

36th Executive Board meeting, 22-24 March 2011

EXECUTIVE BOARD RESOLUTION: RESOLUTION ON DEFENDING FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Considering that

1. Human and trade union rights are most at risk in times of economic, political and social crisis, giving rise to increasing privatisation and casualisation and other forms of insecure employment conditions which undermine the union capacity to organise and bargain collectively;
2. Trade union rights are human rights as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; respect for trade union rights is a fundamental condition for democracy;
3. Trade unions representing teachers and education workers have equal rights with other workers and that the full exercise of all trade union rights is a prerequisite for improving the professional status and development as well as the welfare of their members;
4. Respect of fundamental union rights, especially collective bargaining, is the means of realizing the social contract between workers, government and employers, and expresses a commitment to uphold basic universal human values and achieve fair and equitable distribution of wealth, social protection and economic development.

The Executive Board

5. Affirms that promoting and defending fundamental worker rights is a priority for EI and its member organisations;
6. Recognises it is the responsibility of each state to protect the rights of its employees and deplores that governments restrict the trade union rights of their employees and/or fail to provide equal trade union rights for teachers and other public sector employees;
7. Underlines the crucial role of the ILO supervisory system in holding governments accountable for implementing the ILO Conventions, upholding the professional and employment rights of teachers and education workers, particularly Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and the Protection of the Right to Organise, Convention 98 on the Right to Organise and to Bargain Collectively, Convention 151 on the Conditions of Employment in the Public Service and Convention 154 on Collective Bargaining;
8. Condemns that teachers and education workers, in some countries, face harassment, arbitrary detention, unequal working conditions and remuneration, dismissals and sometimes death because of being active in the union;
9. Denounces that some governments, on the pretext of economic efficiency and privatisation of public services, deprive categories of education personnel from employment rights and social benefits and are attacking teacher unions seeking these rights;
10. Regrets that while social dialogue is key in promoting decent work in conditions of freedom, equality, security and human dignity, teacher union representatives are not always sufficiently involved in collective bargaining machinery.

The Executive Board therefore invites the Secretariat to:

11. Implement a plan of action to help EI's member organisations to become strong, representative, independent and democratic unions, effective in advancing trade union rights into a living reality for teachers and education workers.

The Executive Board invites member organisations to:

12. Demand that public authorities ratify and implement ILO Conventions 87, 98, 151 and 154, guaranteeing the right of teachers and education workers to form independent trade unions and to engage in meaningful statutory collective bargaining with their employers;
13. Promote the implementation of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers and the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel;
14. Work with EI to develop expertise in using the international supervisory mechanisms, and to lodge complaints against governments when they violate international labour standards;
15. Lobby their governments to fund and support strengthening the mandate of the ILO to deal with countries that consistently violate the core labour standards;
16. Lobby for the enhancement of the role of the ILO in the global governance structures within the G20 / G8 process, and in the discussion of trade agreements on services.

Specifically, the Executive Board mandates the Secretariat to:

17. Launch a global comprehensive campaign to defend the fundamental union rights of teachers and education workers;
18. Develop research and capacity building initiatives to support teacher unions wishing to use the international supervisory mechanisms provided for by the ILO, CEART, the UN Universal Periodic Review and regional human rights bodies;
19. Directly encourage Governments to implement the recommendations of the ILO Governing body;
20. Engage with ILO processes and vehicles as appropriate to achieve the above.