

**Global Campaign for Education
General Assembly – Public Session
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Address by Fred van Leeuwen, General Secretary of Education International

President Kailash, Assistant Director General Tang, Right Honorable Gordon Brown, dear colleagues and friends.

We could not be meeting at a more critical moment. More than ten years ago we launched this Global Campaign for Quality Education for all children in the world. Yes, over a decade, 11 years precisely, has gone by since Dakar and the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Eleven years is a long time for a campaign but we need that campaign more than ever! And we need, indeed, we demand results!

Some progress has been made towards the MDGs of basic primary education for all, and equity for girls. But a big gap remains! This Assembly will address this gap tomorrow in the session 'Achievements and Challenges' and we all know that MDG number 2 is just about basic education, the first step.

We all know that in the 21st century every country needs to build from that first step to the others of education for its young people – secondary and vocational and higher education. And you must have societies with sound macro-economic policies and growth with equity and democracy, so these young people can have a future. You only have to look at the revolutions sweeping across the Maghreb and Middle East to understand that. I've just come back from the Middle East.

Gordon, we both know how much Steve Sinnott was committed to the search for peace in the Middle-East through education and the teaching profession. While we still feel Steve's loss, I can say there are colleagues who have taken up the challenge and are building on his work and his legacy.

Friends, do not imagine, for one moment, that the revolution welling up from the depths of despair of our youth is limited to any one region of the world. It is there, across all developing countries. It is there in emerging economies, in India, Brazil, China and South Africa, where EI goes for its next World Congress this July. It is also there in industrialised countries like Britain, Germany and the United States. And it is certainly here in France, and the reality is that teachers have become the *sans-culottes* of the education revolution.

In the global society of the 21st century, the world has come into all of our communities. Many millions of young people from North Africa and beyond live today in the banlieue of the cities of France. In December, we told President Sarkozy, as he began his consultations on priorities for the next G20, that the millions of young people who are neither in school, in training, or in the world of work, represent a veritable time-bomb for the G20 countries, and for all countries.

That is the context for our discussion on securing the resources for universal, quality, public education. It is not about whether we can secure the resources. The governments of this planet damn well have to mobilise the resources, just as they did to bail out the financial system two years ago. For, mark my words, Tunisia and Egypt today, are France or Britain and the United States or China tomorrow, unless the resources are made available for young people to have purpose in their lives.

And here we come to the heart of the question. These big economies have to address both growing gaps of inequity and social injustice within their own societies – and – the increasing gap of inequity and social injustice among countries.

India, China, Indonesia and Brazil have already shown that GDP can grow rapidly, yet they struggle with equitable internal distribution of that growth. Africa with its riches holds the promise of rapid growth. So do many countries across Latin America and Asia, despite the financial crisis that hit the North. Yet I cannot emphasise this enough, all this potential is at risk. It is at risk because the investment in quality public education for all is lagging. In the wake of the crisis, overseas development assistance for education is down. It just does not make sense. Our campaign has to focus on that essential point.

For let us not imagine for a second that the mobilisation of resources can be addressed only with each country. In a global economy, we must have a global approach.

We must have new sources of funds for investment in education. Taxing financial transactions or activities tax – an FTT or FAT – makes eminent good sense. We also have a research project underway right now on corporate taxation in the real economy, how global corporations avoid tax by manipulating their prices and balance sheets along their global supply lines. You don't even need a new tax. Just make sure the global corporations pay at the same rate as national enterprises in all the communities where they operate.

Friends, the resources for investment in education – for the future of our children and young people – these resources are there! It just takes political will.

Finally, I want to address that key word 'Quality'.

Gordon, I recall the special session you chaired in Davos on quality education for all. A year later, Mr Tang, your Director General and I made the point to a group of CEOs and university presidents that for quality education, you need qualified teachers. UNESCO's Ms Bokova and I were struck by their response. 'Of course, that's it', they said. I don't want to say it was a discovery for them, but every CEO, every university president in that room understood that no enterprise can succeed in today's world unless it invests in its people.

Friends, I am glad to say that a consensus seems to be emerging today that we must invest in the people of education – the professionals – the teachers. And not before time!

I was in Washington for meetings with the World Bank two weeks ago. We welcome the Bank's renewed recognition, at the very top, of the importance of qualified teachers for quality learning. Within the Global Campaign we have had extensive discussions with our civil society colleagues on the importance of quality educators. We have the Parktonian Accord, and we have concrete plans to go forward together.

Next month, the US Secretary of Education is inviting, jointly with the OECD and EI, a summit of ministers and teacher union leaders from 20 countries on the future of our profession. This is promising. But, for promise to be turned into reality, for goals to be achieved, and for hopes to be met, public opinion must be mobilised for public resources to be generated for investment in public education – quality public education for all.