RESOLUTION ON CHILD LABOUR


1. **Recalls**
   - the UN Declaration on Human Rights which states that everyone should have the right to free, compulsory education for at least the elementary and fundamental stages;
   - the Convention on the Rights of the Child (for the purposes of the Convention, a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier) which establishes the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development;
   - ILO Convention 138 and Recommendation 146 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment which states that the minimum age of employment should be no less than the age for completing compulsory schooling and in no event less than the age of 15;

2. **Endorses the remarks of the Director General of the ILO:**
   “Childhood is a period of life which should be devoted not to work, but to education and training; child labour by its very nature and the working conditions in which it is carried out, often compromises children's potential to become productive and useful adults in society; finally, the use of child labour is not inevitable, and progress towards its elimination is possible wherever there is political will to oppose it with determination”;

3. **Observes** that despite the growing awareness of this scandalous form of exploitation of the most vulnerable within our society, child labour continues to exist in many forms, including bonded labour; it is more and more common in developing countries and this is as a consequence of their economic situation. Today it even touches the most marginalised groups in industrialised countries;

4. **Condemns** governments that fail to legislate comprehensively or act decisively against child labour and employers who exploit children to increase profits;

5. **Welcomes** the increasing action being taken on child labour by the ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO, the ICFTU and ITTs associated with the ICFTU, and is committed to working in partnership with them;

6. **Salutes** the work against child labour already being done by many EI affiliates;

7. **Acknowledges** the overwhelming evidence - including from the recent country case studies undertaken by ILO-IPEC and EI - that education is one of the most significant factors in the prevention of child labour and the withdrawal of children from work;

8. **Recognises** that eliminating child labour and improving the quality of education are interlinked - the first will not happen without the second - and that teachers, educators and their organisations have a critical and particular contribution to make to the elimination of child labour as do politicians, government officials, employers and the international financial institutions.

The Congress determines that Education International shall:

9. **Establish** as a top priority, for the years 1998-2001, a comprehensive campaign against child labour which is designed to encourage the active participation of all affiliates, to produce measurable results to be reported to the Third EI World Congress and which aims to:
• prevent any more children becoming child labourers;
• withdraw those currently working and provide them with effective, quality education;
• as a transitional measure, for a defined period, for older children, and only if it is impossible to withdraw the child from labour, offering the child access to education and the opportunity to attend regular education partly during working time.

10. Congress **underlines** that the elimination of child labour in a number of regions requires substantial strengthening of development funds. EI therefore invites all member organisations to lobby their respective governments to devote as quickly as possible at least 0.7% of their GNP to development assistance and an appreciably higher amount of such assistance should be dedicated to the development and improvement of public primary education.

11. **Focus** the campaign on six strategic areas:
• opposition to economic and social policies that cause child labour;
• comprehensive legislation and effective enforcement;
• mainstreaming child labour concerns into national education policies;
• comprehensive government education policy and the resources to provide for good quality, universal and free early childhood services and compulsory primary and secondary schooling, and encompassing transitional and special education services, as well as vocational and higher education;
• improved training, status and working conditions for teachers and support staff;
• income support for families and employment opportunities for parents.

The Congress calls on member organisations to:

12. **Adopt** specific policies and a programme of action on child labour;
13. **Co-operate** with Education International and through it with the ICFTU, ILO, UNICEF and UNESCO, and with other trade unions, union centres and non-governmental organisations, at the national level to eliminate child labour nationally, regionally and internationally;
14. **Approach** and urge all governments to ratify the international treaties concerning child labour and ILO Convention 138 specifying the minimum age for employment;
15. **Disseminate** the facts of child labour to union members and the general public to enhance their awareness and arouse public opinion against child labour;
16. **Campaign** for adequate resources to allow for an expansion of public education, including quality early childhood services, schools, transitional and special education and vocational training to ensure access to education for all;
17. **Develop** age appropriate curriculum materials to be used in schools in both industrialised and developing countries that address the issues of child labour for students who are in danger of becoming child labourers and for those who are consumers of products made by child labour. The EI/IPEC and EI/FIET materials on child labour can be used as a basis for such curriculum materials;
18. **Promote** quality teacher training and in-service development to enable teachers to meet the diverse and special needs of children, particularly the most disadvantaged, those at highest risk of becoming child labourers and those who have been child labourers;
19. **Encourage** school systems to become child labour monitors by helping to survey the extent of non-attendance at school and its relationship to the spread of child labour; and to use that information to work with parents and local communities so that they understand the value of education and the costs of child labour, and are encouraged to participate with the local early childhood services and schools in decisions about the education of their children;
20. **Consider** extending union membership to paid educators working in the non-formal sector in recognition of the need to include transitional education as an integral part of the education system and in recognition that those working in the formal and non-formal sectors have common goals and much to learn from each other;
21. **Lobby** with other unions and non-governmental organisations for integrated programmes for poor families whose children are, or are at risk of, becoming, child labourers, including health services, meals for children attending an early childhood centre or school, adult education, vocational training and employment programmes, and family income support.

22. **Ensure** that EI member organisations build up regional networks for information exchange, discuss the issue of child labour periodically and take concerted action to eliminate it.