RESOLUTION ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING


Believes that:

1. All young people must have the opportunity to receive education and career development through the pursuit of studies up to the highest level.
2. Vocational education and training must be recognised as a part of the educational system, with equal importance and status to general and technological programmes within secondary and/or tertiary education.
3. Vocational education and training play a key role in the struggle for equality of opportunity, in remediying school failure and in contributing to cultural, economic and social development. It also allows for individual development to the highest qualification levels.
4. The role of initial vocational education and training pathways in education policy must be emphasised as an instrument in the diversification of the educational system, the democratisation of access to qualifications, and in the struggle for equal opportunities.
5. Girls and boys should benefit from the same opportunities with regard to access to vocational education and training and to recognised qualifications. Girls and boys should be encouraged to make non-traditional choices.

Notes that:

6. Vocational education and training can be defined as different kinds of training and education preparing for a specific occupation, and perhaps for related occupations in a given professional sector.
7. The organisational framework of vocational education and training in different countries is extremely diverse. In some countries, it is regarded as post-secondary education and in others as secondary education. Vocational education and training is an integrated part of secondary education in some countries and a separate part of the educational system in others. In some countries, it is based on apprenticeship programmes and in others it is mainly institution-based. Increasingly, vocational education and training is embedded in all sectors of education and provides the basis for life-long learning.
8. There is a need to develop systems of vocational education and training, including entry-level training, in-service training and continuous development or life-long learning. These developments need to build on the national traditions in each country, on the present structure of the education system, and must include negotiations between the social partners.
9. During recent years, dynamic advances in new technologies have taken place. As a result, problem-solving abilities, higher-order thinking skills, ability to collect and analyse information, planning and organisational skills, ability to work with others and in a team, communication skills, practical use of mathematics, technology and science, have been regarded as critical for workers in the modern workplace. Thus, initial vocational education and training acquired by workers though the education system must be recognised even if there are changes in the organisation of work. Initial forms of training of a professional nature must provide a coherent and balanced approach covering theory and practice, and technological and general training. Such training must be offered at all levels and be aimed at developing skills directed toward the future to cope with diverse and unpredictable situations. They should be offered at all qualification levels, depending on the ability and motivation of young people and on economic and social requirements.
10. Public education systems have developed training schemes on the basis of accepted professional or technological practice. The entire range of training pathways, whether they are general, technological or professional, must be more closely linked, notably through the establishment of bridges, in order to constitute an educational system which offers students a variety of diversified options enabling them to reach the highest possible level of training and qualifications, appropriate to their abilities and the choices they have made, without replacing any guidance services.

11. Vocational education and training not only has the purpose of preparing young people for employment. Like other types of education, it has also to help prepare young people for life as citizens, through their political, cultural and private lives. This requires programmes to support young people to develop democratic values along with an environmental awareness and an understanding of multi-cultural traditions that must not serve as a pretext to justify the inequality of rights and policies of ghettoisation and discrimination. These aspects are also important for development in working life.

12. General trends and cultural and professional requirements indicate that it is the totality of disciplines and types of teaching (general, technological and vocational) which determine the quality of education and training of young people. It is in this way that vocational training must be seen as a means of access to culture.

13. Unemployment and the process of exclusion, to which an increasing number of young people including graduates are subjected, lead us to query corporate strategies and the free-market economic policy in force in most countries.

14. Vocational education and training must enable all young people to obtain a recognised qualification, which will provide genuine opportunities in the world of work. There is a need to take measures to guarantee the quality of diplomas given in vocational education and training. This recognition is a matter for national education authorities as well as for international bodies dealing with education.

15. A quality vocational education and training system is a good investment: States must invest in young people's qualifications and do everything possible to create real, guaranteed, full-time, and appropriately paid employment.

16. In each country, initial vocational education and training should be offered free of charge to young people, within the framework of public education and training. Private and public sector employers should recognise their financial and other responsibilities towards the vocational education and training system, and should contribute to training courses in accordance with various procedures leading to a coherent global training scheme. Unions must be encouraged to promote and negotiate rights to educational and training opportunities for their members. The public service must maintain control of the conception and organisation of education and vocational training schemes in general.

17. Those bodies with responsibility for the policy, planning and implementation of vocational education and training must organise dialogue on the development of courses and qualifications between teachers, employers and employees. Teachers must play a leading role in developing the content of initial vocational education training programmes.

18. Teachers in vocational education and training as well as teachers in other areas need teacher education.

19. Unfortunately, there are still many countries which do not have specific education for vocational teachers while, among those countries who offer such an education, there are shortcomings such as a shortage of places available in the courses and/or low standard of education.

20. States must guarantee for all citizens the right to initial and continuing vocational education and training.

21. Sufficient resources must be allocated to vocational education and training. Public bodies must
invest in the initial vocational education and training of young people and must determine ways in which this can be developed. Private sector companies and enterprises must also be prepared to meet relevant parts of the costs related to vocational education and training.

22. There is an urgent need to develop new partnerships among teachers, governments and employers, in order to improve vocational education and training. Employers, trade unions in general, and teachers' unions in particular, have a legitimate interest in being involved in the establishment and running of vocational education and training. Such co-operation between public institutions and the world of work must be encouraged in accordance with established procedures, depending on the system and with respect for the principles and the mission of public education.

23. Private enterprises have an important role to play in the financing and in the development of the content of vocational education and training. Enterprises have to be prepared to provide apprenticeships to young students in public initial vocational training programs and to pay some of the costs related to relevant training. This is both relevant to initial vocational education and training and, to a large degree, to in-service training. There should be a possibility for individuals to obtain not only the training considered appropriate by the employer, but also training corresponding to individual needs and wishes. For this reason, there must be a right for employees to receive study leave.

24. In order to meet the major needs related to the demand for vocational education and training, diversification and some flexibility in programs, facilities and staff may be desirable, but this must not mean that governments can escape their responsibility. Governments have an important role to play in co-ordinating different education and training activities. If there is no overview of policies in different sectors of education, there is a risk that these efforts will be wasted. It is essential to develop a coherent, comprehensive government policy that addresses all levels and sectors of education.

25. Within the context of vocational education and training, the important roles of the trade union movement in general and teacher unions in particular have to be recognised. The trade union movement has a legitimate interest in being part of the development of the education and training of future workers and in protecting the right of workers to receive continuous training. Teachers and their unions must play an essential role in defining vocational education and training programs and qualifications, in conjunction with other parties concerned. Teacher unions should therefore be recognised as a social partner when vocational education and training is to be discussed and developed.

26. High quality initial vocational education and training should be established, within all education systems, which provides for the mutual recognition of qualifications between countries. All students and workers should have access to these qualifications.

27. The importance of high quality initial and continuous education for vocational teachers must be emphasised.

28. In order to maintain a strong link between vocational education and training and working life, vocational schools need a large number of teachers with experience of working life. This requires comparative salary rates for teachers and the organisation of teacher education in such a way as to attract people with industry experience.

29. Teachers in vocational education and training should be given the same conditions and guarantees of status, remuneration and service as other teachers.

EI should:

30. Promote the ideas and recommendations expressed in this resolution in contact and discussions with ILO and UNESCO and other relevant intergovernmental organisations. It should make representations to the World Bank and the OECD in support of these demands.

31. Work with the ILO to develop an ILO Convention on vocational education and training.

32. Continue to follow the developments within vocational education and training and elaborate this policy area, including:
• encouraging the development of networking between EI affiliates
• further development of the EI database comparing vocational education and training systems in member countries, as well as publishing and reporting on major issues affecting reforms in vocational education and training

33. Organise a conference on vocational education and training in 2000 to explore professional, industrial and funding issues of common concern to EI affiliates.

34. Ensure that the experiences of EI affiliates with quality vocational education systems are shared and that these experiences are used to assist in developing quality vocational education and training systems in those countries where no such systems currently exist.

35. Encourage EI affiliates to promote partnerships between vocational teachers and their unions, government, industry and trade unions in the development and implementation of education reforms in the vocational education and training sector.

36. Promote vocational education and training as major industrial rights and bargaining issues for education and non-education trade unions and their members.