



## **Joint Message on the Occasion of World Teachers' Day**

**5 October 2006**

On World Teachers' Day 2006 we celebrate teachers and their enormous contribution to learning and social development.

We also mark this year the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the *Joint ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers*. The Recommendation, approved on 5 October 1966 by governments and social partners at a special intergovernmental conference, was an historic occasion. International attention was for the first time directly focused on such crucial issues as: the preparation and employment conditions of teachers; the participation of teachers and their organizations in educational decisions; and the measures that should be taken in each country in order to promote quality teaching and learning environments.

Education has changed greatly over the past four decades. National education systems have been obliged to reform in order to respond to the new socio-economic challenges of a rapidly globalizing world. Access to education has improved, but systems are still struggling. Today, almost 100 million children of primary school age are not enrolled in school. The majority of these are girls, many of whom are trapped in child labour. About one-fifth of the world's adults – nearly 800 million – still cannot read or write. A fundamental constraint to expanding access in many countries is the persistent shortage of qualified teachers, overall or in disciplines critical for societies' development. Many teachers continue to work in extremely challenging circumstances. The HIV and AIDS pandemic has exacerbated these problems further. An estimated 18 million teachers at least will need to be recruited over the next decade if quality basic education for all is to be achieved.

We are committed to realizing quality education for all learners. This goal is an integral part of our efforts to reduce poverty and to help ensure a better life for all, including respect for the basic rights of children and the creation of decent work opportunities for women and men. To reach this goal, the guidelines set out in the 1966

Recommendation must be used as one of the basic tools for education reform. Forty years on, the moral force of the only comprehensive international standard for the teaching profession remains as strong and pertinent as ever. Its messages now need to be systematically applied everywhere.

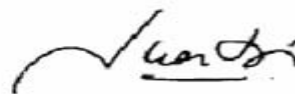
Teachers are the heart of the education system. There can be no viable long-term solution to our education challenges and teacher shortages without investment in training and measures to promote respect for the teaching profession. It is essential to support teachers professionally, boosting their determination and motivation through decent employment and working conditions and adequate remuneration. We also need to promote social dialogue to ensure that teachers' voices are integrated into basic education reform decisions. Such measures will be key to producing more trained and better qualified teachers and, through this, to achieving excellence in teaching and learning. It is our responsibility to present and future generations to get this right.

We call on everyone concerned with education – governments and educational institutions at all levels, teachers' unions, civil society organizations, development partners, the private sector, parents and teachers themselves – to combine their efforts to give new life to the principles of the *1966 Joint ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers*. This is the best way of showing our gratitude to all teachers, while helping to advance global progress towards quality education for all. Children and adult learners deserve nothing less.



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