



El Africa webinar on Democracy, Human and Trade Union Rights

20 July 2022,

Theme: “Educators United for Democracy, Human and Trade Union Rights”

Webinar Declaration

We, participants at the webinar organised by Education International Africa this day of 20 July, 2022;

1. Aware that democracy remains a universal human aspiration and a powerful force of political mobilisation for transformation, as witnessed by citizens-led movements which are demanding democratic reforms in many countries;
2. Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations which affirms that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights;
3. Further recalling the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions 87 on Freedom of Association and the Right to Organize and 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining;
4. Considering the provisions of the Education International (EI) [Constitution](#) and [Human and Trade Union Rights Policy Paper](#) which reassert that the right to form and join trade unions (freedom of association), and to bargain collectively are fundamental human rights recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ILO’s Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and several regional treaties;
5. Recalling that EI is guided by the principles of human and trade union rights, and by its commitment to democracy, equity, and social justice; and that it promotes and protects the rights of all teachers and education workers and campaigns for quality education for all that is publicly regulated and funded;
6. Further considering that EI advocates for trade union rights worldwide and supports the development of strong, independent, democratic, sustainable, inclusive, and representative organisations of teachers and education support personnel;
7. Reaffirming our conviction that democracy is a prerequisite for good governance and essential for the fulfilment of human rights;
8. Seriously concerned about frequent violations of workers' fundamental rights, in particular, freedom of association, the right to organise, collective bargaining, academic freedom and professional autonomy; with many trade unionists being attacked, beaten, detained, sentenced to prison, sacked from their jobs; harassed for carrying out legitimate trade union activities, and killed or forced to leave their countries to protect their lives;
9. Further concerned about current neoliberal policies which result in the privatisation of public services and commercialisation of and in education, thus undermining the right to quality public education for all and labour relations, negatively affecting educators’ working conditions and rights;
10. Reaffirming that LGBTI rights are human rights and therefore a legitimate trade union issue that should be championed throughout the global trade union movement;

11. Reasserting education sector trade unions' conviction that the real safeguard of democracy is education and that the ability of education institutions to fulfil that role largely rests on the teaching profession as stipulated in EI's Education Policy Paper adopted by the EI World congress in 2011;

We therefore:

12. Reaffirm our commitment to defend and promote democracy, human and trade union rights and to resist and fight all forms of discrimination through and in education, education unions and society, including those based on age, disability, ethnicity or indigeneity, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation, language, marital status, migratory status, political activism, religion, socio-economic status, trade union affiliation or other factors;
13. Undertake to act in solidarity with sister trade unions and educators when their human and trade union rights are violated, including through response to the Urgent Action Appeals issued by Education International;
14. Urge African governments to take policy, legislative and financing measures to guarantee the right to education for all and the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on quality education and the objectives of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA);
15. Commit to promote democracy and good governance in and through education and in our trade union organisations;
16. Undertake to promote gender equality, equity and inclusion in and through education and in our unions; and,
17. Encourage EI member organisations in Africa to: (i) urge national governments to ensure that human rights education is embedded in the curriculum and education system as a whole; (ii) press governments to ensure that human rights are part of initial teacher education and continuous professional development programmes.