**“TEACHING RESPECT FOR ALL”**

**Remarks made by Dennis Sinyolo, Senior Coordinator, Education International, at the launch of the UNESCO-Brazil-USA project in Paris, France, on 18 January 2012**

First of all, I would like to thank UNESCO and the project partners for inviting Education International (EI) to this important event. EI is the voice of the education sector world-wide, representing over 30 million teachers and other education employees at all levels-from early childhood education to higher education. Through its over 400 member organisations, EI has a presence in over 170 countries.

EI welcomes the launch of the project, “Teaching Respect for All”. We strongly believe that this project will contribute to the promotion of a just society, guided by the principles of human rights and social justice. As clearly articulated in EI’s Education Policy Statement adopted by the organisation’s 6th World Congress in Cape Town last year, education is key to promoting and strengthening democracy, tolerance, peace, inclusion and intercultural understanding.

EI is concerned about the rise in levels of xenophobia and the continued racism and discrimination of various categories of society. Indigenous and ethnic minorities such as the Roma in Europe continue to be marginalised. The financial, economic, debt and job crises seem to have led to a rise in levels of intolerance, particularly for migrants and their children. The xenophobic attacks experienced in South Africa in 2008 resulted in the death of over 60 people, saw dozens of women raped and left over a 100 000 people displaced. All this calls for a united and systematic response by the international community, country and local level stakeholders.

Education can help break the cycle of racism, xenophobia and intolerance. While many education systems have citizenship or civic education in one form or another, more can still be done to strengthen policy, curricula and implementation. Several challenges, most of them related to implementation, continue to prevail. These include:

* Lack of adequate and relevant resources, such as textbooks and other educational materials
* Lack of training in anti-racism and tolerance in teacher education and continuous professional development
* High stakes-testing, competition and the accountability demands based on results placed on schools and teachers can threaten the effective implementation of teaching respect for all

In order to ensure the effective implementation of the “Teaching Respect for All” initiative, we would like to urge UNESCO, the project partners and policy makers to:

* Adopt an inclusive and holistic approach to the development and implementation of the new project, ensuring the involvement of teachers (through their representative organisations) and other key stakeholders and civil society groups
* Incorporate teaching respect for all into teacher training and professional development programmes
* Promote student and teacher mobility and exchange programmes in order to promote inter-cultural understanding
* Promote tolerance and celebrate diversity at all levels and have teachers from different ethnic groups and diverse backgrounds as role models