



**United Nations  
University**

*15th Session of CSD  
30 April-11 May 2007  
New York*

## **Mainstreaming Education and Capacity Development in Sustainable Development Practices**

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Mr. Chairman,

As a think-tank within the United Nations, United Nations University (UNU) has been contributing to CSD's discussions on energy for sustainable development (SD), industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change in various ways.

For instance, the UNU Maastricht Economic and Social Research and Training Centre on Innovation and Technology (UNU/MERIT), which is located in Maastricht, the Netherlands and has its major focus on socio-economic impacts of new technologies, offers a side event on hydrogen fuel cells and alternatives in the transport and energy sectors: issues for developing countries. The UNU Geothermal Research, Exploration and Development (UNU/GTP), which is located in Reykjavik, Iceland, offers training in geothermal research, exploration and development. In addition, the UNU has carried out various studies on energy, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change, especially on climate change and convened many workshops/seminars on this topic.

Research undertaken by the UNU indicates that education and capacity building is a key component of the successful implementation of sustainable development, especially on climate change policies in developing countries. As such the UNU has also contributed to the CSD15 by convening a learning centre activity on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) - a tool for better governance and sustainable decisions as well as a side event on regional centres of expertise (RCEs) on education for sustainable development. Furthermore, over the past few years, a major effort of the UNU has been the *Mainstreaming of Education and Capacity Development in Sustainable Development Practices*.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, the UNU has been making significant efforts to strengthen collaboration between scientists/researchers and educators, together with other foremost scientific/technological and educational institutions who signed the Ubuntu Declaration. The UNU has also been emphasizing the important role of educators, especially higher education institutions, and encouraging them to be more active in promoting sustainable development at all levels of education and in all sectors.

We firmly believe that education, in close collaboration with science and technology, is a key agent for change, especially at the regional and local levels. It is our sincere hope that education and capacity building will be the foundation for all future efforts in sustainable development practices. We also hope to motivate the CSD to further strengthen the role of educators in the CSD process, and the role of education as the means of implementing Agenda 21 and the commitments made in Johannesburg.

Mr. Chairman,

As you are aware, the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UN/DESD) started in January 2005. To promote its implementation, the UNU has put particular emphasis on regional and local approaches. The UNU has proposed creating regional centers of expertise on education for sustainable development (RCEs). These innovative mechanisms aim to strengthen communication and collaboration among different stakeholders at regional/local levels. RCEs will strengthen collaboration between different levels of formal education, between formal and non-formal education, and between science and education. Participants in RCEs include school teachers, university professors, experts in research institutions and museums, local government officials, media, local NGOs and local industries.

Thirty five RCEs have been launched all over the world. There are another fifty RCEs in the pipeline, as of 2007. The UNU expects hundreds of RCEs by the end of the UN/DESD. The UNU commits to promoting RCEs throughout the UN/DESD. We are convinced that RCEs will demonstrate how education can serve as a means of achieving sustainable development and making changes happen on the ground level. We also believe that RCEs and their network will significantly contribute to the creation of Global Learning Space on Sustainable Development; an important goal of the UN/DESD.

