RESOLUTION ON THE FEMINISED NATURE OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION


1. Whereas EI recognises the vital importance of all levels of education from early childhood through primary, secondary, technical and higher education, to the physical, social and cognitive development of children and youth;
2. Recognising the excellence of the work done by women in the caring professions of education and healthcare;
3. Noting that the work done by women in all spheres, including in education, has traditionally been undervalued;
4. Confirming that women have traditionally been the majority of teachers in the early stages of education, and that research and statistical data continue to demonstrate this fact in most regions of the world, regardless of national income or the income of teachers;
5. Noting that data on primary education confirm world-wide trends that show the increasing feminisation of this largest segment of the teaching profession, across regions and income levels;
6. Noting that the proportion of women teaching in technical and vocational schools is also increasing according to ILO and UNESCO data;
7. Concerned however that technical and vocational education tends to be very compartmentalised, with a large percentage of women teachers concentrated in so-called “feminine” disciplines;
8. Noting also that despite the steady rise in numbers of women academic staff in higher education institutions, their distribution in the career hierarchy remains very unbalanced while the higher-paid, more secure and prestigious positions of professor and associate professor, which provide the springboard to management positions, remain largely the preserve of men;
9. Further noting that women in higher education are concentrated in the lower-paid, less secure jobs of lecturer, (often part-time) and assistant professor;
10. Noting that in contrast to the increasing percentage of positions held by women in the education sector, the proportion of women in higher-level, central and regional positions, managing primary and secondary education or higher education institutions (ministry officials, chief education officers, inspectors and others) is very low;
11. Noting research that has revealed that internal promotion structures discriminate against women directly or indirectly because of subtle but powerful perceptions that women as potential managers may lack authority, may be challenged by disciplinary problems of students or teachers, or by parental or public pressures that prejudice the evaluation of women candidates;
12. Taking into account all of the above factors and the concerns expressed that many children grow up in families without positive male role models and in schools where they rarely see men working in partnership with women as classroom teachers, or equal numbers of women in administrative positions, it is necessary to analyse the consequences on the learning of both girls and boys, particularly in areas of socialisation such as social stereotyping, gender prejudice and career choice;
13. Concerned that employing authorities do not deal adequately with these matters and that little research is being done into these issues;
14. Congress calls upon EI and its member organisations to:

**Initiate strategies to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women working in education through:**

- **considering** the impact on women teachers of all aspects of education and union policies;
- **working** to eradicate inequity where conditions and/or salary parity is denied to women, or denied to both men and women, as may be the case in the female-intensive primary and early childhood sectors;
- **promoting** the inclusion of women on hiring and promotion panels;
- **documenting** the impact on women teachers of discriminatory rules concerning retirement pensions; e.g. the age at which they are eligible to retire with full benefits as a result of having different career paths from men teachers;
- **undertaking** studies with the WHO and other appropriate intergovernmental agencies to establish the correlation between stress-related illnesses reported by women teachers and increasing incidence of breast cancer.

**Undertake or promote research to:**

- **identify** the factors in recruitment, teacher education, conditions of work, or status of teaching as a career that fail to encourage more men to enter and remain in the teaching service;
- **develop** policies that will encourage a better balance of men and women at all levels of education;
- **co-operate** with the ILO on the factors influencing the decline in the status of teachers, a trend in an increasing number of countries. This brief should include consideration of the nature of the relationship, if any, between the increasing feminisation of the teaching profession and the decline in both salaries and status;
- **develop** dynamic indicators, disaggregated by level of education and position of responsibility, to measure the degree of increase in the numbers of women working in the profession as a guide for future policy and action;
- **work** with the ILO and other appropriate intergovernmental agencies to establish the stress-related illnesses reported by women and men in the education sector to assist with policy development related to conditions of service;
- **analyse** what implications there are, if any, on students as a result of the increasing feminisation of the profession; the advantages and disadvantages detailed from this research should form the basis of discussion and action for the EI Status of Women’s Committee and the Executive Board.