EI Progress Report: A tale of challenges, opportunities and realities in a very “difficult international political context”

EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen presented the EI progress report since the last Congress in 2001, held just a few months before the world was transformed by 9/11 events. He pondered on the challenges and realities faced by countries around the world. “Grinding poverty, the ravages of HIV/AIDS and civil conflicts are all taking an awful human toll,” he said. He also highlighted the common thread among countries in which international economic order is hostile to governments spending money on basic social services – including education. “Many government feel they can reduce their role in education and make more room for the market,” he said to the 1,500 EI Congress delegates and observers. The General Secretary also stressed the importance to achieve Education for All by 2015: “How can we think of winning the war on terrorism without making available the resources needed for the fight to end illiteracy and poverty.” He also referenced to a number of critical issues faced by teachers which undermine quality public education: WTO/GATS, OECD’s policy and research projects, teacher working conditions, ending discrimination in education, promotion of democracy, sustainable development and solidarity. “We cannot allow democracy and human rights to become victims of the war on terror” as he made reference to governments arresting and detaining people without charge or trial.” He also stressed the importance of the role of teacher unions in promoting and protecting democratic values in schools and society. His full speech will be posted on the EI Web site.

Congress highlights

The lunch meeting focused on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education sector. Panelists included senior representatives from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), teacher leaders from Rwanda and Zimbabwe as well as EI representatives.

Key resolutions adopted on:

- Djibouti
- Columbia
- Vocational Education
- Headmasters/mistresses
- Death Penalty
- EI Resolutions
- Collective Bargaining
- Education for Peace

Guest speakers

Jim Baker, Director Bureau for Worker’s Activities, ILO/ACTRAV
Chuck Gollmar, Team Leader School Health, World Health Organization (WHO)
Koichiro Matsuura, Director General of UNESCO

100,000 Teachers' Exercise Books for HIV Prevention

As part of its HIV/AIDS Prevention Programme conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Education Development Center (EDC), Education International will soon be distributing 100,000 exercise books on HIV/AIDS prevention to teachers on the ground. As part of a sign of appreciation for her leadership, EI, WHO, CDC, EDC presented the first copy of the exercise book to Dr Mary Futrell. Seen here are WHO representative Chuck Gollmar (left), Dr Mary Futrell and General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen.