



Education International's First World Women's Conference

REACTION ON THE REPORTS

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Good morning my dear colleagues. I would like to thank Education International for this valuable opportunity to convey my personal thoughts about the reports.

Education International has truly begun an amazing job towards gender equality. It is flesh and blood through us who have come from all over the world bringing with us our differences. Our culture, forms of government, religion, educational practices and even languages clearly spell out our differences...an obvious indication of inequality. Being so, our dear speakers clearly pointed out that the situations tainted with inequality here and everywhere can be an instrument to be together, to find our similarities, to bridge the gaps and work as one towards a common goal.

However, I said GENDER EQUALITY is now flesh and blood, for despite the differences, we were able to put our minds together to share about the status of women in our countries. We shared the same sadness at some deplorable stories of women and girls; we shared the same happiness at the little victories of each unions for their women; and now we are partaking as ONE, both male and female and in a unified goal of working against stereotyping of women and girls, providing a safe and healthy environment for women, and advancing the women's position in the decision making body and more through global networks.

The discussions from our sessions gave us a clearer picture of where we are right now and what else we could do. We collectively agreed that there's much



to be done within our unions, among our networks, and EI is the most potent tool for the realization of the goals for gender equality. However, I would like to emphasize that Education International is just a tool, a network likewise, BUT it is US who is responsible and accountable...it will not be given to us----- we must get it.

Being a woman is not a choice and it comes with an honest to goodness blessings if we only know how to GET AND ENJOY IT. A speaker said, there are three types of women, THOSE WHO ARE AWAKE, THOSE WHO ARE ASLEEP, and THOSE WHO ARE SNORING.

I FELT AND I BELIEVE you will agree with me that the speakers' of this conference hopes were that we WOMEN are awake now and that they who are awake would WAKE THOSE WHO ARE STILL SNORING AND STILL ASLEEP. We have turned one stone towards the goal. But there are still other stones to turn and with the support of EI and other partners and networks OUR LITTLE STEPS TOWARDS EQUALITY WOULD SURELY GET US THERE.

Let us always keep ourselves moving toward our goal because there will always be hindrances to get us there. Having in mind some directions towards our objectives, it is time to put these ideas into concrete actions. It is fundamental that while we enjoin the men, we women must take the lead. We can do so by going back to our unions first. The theme "on the move to equality" serves as a reminder that unions are potent force to achieve it and it is necessary that women in our unions must have a strong foundation through education and training. Because the women in the union will serve as the strong pillars, as we further build our way to the fulfilment of EQUALITY.