



## RESOLUTION ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH POLICY

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

### **A. Affirms EI's commitment to the continuing development of higher education and research noting that:**

1. Higher education institutions play a central educational, economic and employment role in society, in scientific, technological and applied research and through the production of skilled graduates (including primary and secondary teachers);
2. Strong higher education and research institutions underpin a vibrant and pluralistic civil society, and enrich social and cultural life by generating new knowledge and by continuously enhancing humanity's intellectual and cultural heritage;
3. Higher education is often an important focus of resistance to authoritarian regimes, and plays a significant role in promoting human rights, democracy and cultural and intellectual tolerance;

### **B. Considers that the development of higher education and research should be guided by the following principles and priorities:**

4. the importance of a strong, public higher education sector to ensure that access to lifelong learning is available to all citizens;
5. Access to and participation in higher education should be available to all that meet relevant entry criteria and should not be limited by the financial means or social origins of students. This means that higher education, as well as other education sectors, should be free of charge, and that the State should ensure that adequately funded student support schemes are available. Where fees do apply, they should not exceed 20 % of total course costs and appropriate subsidies, grants and options for deferred repayment must be available;
6. Funding for universities, colleges and research institutions is primarily the responsibility of the State, and the State should maintain its overriding responsibility for ensuring that higher education and research institutions serve the public interest. Where private institutions exist and receive State support, they should be required to adhere to the same standards and levels of accountability as public institutions;
7. While the State has a right and an obligation to insist on public accountability from higher education and research institutions for the expenditure of public funds such accountability should not undermine institutional autonomy in relation to academic policies, curriculum, staff appointments and internal management. Institutional autonomy, in these spheres, is a precondition for the existence of academic freedom. This in turn guarantees that independent research, teaching and scholarship can flourish;
8. An essential element of academic freedom is the right of staff to be directly represented on all key decision-making bodies within universities, colleges and research institutions and for decision-making to reflect collegial principles. Collective decision-making must guarantee and develop individual staff rights such as the freedom to determine teaching style or the right to intellectual property;
9. Research and scholarship is guaranteed and underwritten by the existence of academic tenure or job security. Universities and colleges should provide tenured opportunities through appropriate policies or collective agreements. Member States of UNESCO should be encouraged to adhere to the terms of the UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel and to adopt positive measures for its speedy implementation. Where staff are not employed in tenured posts but on shorter term contracts, their industrial and professional rights should be equivalent to those of tenured colleagues;





## C. Welcomes the progress made in the higher education and research sector since the Harare Congress, particularly in the following areas:

10. the significant increase in affiliations by unions representing higher education and research staff;
11. the major Conference organised jointly with UNESCO in Paris in March 1997;
12. the substantial work done on the UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel;

## D. Considers that this work should be continued with a particular focus on:

- international cooperation in the areas of higher education and research;
- the democratisation of access to higher education in conjunction with the trend toward mass provision of higher education;
- the promotion of students' social status;
- the professionalisation of higher education;
- the world-wide financial crisis in higher education (particularly in the developing world);
- the threats to the academic freedom and working conditions of higher education and research staff;

## Expanded EI work should aim to:

13. **Strengthen** EI's membership base in the higher education and research sector, and build networks in the sector globally and regionally;
14. **Achieve** and **promote** the adoption and implementation by National Governments of the UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel, and develop an effective monitoring process for its implementation;
15. **Defend** higher education budgets from domestic and international threats in the context of a broader international defence of all education sectors. Opposition to international institutions' attempts to deregulate and privatise education is a central element of this defence;
16. **Develop** EI's policies on the role of universities and colleges in teacher education, on lifelong learning, on the implications of new technology and on the links between education and the economy;
17. **Support** academic freedom and the right to collective bargaining including the protection of intellectual property rights and the defence of contract and part-time staff;
18. **Promote** open and accountable institutional governance and management systems and the appropriate involvement of staff unions;
19. **Strengthen** the input of developing countries into the higher education and research work of EI including its regional structures;
20. **Develop** formally structured higher education and research forums as part of regular EI Regional Conferences and prior to the convening of World Congress Meetings;
21. **Ensure** that EI's higher education and research policies are fully covered in EI's dialogue, co-operative work and advocacy with the relevant international and regional bodies and institutions, to ensure that EI's influence within the higher education and research sector is maximised.

