

**The speech of Nosirhon Akbarov
President of the Trade Union of Education and Scientific Workers of Uzbekistan**

Good afternoon dear brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen!

As the representative of delegates from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, I am very glad to welcome all the participants of the regional conference.

Education International makes significant contribution to improve teachers` status and Trade unions role on social and economical protection of their members in a market economy. The evidence of this is the conferences, meetings, seminars and workshops regularly organized by EI. Participation in EI`s activities and events helps to exchange work experience and stay united. Regular publication of EI materials helps our trade unions be informed on each event and activities of teacher organizations of other countries, that is undoubtedly very useful.

In Central Asia countries much attention is paid to the improvement of education and professional level of population. In all Central Asia republics education issues are included in states constitutions providing free and compulsory primary and secondary special vocational education. All these factors will create the necessary conditions for students to get quality education, good knowledge and become comprehensively developed individuals.

Education system reforms implemented in Central Asia republics provide the improvement of the social and economical status of teachers and education personnel. To this end, teachers` salaries and students stipends are increased annually in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan that includes the improvement of salary pay system.

Despite world economic crisis each issue in these republics is solved by pragmatism level of governments and their ability to work out unique and possible economic models which help the economies to overcome the global trends of slowing down of economic activity as well as the critical decreasing of GDP (gross domestic product). Particularly, the economy model of transition to social oriented free market economy, based on five principles, annually is proved to be proper and useful.

Essentially such principles as:

1. pragmatism of economic policy, meant to be the priority rather than politics;
2. the reformatory role of governments;
3. priority of law;
4. strong social policy and
5. step by step realization of reforms

are proved to be actual and sustainable in world economic crisis. For instance in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan the literacy level is 99,4% that is one of the highest indicators in the world. Spending on education is 12% of GDP in Uzbekistan. In 2009 in these two republics teachers salary and students stipend have been increased up to 30% and additional increase up to 15% is planned by the end of this year. Annually school facilities are improved and much attention is paid to working and living conditions of new teachers in remote areas. For instance in Uzbekistan about 233 new school buildings and 196 vocational colleges and 18 lyceums have been built this year. The same number of school buildings has been built in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Taking into consideration the similarity of trade union issues, problems and challenges, trade union organizations of Central Asia have worked out their programs and identified priorities of their activities in

world economic crisis. They are the full realization of trade union rights, trade union participation in the development and implementation by the government of programs and methods on decreasing (minimizing) of world economic crisis effect on Central Asia countries` economy to keep the growth of economy level.

Trade unions also participate in decision making process on additional payment issues to teachers` salary and provision of other kinds of bonus to education personnel.

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. It means trade unions` cooperation with employers on social economical protection issues. Trade unions continue to improve the structure and content of these agreements.

These documents strengthen the main trends of social economical protection of trade union members, namely salary payment, employment, social benefits, improvement of working conditions and others. The items of adopted territorial agreements help to improve teachers` status.

Central committees of trade unions are trying to include more items on providing benefits and social economical protection in comparing with laws and decrees, identified by legislation. The result of this is the compensation of transport expenses, paid long term professional vocation, partial payment of improving teachers` health in resort houses and sanatoriums.

Much attention is paid to the improvement of working conditions of teachers and labor protection issues. This includes safer working conditions and labor hygiene of education personnel. We should try to fully realize the possibilities of collective agreements which are the important factor to improve teachers` status.

And of course there are some issues and unsolved problems which demand trade unions to have wider range of activities and to work out new solution methods.

Dear conference participants!

As you know many teacher organizations of former soviet republics are the member organizations of EI and Russian is considered as the common language in these countries. Taking this into consideration we would like to suggest to include Russian in the list of official languages of EI that will provide more active participation of trade unions of these countries in EI activities.

At the end of my speech on behalf of the delegation of three Central Asia countries I would like to wish success to our conference. I am sure decisions and resolutions of the regional conference will help to improve education issues and social economical protection of teachers.

Thank you for your attention.