New EI President Thulas Nxesi elected by acclamation

Thulas Nxesi replaces Dr Mary Futrell who completed three terms as EI President. Thulas, a former teacher and a politically active student leader in university, has been the General Secretary of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), the largest public service union in South Africa since 1994.

“As President of EI, my task is to articulate and promote the positions and policies of the organization,” said Thulas. Thulas, also known as a tireless fighter for the cause of quality public Education for All, will continue to strengthen teacher unionism globally. He also plans to advocate for quality public education in partnership with parents, communities, leaders, education departments and civil society to reverse the disastrous policies of budget cuts and privatisation around the world. “We have to mobilise these stakeholders to take the debate to governments and international agencies,” he said. The eradication of HIV/AIDS is also a battle to be won, in his view.

Outgoing EI President Mary Futrell will stay on the Executive for the next three years. Fred van Leeuwen (right) was re-elected as EI General Secretary.

Sylvia Borren, Oxfam International, Director of NOVIB, the Dutch Oxfam expressed deep concern over the hundreds of millions of children who receive no education and who are often in dangerous jobs – sometimes in forms of modern slavery including the sex industry. She stressed the importance of collaborative efforts of EI and Oxfam to fight for a just world without poverty.

Public Services International (PSI) General Secretary Hans Engelberts praised the collaborative efforts of EI and PSI on issues related to the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services. “We must keep the pressure on,” he stressed.

Announcements
Saturday night is North American-Caribbean Night hosted by the EI member organizations in Canada, United States and in the Caribbean.

Meet you at the Grêmio Nautico Uniao in Porto Alegre

Break-out sessions on sub-themes
On Friday afternoon, delegates were invited to attend break-out sessions dealing with the three sub-themes:
- Education, Public Service or Commodity
- The right to teach, the right to learn
- Recruitment and retention of qualified teachers

Panelists included senior representatives of the World Bank, UNESCO and ADEA as well as trade union activists.