

## **Role and Tasks of the Round Table**

**(Drafted by the members of the Round Table of the UN Decade)**

### *Background*

The United Nations have proclaimed the years 2005 to 2014 as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and appointed UNESCO to implement this initiative at an international level. On the basis of a unanimous decision of the German Bundestag in 2004, the Federal Government appointed the German Commission for UNESCO to implement the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in Germany. The German Commission for UNESCO has instituted the National Committee for the UN Decade as the control and co-ordination body. The National Committee represents a wide spectrum of political and social stakeholders from the ESD field. The National Committee initiated a Round Table and invited 100 organisations and individual experts to participate in order to provide a wide basis for the implementation of the UN Decade in Germany. The National Committee appoints Round Table members at intervals of two years. The National Committee and the Round Table furthermore appointed working groups for individual fields and issues in relation to Education for Sustainable Development.

### *Characteristics of the Round Table*

1. The Round Table provides a forum to exchange information, to link and to discuss issues, contents and strategies concerning the implementation of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development on a cross-sectoral basis.
2. The broad spectrum of stakeholders represented at the Round Table, on the one hand, results in initiation of new developments in the field of ESD and, on the other hand, it transfers the idea of ESD into society.
3. The Round Table furthermore aims to be a catalyst for common activities by the members, for example, by initiating co-operation projects from within the circle of the Round Table.

### *The organisational structure of the UN Decade and the Round Table*

4. As with the National Committee, the Round Table participates in the implementation of the UN Decade by bringing together the stakeholders in Education for Sustainable Development across their entire range, by concentrating expertise, preparing clearly defined recommendations for the implementation of the Decade (for example concerning annual themes) and by defining strategic priorities.
5. The annual Round Table meetings offer the opportunity to formulate recommendations to the National Committee and to the members of the Round Table as well. After every meeting the National Committee's decisions are communicated to the Round Table and the working groups.
6. Relationship to working groups: The working groups' activities are related to specific issues or sectors. The Round Table, on the other hand, offers a platform to discuss general objectives and perspectives not limited to individual issues or sectors and to formulate measures and make arrangements to achieve these objectives. The working groups' activities generate themes and subjects which are discussed at the Round Table. The discussion needs to concentrate on cross-sectoral issues that are important to all stakeholders of the Round Table.
7. With regard to the annual meetings of the Round Table: As a rule the annual Round Table meetings are hosted by one Minister-President in co-operation with the

corresponding State Government. The following arrangements for those meetings have been agreed:

The annual meetings of the Round Table

are organised as closely as possible to the following agenda elements as a basic structure:

- current situation / state of affairs / review of implementation of the UN Decade in Germany;
- input referring to the situation of the UN Decade in a wider context (“big picture”), possibly by means of an external keynote;
- cross-sectoral themes for the German implementation of the Decade (alternating plenum and work-shop activities);
- networking platforms;
- agenda item “general discussion”.

take place with participation of members of the National Committee;

The contents of the annual meetings are prepared by the UN Decade co-ordination unit and a preparatory working group consisting of the representatives of the working groups and a representative of the State hosting the next Round Table meeting. Additional interested parties are always invited to contact the co-ordination unit. The preparatory working group meets at least once before the Round Table meeting takes place.