

## **RESOLUTION 4.1**

# **THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF STANDARDS AND VALUES IN THE WORLD**

Proposed by the Executive Board

Original language: English

**The 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Education International, meeting in Ottawa, from 21– 26 July, 2015,**

### **Recognising:**

1. That there are dangers, including global shifts in the balance of power, which challenge, nationally and internationally, democracy, teachers and other education personnel and their trade unions; that such changes affect both the private and public sectors; that the deterioration of standards and external threats to the health of our societies rapidly become internal problems for our schools.
2. That chief among these challenges are four different, but inter-twined forces that have major impact on our societies, and that these are:
  - a. The liberalization of the world economy, accommodated and facilitated by national governments which is moving the balance of power to unelected corporations, and, thereby, undermining national sovereignty and democracy;
  - b. the lack of respect for international standards by national governments, including governments of some large and powerful nations;
  - c. geo-political shifts generated by developments in Eastern Europe and the Middle East undermining long-standing global standards for peace, justice and equality;
  - d. extremism by groups claiming to act in defense of religion or for ethnic or nationalistic reasons, noting that educational institutions, students -particularly girls - and teachers are often and increasingly the targets of terrorists and other extremists;
3. That all of these developments have an impact on values, and, that, if governments abuse their power and do not respect long-standing rules designed to promote and maintain peace, private parties are unlikely to avoid abuse and arbitrary action; that, if some countries are allowed to break the rules just because they are too powerful to be controlled, the credibility of those rules is bound to be thrown into question.
4. That there is no excuse or justification for terrorism or for bigotry or for any efforts to rob people of their basic humanity and enslave the human spirit; that, fortunately, the number of people involved in such acts remains a relative, if dangerous handful; that, although some countries where terrorism and extremism can reign with impunity, have been rendered ungovernable, its reach is not confined to a limited number of countries; that questions of values are raised by terrorism, but also by reactions to it and, that, reactions sometimes confuse extremists with a group of identifiable people, or a religion, and may imperil liberties.
5. That the global shift of power to private actors in the economy not only allows business to escape from the "civilizing" effects of the public will, but means that governments are increasingly subservient to private, special interests as well as competing for their favours; that

this has distorted economic and tax policies and led to austerity; that trade and investment agreements erode national sovereignty and the public services, and, that radical shifts in production and services have undermined rights and conditions of workers and sustainable development.

6. That the visibility and appeal of accumulating wealth and material goods, distorts values and makes society more vulnerable to other threats, and, that market "values" have spilled over into the public sector, including education.

**Further realising:**

7. That all of these crises of values come together in the classroom; that the legitimacy of government is undermined by lawlessness and abuse by States, thus creating cynicism about government and the public service; that extremists feed on hopelessness and desperation generated, in part, by the fact that so many have been disinherited from the global economy; that, in the circumstances, it is not surprising that young people, who have been "disrespected" and suffer from discrimination and humiliation, do not readily accept that they have a stake in values that may seem to consist only of words.
8. That the sacrifice of public and democratic values on the altar of the market, actions by lawless States, and the siren songs of extremists undermine stability and decency in society, and, that, as the common culture of values has weakened, many young people have been creating their own reality through small networks separated from larger society.
9. That education is among the victims of these three major destructive global forces, but it also offers an alternative to cynicism and despair; that Quality Education, inspired by values, makes or can make special and invaluable contributions; among these are:
  - a. Development of capacities for creative, critical, and independent thinking and discussion;
  - b. Build abilities for listening and tolerance and serve as a ladder into the mainstream for those on the margins of society;
  - c. Contribute to real peace based on understanding and resolution of conflict, rather than silence or submission;
  - d. Provide a "safe place" for diverse groups to build relationships and understanding;
  - e. Break down prejudices and support dignity and opportunity for girls and women; and
  - f. Give new meaning and value to "citizenship education".
10. That to carry out this mission, teachers must have an environment of respect that liberates them to exercise their professional responsibility and judgment, and, that human rights, including trade union rights, are intimately linked with other human rights, in particular, the right to education.
11. Asserts that education will only be sufficiently valued and respected when the value of teachers is recognized and appreciated, which is a major aspect of the continuing Unite for Quality Education campaign.
12. Believes that, just as terrorism and extremism have no frontiers, the forces for democracy and human enlightenment must know no borders; that the bulk of the work to build tolerance and peace will take place in the classroom, and that EI must continue to defend teachers and students subjected to violence and fear and help create a political environment that reduces risk, as well as mobilises international solidarity.

13. While recognizing that, the integration of the world economy has strengthened the actors of the market, weakened human values and cultural diversity as expressed through education, and trade unions and other democratic forces, EI will remain vigilant and confront government actions that enable such massive shifts of power, including trade and investment agreements that lock-in privilege and undermine public decisions.
14. Declares that the front line for educators in this global fight are in the protection of education from "performance" without values and compliance with market rules, as opposed to the promotion of professional standards and values in education, and in asserting that Education, free to make its full contribution, is a principal means to deal with the major challenges facing people across the globe and in building decent and just societies.

**In this context, Education International (EI):**

15. Will continue to seek to influence the UN in the post-2015 period and process, recognising that that process can contribute to building a stronger United Nations (including specialized agencies) that is more credible and can improve global governance and respect for international standards; and, that engagement globally by EI with other international organisations, like the International Financial Institutions and the OECD, reinforces the struggle of teachers in their home countries.
16. Will also strive for a stronger presence and role of Civil Society in all relevant UN mechanisms, including the Security Council