



4 October 2011 (embargoed until 4 October 10h00 GMT+1)

World Teachers' Day 2011

Teachers for Gender Equality

"Let us remind ourselves on this World Teachers' Day that teachers are a powerful force to address gender injustices around the world, and that gender equality is not simply a women's issue... it is everyone's issue," says EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen.

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Despite real progress being made in the last 25 years towards achieving gender equality there is a long way to go. For example, in gender parity in primary education significant gaps still exist. The ratio of girls-to-boys in primary school enrolment within sub-Saharan Africa remains extremely low, while boys' academic under-achievement in school is an increasingly worrying phenomenon in many countries, including Jamaica and the United States.

This year's theme *Teachers for Gender Equality* encompasses equality between female and male teachers; demands access for girls to gender-sensitive and quality education, and highlights the contribution of teachers and education in overcoming gender stereotypes.

The focus on gender equality rounds up a year of intensive work in this area, opportunities EI has created or used to advantage. 2011 began with EI's *On the Move for Equality* Conference in January (Bangkok, Thailand), and continued with the UN Commission on the Status of Women discussing women's access to and participation in education, especially science and technology, for full employment and decent work in March (New York, USA), the Global Action Week for Education in May concentrated on girls' right to quality education. This was followed by EI's World Congress in July (Cape Town, South Africa) which adopted a landmark resolution on gender equality. A four-year action plan geared to making gender equality a reality in unions, in education and in society is the pivotal goal.

EI and its affiliates know that if teachers are to be good role models for gender equality for boys and girls in all areas and levels of schooling, inequalities within the teaching profession must also be addressed. We need to promote equal opportunities for women to be school leaders, institutional managers and decision-makers within ministries of education; we need more women to become science, mathematics and technology teachers and university professors, and we need more men to be recruited as early childhood and primary school educators.

The important role of educators in achieving gender equality is underlined in our joint statement with the ILO, UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF.

EI will participate in the official UNESCO event taking place in Paris on 5 October where EI Deputy General Secretary, David Edwards, will be chairing some of the discussions. You are invited to participate in the discussions by posting your questions or comments on Twitter using the hashtag #wtd2011.

Education unions around the world will also celebrate this day with their members. View the photos of these activities on EI's Flickr photostream on the official World Teachers' Day website: www.5oct.org

Everyone can take part in World Teachers' Day by sending an e-card, downloading the multi-lingual posters, and the pay equity toolkit. To see your activities featured in EI's report on World Teachers' Day, please send photos, articles, videos or links to: 5oct@ei-ie.org. You can also tweet about your World Teachers' Day activity using the hashtag #wtd2011

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Press Release