RESOLUTION ON THE WORLD ECONOMY AND EDUCATION


1. **Notes** that the economy is caught up in the process of globalisation at the level of the sites of production and of the markets. This is accompanied by aggressiveness on the part of the business world and Governments have either been co-opted or become “laissez faire” in their approach. Relocations of enterprises that arise from this process often dramatically disrupt the labour market and the situation of workers;

2. **Notes** that these relocations are increasingly accompanied by a reduction of social guarantees for workers and their families. Government policies of fiscal exemption for these enterprises reduce the revenue of the governments that are responsible for the provision of basic social services;

3. **Notes** that this globalisation is based on neo liberal economic principles that aim to reduce to a minimum the role of government and the public sector, particularly in the fields of education and health. They promote values of excessive competition between individuals in which the immediate profit of a few becomes the rule, while the general well being of the majority becomes the exception;

4. **Notes** that governments that have adopted the neo-liberal model with highly internationalised economies wish to obtain a suspension of all customs tariffs to enable them to gain access to every market along with total freedom to invest in every country and in every sector, including the sectors that were traditionally the preserve of the public services. The consequence is a significant increase in privatisation, including within the education sector;

5. **Notes** that this globalisation of the economy is generally accompanied by a profound transformation of the nature and content of employment. While transnational corporations locate low-skill work with cheap labour in poorer countries, in the OECD countries and in those which have undergone spectacular development during the last few years, the economy is increasingly more sophisticated. The use of new technology, that is constantly being updated, is leading to a demand for new forms of general and professional training for young people if they want to enter this labour market without too many difficulties.

The Second World Congress of Education International:

6. **Considers** that the economy has interests and education has objectives which should be reconciled: the economy needs human resources that are increasingly better trained to meet the challenges of global economic competition, while education needs financial resources provided by economic growth through equitable systems of taxation. Such convergence would benefit education if the economy were to move away from the finance-driven logic of the marketplace focused on the search for ways of reducing the cost of work, on privatisation and on deregulation.

7. **Considers** that education also has the role of training human beings and citizens capable of participating in societies that are becoming increasingly complex and multicultural and of keeping alive the ideals of democracy, social justice, solidarity and peace. Education should therefore not be subjected to the interests of the economy alone;

8. **Considers** that the working environment must create favourable and learning conditions. In turn this will encourage positive attitudes from families, their children and society in general, to the role and importance of education. Employees who are happy and well-balanced in their everyday life are more likely to encourage behaviour of the same kind in their children in relation to education.
The Second World Congress of Education International:

9. **Recommends** to the Executive Board and to the Secretariat that they remain alert to changes in the globalisation of the economy and its consequences for employment in general. This is important for the future of young people. The link between the education sector and the economy drives changes in the nature and content of employment and the courses offered to young people. To protect a balance of general and vocational education it is important to influence to the greatest degree possible the policies of intergovernmental institutions like the World Bank, the OECD. It is also important to have the ILO play its role to the fullest extent.

10. **Recommends** that the Executive Board initiate an in-depth debate on scientific rationality and the new models of economic rationality. The debate on the building of knowledge, an issue which lies at the heart of teachers’ work, is vital for educators’ trade unions;

11. **Recommends** that the Executive Board develop education and research projects to stimulate debate on the unidirectional model, leading to social exclusion, which underlies the globalisation project currently underway and which ignores and destroys biological and cultural diversity.

12. **Recommends** that the Executive Board promote, through trade unions in different parts of the world, a new approach to the processes of regional integration. We must develop new approaches and strategies for Mercosur, NAFTA, the European Union, the Central American Market, the Organisation of African Unity and the various regional organisations in Asia.

13. **Recommends** to the Executive Board that, in order to protect and enhance free and universal public education and workers’ rights, EI should monitor the impact on education of the Free Trade of the Americas Agreement (FTAA) and the agenda of the Asian-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) and support affiliates to intervene in order influence these organisations.

14. **Recommends** that the Executive Board, in liaison with the ICFTU and the TUAC, focus attention on the negotiations currently taking place on the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI) within the framework of the OECD. The MAI has already been discussed within the framework of the World Trade Organisation. It seeks absolute freedom for foreign investments in every sector of the economy, including education, health and culture, which re-opens the questions of social, educational and cultural policies of States, and thus poses a potential threat to public education. Corporate influence or control of education is anti-democratic and national governments must retain sovereign rights concerning the provision of public education. Until there are guarantees concerning labour and environmental standards and exceptions for public education, health, public services and culture, EI will continue to oppose this agreement and urge member organisations to participate in the global campaign of opposition.

15. **Recommends** that the Executive Board oppose, through strategically planned actions, WTO’s plans which result in increased poverty, concentrate wealth in the hands of a minority, and prevent the emergence of genuine programs for health, education and scientific and technological development, geared to creating a more responsible and caring world.

16. **Recommends** that the Executive Board promote the creation of negotiating bodies in each country to enable trade unions to discuss the new framework which all these changes as a whole imply for working conditions and education.

17. **Recommends** to the Executive Board and to member organisations that they engage in constructive negotiations and/or partnerships at the international and national level with groups concerned with education and economic issues, in order to influence the nature of education reforms so that they result in education systems that meet the new needs of individuals in societies that are undergoing profound change;

18. **Recommends** that member organisations, in liaison with the trade union centres/confederations of their respective countries, study the equity of national policies of taxation, and propose appropriate changes where necessary to these policies in order to obtain, as a first step, a minimal allocation of 6% of the Gross National Product (GNP) to education. A tax on global financial transactions should contribute to the target of at least 6 per cent of GNP allocated to education. The EI Secretariat should be kept informed of initiatives that have been taken in this area.