



## Iran

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was officially introduced in Iran, at the national level by the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office (UTCO) through a national workshop attended by university academics and senior government personnel, including the Minister of Education and several Deputy Ministers. The workshop focused on developing specific actions during the Decade to reinforce commitment to the EFA goals, the Literacy Decade and cross-cutting issues such as environment, poverty alleviation, gender and human rights. 161 research and discussion papers were presented on these subjects by the main national universities.

Prior to the workshop, the UTCO carried out a number of preparatory activities to introduce ESD to government officials. These included: meetings and discussions with different officials; translation of the Asia Pacific Situational Analysis and Regional Strategy Working Paper into Farsi; and dissemination of this material to universities and research centers. These proactive preliminary activities helped build a receptive environment which, in turn, elicited enthusiastic national commitment and action.

The National Workshop on ESD resulted in a decision, supported by government counterparts, to establish a National Secretariat for ESD. To create this committee, the UTCO worked closely with the workshop organizers who formed a temporary coordinating secretariat immediately after the workshop to introduce ESD to all relevant ministries. As a result of persistent follow-up and the alignment of DESD with the five-year national development programme, 20 representatives from different ministries and governmental organizations met to form the technical committee of the secretariat with full authority on behalf of their ministry or organization.

In early June 2005, the Iran National ESD Secretariat (INES) was formed under the direction of the Minister of Education. Membership of INES reflects the broad, all-encompassing nature of ESD and includes representatives from the tourism, culture, education, media, environment, science and research, health, women, social welfare and planning sectors. All members were nominated by their ministries or organizations to serve on the committee.

The INES has responsibility to ensure the realization of the DESD goals in Iran and also acts as the national focal point for ESD for the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office. Representatives need to hold regular meetings to assess the current situation of ESD and to identify and develop projects that are based on DESD goals and are in line with Iran's sustainable development priorities. The committee plans to publish regular informative publications, exchange experts at both Cluster and Regional levels, provide study visits for academics and decision makers, and hold meetings at both national and provincial levels. The INES has been actively working with the UTCO education section in translating several ESD documents in 2005. The translated ESD package was presented collaboratively by the UTCO and the INES to high-ranking officials of the new government to introduce their goals and projects as well as ESD related materials.