



**Message from the heads of UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, ILO and
Education International
on the occasion of the World Teachers' Day 2010
"Recovery Begins with Teachers"
5 October 2010**

Today, on World Teachers' Day, we pay homage to all teachers for their pivotal role in shaping children's lives and for their critical contribution to the social, economic and intellectual development of nations. Teachers are change agents, providing the impetus for the emergence of educated communities.

Many teachers work in extremely challenging circumstances, serving in communities with high rates of poverty, coping with violence within and outside the classroom, or confronting the demoralizing impact of HIV and AIDS on colleagues, students and families. There are those who are seeking to ensure the right to education of 18.5 million refugee children throughout the world. In countries affected by conflict, teachers are instrumental to reconstruction and peace-building.

We take this opportunity to commend the efforts of teachers, especially female teachers, who accept to serve in high risk, deprived and disadvantaged areas, reaching out to the excluded, and bringing them the prospect of a better life through education. Teachers are also crucial to sustainable recovery and growth in post-conflict and emergency situations. In Haiti, the devastating earthquake that struck last January claimed the lives of some 38,000 pupils and 1,300 teachers and education personnel. In Pakistan, according to UN estimates, half of the 20 million people affected by the floods are children. From the outset, reactivating the education system has been a priority of the humanitarian and recovery effort in both countries. We especially honour the memory and commitment of those teachers who have lost their lives in emergency situations.

Teachers provide continuity and reassurance, both during and after natural disasters and other crises. By giving hope for the future and providing structure and a sense of normalcy, they help to mitigate the effects of conflict, disaster and displacement. They provide much-needed psycho-social support to ease the trauma of children and youth who have witnessed extreme violence, or lived through the destruction of their homes and the loss of family members. Supporting teachers in post-crisis situations is an investment in peace and development.

While many governments are making efforts to protect education budgets, teachers' jobs, salaries and decent teaching/learning conditions, we are deeply concerned by the probable impact of the global economic slowdown on the teaching profession. As a catalyst for human growth and development, education is key to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) targets. But without sufficient numbers of well-trained and professionally motivated teachers, we risk falling short of the promise made ten years ago at the World Education Forum to the world's children and youth, because teachers are at the heart of the education system.

On this Day we call for adherence to the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (which was adopted on this date in 1966) and to the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel. The moral force of these Recommendations remains as pertinent as ever. Low status, low salary and poor working conditions infringe on the rights of teachers whilst discouraging talented young people from joining and remaining in the teaching profession. The situation must be redressed at a time when the world needs an estimated 10.3 million new teachers to reach internationally-agreed education targets by 2015.

The quality of teacher training is equally important. Teachers who are well-trained and adequately remunerated are better equipped to provide a decent education and be active promoters of the values of citizenship, peace and intercultural dialogue. Governments are therefore urged to continue investing in viable national policies and programmes for teacher training, recruitment, and incentives so that teachers remain and develop within the profession. At the same time, we urge development partners to support governments, particularly in developing countries, in their determination to invest in well trained teachers.

We also call for greater efforts and structures of social dialogue that give teachers a voice in decision-making through their democratically elected organizations. Without teachers' inputs to shape education reforms, recovery processes are not likely to achieve all their goals.

On World Teachers' Day, we appeal to governments, communities, national and international institutions worldwide to renew their commitment towards teachers, particularly in the poorest countries and those affected by conflict or disasters. Recovery begins with teachers. We can best honour teachers by giving them decent working conditions to fulfil their mission of preparing the younger generation to become responsible citizens, equipped with the knowledge and skills to shape a sustainable future.

Join us today, 5 October 2010, in celebrating teachers around the world!



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