Dear Colleagues,

Teachers and education workers around the world are shocked by the tragic incidence of the collapse of two schools that collapsed in the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince within less than one week.

Education International expresses its deep sympathy with the families of the children and teachers who were killed or injured under the debris.

This immense tragedy took the lives of almost 90 innocent people and injured 150. EI notes with extreme concern that faulty construction is said to be the cause of the collapse in both cases.

Schools should be centres of safety and security, not fear and danger. It is the obligation of each government to ensure that school buildings fulfil sufficient safety standards and to enforce strict building codes.

EI appeals to the government and school authorities to immediately undertake a thorough investigation of the state of all schools in the capital and to close those schools that do not fulfil rigorous safety standards.

Such tragedies can and must be avoided in the future. It is in the interest of all to provide safe sanctuaries to the most vulnerable within society, the children.

If EI can be of any help in supporting affected students, teachers and their families please do not hesitate to contact us.

In solidarity,

Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary

Confédération Nationale des Éducateurs d’Haïti, CNEH
M. Jean LAVAUD FREDERICK, Secrétaire général
M. René JOLIBOIS, Secrétaire général adjoint
12, Rue Lota Jérémie, Bas Peu de Chose
Port-au-Prince
Haiti

Brussels, 18 November 2008