four strategic goals of the National Action Plan, the following measures and activities have been submitted by VENRO for the NAP and should be implemented²⁰:

20 In agreement with other partners of the "Allianz Nachhaltigkeit lernen", VENRO, for the time being, will not submit a measure for the third strategic goal of the NAP ("Improving public awareness of Education for Sustainable Development").

DEVELOPING AND FOCUSING ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS TRANSFER OF GOOD PRACTICE

MEASURE 1

*Millennium Development Goals:
Against poverty worldwide – Education heads for 2015*

In the UN Millennium Declaration, the world community committed itself to the implementation of eight global development goals by 2015. Its focus lies on reducing global poverty by half. In order to reach these goals and step up the necessary public pressure for political decisions, the goals must be more strongly established in public awareness. This is the aim of the UN Millennium Campaign and the worldwide campaign "Global Call to Action against Poverty" supported by civil society, propagated in Germany under the title "Deine Stimme gegen Armut". Schools and educational institutions are to be encouraged to participate in campaigns for reaching the Millennium Development Goals. They will be supported in accessing the related subject areas through appropriate educational measures. VENRO member organisations will provide educational models and media focusing on key subjects of the MDGs such as poverty, health/HIV/AIDS, gender justice, financing development, global environmental policy, rights of children and education. In this, the media serve an important purpose by informing society.

In the context of the Decade "Education for sustainable development" the two international goals on education are of great importance:

- with MDG 2 nations have committed themselves to provide basic education for all children by 2015
- MDG 3 aims at gender equality at all educational levels by 2015 at the latest

The implementation of the "Education for all" goals must be understood as a key element of the UN Decade. The promotion of high-quality primary education, oriented towards the model of sustainable development, must therefore be increasingly realized in development policy. The human right to education is to be treated with top priority in education policies and development cooperation.

According to the UNESCO vision, education for sustainable development is targeted towards inclusive education structures, enabling all human beings to participate in education processes which are essential for their personal and for general social development. The goal "Education for all" is not only important for the global education situation but

also poses a challenge to the implementation of the Decade in Germany. Attempts to provide education for sustainable development have not reached or addressed disadvantaged or socially weak strata appropriately. "Education for all" thus assigns to the Decade the task of integrating disadvantaged groups in this country. Lower-threshold education projects for schools and leisure activities must increasingly be developed; Haupt- and Sonderschulen as well as vocational schools and institutions of further education must be given particular attention. Education and action materials should be designed in such a way that they particularly address children, adolescents, and grown-ups with migration backgrounds.

MEASURE 2

Global education: Making globalisation fair

In the age of globalisation, an understanding of global processes and relations is an indispensable element of general education. In order to act responsibly in day-to-day life and participate competently in the shaping of social change, people from all population and age groups must learn to gain a sense of orientation within complex globalisation processes. Proven action models for global education illustrate global relationships using examples such as clothing, coffee, youth culture, cell phones, food, toys, tourism, local competition or world music, and create an understanding of the importance of a sustainable political control of the globalisation process.

Such learning and action models as well as lesson materials, revealing the connections between individual day-to-day life and global issues and illustrating globalisation using specific examples, are to be further developed in the framework of the Decade for purposes in schools as well as outside school education. They are to be made accessible nationwide. A central internet portal, based upon and extending the portal of the "Eine Welt Internet Konferenz", could present supplies of all relevant stakeholders in the field of global education and establish access to all available materials in this field. Common standards will be defined to secure quality, evaluation methods will be further developed, and training courses will be offered to producers and users.

International campaigns encouraging dealing with current and important political processes and decisions at global level (e.g. Conclusion of the WTO Doha Round, GATS negotiations) should develop educational materials and action models in order to open up possibilities for schools and other educational institutions to participate actively.

On the occasion of the 2006 Soccer World Championship in Germany, VENRO is organizing an international one-week "Summer School" on development education and sports in cooperation with the European umbrella organisation CONCORD.

NETWORKING OF THE STAKEHOLDERS OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

MEASURE 3

Civil society as a partner of schools

The collaboration of schools and civil society organisations opens up new potentials for education for sustainable development. A further opening of schools, but also of continued learning establishments, teacher training institutions and education boards, is necessary for systematic cooperation with non-governmental organisations and development education service offices outside schools. The development of all-day schools in particular opens up new perspectives for the cooperation of civil society and schools. The legal and financial preconditions as well as the qualitative standards of such collaboration should be guaranteed through agreements between the education ministries of the Federal States and civil society, e.g. drawing on modalities already developed in Brandenburg and Rhineland-Palatinate.

The systematic collaboration between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders as well as environmental and development initiatives requires not only central or national but also, and particularly, decentralized network structures. The key to lifelong education for sustainable development is based upon the networking of all these learning opportunities in the sense of a "learning region". Information systems (databases) should be set up for these regions providing direct access to the available offers of different educational institutions. Here, the regional NGO networks responsible for development policies as well as the decentralized service and school counselling offices for global education, whose counselling and agency services have to be better financially secured, can assume a key position. The "Hamburger Bildungsagenda" (Hamburg Education Agenda) is an excellent example of such regional networking. Action plans for the implementation of the Decade based upon a broad alliance ought to be set up at Federal and State level.

In addition to the BLK programme Transfer-21, which is limited to schools, promotion programmes for institutions and measures are needed outside the school system. In order to guarantee quality, further educational training programmes for experts from civil society initiatives and industry are to be offered in addition to an agreement on adequate standards. Attention should be paid in particular to the active integration of consultants with a migration background. Returning development aid workers could play an important role as communicators of knowledge and experience.

INCREASING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

MEASURE 4

North-South partnerships

Schools and networks created in the “learning regions” and Local Agenda 21 groups must be supported more intensively in establishing learning partnerships with partners in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. School, community, church and project partnerships offer an important learning area for education for sustainable development. Exchange, cooperation, and contact with groups of different cultural areas require a change of perspectives and allow for intercultural learning experiences. Trips costing time and money would be favourable for direct and personal contact with other cultures, but they are not absolutely imperative. Modern communication technologies enable contacts and perhaps even the maintenance of contacts without personal meetings. Supporting and connecting structures necessary for such learning project partnerships must be further expanded.

VENRO's member organisations will participate in this effort in agreement with other stakeholders, e.g. in setting up a communication network based on the Internet, in counselling services and in the provision of educational materials to promote South-North exchange and the organisation of school and learning partnerships. Such partnerships can create the basis for a situation where single Decade activities are increasingly carried out as cross-border cooperation projects.

On top of such measures, VENRO and its member organisations will take part in further projects planned by partners in the fields of development and environment to implement the Decade in Germany. Among other efforts, the strengthening of the North-South dimension of sustainable development as well as the integration of migrants in the local Agenda 21 process in the context of measures of the Service Agency for Communities in One World will be focused. In cooperation with InWEnt, VENRO will contribute to the exchange of concepts of education for sustainable development in the international context. An important impact for the critical assessment of global education in Germany from an international point of view is to be expected from participation in the “European Global Education Peer Review Process” coordinated by the North-South Centre.

In all our efforts to integrate the model of sustainable education into our education system, we must emphasise that education for sustainable development may not be reduced to the conveyance of messages critical of society or emphatic appeals to improve the world. Rather, education for sustainable development must become an integral part of a comprehensive and collective education process, a concrete and practical approach to changing society and civic engagement directed towards sustainable and global development among partners. Therefore, it is necessary to test alternative options for action practically and to take into account the principles of sustainable development in everyday life and in the concrete shaping of our learning environments and our educational structures.

LIST OF VENRO MEMBERS (JANUARY 2006)

action medeor – Deutsches Medikamenten Hilfswerk
 ADRA – Adventistische Entwicklungs- und Katastrophenhilfe
 Ärzte der Welt
 Ärzte für die Dritte Welt
 Ärzte ohne Grenzen*
 AeJ – Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Evangelischen Jugend
 AGEH – Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe
 agI – Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Eine-Welt Landesnetzwerke
 Akademie Klausenhof
 Aktion Canchanabury
 Andheri-Hilfe Bonn
 Arbeiter Samariter Bund Deutschland
 AWO International
 AT-Verband*

BDKJ – Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend
 Behinderung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit*
 BEI – Bündnis Entwicklungspolitischer Initiativen
 Bundesvereinigung Lebenshilfe für Menschen mit geistiger
 Behinderung
 Brot für die Welt

CARE International Deutschland
 Casa Alianza Kinderhilfe Guatemala
 CCF Kinderhilfswerk
 Christliche Initiative Romero
 Christoffel-Blindenmission

DEAB – Dachverband entwicklungspolitischer Aktionsgruppen in
 Baden-Württemberg
 DESWOS – Deutsche Entwicklungshilfe für soziales Wohnungs-
 und Siedlungswesen
 Deutsche Kommission Justitia et Pax
 Deutsche Lepra- und Tuberkulosehilfe
 Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung
 Deutsche Welthungerhilfe
 Deutscher Caritasverband – Caritas International
 Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband AK "Parität International"
 Deutsches Blindenhilfswerk
 Deutsches Komitee Katastrophenvorsorge*
 Deutsches Rotes Kreuz – Generalsekretariat*
 DGB-Bildungswerk – Nord-Süd-Netz
 Die Lichtbrücke
 Dritte Welt JournalistInnen Netz

EED – Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst
 Eine Welt Netz NRW
 Eine Welt Netzwerk Hamburg
 EIRENE – Internationaler Christlicher Friedensdienst
 Evangelische Akademien in Deutschland

FIAN Deutschland

Gemeinschaft Sant Egidio
 Germanwatch Nord-Süd-Initiative
 GSE – Gesellschaft für solidarische Entwicklungszusammenarbeit

Handicap International
 Hilfswerk der deutschen Lions

ILD – Internationaler Landvolkdienst der KLB
 Indienhilfe
 INKOTA – Ökumenisches Netzwerk
 Internationaler Hilfsfonds
 Internationaler Verband Westfälischer Kinderdörfer

Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe – Johanniter International
 Jugend Dritte Welt

Kairos Europa – Unterwegs zu einem Europa für Gerechtigkeit
 Karl Kübel Stiftung für Kind und Familie
 KATE – Kontaktstelle für Umwelt und Entwicklung – Berlin
 Kindernothilfe

Lateinamerika-Zentrum

Malteser International
 Marie-Schlei-Verein
 marrera – Stiftung Frau und Gesundheit
 Medica mondiale
 medico international
 Misereor Bischöfliches Hilfswerk
 Missionszentrale der Franziskaner*

Nationaler Geistiger Rat der Bahà'i in Deutschland
 NETZ – Partnerschaft für Entwicklung und Gerechtigkeit

ÖEIW – Ökumenische Initiative Eine Welt
 OIKOS Eine Welt
 ORT Deutschland
 Oxfam Deutschland

Peter-Hesse-Stiftung – Solidarität in Partnerschaft für eine Welt
 Plan international Deutschland

Rotary Deutschland Gemeindienst*

Senegalhilfe-Verein
 SES – Senior Experten Service
 SID – Society for International Development
 SODI – Solidaritätsdienst International
 Sozial- und Entwicklungshilfe des Kolpingwerkes Stiftung Entwick-
 lung und Frieden
 Stiftung Nord-Süd-Brücken
 Susila Dharma – Soziale Dienste

Terra Tech – Förderprojekte Dritte Welt
 terre des hommes Bundesrepublik Deutschland
 Tierärzte ohne Grenzen*
 TransFair – Verein zur Förderung des Fairen Handels mit der
 "Dritten Welt"

VEN – Verband Entwicklungspolitik Niedersachsen
 VENROB – Verbund entwicklungspolitischer Nichtregierungs-
 organisationen Brandenburgs

Weltfriedensdienst
 Welthaus Bielefeld
 Weltladen-Dachverband.
 Weltnotwerk der KAB Westdeutschlands
 Werkhof Darmstadt
 Werkstatt Ökonomie
 World Vision Deutschland
 W. P. Schmitz Stiftung
 WUS – World University Service – Deutsches Komitee

Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklungshilfe der Gemeinnützigen Treuhand-
 stelle

*) Guest member

The following VENRO working papers have been published:

Arbeitspapier Nr. 1: Arbeitspapier zur Zukunft der EU-AKP-Zusammenarbeit

VENRO-Positionspapier zur Zukunft des Lomé-Abkommens vom 13.2.1998

Arbeitspapier Nr. 2: Der Internationale Währungsfonds – neuer Akteur in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit?

Dokumentation des VENRO-Studientages am 13.1.1998

Arbeitspapier Nr. 3: Initiatoren, Wächter oder ungebetene Gäste?

Die Rolle von NRO beim Aufbau einer Global-Governance-Architektur

Dokumentation der Fachtagung am 29.10.1998

Arbeitspapier Nr. 4: Handel statt Hilfe? Das Lomé-Abkommen vor dem Umbruch

Dokumentation des VENRO-Studientages am 4.11.1998

Arbeitspapier Nr. 5: Der neue Lomé-Vertrag – Welche Rolle für die NRO?

Dokumentation des Studientages am 14.2.1998

Arbeitspapier Nr. 6: Schuldenkrise vor der Lösung? Die deutsche Schuldeninitiative für den G8-Gipfel:

Werden die Schulden der ärmsten nun auf ein tragbares Maß reduziert?

Dokumentation des VENRO-Studientages am 17.3.1999

Arbeitspapier Nr. 7: VENRO-Kampagne "Deutsche EU-Präsidentschaft"

Textsammlung zur Kampagne im ersten Halbjahr 1999, Juni 1999

Arbeitspapier Nr. 8: Nachhaltigkeit in der Humanitären Hilfe

Diskussionspapier im Rahmen des Projekts "Qualität in der Humanitären Hilfe" (deutsch/englisch), September 1999

Arbeitspapier Nr. 9: Die Reform der EU-Entwicklungspolitik: Aufbruch oder Abbruch?

Dokumentation zum VENRO-Studientag am 18.9.2000

Arbeitspapier Nr. 10: "Globales Lernen" als Aufgabe und Handlungsfeld entwicklungspolitischer Nicht-Regierungsorganisationen

Grundsätze, Probleme und Perspektiven der Bildungsarbeit des VENRO und seiner Mitgliedsorganisationen, Dezember 2000

Arbeitspapier Nr. 11: Den ärmsten Ländern neue Chancen eröffnen!

NRO-Beiträge zur UN LDC III Konferenz vom 14.–20. Mai 2001 in Brüssel

Arbeitspapier Nr. 12: Entwicklung ohne Ausgrenzung

Menschen mit Behinderung als entwicklungspolitisches Querschnittsthema im Kontext der Menschenrechte,

Dokumentation einer internationalen Fachtagung in Berlin, Juli 2003

Arbeitspapier Nr. 13: Reality or Wishful Thinking: Does the Cotonou Process Strengthen Civil Society?

Documentation of the Workshop on 29th July 2003 in Bonn, Dezember 2003

Arbeitspapier Nr. 14: Humanitäre Hilfe auf dem Prüfstand

Prinzipien, Kriterien und Indikatoren zur Sicherstellung und Überprüfung der Qualität in der humanitären Hilfe

Working Paper No. 14: Humanitarian Aid put to the test

Principles, criteria and indicators to ensure and monitor quality in humanitarian aid

Arbeitspapier Nr. 15: Kurs auf eine nachhaltige Entwicklung

Lernen für eine zukunftsfähige Welt – Ein Diskussionsbeitrag des Verbands Entwicklungspolitik deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen (VENRO) zur UN-Dekade "Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung" 2005–2014

Working Paper No. 15: Towards sustainable development

Learning for a world qualified for the future – A discussion paper of the Association of German development non-governmental organisations (VENRO) on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005–2014

Arbeitspapier Nr. 16: Selbst bestimmt oder Auftragnehmer?

Die Rolle der Nord-NRO in der Europäischen Entwicklungspolitik

Arbeitspapier Nr. 17: Linking relief, rehabilitation and development

Ansätze und Förderinstrumente zur Verbesserung des Übergangs von Nothilfe, Wiederaufbau und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit