Press Release
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Education International, 4th World Congress
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KOFI ANNAN: Education is a Human Right

In his message to Education International on the occasion of its 4th World Congress in Porto Alegre, Brazil (see below), United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan reiterated that education is a human right.

"More than half a century ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established that everyone has the right to education," he stated. "The fact that millions are still deprived of it should fill us all with shame."

Mr Annan sent his greetings to all participants in the 4th World Congress of Education International, the largest body in the world that represents 30 million teachers and education personnel through over 300 affiliates in over 150 countries and territories.

It gives me great pleasure to convey my greetings to all participants in the Education International World Congress.

Education is a human right. More than half a century ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established that everyone has the right to education. The fact that millions are still deprived of it should fill us all with shame.

Education is also key to our work to translate into reality the Millennium Development Goals, the blueprint agreed by all the world’s Governments for building a better world in the 21st century. Two of the Goals are focused on education for girls and boys alike. These are not only Millennium Development Goals in their own right; how we fare in reaching them will be crucial to our ability to reach all the others, for every year of completed schooling is also a step towards eradicating poverty and disease.

As educators, you are crucial to our efforts to build a healthy, peaceful and equitable world. The United Nations looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with Education International in the years to come. I thank every one of you for your commitment, and wish you a most stimulating conference.

Kofi A. Annan