



## RESOLUTION ON THE RIGHT TO TEACH: THE RIGHT TO LEARN

The Fourth World Congress of Education International (EI), held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, from 22 to 26 July 2004:

1. **Considers** that two fundamental rights, among others, pertain to human beings in any democratic society: the right to learn and the right to teach; but both these rights are a long way from being recognised everywhere in the world.
2. **Considers** that the right to learn is the right of all human beings – whether they are children or adults, and without any form of discrimination – to acquire knowledge and skills through the public education system in order to achieve personal development in an effective learning environment and become professionally and socially integrated in the society in which they live.
3. **Considers** that the right to teach is the right of all qualified teachers, recognised as such by public authorities, to benefit from adequate salaries and from a social status equivalent to their qualifications and to make use of any part of the international community's skills and knowledge, without any restrictions or limitations, in order to make all learners benefit from the political, economic, social and cultural heritage of humanity.
4. **Considers** that, in order to be effectively exercised, the right to learn and the right to teach presuppose a democratic environment, free access to knowledge, adequate scientific and pedagogical training for teachers and education personnel, as well as favourable living and working conditions for learners and teachers alike.
5. **Notes** that public authorities do not always allocate the human and financial resources required to ensure the effective exercise of the right to learn but, on the contrary, cut back on public investments, tend to implement policies which transfer responsibility outside the public education system, thus leading to the privatisation of certain areas of education, and, as regards the right to schooling and school fees, implement practices that make it difficult for young people from disadvantaged families to access education; in many countries these practices have become more frequent under the pressure of international organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank.
6. **Notes** that the right to teach comes up against ideological and cultural obstacles and is also hindered by material obstacles since teachers and education personnel are not given the basic pedagogical and professional resources needed to carry out their work adequately.

### Congress, furthermore,

7. **Recalls** its existing commitments to Education For All (EFA) and a wider access of young people to secondary education and vocational training, particularly in the case of girls, as well as its commitment to upholding the right of young people and adults to access higher education and technical training through the public education system within the framework of effective lifelong education policies.
8. **Finds** the World Bank's EFA Fast Track Initiative launched in 2002 to be a commendable idea, but that some of the conditionality clauses attached to it are unacceptable, such as decreasing the



salaries of teachers already employed and throw into question the collective bargaining principle enshrined in ILO Convention 98. These conditions lead to the erosion of the status of public education.

9. **Deplores** that the use of voluntary teachers who lack proper teacher training, social protection or career prospects on pay well below that of regular teachers, is considered by the World Bank as one way of cutting total wage bills and recruiting extra teaching staff.
10. **Recalls**, furthermore, that the contents of education should be universal in scope while integrating cultural diversity and should not be modified to reflect the dominant ideology and culture in each country, since this would create barriers to knowledge for youths and adults from minorities and would be conducive to misunderstandings in a globalised world where it is important to learn to live together.

### Congress:

11. **Asks** that at least 6% of their Gross National Product (GNP) be allocated to public education budgets, in conformity with the recommendations of the international community.
12. **Asks** the Executive Board to continue monitoring the status of the right to learn and the right to teach, deploying, for this purpose, the necessary means to identify the existing obstacles to the full exercise of these rights, as well as developing appropriate strategies to eliminate such obstacles in close cooperation with EI's affiliates.
13. **Asks** member organisations to lobby their governments so that they defend education for all and the means necessary for its implementation before the World Bank.
14. **Asks** the Executive Board to include these issues in the agendas of the regional or national conferences that will be held in the period between now and the next World Congress and to publish a report on the various debates and conclusions emerging from these meetings.
15. **Resolves** to continue regular consultations with the World Bank, while insisting on the need to promote Education For All by 2015, speed up reforms to public education systems aimed at improving their quality and making teaching a more attractive proposition, and thereby preserving a positive image for teachers with the general public.
16. **Decides** to continue with a critical analysis of the World Bank's policies and proposals, and to denounce them publicly in the event of disagreement.
17. **Reasserts** that the defense of the right to teach rests on the existence of free and independent trade unions in all countries to defend the material and moral interests of education personnel and public education.