**International Summit on the Teaching Profession 2014**

**Framing of the Summit**

**By Fred van Leeuwen, EI General Secretary**

First, I want to thank the New Zealand Government and our colleagues in the PPTA and the NZEI for making this Summit happen. Like the OECD we are grateful you have enabled the Summits to continue. Their importance to the professional lives of teachers and to the future lives of children are profound.

I also want to congratulate all those who have organised the Summit for their hard work and commitment.

Never has this unique gathering been more needed. We are in the middle of a great global debate about the future of education involving two educational visions.

The first one is grounded in the understanding that without highly qualified, self-starting and motivated teachers there is little chance of all children getting the education they deserve. Neither is there much chance of countries having stable societies or sustainable economies without quality teachers.

The second vision is sustained by the illusion that education can be delivered more cheaply and efficiently by the private sector preferably with fewer, less qualified staff and a liberal dose of one-size-fits-all on line programmes. It’s a second best vision.

It’s the first vision that brings us all here. It’s the vision which informs UNESCO’S recent Global Monitoring Report on Teaching and Learning and the OECD’s Teaching and Learning International Survey. And it’s the vision which shapes Education International’s Unite for Quality Education campaign which we launched on World Teachers’ Day.

This is why I’d urge the OECD, UNESCO and the United Nations to come together with Education International to define and promote quality and equity in the world’s school systems. We all have a common interest. We all know that there is no substitute for qualified teachers in every classroom.

And we all want our education systems to work for all our children and young people. How they work is the question we’re all discussing in the next two days.

Over the last few decades we have had bursts of reforms about how public education systems should be organised. Some have been based on evidence and partnership with teachers. Others have been based on partnerships and others have been imposed by governments determined to make their ideological mark on education. Imposition has meant that teachers have felt that they are mere cogs in the reform machine even where the trend has been to devolve responsibility to schools.

Another characteristic of imposed reform has been a narrow obsession with assessments of students, teachers and their schools with severe consequences for any failure to conform. Indeed there are governments that think that there is a simple answer to the complex question of how to create a successful education system. They believe that all that is necessary to define an education system is to create a punitive evaluation framework with little awareness of its damaging impact on creativity and innovation in schools.

That is why I welcome the themes we will be discussing at this Summit. They really go much deeper. They ask real questions about the relative responsibilities of governments, school communities and teachers in making sure that, whatever their background, all young people achieve their full potential.

You will all be aware of that well known saying that it takes a village to raise a child. I would argue that the school community is a microcosm of the village. Within schools teachers and support staff alongside parents are vital in raising the child educationally. It is essential that education systems should work with staff to analyse their needs and support them.

That means that the governments have much, much more to do than simply devolving powers to schools. Equitable resource and professional standards cannot be devolved. Important as principals are in leading their schools they cannot know everything. Whether you are a teacher, a middle manager or a principal you cannot know what you don’t know. No-one can. It is vital then that the education system should support teachers in sharing knowledge and empowering them professionally. That is why it is essential that every education system should be both coherent and enabling.

Which brings me to my final point. Ensuring that an education system is coherent and enabling cannot just be a job for governments. And while it is important that governments engage constructively with unions at national level it is even more important in highly devolved systems. It is after all teachers and their collective voice that define a successful education system. I wish this Summit every success.