

Requests to UNESCO's "Framework for a Draft International Implementation Scheme"  
on the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD)

We, the Japan Council on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD-J), appreciate the initiative taken by UNESCO in promoting the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). Many NGOs and individuals in Japan are concerned about education for sustainable development (ESD), and have consequently been pushing forward the ideas of the DESD. In fact, the establishment of the DESD is directly rooted in government lobbying efforts by Japanese NGOs' in order to recommend the DESD to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Some groups and individuals in Japan who support the DESD gathered together and established the ESD-J in furtherance of the DESD.

The ESD-J currently consists of more than fifty organizations, both national and regional, as well as many individual members. There are various members with many different specialties covering virtually all issues related to ESD, including (but not limited to): the environment, development, gender, human rights and peace. The organization has the strong will to make meaningful contributions to the success of the DESD, functioning as the DESD platform in Japan through cooperation with the government, private sector and other stakeholders. We have no doubt that contributions from NGOs and other people are absolutely indispensable to ensure the success of the DESD. It is our great pleasure to have been given the opportunity to comment on the draft prepared by UNESCO for the framework in implementing the DESD.

Having reviewed the proposed document, we (ESD-J) would like to request that you (UNESCO) incorporate the following points into your framework:

1. Clarify goals and indicators for ESD.

We feel that the framework should clearly state the basic goals and indicators for ESD in order to realize sustainable development (SD). Considering the important perspectives regarding ESD included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was also pointed out in your draft, we feel it is necessary to emphasize that achieving the MDGs is one of the top priorities of ESD. We also feel that MDGs should be a part of the educational goals for ESD.

<Main draft sections>

Section 1: Education for Sustainable Development

- Meeting Millennium Development Goals
- Linking DESD to other International Educational Priorities

Section 2: A Partnership Approach to DESD

- Principles for Developing Partnerships
- Vision

2. Stress the need to achieve peace and a "culture of peace."

At present, war and terrorism have both been of great concern in the global community, and ESD is supposed to be a powerful tool to eradicate such human atrocities. However, it should also be recognized that achieving peace takes more than eliminating direct violence: for true peace to occur, it is essential that structural violence be overcome as well. We therefore request that the framework place stronger emphasis upon the recognition that the basis of SD is peace, and as a result, it is important to build a "culture of peace." We must also stress that gender perspectives are particularly important to create such a culture, since gendered viewpoints transcend all issues while also representing their very foundation.

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Section 1: Education for Sustainable Development

- Key Themes in Education for Sustainable Development
- Gender Equality
- Intercultural Understanding and Peace

3. Conduct a DESD promotion campaign for global citizens.

We feel that campaigns should be organized using various media sources in order to make

ESD widely recognized by citizens worldwide (e.g., a signature campaign for ESD declaration). These campaigns should be linked with Education for All (EFA), MDGs and the UN Literacy Decade (UNLD).

< Main draft sections >

Section 1: Education for Sustainable Development

- Linking DESD to other International Educational Priorities
- Key Themes in Education for Sustainable Development

Section 2: A Partnership Approach to the DESD

- Communication and Advocacy

4. Guarantee peoples' right to access information and participate in decision making.

Any actors who are in positions to lead and implement the DESD, such as the United Nations and related organizations including UNESCO and governments, must ensure the peoples' right to participate in all decision-making processes regarding the DESD. We feel that this should be done by completely disclosing all DESD-related information, as well as by encouraging the regular participation of all people in any and all phases of the DESD, including planning, deciding goals, means, processes, evaluation of methods and institutions, and implementation.

< Main draft sections >

Section 1: Education for Sustainable Development

- Education: Making the Abstract Real
- The Four Domains of Education for Sustainable Development

Section 2: A Partnership Approach to the DESD

- Partners
- Principles for Developing Partnerships
- Vision
- Demonstration activities
- Community-based Processes
- National, Provincial and Local Government Processes

5. Development of support and feedback systems.

We feel that there is a need for the realities of implementation, problems, issues and feedback regarding the DESD to be monitored through global monitoring systems for EFA, UNLD and ESD. We also feel that it is necessary to develop systems for both support and feedback in order to popularize ESD more effectively, and to promote the ideas more efficiently.

< Main draft sections >

Section 2: A Partnership Approach to the DESD

- Principles for Developing Partnerships
- Demonstration activities
- Networking
- Monitoring

6. Introduce the concept of global citizens, global democracy and media literacy.

We feel that the framework should reflect the necessity for each individual to act as a global citizen who contributes toward the creation of a sustainable society. To make this happen, various institutions, organizations and individuals need first to cooperate and learn about ESD at both basic and adult education levels in order to identify the real causes of currently unsustainable situations.

To resolve the identified problems, the individuals should apply things learned through ESD to local education plans and policies, including local agendas, in concrete terms. There should also be some support for media literacy regarding SD programs, in which individuals share the outcomes of their learning with others through various media. We believe that the establishment of a "global democracy," where small voices are to be heard, is key to actualizing the idea of ESD. It is important to make governments aware that insofar as ESD is free from the boundary of national education, it is a global education in the true sense.

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Section 1: Education for Sustainable Development

- Meeting Millennium Development Goals
- The Four Domains of Education for Sustainable Development

Section 2: A Partnership Approach to the DESD

- Principles for Developing Partnerships
- Demonstration activities

7. Call for more attention to globalization.

The rapid rise of globalization has caused decline and collapse of local communities and cultures, as well as changes in the form of employment and domestic industries. These are serious situations for SD as well, and we feel that it is therefore necessary to advise people to have some sense of urgency regarding the issue of globalization in approaching ESD.

< Main draft sections >

Section 1: Education for Sustainable Development

- Meeting Millennium Development Goals

8. Alert the advanced world.

We feel it should be pointed out that advanced countries have enormous issues to address with regard to their consumption patterns of resources such as energy and food.

< Main draft sections >

Section 1: Education for Sustainable Development

- Key Themes in Education for Sustainable Development
- Environmental Conservation and Protection
- Sustainable Production and Consumption

9. Convene international conferences to evaluate and review DESD.

Please include in the framework that two international conferences are to be held: one in the fifth year for interim assessment and review of the overall plan, and the other when the DESD period is over for summative evaluation of the ten years.

< Main draft sections >

Section 2: A Partnership Approach to the DESD

- Monitoring

\*Abbreviations:

SD = Sustainable Development

ESD = Education for Sustainable Development

DESD = the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

ESD-J = the Japan Council on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

EFA = Education for All

UNLD = United Nations Literacy Decade

MDGs = the Millennium Development Goals

Thank you very much for your consideration of our concerns regarding these issues.

Osamu Abe

Steering committee chairman

Japan Council on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD-Japan)