RESOLUTION ON EDUCATION FOR ALL AND COMBATING ILLITERACY


Believes that:
1. Education is a human right as expressed in international conventions and recommendations, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Governments must take all necessary steps to guarantee that this right is given to everyone, and increasingly to adults who require educational support.
2. An important aspect of the right to education is literacy and basic education. To be literate is a pre-requisite for participation in today's world. Literacy makes it easier for individuals to fulfil their obligations as citizens in a democratic society and to fight for and demand their rights. Literacy makes it easier for the individual to find a job and to perform well in any endeavour.
3. A high literacy rate is a pre-requisite for democratic development and economic growth in each society. It is also of great importance for the empowerment of women in society.
4. Education is a crucial investment for a better future. It has been shown that education benefits all of society; the costs of education should therefore be borne collectively by the public sector and not by individuals. Economic analysis also shows that there is a high rate of return from education for a society that devotes a high degree of public expenditure to education.

Notes that:
5. In spite of the many measures taken as a result of the program adopted jointly by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and UNDP at the Jomtien Conference in 1990 on Education for All, 23% of the world's population is still illiterate.
6. The estimated world-wide literacy rate is still lower for women than for men (71% compared with 84%).
7. Illiteracy is higher among groups such as ethnic minorities, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, nomads, rural populations and populations in remote areas than in other groups within society.
8. Access to early childhood education will help the child to develop learning skills and will facilitate life-long learning.
9. There are still several countries in the world where more than 50% of the population is illiterate. Many of these countries are among the poorest countries in the world.
10. Illiteracy or inadequate levels of literacy are not only problems for developing countries. In a recent report from the OECD it is claimed that more than 20% of adults in some of the richest countries in the world are unable to read and write except at the most elementary level.
11. If the idea of life-long learning is to become a reality for all, one of the main pre-requisites is that people possess sufficient skills to take part in different types of education and training. If basic learning skills are acquired at an early age, this opens up new possibilities later on in life in relation to both education and employment.
12. The only long-term action that will eradicate illiteracy is the provision of high quality, free and compulsory education for all children. In addition, it must be recognised that, in many countries, large groups of adults have never been given the chance to learn, to read and write. For those who have not been offered the chance and/or have not been successful at education, there is a need to find emergency solutions and to give them a second chance. Adult education is critical in these circumstances.
13. Governments must increase their investments in education in order to guarantee education to all and to eradicate illiteracy. These investments must be directed towards both basic education and towards adult education. Further governments should establish timelines to ensure the implementation of these guarantees and mechanisms.

14. All teachers need to have training in a variety of methods for teaching literacy. Teachers who work with language education must be given high quality and in-depth initial teacher education as well as continuous training to up-grade their skills relating to the teaching of reading, writing, viewing, speaking and listening and to receive information about developments in this area.

15. Governments must ensure that appropriate resources are provided to all students, both children and adults; these include access to libraries or on-line services.

16. EI develop partnerships with or support NGOs, including trade unions, where they are working with adults in areas where Governments fail to accept responsibility. Where successful programs support literacy development in community or workplace settings, EI and/or its member organisations should advocate appropriate levels of government support to ensure both transitional arrangements as the NGO withdraws and sustainability in the context of public provision for adult education.

17. Governments have an important role to play in co-ordinating different educational activities. If there is no overview of the policies in different sectors of education, which in turn guides efforts in the right direction, there is a risk that these efforts will be wasted. It is essential that a coherent, comprehensive government policy exists which addresses all levels and sectors of education.

18. Governments have to take measures to improve the enrolment of girls in basic education, and to ensure that adult education plays an important role in providing women who received insufficient or no education during their childhood with the opportunity to improve their education. Research shows that where the literacy rates of women are increased, there is a direct correlation with the quality of healthcare in the community.

19. Governments can play a crucial role in remedying the fact that groups such as migrants, Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities have had fewer opportunities to receive education compared with other groups in society. It is important that these groups have the opportunity to determine the type of education they will receive in order to ensure that it is relevant to those concerned, and that education in their own language and related to their own culture is available.

20. Governments, intergovernmental organisations, research institutes and other organisations working in education have to ensure that knowledge about the process of literacy development is understood and implemented.

21. It has to be recognised that the most efficient way of promoting literacy is to improve enrolment in primary education and to achieve universal basic education for all children.

22. The growing adult education sector cannot depend, as in some countries, on voluntary workers alone; there is a growing number of teachers and employees in other positions working on a full-time basis in adult education. In order to guarantee the quality of adult education, it is important that these teachers and employees have the opportunity to develop professionally and that their working conditions are adequate. Teachers and employees in the adult education sector must receive the moral and material recognition appropriate to their level of qualification and responsibility. They must have salaries comparable with other professions requiring the same level of qualifications and responsibilities. They must have the right to be consulted and to participate in the process of formulating educational policies.

EI should:

23. **Co-operate** with UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and UNDP in seeking full implementation of the Education for All program, jointly adopted by those intergovernmental organisations.

24. **Promote** and **sponsor**, in collaboration with UNESCO, UNICEF and member organisations in the
concerned countries, both literacy courses for children, adults and disadvantaged groups, and the development and dissemination of teaching materials.

25. **Promote** and **sponsor** seminars in co-operation with UNESCO and the ILO, placing particular emphasis on equality of access to education for all; make representations with TUAC to the OECD for this purpose and put forward to the World Bank the positions taken by Education International in opposition to privatisation and deregulation.