

The Lüneburg Declaration

on

Higher Education for Sustainable Development

Education in all its forms plays an indispensable role in addressing the critical challenges of sustainable development. The interconnected issues of globalization, poverty alleviation, social justice, democracy, human rights, peace and environmental protection require inclusive partnerships to create a global learning environment.

Higher education has a catalyst role vis-à-vis education for sustainable development and the building of a Learning Society. It has a special responsibility to conduct the scholarship and scientific research necessary to generate the new knowledge needed and train the leaders and teachers of tomorrow, as well as communicate this knowledge to decision-makers and the public-at-large.

The ultimate goal of education for sustainable development is to impart the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills needed to empower people to bring about the changes required to achieve sustainability. Quality education for sustainable development needs to be based on state of the art knowledge and to continually review and update curricula and teaching materials accordingly. It needs to serve teachers, other professionals and all citizens as life long learners to respond to society's challenges and opportunities, so that people everywhere can live in freedom from want and fear, and to make their unique contribution to a sustainable future.

In October 2001, a conference on "Higher Education for Sustainability: Towards the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002", was held at the University of Lüneburg, Germany. The conference was jointly organized by the University of Lüneburg and the COPERNICUS Programme of the European University Association (EUA) and was sponsored by the Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP) formed by COPERNICUS, the International Association of Universities (IAU), the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

GHESP partner organizations and the experts in attendance at this conference endorse the following:

1. Taking into account the recommendations and results of:
 - UNCED: Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 (1992);
 - The International Work Programme on Education, Public Awareness and Training for Sustainability adopted by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (1996);
 - International Conference on Environment and Society (Thessaloniki, 1997);
 - World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 1998);
 - World Conference on Science (Budapest, 1999);

- World Education Forum (Education for All) (Dakar, 2002); and
2. Building upon the significant networks of the three academic associations which founded GHESP, beginning with over 1000 colleges and universities which pledged to implement comprehensive sustainable development action steps by signing the charters and declarations sponsored by these three organizations;
 3. Calls on **higher education institutions, NGO's and other stakeholders** to:
 - a. Ensure the continual review and updating of learning materials to reflect the latest scientific understanding of sustainability;
 - b. Ensure that the reorientation of teacher education towards sustainable development continue to be given priority as a key component of higher education;
 - c. Provide continuing education to teachers, decision makers and the public at large on sustainable development;
 - d. Encourage all educational institutions to include in their activities a strong component of reflection on values and norms with respect to sustainable development;
 - e. Raise awareness and increase understanding of the importance and relevance of technology assessments and risk assessment;
 - f. Promote the creative development and implementation of comprehensive sustainability projects in higher education, and all other levels and forms of education;
 - g. Increase attention to the international dimension and provide more opportunities for inter-cultural exchange in the learning environment;
 - h. Increase a focus on capacity development and intensified networking among institutions of education; and
 - i. Promote stronger integration of training and research and closer interaction with stakeholders in the development process.
 4. Calls on **governments** to ensure that the World Summit on Sustainable Development includes education in general, and higher education in particular, in the future international programme of work.
 5. Calls upon the **United Nations** to:
 - a. highlight in the Secretary-General's main policy report the indispensable role of education in general, and higher education in particular, in achieving sustainable development as stated in chapter 36 of Agenda 21.

- b. to make education a discussion topic during the multi-stakeholder dialogue sessions to be held during the preparatory committee meetings for the Johannesburg Summit and during the Summit itself.
6. Calls on **UNESCO** as task manager for chapter 36 of Agenda 21, in cooperation with UNU and other relevant parts of the United Nations system, to support these efforts concerning the Johannesburg Summit.
7. Furthermore, the EUA-COPERNICUS, the International Association of Universities (IAU), and the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF) commit to achieving the following targets within next five years:
- a. Create a global learning environment for higher education for sustainable development;
 - b. Promote expanded endorsement and full implementation of the Talloires, Kyoto and Copernicus declarations;
 - c. Produce an action-oriented Toolkit for universities, managers, administrators, faculty and students designed to move from commitment to concrete action. The Tool Kit would include:
 - implementation strategies for colleges and universities depending on size, type, demographic characteristics, etc.;
 - strategies for reform in particular areas of university activity, including teaching, research, operations and outreach, or for comprehensive change across all universities activities;
 - an inventory of available resources;
 - an inventory of best practices and compilation of case studies;
 - d. Enhance the development of Regional Centres of excellence in both developed and developing countries, and effective networking among them.

The Lüneburg Declaration on Higher Education for Sustainable Development was adopted on 10 October 2001 in Lüneburg, Germany, on the occasion of the International COPERNICUS Conference “Higher Education for Sustainability – Towards the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10)” held at the University of Lüneburg 8 – 10 October 2001.