JOINING TOGETHER TO BUILD A MORE EFFECTIVE UNION MOVEMENT

The 5th World Congress of Education International (EI), meeting in Berlin (Germany) from 22 to 26 July 2007,

Trade Union Context

1. **Considering** that trade union organisations, including education unions, are crucial to democratic development and social progress;

2. **Considering** that the strength of education unions and, therefore, the degree to which the organisation is representative, democratic in nature and independent from employers, government and political parties is determined by its members;

3. **Considering** that the action plans and policies of education unions should be determined by their own statutory bodies in accordance with democratic methods, without any external interference;

4. **Considering** that the fragmentation of the union movement, whether it occurs because of internal conflicts or external political interference, severely inhibits the effective expression of educators' collective interests;

5. **Considering** that decreased job security in the education sector, including in particular the employment of unqualified teachers, and the increase of private schools in many countries, is not conducive to participation in unions and undermines collective action;

6. **Considering and welcoming** the increased involvement in the education sector of parents' and students' organisations and other civil society organisations, such as NGOs, recognises the imperative of education unions working with these groups in pursuit of common interests;

Working Environment
7. **Stresses** that many teachers and education workers have to live and work in unsafe, inadequate and insecure conditions, and this hinders them from actively engaging in union activities;

8. **Denounces** that, despite international labour conventions, educators in some countries, are denied the right to join trade unions and/or face harassment, arbitrary detention, unfair working conditions, dismissals and sometimes death because of their union affiliation;

9. **Notes** that pressure exercised by governments and international agencies to privatise public education services represents an additional challenge for education unions, which continue to uphold the principle of a quality publicly-funded and regulated education system;

10. **Stresses** that when creating categories of employment and status among educators it is necessary to promote quality education and therefore categories should always require expected pedagogical competences and education for qualification and that benefits and advantages should be negotiated with representative trade unions. In general variety of professional educators as members makes unions strong and capable to advocate in demanding and developing environment;

11. **Emphasises** the importance of ensuring that unions function democratically and that membership in unions and access to positions of responsibility within the union are free from discrimination, whether on grounds of race, political opinion, religious belief, status, gender or sexual orientation,

12. **Emphasises** that unity of teachers unions at national level leads to greater impact and effectiveness and promotes the interests of the educators and the education system.

**Action**

13. **Declares** its continuing commitment to promoting free independent democratic representative unions in the education sector whose constitution and programmes are founded on adherence to the principles enshrined in the relevant ILO Conventions and Declarations;

14. **Declares** its continuing commitment to international trade union development cooperation as an integrated and core element of EI policy;

15. **Invites** EI to assisting member organisations to develop a constructive social dialogue with governments and other social partners for the development of quality public education for all and the return of value to our professions;
16. **Commits** EI to engaging in a constructive dialogue with non-governmental organisations, both at the national and international level, along the lines of the cooperation developed within the framework of the Global Campaign For Education in pursuit of the Education for All goals;

17. **Stresses** that a sustained effort is necessary to get the various unions in the education sector that may exist in different countries to work together, to enable educators to speak with one clear and strong voice;

**The 5th World Congress of EI, therefore,**

18. **Demands** that public authorities respect the right of educators and particularly support staff to form independent democratic trade unions, and to engage in free collective bargaining, or similar negotiation processes, with their employers;

19. **Mandates** the Executive Board to strengthen the organisation and effectiveness of the education union movement everywhere so as to promote respect for human and trade union rights and to advocate for the provision of quality public education worldwide;

20. **Mandates** the Executive Board to encourage systematically education unions to work together towards organisational unity at national and international levels, so that they can move forward in solidarity in pursuit of common objectives;

21. **Mandates** the Executive Board to be inclusive and represent all organisations of those working in education and to try to ensure that membership of unions is available to all education employees, including those engaged as “teachers” but not yet fully qualified, while advocating the provision of additional training courses for them;

22. **Mandates** the Executive Board to encourage all member organisations to become actively engaged in multi-lateral and bi-lateral (international) trade union development cooperation programs entailing both financial support and the exchange of education and trade union experience and expertise, and where possible and appropriate, to channel the EI support with regard to humanitarian assistance in emergency situations through recognized relief and organizations;

23. **Mandates** the Executive Board to develop further strategies and plans to promote and facilitate international trade union development cooperation. Such development cooperation should aim at accomplishing the goals set by the national education unions involved, and take into account the right to education for all, the professional interests of teachers and their terms and conditions of employment and the achievement of ILO core labour standards.