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**Joint ILO–UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application  
of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel**  
12th Session (Paris, 20–24 April 2015)

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## **Empowering teachers: Teaching in the post- 2015 education agenda**

### **Communiqué by the 12th Session of the ILO–UNESCO Joint Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel to the World Education Forum 2015**

The ILO–UNESCO Joint Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (hereafter the Joint Committee), having met at its 12th Regular Session in Paris on 20–24 April 2015,<sup>1</sup>

*Recognizing* the importance of international deliberations on the Sustainable Development Goals and in particular Goal 4 on education and its target on teachers,

*Concerned* that, while much is expected of teachers in the post-2015 agenda, the status of teachers around the world is severely challenged,

*Considering* that the ILO–UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) are as relevant as ever in guiding policies aimed at strengthening the status of teaching personnel,

Adopts the following communiqué:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Joint ILO–UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel was established in 1967 after the ILO and UNESCO adopted a far-reaching Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966). Since 1997, the Joint Committee is also charged with examining key issues facing higher education staff following the adoption of the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel by UNESCO. Composed of independent education experts from around the world, the Joint Committee meets every three years to review major trends in education and teaching, and to make relevant recommendations. It also reviews allegations brought by teachers' unions regarding violations of the principles of the Recommendation. The recommendations of the Joint Committee are non-binding, being intended to guide the actions of national authorities, employers' and workers' organizations and other education stakeholders.

<sup>2</sup> This communiqué represent the views of the Joint ILO–UNESCO Committee. As it was not possible for the Governing Body of the ILO and the Executive Board of UNESCO to discuss the communiqué in time for the World Education Forum, the views expressed in the communiqué are those of the Joint Committee only, and its publication does not represent an endorsement by the ILO or UNESCO.

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1. The Joint Committee appreciates the major progress made worldwide in steadily increasing the number of teaching staff, especially at the secondary education level, during the last two decades. It notes with satisfaction that quality teachers are increasingly recognized as the single most important factor in providing effective learning, and that a wide evidence base supports this view.
  2. The Joint Committee is nonetheless deeply concerned by persisting challenges brought about by teacher shortages and by the low status of teachers at all levels of education, as reported by the Global Monitoring Report 2015, as well as by teacher organizations and NGO/CSOs.
  3. In particular, the Joint Committee has noted that the latest trends show:
    - (a) a continued lack of recognition of teachers as professionals at all levels (de-professionalization), driven by austerity measures and poorly designed accountability schemes. Such trends have had an impact on the safety and health of teachers, in particular on their psychological well-being (burnout) and physical security;
    - (b) weakening social dialogue in education;
    - (c) lack of participation of teachers and their organizations in education policy reforms;
    - (d) decline in teachers' status and working conditions;
    - (e) increasing disparities in teaching qualification requirements at all education levels;
    - (f) increasing for-profit privatization of education and a related impact on quality of education;
    - (g) violence targeted specifically at schools and teachers.
  4. Moreover, early childhood education teaching personnel enjoy the least recognition, appreciation and investment in their professional development, despite the increasing recognition of the importance of ECE in laying the foundation for learning throughout life.
  5. With reference to the proposed 2030 education goal and its set of targets, the Joint Committee notes with concern the narrow focus given to the issue of teaching personnel, with its main emphasis being on ensuring the adequate supply of teachers. The Joint Committee has noted that the target related to teachers is referred to as the "Means of Implementation", implying that teachers/teaching personnel are merely seen as an "input" into the education system.
  6. The Joint Committee is of the firm view that teachers are not only a means of implementing education goals; they are the very key to sustainability and national capacity in achieving learning outcomes and creating societies based on knowledge, values and ethics. For this reason, the professional status of teachers must be addressed as a critical element of education goals.
  7. The Joint Committee firmly believes that the key condition to attaining quality education at all levels is to ensure that every learner is taught by a qualified, motivated and professionally-supported teacher who is able to participate in education decision-making.
  8. In view of the above, the Joint Committee calls on governments, teacher organizations and unions, international development partners, and other stakeholders in education to take urgent actions, in line with the provisions of the Recommendations of 1966 and 1997, so as to:
    - (a) ensure that the central role of teachers in the full achievement of all the 2030 education-related targets is explicitly recognized and included as one of the core targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education;
    - (b) ensure that the status of teaching as a profession is publicly recognized and respected;

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- (c) ensure that practising teachers are properly qualified through formal teacher education processes in line with each country's requirements;
  - (d) devise strategies for the provision of appropriate incentives, including competitive remuneration, clear career paths and continuous professional development opportunities to attract and retain good candidates to become teachers;
  - (e) establish and respect appropriate legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms that secure social dialogue and acceptable working conditions for teachers;
  - (f) ensure that teachers and their organizations participate prominently and play a constructive role in policy discussions and reform efforts in education;
  - (g) identify and agree on a comprehensive set of key indicators that would allow systematic monitoring of progress on the status and quality of the teaching profession at global, regional and national levels;
  - (h) identify good practices that lead to improvement in the teaching profession, so as to inspire more positive actions by government and other stakeholders;
  - (i) analyse and address new challenges in teaching in various contexts such as the evolving school environment, new forms of technology and for-profit privatization;
  - (j) establish policies and strategies to protect teachers from violence within the framework of violence-free schools, and, in areas of armed conflict, adhere to international principles which prohibit the targeting of schools or use of schools for military purposes.

Paris, 24 April 2015