EDUCATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

The Third World Congress of Education International, meeting in Jomtien, Thailand, from 25 to 29 July, 2001:

1. **Considers** that the use of new information and communication technologies (ICT) in education and training will develop further, as is already the case in most other professional sectors;

2. **Considers** that their use may create opportunities for more widespread and diversified access to knowledge, but will pose at the same time major challenges for education personnel and their unions. ICT must be the means of improving education and strengthening union rights by facilitating access to information, and democracy;

3. **Notes** that currently, the use of new information and communication technologies (ICT) in traditional systems of education and training, or outside these systems, generates inequality in terms of access, not only between industrialised and developing countries, but also between the privileged and the disadvantaged in all countries;

4. **Stresses** that it is in the nature of the trade union movement to take these challenges into consideration and to define appropriate strategies so that new information and communication technologies (ICT) become an instrument of democratisation providing access to “quality public education for all”. Teachers must keep the key role in the learning process which will consist in knowledge and education for citizenship. This new learning needs a development of research in education to explore and analyse the different pedagogical ways of using ICT. Teachers must be associated with this research so they can take advantage of its results;

5. **Stresses** that the virtual marketing and export of education, particularly at the level of higher education, has resulted in the opening of a huge market to ambitious investors taking advantage of the current political and economic environment;

6. **Stresses** that the huge financial stakes inherent in the commercialisation of knowledge pose a problem of intellectual property rights and of the qualitative design, production and dissemination of software, along with the risk of the existence of e-learning monopolies to the detriment of the cultural diversity, conservation of ethnic identity, values and history of our societies;

7. **Stresses** that the increasingly substantial and diversified supply of courses on the Internet raises the question of their quality and of the accreditation of diplomas obtained by those who follow these courses;

8. **Stresses** that effective digital learning will require more teachers with higher skills than ever before with subsequent implications for the provision of training and support;

9. **Stresses** that public education must play its part to give teachers professional tools (producing and circulating software) inspired by true educational and pedagogical choices.

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10. **Demands** that all teachers and education personnel receive adequate training in the use of new information and communication technologies (ICT) and that gradually all schools be connected to the Internet free of charge, with the necessary access restrictions and security protocols (filters, firewall, etc.) to guarantee strictly pedagogical usage. The collective dimension through ICT and the role of team work of teachers must be taken in account in this training;

11. **Mandates the Executive Board** to carry on the necessary discussions with UNESCO, other relevant bodies, the OECD and governments to ensure that the design, production and dissemination of education software will be organised appropriately to guarantee the cultural diversity, conservation of ethnic identity, values and history required for international understanding;
12. **Mandates the Executive Board** to carry on the necessary discussions with UNESCO, other relevant bodies, the OECD and governments so that education will not be considered as a commodity, and intergovernmental cultural agreements and principles of UNESCO will prevail over the commercial rules of WTO in the exchanges of education services;

13. **Mandates the Executive Board** to vigorously advocate the provisions and use of learning software and to pursue means of providing software at prices affordable to developing countries, and to encourage a better distribution of knowledge to all;

14. **Mandates the Executive Board** to defend the interests of education personnel with respect to working conditions, career opportunities and intellectual property rights and to develop codes of good practice on these and related issues;

15. **Mandates the Executive Board** to take the necessary action to determine the impact of technology, in particular the potential hazards to children’s health and safety but also its effects on young children’s learning environment;

16. **Mandates EI and member organisations** to support national and international research into the educational, social and economic impacts of technological developments affecting education and the working conditions of teachers;

17. **Mandates the Executive Board** to undertake the necessary action so that public authorities can take advantage of the technological revolution to guarantee the fair distribution of information and knowledge, and to carry on the necessary consciousness-raising activities with civil society organisations on the great opportunities presented by this revolution but also on the challenges it poses to “quality public education for all” in the Third Millenium.