



New Zealand

The New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO decided early in 2004 that the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) was an important initiative which aligned well with national policies. The impetus for action was provided by a group of non-governmental organizations, which, in collaboration with the National Commission, organized a stakeholder workshop comprising around 90 key stakeholder groups, including government agencies. This workshop demonstrated that the DESD must become a high priority for the National Commission. A Government Agency meeting was convened to assist with the development of a government position on DESD.

The *New Zealand Coordinating Committee for the DESD* was appointed in December 2004 to plan and lead the New Zealand response to the Decade. An important feature of this group is the diverse range of backgrounds from which members hail. Members do not merely represent education interests but were selected for their public profile and standing in the business community, commitment to and understanding of sustainable development and for their understanding of New Zealand's diverse cultural environment. The Chair of the Committee is a well-known and respected member of the New Zealand business community and Chairperson of the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development. The Coordinating Committee is united by an appreciation that education is critical to the achievement of broader sustainable development goals.

A national launch for DESD in New Zealand was held in conjunction with Eco-Show, a national trade fair focused on sustainable development. The launch, held on 5 March 2005, was considered essential for building public and private sector interest in the Decade. Students from a UNESCO ASPnet School as well as government representatives and members of the media and private sector attended the event. A special fashion show "From Trash to Fashion" rounded off the launch event.

Consultations

The national coordinating committee met for the first time on the day of the launch. The challenge for the committee members was to establish a way to foster a collective understanding and process to develop a New Zealand response. The first meeting canvassed the views of the committee and identified some of the issues that would need to be tackled, such as the language surrounding sustainable development, which must be made accessible to a wide audience in order to promote the ESD concept. The meeting also recognised the need to support and complement existing work in the ESD arena rather than duplicating effort. The committee agreed to a facilitated session to clarify its own ESD vision, and to develop processes for this vision to be realized. At a subsequent meeting, the committee undertook a rapid planning process to develop a 'vision' of New Zealand in 10 years time following implementation of successful ESD projects as imagined by the committee. From this, priority elements were identified and strategies to achieve them were developed.

The key elements emerging from the facilitated planning session were the need to focus on 'branding' and communication tools for ESD. Significant resources would be imperative to implement these projects. The Coordinating Committee has developed the phrase, '**making the good things last**' into a by-line for its work to help translate the concepts of the DESD into a meaningful catch-phrase for a public audience.