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EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES AND BUSINESS

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The main preconditions to achieve a balanced (sustainable) development of the society are the science and education. They are simultaneously the most important tools for effective management and decision-making.

A strong, deep and branched scientific and theoretical basis as well as the widest educational and explanatory work are needed at all stages of developing and implementing of the concept of sustainable development (to ascertain the needs, formulate the ideas to practical implementation). Insufficiency of theoretical knowledge in the field of sustainable development illustrates governmental reluctance in many countries to listen to the scientists' estimates concerning the possible negative impact of decision-making by inadequately educated managerial staff (that was and remains one of the major causes of contemporary crisis in human relationship with nature) [1].

Education for sustainable development is a practice of teaching for sustainability [2]. Agenda 21 was the first international document that identified education as an essential tool for achieving sustainable development and highlighted areas of action for education [3].

Education for sustainable development implies four descriptors: sustaining, tenable, healthy and durable.

- Sustaining – it helps sustain people, communities and ecosystems
- Tenable – it is ethically defensible, working with integrity, justice, respect and inclusiveness
- Healthy – it is itself a viable system, embodying and nurturing healthy relationships and emergence at different system levels
- Durable – it works well enough in practice to be able to keep doing it [4].

Education for sustainable development requires establishing multilateral cooperation and partnership. Its main actors are governments and local authorities, non-governmental organizations, health sector, education and science, transport and agriculture, private sector, industry, the media, various communities, indigenous peoples and international organizations [1].

Higher education institutions bear a profound, moral responsibility to increase the awareness, knowledge, skills, and values needed to create sustainable future. Higher education plays a critical but often overlooked role in making this vision a reality. It prepares most of the professionals who develop, lead, manage, teach, work in, and influence society's institutions. Higher education has a unique academic freedom and the critical mass and diversity of skills to develop new ideas, to comment on society's challenges, and to engage in bold experimentation in sustainable living [5].

Business schools, schools of industrial and agricultural guidance, vocational schools include relevant topics related to sustainable development into their curricula. Industrial corporations include issues of sustainable development into their professional traineeship. The postgraduate training also provides specific courses in order to conduct special management skills for sustainability decision-making [1].

Nowadays professional and continuing higher education for sustainable development is designed to perform an important role in this regard. Such a training should be organized for all managers and professionals, and especially for those who are engaged in planning and management in order to gradually move from brown to green economy.

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