



Arab Countries Cross-Regional Structure Draft Resolution on Transforming Unions to Transform Education

Regretting that:

1. Pandemic-related crises worsened the quality and reach of education with many children being deprived of schooling.
2. Education of children of refugees and migrants has suffered under the burden of the responsibility of educating many with limited resources and insufficient international support.
3. Closings and the uneven and limited availability of distance learning (only 48 per cent of students in the region have access to the internet at home) deepened inequalities and injustice based on gender, national origin, socio-economic status, and other factors.
4. Education and other public services were crippled by austerity programmes related to budget limits, poor governance, lack of fair taxation and, in some countries, the increase of debt burdens,
5. Few of the funds available for pandemic relief were used to support education – globally 3 per cent and less in Arab countries:
6. The weakening or collapse of education systems has had a devastating impact on the teaching profession in terms of remuneration, training, and respect, aggravating the teacher shortage; and
7. Attacks on human rights and democracy by governments and others have continued and, in many cases, gotten worse, including on such fundamental human rights as the rights to organize and bargain and freedom of expression.

Urges governments to:

8. Protect fundamental labour standards, especially trade union rights, and other international human rights,
9. Lift restrictions, including those imposed during the pandemic, on the organisation of trade unions, collective bargaining, and the right to strike as well as not interfering in internal union affairs.
10. Recognise the vital role and contribution of education and the education community to sustainable development and building decent, prosperous, and fair societies that provide opportunities for and enrich the lives of this and future generations; and
11. Participate in and contribute to the UN mobilisation on transforming education.

Call on governments to:

12. Fully fund quality, public education systems.
13. Invest in, support, and respect teachers and other workers in education.
14. Provide quality teacher training and professional development.
15. Involve teacher unions in policy through social and policy dialogue – the representatives of teachers belong at the table when education policy is being made,
16. Ensure that education policy is determined in a transparent manner that serves learners, teachers, parents, and the community.
17. Introduce new technology with the full participation of teachers and their trade unions so that it enhances rather than undermines the teaching profession; and
18. Avoid introducing private, special interests into education through privatisation, commercialisation, public-private partnerships or harvesting of student data.



Reaffirms:

19. A common commitment to free and independent trade unionism.
20. The will to share information and experience on strategies to strengthen trade unions and make them more representative and democratic,
21. The value of increasing participation in unions through increased membership, active member involvement, and leadership with emphasis on women and youth and others who may not yet be active members,
22. The need and desire to build additional capacity in and through union education in such areas as organising and collective bargaining, increasing the status of the teaching profession, and influencing and engaging with governments and civil society, and
23. Our commitment to transform our trade unions to make them closer to members, more effective and capable of playing a leading role in the transformation of education.

