



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
PABSEC

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

Doc. GA48/CC47/REP/16

CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

REPORT*

“Education and Science for Sustainable Development in the BSEC Member States”

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**Text considered and adopted by the Forthly-Seventh Meeting of the Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee in Bucharest on 25 October 2016 and approved by the Forty-Eight General Assembly in Belgrade on 1 December 2016*

I. INTRODUCTION

1. We are at the completion of an important stage in the development of the global community, where the achievements of the scientific and technological progress and education are replacing the natural resource usage. The countries with rich natural resources, are changing their policies and are proclaiming the thesis about the transformation of the natural factors in human capital. According to the World Bank in the most developed countries, the role of the human (research and education) capital exceeds 75%, while the natural factor is only 5%. This confirms the important role of the development of the science and the achievements of the scientific and technological progress and education for the sustainable development of the societies.
2. The level of the scientific sophistication is one of the main indicators of the development of the society, as well as an indicator for the modern development of every State. All countries with high living standards have a high level of scientific development and vice versa. The spendings on the science of the developed countries are more (as a percentage of their budget) than the others. The scientific potential of the country, along with the natural and labor resources, constitutes the basis of the effectiveness of the country's economy. In today's world the emphasize is put on the importance of the innovation, the development of knowledge-intensive industries, which ultimately is an essential factor ensuring the economic growth. Scientific and technical potential is the main engine of the economy, and the industrial development, based on science and innovation, leads to qualitatively new factors of economic growth.
3. In the transition to a green economy, based on new green skills, science and education are one of the binding tools necessary in understanding and solving the problems, related to the environmental, economic and social dimensions of the sustainable development. The promotion of the sustainable development goals through reaffirming the importance of the three pillars: social, economic and environmental, is further strengthening the need for an interdisciplinary and an integrated approach for the sustainable development.
4. Currently, the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), is a congruent element to all major initiatives of the United Nations (UN) and other international bodies. The UNESCO Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development is based on the principles of solidarity, equality and mutual respect between people, countries, cultures and generations. As a result of its 10 years implementation of regional and further on a national level, ESD is now reflected in the national education policy documents and has led to its inclusion in curriculum frameworks, particularly at the primary, lower and upper secondary levels, changing approaches to the learning processes.
5. PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee decided to focus on a topic that touches upon science and education for Sustainable Development in the BSEC Member States. Contributions to the Report were received from the National Delegations of the Republic of Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Bulgaria, Greece, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Republic of Turkey and Ukraine. Reference material was also obtained from the official websites of UNESCO and other relevant international organizations and sources on the Internet.

II. THE ROLE OF THE SCIENCE AND EDUCATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES

6. Education and science are an essential tools for achieving sustainability. One of the definitions for sustainable development, credited to the Brundtland Commission, says that: "*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p 43). It contains within it two key concepts: the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given, and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs. One of the principles of the sustainable development states that SD requires better scientific understanding of the problems and nations should share knowledge and innovative technologies to achieve the goal of the global sustainability.
7. The impact of science on sustainable development is a strategic objective in the sustainable development of the Black Sea Member States. In the XXI century the development of the science and innovation is increasingly viewed as a means of solving socially significant problems in order to overcome serious challenges in economic development and as a global cultural phenomenon. Science can accumulate and store knowledge that needs to be continuously transferred over the years. This requires that all scientific areas be provided with the necessary material and human resources. In this sense, effective management of science, as an economic factor that ensures growth, employment and dynamism of the national economy, is a priority of the countries.
8. One of the major challenges facing modern higher education in the BSEC Region is to provide quality training to the students. The constant efforts are essential to ensure adequate response to the current requirements of the labour market and train competent professionals having the willingness and drive to constantly improve their qualification, to update and expand their knowledge and skills. Providing opportunities for sustainable employment will continue to be a priority in the training of specialists of higher education in the BSEC Member States. This implies the development of modern, competitive and practice-oriented curricula based on the latest achievements in science and technology and training the lecturers to work in an innovative environment.
9. Another significant trend in the Black Sea Region countries is the need for cooperation in the field of joint development of curricula in various disciplines. An effective role in this direction played the BSEC Member States accession to the Bologna process, which have accelerated such cooperation. The trend to involve the business community in this process provides the link between modern requirements of the labour market and the academic training. Carrying out the operation provides an opportunity for a direct link between the management and the faculty councils of the Universities, on the one hand, and on the other hand, between the management of employers' organizations, large enterprises and key experts, who can redefine and update together the educational programmes in the higher education area.

10. The Adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a historic moment for the global community meant to steer the world on a path to sustainability that inaugurates a new era of global action, with a universal, integrated and transforming vision, which implementation will be the responsibility of each country. For the first time, there is a development agenda that focuses on sustainability and is addressed to both developing and developed countries, which transmits the urgent need for global action. Agenda 2030 includes an ambitious set of 17 goals for sustainable development (SDG) and 169 target sites, which will be implemented into relevant national programs and strategies. Education for sustainable development (ESD) is included in 3 targets in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (Goal 4, 12 and 13) showing its importance in contributing to the achievement of different development objectives (i.e. education, sustainable consumption and climate change).
11. One of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 4 “*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*”, is a standalone goal promoting a quality education, and inclusive and equitable learning opportunities throughout life, for everyone. In this context the value of education in promoting Sustainable Development will have a crucial importance for the next 15 years that transcends the scope and mandate of that Goal.
12. The ninth paragraph of the "Sustainable Development Goals" highlights the vital importance of science and technology, and with a request to the world-and in particular to developing countries- to support industrial growth and technological modernization, encourage innovation, increase their spendings on research and development. Achieving this goal requires that Governments have made political commitments to the sustainable development, and not only adopted the necessary policies and incentives, but also ensure the appropriate resources. In fact, all the 17 goals of sustainable development tasks-from hunger, clean water and sanitation to preserve ecosystems, depend on how effectively we use science and technology. The world is entering the 15-years path to perform SDG, recognizing that this is an essential task.
13. Education and science are an essential part of the global response to the climate change. It helps young people understand and address the impact of global warming, encourages changes in their attitudes and behavior and helps them adapt to climate change-related trends. The effect of human activities - magnified in recent years by population growth and global climate change - has greatly reduced biodiversity in ecosystems around the world. It is therefore important to refocus education and scientific programs so that they enable educators and learners to protect biodiversity. The issue of biodiversity should be introduced or developed within both teaching and learning perspectives, with curricula and materials developed to create desired learning outcomes. Learning outcomes should include academic understanding, acquisition of values, increased capacity, skills development and the adoption of attitudes and behaviour, conducive to biodiversity preservation.
14. There are clear linkages between education, science, poverty reduction and sustainability. The poor and marginalized are disproportionately more affected by poor environmental and socioeconomic conditions. Educational and scientific responses to poverty need to address the fact that many of the world’s poor do not participate in the formal market economy, but in non-formal economies, and many are self-employed entrepreneurs.

15. Science policies are not enough developed. Science and engineering education at all levels and research capacity need to be built to allow countries to develop their own solutions to their specific problems and to play binding role at the international scientific and technological arena. Linking science to society, public understanding of science and the participation of citizens in science are essential for the development of societies, where people have the necessary knowledge to make their professional, personal and political choices, and to participate in the stimulating world of discovery.
16. The Black Sea Universities Network was established in 1998, following the relevant Recommendation (56/2001) of the PABSEC. Today it counts over 100 universities from the 12 BSEC Member States. The current priority areas of cooperation and activity of BSUN are: Sustainable Development, Networking on Innovation and Knowledge Transfer, Energy Security & Renewable Energy Sources, Advanced & Multifunctional Material, E-health & Telemedicine, Social & Cultural Cohesion in the Black Sea Region.

III. EDUCATION AND SCIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

17. *The Republic of Armenia* is actively participating in the global process of implementing education for Sustainable Development in the framework of the decade. In the recent years, the general education system of the Republic of Armenia is in the process of reforms, aiming to improve the quality of the education and to be integrated into the existing international processes. In 2011, a State Programme for the Development of Education of the Republic of Armenia (2011-2015) was adopted, where the main concept of "Education for Sustainable Development" was introduced. According to the strategy, the new educational standards set the learning outcomes of students, in particular: the acquired knowledge and skills, the emerging system of values in accordance with the level of education.
18. In 2009 the concept of "Creation of an Unified National System for Environmental Education and Awareness-raising" was approved, aiming to create conditions for improving the quality of environmental education, ecological awareness of the society and raise awareness concerning the environmental issues. Currently, a lot of universities have included in their academic programs special courses on "Sustainable Human Development", "Sustainable Development and Global Security", "The Millennium Development Goals", "Global Programme of Sustainable Development", "Environmental Geology in the context of Sustainable Development".
19. In 2016 the Government of the Republic of Armenia adopted a Draft Law, based on the "State Program for the Education Development of the Republic of Armenia in the period 2016-2025", as well as several concepts for development, a strategic development program, the concept for the sustainable development agenda until 2030. The program was based on the already achieved success in the educational system and is committed to the gradual development, identifying priorities and strategy for the development in this area.

20. The implementation of the environmental education in Armenia is one of the priorities of the country, which is based on a number of commitments in the framework of the international educational and environmental conventions. The environmental education is presented in all levels of the educational system in Armenia, including different seminars and workshops, representing the main themes of the UN ESD Strategy, as well as measures for the nature protection, university courses specialized in “Ecology”, “Social Ecology”, “Human Ecology”, “Industrial Ecology” and “Sustainable Development”.
21. In 2011 in the Eco-noospheric studies center of NAS RA was established a UNESCO Department dedicated to the ESD, aiming to facilitate the integration of education and research, training and retraining of specialists in the field of sustainable development, development of educational materials and various initiatives. Thus, with a view to ensure the further stages of the sustainable development of education in the Republic of Armenia the steps taken include the following priorities: universal and affordable quality of education, the establishment of the school as a platform for sustainable development, improving the quality of the specialist in sustainable development field.
22. In October 2013, the President of *the Republic of Azerbaijan* approved the National Strategy for the Development of the Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan, which defined the strategic direction and objectives for the development of education in accordance with the challenges of the XXI century. In compliance with the State strategy, the Ministry of Education has implemented a number of projects to identify talented children and young people with a view to ensure the further development of their scientific potential.
23. Over the past 20 years, due to the adequate policy of the Government, the number of the higher education institutions in the country has increased 3 times, and the number of the students reached 160 thousand. As a result, over the past years the number of students at the postgraduate level and doctoral degree, compared to the year 1990, increased by 64% and reached the amount of 2500 people. At the moment, in different universities and scientific organizations of the Republic work more than 33 thousand researchers, of whom 35% (11689) are doctors of philosophy and 2510 (7.2%) doctors of sciences.
24. In the framework of bilateral agreements and international projects (Tempus, ERASMUS+, etc.) the young scholars and researchers have the opportunity to conduct their studies and research in the prestigious foreign universities. One of the major projects of the education system has become a State Programme on study of youth in foreign countries in 2007-2015. The programme gives a chance to 3558 students to study in leading universities abroad, by getting a scholarship.
25. With the support of the European Commission, in Azerbaijan was developed a project «Nizami», aiming to harmonize the doctoral level in Azerbaijan with the requirements of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This project involves the Ministry of Education, the National Academy of Sciences, 9 local universities and 6 leading universities in Europe. The project will simplify the procedures for obtaining scientific degrees.

26. Azerbaijan is actively participating in the program «PROMITEJ», which is implemented in the Black Sea Region with the support the Council of Europe in the field of energy and climate change. Under this programme, the Republic of Azerbaijan represents the Research Institute "Geotechnological problems of oil, gas and chemistry" in Azerbaijan State University of Oil and Industry. Having started its activity in the year 2004, the Institute served as a leading participant in the regional project, entitled "Research and Energy policies in Caspian-Black Sea Region“, implemented together with the relevant organizations in Greece, Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine, Romania and Azerbaijan.
27. One of the priorities of the Government of *the Republic of Bulgaria* is investment in education since early childhood of the pupils, with the clear conscience that children’s development is an investment in the economy and welfare of the nation and that it is linked to the principles of sustainable development. In pursuance of the provisions of the Law on Vocational Education and Training and the planned measures and activities in the Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Bulgaria (2015-2020), the Ordinance on the terms and conditions for learning through work (dual training) has been issued. National Platform for Lifelong Learning 2020 has been created.
28. The Ministry of Education and Science has shown new commitment and direction of the development of scientific research in Bulgaria in the Draft National Strategy for the Promotion of Scientific Research 2016-2025. The document aims at supporting science in Bulgaria and making it a factor for the development of the economy, based on knowledge and innovation. The target group of the Strategy involves Universities and scientific organizations.
29. In the field of higher education: it is envisaged to develop a new effective mechanism of cooperation between the students and the employers. The aim is to integrate analyzes and forecasts of the needs of graduates produced in cooperation with the employers. In addition, the Universities will be encouraged through financial levers in partnership with the business to monitor and respond flexibly to the emergence and development of new professional niches in the labour markets in country and the other European countries.
30. In the field of science and innovation the National Reform Programme 2014-2020 policy is defined as a key area for improving the competitiveness of the Bulgarian economy and developing a potential for growth in the post-crisis period. An increase in public-private investment in research and development is envisaged up to 1.5% of the gross domestic product by 2020. The National Development Programme of Bulgaria 2020 is focused on: developing a high-performance industrial basis and modern innovative infrastructure; stimulating innovative activity and research; developing human resources for the needs of innovative enterprises; introducing an effective organization and management of research and innovation processes, covering all subjects of the national science and innovation system.
31. *Greece* has set as urgent political priorities to improve the framework and environment in order to enhance businesses competitiveness, as well as to address major societal challenges in the areas of health and environment. The General Secretariat for Research and Innovation has formulated and is currently implementing the “National Research

and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization – RIS3”, covering the period 2014-2020. RIS3 is inspired by a vision for Greece that gives priority to people and society, ensures high quality of life and low environmental footprint, and promotes cultural heritage and creativity.

32. The objective of RIS3 is the targeted productive reconstruction of the country having as drivers research, technological development and innovation. In this context, RIS3 has identified the following eight thematic priorities: Agrofood, Sciences, Health & Pharmaceuticals, Information and Communication Technologies, Energy, Environment, Sustainable Development & Climate Change, Transport and logistics, Materials – Construction, Culture - Tourism - Cultural & Creative Industries.
33. RIS3 activities provide also for capacity building, excellent Research and Innovation infrastructure and human research potential, as well as for creating an appropriate environment and framework conditions for innovation to flourish. International collaboration and participation of Greek players in international networks, teams and consortia is a horizontal element crossing the whole thematic spectrum of RIS3.
34. To that end, a number of bilateral cooperation schemes have been signed between the Hellenic Republic and certain BSEC Member States (some of which have been ratified by the Greek Parliament), as follows: Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement (Albania), Cultural and Scientific Cooperation Protocol (Armenia), Scientific and Technical Cooperation Agreement (Bulgaria), Agreement on Cooperation in the fields of Education, Science and Culture (Georgia), Agreement on Cooperation in the fields of Culture, Education and Science (Moldova), Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement (Romania), Financial and Industrial Cooperation Protocol (Russia), Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement (Turkey), Educational, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation Agreement (Ukraine).
35. Furthermore, the strengthening of relations between EU and the Black Sea countries in all fields, including science, technology and innovation (STI) issues constitutes a major priority for Greece. In this context, there is cooperation between Greek organizations (Research Centers, enterprises) in various projects within Horizon 2020 actions.
36. In *the Republic of Moldova* a National Economic and Social Development Strategy “Moldova 2020” was drafted in 2012, aiming to focus on eight sustainable development priorities, such as: “Eradication of poverty; Education; Economic growth; Green energy; Infrastructure; Justice, Health and welfare; Agriculture and rural development”. The way of defining the goals shows that the “Moldova 2020” Strategy is anchored to the SDG for the long run, as it comprises indicators, established for 2015 and 2020, that are intended to monitor the intermediate progress and, respectively the final progress.
37. Currently, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova, jointly with other central public authorities, is in course of integrating the SDG targets relevant for the Republic of Moldova in the national policy documents. The Ministry of Education is being part, for the second year in a row, of the UN initiative on the organisation, within educational institutions of all levels, of the Greatest Lesson in the world, which supports young generation to become aware of SDG importance.

38. In July 2016, by Government Decision no. 912 of 25, the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development was created as an advisory body on sustainable development, with no legal entity status, chaired by the Prime Minister and consisting of government members, representatives of the State Chancellery, academia and the NGO sector. The primary tasks of this Council are (1) ensuring the localisation process of SDG sites included in the 2030 Agenda; (2) coordination and monitoring of the process of SDG targets adaptation and implementation at national level; (3) coordinating the process of evaluation of efficiency, effectiveness and SDG localisation impact in the national policy documents; (4) collaboration with development partners to increase awareness of the SDG importance.
39. The Government of the Republic of Moldova, together with the development partners, committed to make concerted efforts in order to ensure a more inclusive and sustainable development. Consequently, several important events were organised to increase public information and awareness of SDG importance. The data ecosystem mapping in the country was carried out in the first quarter of the current year, and included the analysis of data availability and of institutional modernisation capacities needed for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. In August, the State Chancellery together with the UN Representative in Moldova and the Independent Analytical Centre EXPERT-GRUP proposed to initiate an extensive and inclusive consultation with central public authorities and other institutions, including civil society, on the identification of SDG relevant for Moldova, and the adjustment of the policy, institutional and statistical framework for the successful achievement of the 2030 Agenda.
40. **Romania** considers that the role of education in sustainable development should be explicit. Sustainable development principles and examples on how to adopt those principles in everyday life must be included in all levels of education, ensuring therefore that education enhances people's understanding on sustainable practices.
41. Working with the Education for Sustainable Area Development Group will challenge all those interested to join forces in redesigning the world based on the principles of people, planet, peace, prosperity and partnership. Romania accentuates the need for public, opened access to ESD resources in order to increase the awareness of civil society in the field of sustainable development through education and to engage the multi-stakeholder dialogue both across government departments and among external groups.
42. As a member of the European Union and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Region, Romania recognizes the need to ensure equitable access to education and quality learning for all throughout life, taking into consideration that education is also an effective tool that could be used in order to protect children against exploitation and could help meet the psychosocial needs of children in conflict-affected areas by restoring normality and hope for the future.
43. Science and Technology is a priority area of cooperation since its establishment of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). As a member state, Romania has appointed a representative from the National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation to the Working Group for Scientific and Technological Cooperation. Thus, besides the joint projects in which Romania takes part and which are financed through the financial

instrument of BSEC, known as the Project Development Fund, other regional cooperation programs in which Romania is member, are: The Danube Cooperation Process with the participation of 5 BSEC countries, The Program “Cross Border Cooperation – Black Sea Basin 2014 - 2020” with the participation of 10 BSEC countries, “Black Sea Horizon 2015-2018, The Permanent Secretariat of the Black Sea Universities Network and a large number of scientific projects, developed by partnership between the universities of the Black Sea Region (more than 120 Universities).

44. In *the Russian Federation*, the Intergovernmental Working Group under the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation is responsible for the issues related to the climate change and the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDG) into the national development strategies and priorities. Another task of the Working group is the creation of monitoring mechanisms on the basis of a system of indicators, developed by the UN Statistics Commission. The Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat) conducts the work on the development of a national system of analyzing the progress in the implementation of the SDG.
45. A wide range of measures have been implemented in the framework of the national programmes, laws, regulations and administrative procedures, aimed at the strengthening of the Russian contribution to the challenges of the climate change. Some of them are the Climate Doctrine of the Russian Federation, the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation on measures to improve the Energy and Environmental Efficiency of the Russian Economy, a Federal Law on Energy Conservation, Energy Strategy for the period up to 2030, the Decree of the President of Russia on the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, etc. In general, in the field of environmental development in the Russian Federation for the period up to the year 2030 have been adopted more than 60 federal laws and more than 180 regulations aimed at improving the environmental management system.
46. Russia is an active participant in the UNESCO initiatives aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of education. In addition, 189 Russian educational institutions have the status of UNESCO associated schools. Great attention is paid to the formation of a unified educational space. A key process in this direction is the creation of a Eurasian University Network (EUN) in April 2016, involving universities from Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia. The activities of the network, built on the use of innovative educational technologies, will be directed to the preparation of highly qualified personnel and development of academic mobility, as well as ensuring the harmonization of the qualifications and training standards. A pilot project will be a master's program of "Eurasian Studies". Russia is also seeking to develop bilateral agreements with partners from foreign countries in the sphere of education and science. Priority is given to the signing agreements on mutual recognition of diplomas of higher education. Such agreements are in force with the majority of the BSEC Member States.
47. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Field of Education in Russia is carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as the UNESCO Commission. Actively involved in advancing the SDGs are also socio-political organizations and movements, media, news agencies and business associations. In the Russian Federation have currently been developed (but not

approved as regulations) two documents in the field of the ESD: the National Strategy for ESD in the Russian Federation and the Action Plan for Formation and Development of ESD in the Russian Federation.

48. *The Republic of Turkey* states its Sustainable Development policies in its national Development Plans since 1992 Rio Summit. Currently the 10th Development Plan concentrates on sustainable development with the understanding of green growth and people oriented development. The plan gives special attention to international cooperation for development and includes economical, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in balance process.
49. The Ministry of Development, which coordinates planning and programming processes among public corporates, is also the main institution to be responsible for the sustainable development in Turkey. Since sustainable development requires multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approach, it has dimensions that affect duties and responsibilities of different actors and corporations. Another institution, the National Sustainable Development Council, was established in 2004 in order to have a strong cooperation among various corporations that work in the area of sustainable development. Also, Higher Planning Council and Economy Coordination Council play an important role in coordinating, tracking and evaluating the sustainable development.
50. Curricula and materials, used in the institutions liable to the Ministry of Education, are prepared in accordance with the rules specified in "The National Education Basic Law". Different projects have been launched in order to make the necessary changes and their adaptation to the SDGs. During the updates of curriculum used by the Ministry of Education, the aim is to ensure a qualified educational system that covers the needs and the development of all students by giving attention on basic skills, values and interdisciplinary approaches together with the basic educational view of the XXI century.
51. Another initiative, named the "MEB Quality Framework" project, aims at the development of corporate quality level in educational system and to gather and analyse the received data. With substructure, the target is to install sustainable quality management system. The goal is to score schools/institutions according to quality indexes and to measure Turkish educational system quality according to international standards, to explain the success and failure with data. There are ongoing projects regarding to that issue.
52. In scope of SDGs, Turkey considers that it is necessary to develop implementation tools to fight with global and regional difficulties. In this regard, the main priorities can be listed as the access of less developed and low profile countries to the markets, commerce, health, information technologies, infrastructure, capacity development programs and technology transfer. In addition to these tools, the most necessary thing is the international public finance since financial support is a must for the sustainable development of the less developed countries. In 2015, Turkey provided 3.9 billion US Dollars Official Development Assistance (ODA). During the 4th United Nations Less Developed Countries (LDC) Conference held in Istanbul in May 2011, the country has promised to offer 200 million US Dollar support to LDCs every year until 2020.

53. In *Ukraine*, the government policy in the field of education is based on the following principles: promoting sustainable development through forming competitive human capital and creating conditions for life-long learning, creating conditions for high-quality education, accessibility of higher education, independence of higher education from political, voluntary and religious organisations (except for religious educational establishment), international cooperation and the integration of the Ukrainian higher education system into the European Higher Education Area, improving social protection standards for persons employed in education and research.
54. An important landmark in the development of the education-related legal framework was the adoption in July 2014 of a revised Law on Higher Education, which ushered in a systemic reform of the Ukrainian higher education system. The main priorities of this law are: de-centralization of higher education and the introduction of self-governance for higher educational establishment; ensuring autonomy for universities and academic freedom for professors and students; creating an efficient quality control system for higher education in accordance with the standards and recommendations of the European Higher Education Area confirmed by Bucharest Communiqué of Ministers of Education of the Bologna Process participating countries; integration into the European Higher Education Area and academic mobility; developing scientific research at universities and using research results for higher education.
55. The new provisions of the Law have allowed to improve academic mobility, use the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and recognize foreign qualifications. A three-stage education system including Bachelor, Master and PhD levels has been introduced in order to provide a system suiting the labour market and compatible with a European format. Ukrainian universities have received broad academic freedoms that are traditional for European universities, such as the right to award degrees and to carry out independent procedures for recognizing foreign diplomas. For the first time, higher education institutions have been allowed to issue their own diplomas in accordance with a model decided upon by the academic Council of a university.
56. A new Draft Law on Education is now under consideration in the Verkhovna Rada. The main goal of the education reform is to improve the quality of education of the Ukrainian society. Education should provide a social elevator for every citizen regardless of his or her place of residence, social origin, state of health or material wealth. This means that the law should ensure the conditions of freedom of choice among different forms of education for a child, including family education, distance education and so on. The teacher will be in the focus of proposed legislative changes. The key issue for the reform is the teacher's social status and level of qualification. The bill provides for salary growth and career advancement for teachers on a principle "the higher level of skills and performance, the higher the pay."
57. In November 2015, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted a Law on Research and Development initiating a reform process in order to address the main challenges in this field such low Research&Development financing (0.5 % of GDP compared to 3-4 % in leading countries), low grant financing for priority research and the brain drain of young scientists from Ukraine. The Law will also help to focus on priority scientific fields, establish research centres at universities and enhance the competitiveness of Ukrainian universities in world rankings. Some of innovative research has already been successfully realised, including drones for the armed forces and a Nano-satellite

already in orbit and transmitting scientific information, both projects developed by the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

58. Sustainable development cannot be achieved by technological solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone. We need to change the way we think and act. This requires quality education and learning for sustainable development at all levels and in all social contexts. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is about enabling us to constructively and creatively address present and future global challenges and create more sustainable and resilient societies.
59. In a world of 7 billion people, with limited natural resources, individuals and societies have to learn to live together and take responsible actions based on the understanding that actions here and today can have implications for the lives and livelihoods of people in other parts of the world, as well as for future generations. Empowering learners to live responsible lives and to address complex global challenges means that education has to promote competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way. This calls for new approaches to learning, the development of vibrant green economies and societies, and the emergence of a “global citizenship”.
60. The BSEC Member States, acknowledges the need to consolidate, stimulate and strengthen the scientific communities as an essential element for sustainable growth and economic development. The role of researchers in addressing societal challenges towards a knowledge-based sustainable development of each country, and the region as a whole, is vital. Therefore, the performance of the local research personnel should be enhanced through intensive internationalization activities such as mobility schemes, participation in scientific events, promotion of international networking and participation in international projects.
61. The Assembly notes that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an opportunity and a responsibility that should engage both developed and developing countries in intensifying efforts for poverty eradication, reduction of inequalities, environmental protection and economic growth, with a view to promoting equitable, more sustainable economies and societies benefiting all countries. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals should fully take into consideration local, national, regional and global contexts, as well as the contribution of culture to sustainable development and the need for respecting peace, non-violence, cultural diversity, local and traditional knowledge and indigenous wisdom and practices, and universal principles such as human rights, gender equality, democracy, and social justice.