



***Education International's  
First World Women's Conference  
January 23, 2011  
Respondent to Report on Conference Outcomes***

Good morning delegates.

On behalf of Randi Weingarten, AFT President, Toni Cortese, AFT Secretary-Treasurer, and myself, I would like to thank Education International for organizing this historic First World Women's Conference. And thank you delegates for three (3) days of thoughtful deliberations.

The theme, "**On the Move for Equality**" is appropriate given the status and working conditions of women around the globe.

This forum provided a unique opportunity for us to network and engage across our borders. I was struck by the uniformity of the challenges we face in spite of different languages, cultures, political systems and union traditions.

Some of these common issues include gender-based violence, pay equity, sexual harassment and declining respect for the teaching profession.

The women's committees and caucuses in our respective countries have already begun to work on these issues. But as we prepare to depart, the next task is to harness the energy and momentum from this conference and transform it into an action agenda!



In order to address the gap between gender policy and implementation, I ask the following:

One positive outcome from this conference would be more task forces that are uniquely gender focused.

These task forces can support the excellent work of the existing regional women's networks. They will enable the networks to collaborate on individual issues, such as pay equity, as well as prioritize, plan and implement research and evidence-based strategies.

Secondly, we should direct all EI staff and member organizations to mainstream and incorporate issues of gender into work already underway.

Cross-cutting issues such as teacher migration, HIV and Aids, pensions and benefits all have a gender dimension that have been identified at this conference.

Although EI has focused on these issues for many years, in the future, they must be more cognizant of gender impacts that can be documented and circulated in reports and publications.

Thirdly, we must all examine our budgets and increase allocations that invest in women's leadership and training at all levels.

In order to create a culture of organizing in a profession that is predominately female, there must be opportunities for women to advance through the



ranks and steer the direction of the movement for gender equality. This is not only the *“right”* thing to do, but it helps to expand our ranks at a time when unions are under increased attack.

Finally, to jumpstart these initiatives, the final conference report must inform action-oriented resolutions to be presented at the Sixth EI World Congress in Cape Town, South Africa this July. It's time for this body to move beyond policy resolutions and statements of intent.

As we leave this conference today, it is essential that we apply these outcomes at the local level by creating an individual action plan for each member organization.

I look forward to returning home newly invigorated by these proceedings and collaborating with our local affiliates and my colleagues in the NEA.

Thank you for the opportunity to join you as we are **“on the move for equality!”**