

World Teachers' Day 2009

“Build the future: invest in teachers now!”

5 October 2009

Room XI,
UNESCO, 7, Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris
9:30 am to 1:00 pm

World Teachers' Day 2009 puts the spotlight on the global teacher shortage and the challenges of being a teacher today.

Every year, World Teachers' Day draws attention to the central role that teachers play in ensuring everyone's right to quality education. It is celebrated on 5 October, the anniversary of 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, a document that comprehensively addresses teacher policies, rights and responsibilities.

Great demands are made of teachers today. In our rapidly changing and interdependent world, teachers not only have to ensure that students acquire solid skills in basic subjects, but also that they become responsible local and global citizens, at ease with new technologies and able to make informed decisions about health, the environment and other challenges. Teachers play a leading role in giving students the knowledge, attitudes and values that help them understand the world and become agents of change.

Sustained investment is required to develop a well-trained and motivated teaching force. Many countries are faced with increasing enrolments at all levels of education and the consequent need to hire and train more teachers. Eritrea and Chad, for example, will need to expand their teaching workforces by 16% and 14% respectively each year in order to achieve universal primary education by 2015. Countries striving towards Education for All around the world will have to ensure that there are 1.9 million more teachers in classrooms than there are today. In addition to creating these new posts, school systems will have to compensate for attrition as older teachers retire. So to meet the needs associated with EFA and attrition, an estimated total of 10.3 million teachers will need to be recruited in just eight years. The greatest challenge is in sub-Saharan Africa, which will have to recruit almost as many new teachers (2.4 million) as are currently teaching (2.8 million). At a time when the global economic slowdown risks putting tight constraints on education budgets, it is critical that governments support the recruitment, training and professional development of teachers.

These concerns will inform this year's World Teachers' Day. At UNESCO Headquarters, UNESCO's Director-General and key international education policy stakeholders will share perspectives on the unique challenges, responsibilities and rewards of being a teacher today. UNESCO's Institute for Statistics will present data on the teacher gap and its implications for achieving quality education for all.

Teachers from around the world will share their own professional experiences of being a teacher today. The subsequent discussion will be open to all.

World Teachers' Day will be celebrated on 5 October 2009, from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm, in Room XI, UNESCO, 7, Place de Fontenoy, Paris. This event is open to all.