

6TH EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT

28th to 30th Nov, 2009, Bangkok, Thailand

Theme: "Asia Pacific Teacher Organizations' Response to the Global Crises"

THE OPENING

The opening programme chaired by **MR. YUZURU NAKAMURA**, Chairperson of the EIAP Regional Conference started at 9:14 am. Mr. Nakamura welcoming the participants drew attention to economic justice, political freedom and peace situation in the region and recited a poem from a book titled "Children Learn What They Live – Parenting to Inspire Values". His speech is attached as **Annex A**.

MR. NUMYOOT SONGTHANAPITAK President of Education Society of Thailand extended a very warm welcome to all emphasizing the important role of teachers in educating the nation.

MR. NORIYUKI SUZUKI, General Secretary of the ITUC ASIA/PACIFIC conveying greetings from workers of the world said that the financial crisis has created more unemployment, poverty and worsened the working conditions of the workers worldwide.

Dr. CHINNAPAT BHUMIRAT, Permanent Secretary of Education in Thailand talking about the education reforms informed that the government increased educational budget to facilitate equal access for all from kindergarten to collegiate and to build teachers' capacity especially in English and Science education. Summary of speeches from Mr. Numyoot, Mr. Suzuki and Dr. Chinnapat is attached as **Annex B**

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

FRED VAN LEEUWEN, EI GENERAL SECRETARY in his Keynote address said that the international agencies and politicians in the past have failed to heed warnings from the trade union movement and attributed the continued imbalance in the bargaining power between the employer and the employee as one of the reasons leading to the crisis.

Fred addressed the food crisis, climate change, HIV/AIDS, child labour, migration, quality education, unity among teachers' organisations, education investment, value of public education and democracy, and appointment of unqualified teachers. He also talked about Quality Education project with Oxfam/Novib, the Multistakeholders Partnerships in Education (MSPEs), the Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and GATS. Urging members to march together he said, "Due to our hard work this year the G20 reiterated EI's two main messages: *"Investing in education and skills developments is crucial for sustainable recovery"*, and *"We affirm the right to education for all"*. Full text of Mr. Fred van Leeuwen's address is attached as **Annex C**

DISCUSSIONS ON THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS

A number of delegates expressed their thanks to EI for taking up their causes effectively. Among the

speakers were the delegates from India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Hong Kong (China), Nepal, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Korea and Pakistan. The delegates also highlighted the major problems teachers and their organisations face in their respective countries. Observers from Myanmar (Burma) also reported the education situation and sought support from all to end prosecution of teachers and students for teaching and learning democracy.

Responding to the delegates the Secretary General said, "Actions taken by the teachers' organizations especially in Sri Lanka will give more strength and focus to the work of unions. There is a need to work together to return Fiji to democratic rule. Teachers' situations and establishment of their organizations in China is an enormous task. EI has adopted resolution to provide assistance." "The rights of the children to celebrate their ancestral identity must be guaranteed and so with the teachers training, and indigenous education. Indigenous rights must be respected."

"We believe that public-private partnership is important, but still there's no replacement of public education investment. Neo-liberal colonialism hasn't worked well. International monetary agencies are also looking forward to involving international aid agencies, other global union federations, and international labor confederations while making policy decisions."

EI ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL REPORT 2004-2006

Mr. Aloysius Mathews, Chief Coordinator, EI Asia Pacific Region in his report highlighted the need to attain quality education for all, improve the status of teachers and education personnel, end all forms of discrimination, promoting peace education and strengthen EI and membership participation.

In his report, he applauded EI member organisations for their efforts in achieving quality public education for all in India, Indonesia, Nepal and Mongolia; in achieving teachers' rights in Cambodia Philippines Nepal, Korea, Taiwan and Fiji; in achieving equality in Indonesia and India; and in providing necessary assistance to organisations that required support.

He reported the sufferings of children and their inability to join schools in conflict riddled countries like Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Pakistan and Afghanistan and pointed out the need to improve teacher-student ratio, teachers' training, teachers' workload and working conditions. The full text of the report is attached as **Annex D**

SOUTH ASIA REPORT

EI, Vice President and AIPTF General Secretary Mr. S. Eswaran highlighting the problems faced by teachers, teacher unions said, "A huge number of teachers are unqualified, underpaid and do not join union in the fear of losing their jobs. A large number of children do not attend school because of poverty, class sizes remain large, teachers and children in conflict areas face difficulties in attending schools." The summary of the report is attached as **Annex E**

SOUTH PACIFIC REPORT

Mr. Tevita Koroi, President of COPE in his report said, "Among the problems faced by unions are high cost of communication, absence of full time union officers and weak consultative processes including frameworks and collective bargaining legislations. There are unstable governments, media is censored, union leaders are targeted, human and trade union rights are not respected and nations

lack capacity to handle global issues like HIV/AIDS and rise in Sea Levels. The situation has worsened due to global recession. Costs of education, inflation, job loss, individual contracts have increased and salaries and government allocation on education budget decreased". The full text of the report is attached as **Annex F**

SOUTH EAST ASIA REPORT

Ms Anah Suhaena Suparno, of the PGRI, Indonesia reported that in South East Asia education is viewed as Strategic Means to enable balanced development, economic growth and poverty reduction and social development. "High dropout and low retention rate in Cambodia, child labourers and disguised privatization in Indonesia, disparity in quality between urban and rural school in Malaysia, decline in real education spending in the Philippines, attitude towards stratification by academic ability in Singapore and access to education in Thailand are the major problems faced in the sub-region". The full text of the report is attached as **Annex G**

CENTRAL ASIA REPORT

Nosirhon Akbarov, President of the Trade Union of Education and Scientific Workers of Uzbekistan reporting on the situation said, "In all Central Asia republics states' constitutions enable free and compulsory primary and secondary and special vocational education. Based on social partnership principal trade unions cooperate with the ministries of education to protect social and economical interests of teachers. The main instrument of this cooperation is collective agreements and bargaining. Much attention is paid to the improvement of working conditions of teachers and labor protection issues." The full text of the report is attached as **Annex H**

NORTH EAST ASIA REPORT

Ms D Tungalag, General Secretary of the FMESU Mongolia reporting on the effects of the financial crisis said, "In Mongolia, budget allocation for education sector was cut by 10 percent. In Japan the Central Government is trying to reduce its involvement in education. In Korea, education funding increased by 0.2% to 4.5% of GDP. In Taiwan, the government is not keen on promoting free education from primary to upper secondary levels. More and more children face difficulties to finance their education in Japan and Korea. In Taiwan, decreasing birth rate and increasing migration has led to decrease in the average number of students per class." The full text of the report is attached as **Annex I**

DISCUSSIONS ON THE REPORTS

Delegates from several countries including Fiji, Philippines, Burma, Central Asia, Sri Lanka, highlighted concerns on violations of human and trade union rights and its impact on education and appealed to EI, UN, UNESCO, EU, WB, IMF, and the Commonwealth to fight for respect of human and trade union rights provisions and law

Papua New Guinea delegate highlighted teachers handling large classes without proper training and resources and said that support for teachers is extremely poor. Korean delegate said, "45,000 teachers were dismissed, some teacher leaders were arrested and teachers feel demoralized and need support". Indian delegate said that millions of students are out of school because of poverty and union engagement with the government to address poverty in vital. The Philippines delegate

said, "Women need more help in my country. Leaders must take the lead, motivate, and collaborate to achieve in our endeavor to promote gender equality."

REPORT OF THE STUDY ON "THE ROLE OF TEACHER ORGANISATIONS IN ASIA PACIFIC IN A CHANGING ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Mr. P. Ramanathan and Mr. Mike Thiruman on behalf of the EIAPR sub-committee reported on the findings of the committee's survey and analysis of the status, capacity and impact of EI programmes on EI's Regional affiliates in facing the new emerging challenges. Ms. Susan Hopgood and Ms. Anah Suhaena also contributed as part of the sub-committee undertaking the study.

The report said, "Economic growth with equitable distribution of income and wealth is important. Teachers' organisations must have in-depth knowledge and be credible suppliers of grassroots realities and ensure resource allocation to attain Quality Education for All."

The report looks in detail the Education and Employment, and human and trade union situation, Equity Issues, EI's Solidarity and capacity building Programmes and strategies, Communication and Research facilities for teacher organisations and the EI dues structure in the region. It called upon EI to foster unity among affiliates and strong commitment to trade unionism and profession. It urged member organisations to monitor the National Education programmes and strengthen collaboration with NGO's promoting education. In conclusion the report states, "The objective of teacher organizations is to become a meaningful, independent and respected partner in the policy making process." The full text of the report is attached as **Annex J**.

DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT

A number of delegates from Indonesia, Malaysia, India, praised the report and emphasized on the need to strengthen Freedom of Association in order to build a strong, democratic and independent voice for teachers and urged EI to provide assistance in achieving the rights.

REPORT/RESOLUTION FROM THE WOMEN'S CAUCUS

The Caucus on the "Impact of the Global Crisis on Gender Equality" was attended by 62 women delegates from 30 organisations in 16 countries, and held from 26-27 September 2009 in Bangkok. The caucus looked at the issues pertaining to gender equality, information exchange among women's networks and improved coordinated action. The caucus discussed access to education, gender pay gap, social protection and recommended urgent actions to deal with the existing inequality, hardship for women and girls. It urged affiliates to focus on mass awareness campaigns and remain committed to the attainment of the MDGs.

The caucus called upon Union leaders to provide active leadership in a campaign against violence as a central focus of union activity, build community and union alliances to campaign for the relevant legislation and work towards full implementation of the ILO Conventions.

The Caucus called upon EI to provide positive public messages affirming the value of education of girls and investing in women as solutions to the GFC. The Caucus congratulated Susan Hopgood on her appointment as acting President of Educational International and wished strength in her incumbency. The full text of the Caucus report cum resolution is attached as **Annex K**

REPORT/RESOLUTION FROM THE HIGHER EDUCATION CAUCUS

The caucus opposing commercialization and privatization of tertiary education systems said, "Institutional autonomy should not be allowed to compromise the central role of governments in planning and investing in the higher education system and the global financial crisis should not be used as a pretext for reducing public expenditure and accelerating market reforms.

The caucus calls on all to support EI's call for a new global education and public investment strategy and stronger regulatory regime for the international finance sector. The caucus calls on the governments to increase public investment, recognize collective bargaining and academic freedom rights, encourage international engagement and exchange between universities and colleges and give priority to increasing opportunities for the poor and disadvantaged, particularly women, girls, rural residents and ethnic and indigenous minorities. The caucus recommended convening an Asia Pacific Higher Education Conference in 2010 or 2011. The full text of the report cum resolution is attached as **Annex L**

RESOLUTIONS

A resolution committee comprising of Ms. Susan Hopgood, AEU Australia, Ms. D. Tungalag, FMESU Mongolia, Mr. T. Tenio, ACT Philippines, Mr. Babu Ram Thapa, NNTA Nepal and Mr. Mike Thiruman, STU Singapore was nominated by the Conference.

The committee looked at the resolutions submitted and presented 12 resolutions for adoption from the affiliates, 5 resolutions for adoption from the breakout sessions and 2 resolutions for adoption from the Women and Higher Education Caucuses.

The following 12 **resolutions from the affiliates** are attached as **Annex M**.

1. Resolution on Education Funding Stability
2. Resolution on Health Protection for Students and Educators
3. Resolution on introducing ILO/UNESCO recommendation as a compulsory subject
4. Resolution on recruitment of Para-teachers
5. Resolution on Quality Education for All
6. Resolution on growth of private educational institutions
7. Resolution on Violation of Trade Union and Human Rights in Korea
8. Resolution on Teachers Education Activity Protection Law
9. Resolution on security in schools
10. Resolution on political situation in Fiji
11. Resolution on Situation in the Philippines
12. Resolution on exchange of representatives of teacher unions.

The following **five resolutions from the four breakout Roundtable** sessions are attached as **Annex N :-**

1. Resolution on Migration
2. Resolution on Global Climate and Environmental Change
3. Resolution on Human and Trade Union Rights

4. Resolution on Attaining Millennium Development Goals and Quality Public Education for All
5. Resolution on Role of Teachers' Organisations in Increasing Public Funding for Education

A Resolution on the EIAP Conference Theme adopted by the conference is attached as **Annex O**.

AMENDMENTS TO THE EIAP BY-LAWS

The conference decided to change the frequency of the EIAP Regional Conference and the Regional Committee meetings in-relation to Articles 4 (i), 5 (g) and 5 (j) and Article 5 (B) (v) to keep in-line with the four year term of the EI Congress. Please see **Annex P**.

ELECTIONS

An Election committee comprising of Ms. Sulbha Donde, AIPTF, India, Mr. T. Kuna Cegaram, NUTP Malaysia, Mr. Maika Namudu, FTA Fiji, Mr. Ashwini Kumar, AIFTO India, and Ms. Sri Suciati, PGRI Indonesia was nominated by the Conference.

The EIAP Regional Committee members elected are attached as **Annex Q**.

CLOSING

Mr. Nakamura thanked the delegates, the resolution committee, the election committee, the Chief Coordinator EIAP Region Mr. Aloysius Mathews and all the staff who worked very hard. He also thanked the Thailand member organizations for hosting the conference and the school children for their performance. Mr. Nakamura said, "Through the co-operation of all we are able to reach the EIAP regional conference conclusions very successfully. Thank you."