

World Teachers' Day 2017

Teaching in Freedom, Empowering Teachers

Commemorating the 20th anniversary of the 1997 *UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*

**UNESCO Headquarters, Room II
125 Avenue de Suffren
Paris**

Context

World Teachers' Day, held annually on 5 October since 1994, commemorates the anniversary of the signing of the 1966 UNESCO/ILO *Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers*. The 1966 Recommendation constitutes the main reference framework for addressing teachers' rights and responsibilities on a global scale. It provides guidance to governments, school leaders, and teacher unions to address the status and working conditions of teachers on the one hand and their educational effectiveness on the other, as indissociable and interdependent factors. All school-level teachers are covered, from pre-primary through to secondary level, in all institutions whether public or private, whether providing academic, technical, vocational, or art education. In 2016, the 50th anniversary of the 1966 Recommendation was commemorated on World Teachers' Day.

On World Teachers' Day in 2017, we take the opportunity to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the 1997 UNESCO *Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*. The 1997 Recommendation complements the 1966 Recommendation and covers all higher education teaching and research personnel. Teaching personnel at institutions of higher education are often overlooked in discussions concerning the status of teachers. Like teachers at pre-primary, primary, and secondary levels, teaching in higher education is a profession requiring expert knowledge, specialized skills, and pedagogical competence.

This year, the celebration of World Teachers' Day with the slogan "**Teaching in Freedom, Empowering Teachers**" echoes the theme of World Teachers' Day 2015 that followed the adoption of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 when teacher empowerment was reaffirmed as a top priority in all education and development strategies.

The Incheon Declaration adopted at the World Education Forum in 2015 in Incheon, Korea, committed Member States to “ensure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems.” Teachers, whether teaching at school-level or in higher education, are the key to ensuring the successful achievement of SDG 4 on inclusive and quality education for all and to creating societies based on knowledge, values, and ethics. They are the frontline workers without whom quality learning cannot be achieved.

Like their school-level counterparts, higher-education teaching personnel should enjoy the same rights and freedoms such as security of employment or tenure, career development opportunities, and fair workplace practices. Higher-education teaching and research personnel should also enjoy academic freedom to teach, carry out, disseminate, and publish scholarly research without interference or censorship; and higher-education institutions should enjoy institutional autonomy to allow for these freedoms. Recently, however, the freedom of higher-education teaching and research personnel has been challenged and their expertise questioned by politics or ideology resulting in, for example, budget cuts to controversial research (e.g., genetic research) or debates around the scientific integrity of accumulated evidence (e.g., human-made climate change). Higher-education teaching and research personnel contribute to the economic and cultural progress of societies and human development through the pursuit, advancement, and transfer of knowledge. Without these freedoms, our goal of a sustainable future is at risk. However, with institutional autonomy and academic freedom come responsibilities, such as establishing curricula, awarding qualifications, and delivering quality teaching. How can governments balance institutional autonomy and academic freedom on the one hand and ensure quality in higher-education teaching on the other?

Therefore, in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the 1997 *Recommendation concerning Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*, World Teachers' Day 2017 will bring together all teachers, trainers, policy-makers, as well as researchers and other education stakeholders to celebrate teaching, academic freedom, and what we need to do to ensure quality higher-education and a sustainable future for the teaching profession.

Objectives

- To celebrate and highlight the contribution of teachers, from pre-primary through to higher education, to the education and development of our future citizens.
- To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the 1997 *Recommendation concerning Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*.
- To discuss the issue of quality in higher-education teaching and what this means for quality teaching at all levels of education in light of achieving SDG 4 on inclusive and quality education for all.
- To showcase and discuss progress and persistent challenges in higher education such as institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and professional development of higher-education teaching personnel.

Expected Outcomes

- Awareness raised on the importance of empowering teachers and promoting higher-education teaching and research personnel institutional autonomy and academic freedom.
- Awareness raised on the 1997 *Recommendation concerning Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*.

Programme

Thursday 5 October 2017 Morning		Room II
09:00 – 10:00	Registration	
10:00 – 10:45	<p>Official Opening Ceremony</p> <p>Master of Ceremony: Edem Adubra, Chief, Section of Teacher Development & Head, Secretariat of the International Task Force for Teachers, Education Sector, UNESCO</p> <p>Chair: Qian Tang, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening address by Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO • Statement by Oliver Liang, Head of Public and Private Services Unit, Sectoral Policies Department, International Labour Office • Statement by David Edwards, Deputy General Secretary, Education International • Statement by Anita Lehtikoinen, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Finland 	
10:45 – 11:15	<p>Keynote Speech: 20 Years of Higher-Education Reforms – How the 1997 Recommendation is Helping Countries Achieve SDG4 Targets</p> <p>Chair: Sonia Guerriero, Senior Programme Specialist, Section of Teacher Development, Education Sector, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nada Moghaizel-Nasr, Professor, Honorary Dean, Delegate of The Rector for Quality Assurance and University Pedagogy, Saint Joseph University of Beirut, Lebanon 	
11:15 – 12:30	<p>Panel 1: Progress and Challenges in Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy</p> <p>Chair: Peter Wells, Chief of the Section of Higher Education, Education Sector, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James L. Turk, Distinguished Visiting Professor and Director, Centre for Free Expression Faculty of Communication and Design, Ryerson University, Canada • Tarek Ahmad, Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of Heidelberg, Germany • Katarzyna Kubacka, Research Officer, Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO 	
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
Thursday 5 October 2017 Afternoon		Room II
14:00 – 16:30	<p>Panel 2: Higher-Education Responses to New Demands for Quality, Inclusion, and Equity</p> <p>Chair: Florence Ssereo, Programme Specialist, Section of Teacher Development, UNESCO and Paz Portales, Programme Coordinator, Section of Higher Education, UNESCO</p>	

	<p>Part A. – The Institutional Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julio Fernandez Techera, S.I, Chancellor, Catholic University of Uruguay • Blandine Poos, Director of the National School for Teachers (ENI), Brazzaville, Republic of Congo • Elifas Bisanda, Vice-Chancellor, Open University of Tanzania • Gisela Siririka, Senior Education Officer for Broad Curriculum, Namibia <p>Part B. – Practitioners' Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hawa Tagro, Director of CAFOP in Côte d'Ivoire • Maurice Nkusi, Acting Director for the Teaching and Learning Unit, Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), Windhoek, Namibia • Ndawula Stephen, Director, Open and Distance Learning Kyambogo University, Kampala, Uganda
16:30 – 17:00	<p>Closing Ceremony</p> <p>Concluding Remarks by Georges Haddad, President, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France</p> <p>Official Closing by Jordan Naidoo, Director, Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination, Education Sector, UNESCO</p>

