



Learning for Work, Citizenship and Sustainability

A UNESCO International Meeting of Technical
and Vocational Education and Training Experts

THE BONN DECLARATION

We, the participants in “Learning for Work, Citizenship and Sustainability”, a UNESCO meeting of international experts on technical and vocational education and training, are agreed that, since education is considered the key to effective development strategies, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) must be the master key that can alleviate poverty, promote peace, conserve the environment, improve the quality of life for all and help achieve sustainable development. Our conclusion was reached following deliberations among 122 technical experts from Member States, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and industry who met in Bonn, Germany, from 25 to 28 October 2004, on the threshold of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, to assess progress since the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in April 1999.

1. Following the deliberations at this meeting, and recalling:

- the recommendations of the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education (1999),
- the goals set out at the World Forum on Education (2000)
- the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (2000), and
- the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (2001) adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its 31st session,

the participants in this meeting of experts affirm that the appropriate development of TVET is central to the attainment of those agreed goals.

2. Recognizing that the vast majority of the worldwide labour force, including knowledge workers, require technical and vocational knowledge and skills throughout life, we affirm that skills development leading to age-appropriate TVET should be integral to education at all levels, and can no longer be regarded as optional or marginal. It is especially important to integrate skills development in Education for All (EFA) programmes and to satisfy TVET demand created by learners completing basic education.

3. Preparation for work should equip people with the knowledge, competencies, skills, values and attitudes to become productive and responsible citizens who appreciate the dignity of work and contribute to sustainable societies. We call on all stakeholders to adopt this broader perspective for TVET.
4. The development of TVET since the Seoul Congress clearly shows that there is enhanced recognition of this branch of education as a means to productive livelihoods and social cohesion. However, the UNESCO TVET Survey of 2004 has revealed that progress has been uneven. Renewed effort to modernize TVET and ensure its enhanced status and sustainability is necessary. Increased scope for TVET is recognized in 'sustainability industries' such as environmental conservation, cultural heritage site preservation and renewable energy production.
5. Accordingly, we invite the Director-General of UNESCO to urge Member States, the concerned agencies of the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders, both public and private, to build partnerships and to revitalize efforts to implement the recommendations that have not yet received sufficient attention or resources.
6. Given the scale of the task and the complexity of the conditions in which action must be taken, we ask that particular priority be given to TVET initiatives that alleviate poverty, promote equity, especially in relation to gender, arrest the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, support youth in crisis, support rural communities and people in excluded groups, encourage north-south and south-south cooperation and assist the development of countries in transition and those in and emerging from crisis and conflict. These TVET initiatives are pivotal to human-centred sustainable development.
7. As TVET experts, we call for approaches to development that harmonize economic prosperity, environmental conservation and social well-being. We therefore call for responses to globalization that humanize rather than marginalize, and for applications of information and communication technology that narrow the digital divide.
8. We commit ourselves, in each of our own countries and organizations, to taking the action necessary for quality skills development that leads to economically viable, environmentally sound and sustainable communities.

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**Section for Technical
and Vocational Education**

UNESCO

7, Place Fontenoy
75352 Paris - France
Telephone: (33.1) 45 68 09 60/08 34
Facsimile: (33.1) 45 68 55 45
e-mail: tve.section@unesco.org
Web Site: <http://www.unesco.org/education/>

UNESCO - UNEVOC

**International Centre for Technical and
Vocational Education and Training**

Görresstr. 15
53113 Bonn - Germany
Telephone : +49 (228) 2 43 37 11
Fax : +49 (228) 2 43 37 77
e-mail: info@unevoc.unesco.org
Web Site: <http://unevoc.unesco.org>



United Nations
Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization