

The Ahmedabad Declaration

This Declaration was made on January 20th, 2005 by more than 800 learners, thinkers and practitioners from over 50 countries, engaged in education for sustainable development, at the Education for a Sustainable Future conference held at Centre for Environment Education in Ahmedabad, India.

As the first international gathering of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), we warmly welcome this Decade that highlights the potential of action education to move people towards sustainable lifestyles and policies.

If the world's peoples are to enjoy a high quality of life, we must move quickly toward a sustainable future. Although most indicators point away from sustainability, growing grassroots efforts worldwide are taking on the enormous task of changing this trend.

We accept our responsibility and we urge all people to join us in doing all we can to pursue the principles of the Decade with humility, inclusivity, and a strong sense of humanity. We invite wide participation through networks, partnerships, and institutions.

As we gather in the city where Mahatma Gandhi lived and worked, we remember his words: "Education for life; education through life; education throughout life." These words underscore our commitment to the ideal of education that is participatory and lifelong.

We firmly believe that a key to sustainable development is the empowerment of all people, according to the principles of equity and social justice, and that a key to such empowerment is action-oriented education.

ESD implies a shift from viewing education as a delivery mechanism, to the recognition that we are all learners as well as teachers. ESD must happen in villages and cities, schools and universities, corporate offices and assembly lines, and in the offices of ministers and civil servants. All must struggle with how to live and work in a way that protects the environment, advances social justice, and promotes economic fairness for present and future generations. We must learn how to resolve conflicts, create a caring society, and live in peace.

ESD must start with examining our own lifestyles and our willingness to model and advance sustainability in our communities. We pledge to share our diverse experiences and collective knowledge to refine the vision of sustainability while continually expanding its practice. Through our actions we will add substance and vigor to the UNDESD processes.

We are optimistic that the objectives of the Decade will be realized and move forward from Ahmedabad in a spirit of urgency, commitment, hope, and enthusiasm.