

45th SESSION (1996) - RECOMMENDATIONS

FOREWORD

1. Thirty years after the adoption by UNESCO and ILO of the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and 21 years after the thirty-fifth session of the International Conference on Education, which also dealt with the theme of teachers, the time has now come to examine once again the role, the functions and even the position of teachers and educators in schools and in society.

2. Indeed, globalization which is affecting the economy, culture and information, the internationalization of relations and the increasing mobility of individuals, a complete revolution in the communications media and the massive advent of computerization into daily life and into the world of work represent both a challenge and an opportunity to the education systems. At the same time, many societies and education systems are experiencing serious problems of social integration, among which should be mentioned inter-ethnic conflicts and violence, increasing unemployment - particularly among young people - a decline in moral values, the weakening of guidelines and changes in the role of family ties in the socialization of children. If all these challenges and problems are not overcome in the short term, there could be a risk of reinforcing feelings of uncertainty and pessimism that are particularly pernicious for future generations. Hopes on the part of societies, and especially the youth, for a more dignified, democratic and prosperous life are linked to education, which is considered to be the main instrument in the development of humanity.

3. While education is being transformed as a result of these changes, it is expected that teachers will educate, teach, guide and evaluate, and that they will also demonstrate their capacity to develop themselves, to participate in modernizing the school and to make it more proactive and receptive to change. They should not only facilitate learning, but should also promote citizenship training and active integration into society, develop curiosity, critical thinking and creativity, initiative and self-determination. The role of the teacher will increasingly become that of a facilitator of learning within the group. Furthermore, confronted with the increasing role played by other information providers and socialization agents, it is expected that teachers will assume the role of moral and educational guide enabling learners to obtain their bearings in this mass of information and different values. It is through carrying out their functions as co-ordinator of educational activities provided by various partners - and directed towards common educational goals - that modern teachers will become effective agents of change in the community. Much is expected of education and teachers, too much perhaps, and not always for the right reasons, for, in the first place, it is society itself, clearly with the participation of the teacher, that is supposed to find a solution to its malfunctions.

4. It is not a question of putting forward a unique solution for all countries, but of establishing common guidelines. The variety of situations at the regional, national and local levels obviously implies that these guidelines should be adapted. There is, however, one essential condition: if this vast undertaking of educational renewal is to succeed, inevitably there has to be mutual confidence between teachers at all levels and in all sectors, all education staff and the public and private partners of education systems. In order to maintain such a climate there is a need to establish criteria which provide a clear definition of the competencies and roles of all those involved with respect to autonomy, responsibility and participation.

5. The implementation of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers was more difficult than foreseen. Two conclusions, however, can be drawn from past experience and form the foundation for the present series of recommendations:

- (i) political commitment and technical competence are both necessary to achieve the objectives set;
- (ii) a systemic approach is absolutely indispensable. Experience has taught us that the teacher's role cannot be modified through isolated measures. The Recommendations of the forty-fifth session of the ICE should therefore be considered as an integrated whole.

6. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the living and working conditions of teachers are very often not commensurate with the important and significant task they perform. There is thus a need to devote particular attention to this aspect and to spare no effort in making education a priority within development plans and in enhancing the status of teachers.

RECOMMENDATION No. 1

RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS: ATTRACTING THE MOST COMPETENT YOUNG PEOPLE TO TEACHING

1.1 The recruitment of future teachers is of great concern to the educational authorities and specialists in many parts of the world. While national situations are highly diverse, in all the regional meetings of experts in preparation for the ICE, it was observed that the teaching profession is often not very attractive from the point of view of its social status and its development prospects.

1.2 The criteria for the recruitment of future teachers should not depend only on the knowledge base of applicants. Personal qualities, such as moral integrity, a sense of responsibility and of solidarity, motivation and a favourable attitude towards teamwork, and the ability to communicate are also necessary.

1.3 In this respect, the following measures are recommended :

- 1.3.1 to undertake actions raising young people's awareness of the importance of the teaching profession and guiding them towards it, through meetings with eminent teachers, public recognition of teachers, open days in schools and teacher education institutes, the reporting of innovatory experiences in schools and by teachers in the media, among others;
- 1.3.2 to offer incentives and scholarships to pupils and students with strong academic and extra-curricular records who wish to pursue a career in the teaching profession;
- 1.3.3 to promote gender equality by seeking a better balance of men and women in the teaching profession at all levels and in all academic disciplines;
- 1.3.4 to encourage qualified people coming from other professional fields to enter teaching, in order to overcome possible shortages of teaching staff, and to establish for this purpose appropriate recruiting and education arrangements;
- 1.3.5 to develop and offer intellectually challenging programmes for teacher educators in order to prepare through them teachers of appropriate academic and professional qualifications and to attract the most competent young people to the teaching profession.

RECOMMENDATION No. 2

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING: A BETTER LINKAGE BETWEEN PRE-SERVICE TRAINING AND THE DEMANDS OF AN INNOVATORY PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

2.1 In all parts of the world, it is possible to observe different levels of dissatisfaction about the pre-service training of teachers. In some cases, there is a wide gulf between inputs to teacher training and the demands that their professional activity should satisfy, particularly concerning: (i) their mastery of the discipline they are teaching; (ii) their grasp of the range of teaching strategies in the roles that they are expected to play and in the diversity of teaching and learning situations; (iii) their keen interest in lifelong education; (iv) their ability to innovate and to work in a team; and (v) their observance of professional ethics.

2.2 Pre-service training should be closely linked to in-service training. Building a unified teacher education and training system which views pre-service and in-service learning as a continuum is a concern shared throughout the world.¹

2.3 In order to further improve pre-service training, the following measures are recommended:

- 2.3.1 to associate mastery of the knowledge that the teacher should transmit with mastery of the teaching/learning methods appropriate to this knowledge. In this respect, it is necessary to strengthen the abilities which will enable future teachers to master a range of educational strategies to be used in the different

situations and stages of the learning process, by integrating into their training methods of active learning that they will be expected to use during their professional career;

- 2.3.2 to strengthen the place of teaching practice during pre-service training, through methods employing observation, discussion and participation, both in regular situations and during innovatory educational experiments and pedagogical research. Pre-service teacher training should grant priority to solving the major problems in each education system, such as training for teaching reading, writing and mathematics in both multilingual and monolingual contexts, training in the teaching of multi-grade classes and multi-cultural classes and training in modern approaches to learning assessment;

- 2.3.3 to develop basic skills among teachers for the performance of their indispensable role, which consists on the one hand in arranging information in such a way that it may become knowledge, in making choices and in developing critical faculties, and on the other hand in transmitting culture, forming personal and social relationships, being outgoing, favouring life together and promoting awareness of both differences and common values. In particular, these skills involve:

- in-service education: mastery of the subject, concepts, knowledge and pedagogical skills and integrating appropriate attitudes for the continuous updating of their professional qualifications, enabling them to adapt to the process of the evolution of knowledge and to the variety of educational problems to be resolved;

- teamwork: inculcating attitudes encouraging co-operation and dialogue with colleagues and all levels of educational staff, the essential conditions for collective professionalism guiding teaching activities;

- innovation and experimentation: development of a scientific outlook, basic training in methods of pedagogical research and active participation in the evaluation of experiments;

- respect for others, human rights, peace and democracy: the personal conviction and the professional abilities to teach pupils to live together, to prevent and resolve conflicts through dialogue and negotiation and to reject violence towards and intolerance of others;

- cultural diversity: taking into account cultural diversity essential for mutual understanding in an intercultural/multicultural environment;

- respect for nature: development of widespread awareness of the challenges to our environment and development of the professional ability to teach pupils to take individual and collective action aimed at protecting it;

- 2.3.4 to grant particular attention to the development among teachers of attitudes encouraging successful learning among their pupils, particularly those pupils from disadvantaged groups (physically, socio-economically and geographically) and from cultures different from the dominant one;

- 2.3.5 to aim, both quantitatively and qualitatively, at training teachers able to satisfy the needs of different ethnic and cultural groups, of those with special

education needs and from remote regions, people living in extreme poverty or those affected by conflict.

1 To maintain a certain degree of clarity in its presentation, this recommendation is oriented towards pre-service training and the following one to in-service training, whereas they should both be considered together.

RECOMMENDATION No. 3

IN-SERVICE TRAINING: BOTH A RIGHT AND A DUTY FOR ALL EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL

3.1 In a world undergoing rapid change, in-service training has become vital in carrying out all activities and professions. Thus, teachers are not only obliged to renew their skills continuously, but also to develop in their pupils the attitudes and skills required to create knowledge for themselves throughout their lives.

3.2 Regional analyses have shown that in-service training is the subject of considerable attention, both by the authorities and by teachers. Past experience and future challenges make it possible to predict the following main lines of action for in-service training policies in the future:

- 3.2.1 in-service training should be considered as both a right and a duty of educators. Care should be taken that a balanced approach to these two concepts is adopted, varying according to national situations and different periods. However, any in-service training policy should guarantee a minimum of training opportunities for all teachers;
- 3.2.2 in-service training should be organized to a greater extent within educational establishments and through teamwork, with the active participation of the teachers themselves in defining the programme;
- 3.2.3 special attention should be paid to teachers at the beginning of their career, since the initial positions that they will hold and the tasks they will perform will have a decisive effect on the remainder of their training and career. Tutorial and supervisory systems in the exercise of the profession should be introduced during the initial phases of their career;
- 3.2.4 mechanisms which make it possible for pre-service training to benefit from the experience gained in in-service training should be set up in order to give future teachers an opportunity to become acquainted with the problems encountered and the solutions adopted in a professional context;
- 3.2.5 in-service training should also be developed through the medium of professional support services, which have been conceived as centres of assistance in solving problems, and to which all teachers should have access;
- 3.2.6 special priority should be given to the in-service training and education of those involved in the management, supervision and evaluation of teachers in order

to enable them not only to play an administrative or supervisory role, but also to provide pedagogical guidance;

- 3.2.7 teacher trainers and teacher-training institutes should play an essential part in the process of strengthening the role of teachers and actively participate in their in-service training. In order for them to carry out this function, programmes should be developed and designed to make teacher trainers aware of the outcomes of pre-service training, and to provide permanent contact with researchers and scientists so as to ensure that their own training is up to date;
- 3.2.8 urgent action should be undertaken in areas where teachers are underqualified and untrained. This action should build upon the empirical skills already acquired by these teachers, as well as on their motivation and their knowledge of the local situation. Besides being a means of certification, this urgent action should strengthen the teachers' professional competence and upgrade their knowledge of current developments in pedagogy and subject matter, thus making in-service education a continuous process of educational renewal.

RECOMMENDATION No. 4:

THE INVOLVEMENT OF TEACHERS AND OTHER AGENTS IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMING EDUCATION: AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 The transformation of education - no matter what the national characteristics are - is tending towards greater autonomy in educational decision-making at the local and school levels, accompanied by a greater degree of responsibility concerning the outcomes.

4.2 To encourage the participation of teachers in the process of transforming education, the following measures could be implemented:

- 4.2.1 defining educational objectives and the directions of reforms through consultation, co-ordination and dialogue with teachers and their organizations in line with the provisions of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers and other agents in the transformation of education such as: the family, parents' associations, businesses, employers, workers' organizations, the media, ethical and spiritual authorities and the scientific community. Such consultation and co-ordination should not be limited to the execution phase of projects or reforms, but should also concern their design, initiation, follow-up and evaluation;
- 4.2.2 granting a sufficient degree of autonomy to educational establishments to enable them to make decisions concerning teaching and learning methods and the organization of educational activities, and implementing systems for evaluating the outcomes, which have been conceived as factors for improving the quality of teaching and efficiency in the distribution of financial and human resources;

similarly, strengthening the role of municipal and local authorities in advising schools so as to enable them to derive greater benefits from their autonomy;

- 4.2.3 proposing and implementing measures promoting educational innovation, for both individuals and establishments;
- 4.2.4 accompanying the process of strengthening the participation of teachers with appropriate measures for training, equipment and professional support services.

RECOMMENDATION No. 5

TEACHERS AND THEIR PARTNERS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS: EDUCATION AS A RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL

5.1 Ever since the Jomtien Conference, there has been general agreement that education is the responsibility of all and not of governments or of teachers alone. Partnership has become an essential element in the transformation of education in a world where knowledge and information are key factors in the economy and where respect for cultural diversity, gender equality and other human rights is vital for democratic stability. The forms of partnership are different depending upon cultural, political and administrative traditions, but regional discussions have allowed two main lines of action to be identified: opening up the school to the needs and requirements of the community; and enabling it to participate in community development activities. However, experiences of partnership have shown that this is not a simple or easy undertaking: partnerships succeed and fail: partners agree and disagree. The partnership route is not without its problems but provides a viable way forward compared with the isolationist alternative. Partnership should be conceived as a factor for improving the quality of learning; it should therefore not be perceived as an end in itself, as a way of removing responsibility from the State, from teachers and even from the community, but rather as an effective way of involving actors and exercising joint responsibilities.

5.2 Within the specific context of each national situation, the following measures may be foreseen:

- 5.2.1 the introduction of efficient systems of information, directed towards parents and other partners in educational activities, about school life objectives and the outcomes of educational action. Providing clear information should be considered as a priority in all policies intended to stimulate partnership in education; and to encourage community resource mobilization;
- 5.2.2 the implementation of arrangements for participation in school life by families and other partners, such as parents' associations and councils, students' councils, support committees, tripartite councils (government, parents, enterprises) in vocational training schools, etc.;
- 5.2.3 the opening up of the school to society in parallel with the opening of social institutions to the school. Co-operation between schools and businesses, the

media and sports, and religious and cultural organizations, as well as other NGOs, should be encouraged in order to conduct training courses and other educational activities.

RECOMMENDATION No. 6:

NEW INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES: SERVING TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION FOR ALL

6.1 The new information and communication technologies represent one of the key elements in a changing world. The report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century has clearly demonstrated the implications resulting from the new technologies: 'by abolishing distance, they are instrumental in shaping the societies of tomorrow which, because of those technologies, will have nothing in common with any model from the past. The most accurate, up-to-date information can be made available to anyone, anywhere in the world. Let us not forget, however, that a very large underprivileged population remains excluded from these developments'.

- 6.1.1 Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that the computerization of education is one of the most important means of achieving a new educational paradigm within which there is a shift of emphasis away from the more pragmatic objectives of narrow specialization and towards the acquisition of basic interdisciplinary knowledge. This new paradigm should considerably enhance the social value of education by renewing the potential of the content of education.

6.2 Panacea and threat are the two most polarized terms characterizing the debate on new information technologies and education. These two attitudes are based on a failure to appreciate the real educational potential of the new technologies and the most appropriate ways of using them. As a consequence, the educational system should learn to master them in order to avoid any technological, cultural and economic subjugation, as well as any marginalization of the school compared to other sectors.

6.3 In this situation, decisions about the application of new information technologies and their use in education should be taken with the objective of improving the quality of education for all and of enabling teachers to carry out their role of guide and advocate of learning among pupils.

6.4 On this basis, the measures to be adopted could deal with the following aspects:

- 6.4.1 not limiting the application of new information technologies exclusively to the learning process. The use of these technologies in the administration and management of the school and the local community could save time for and improve the performance of teachers and other educational staff and allow them to devote themselves more to overcoming pupils' learning problems;

- 6.4.2 giving teachers, in the context of their pre-service education and training and career-long professional development, the opportunity not only of mastering the new information technologies for teaching purposes, in conjunction with other educational technologies, but also of contributing to the development of educational software and methodology. Special attention should be paid to distance education in the professionalization of teachers;
- 6.4.3 using new technologies to encourage communication, networks and exchange programmes among teachers, pupils and schools, at both national and international levels;
- 6.4.4 introducing ways of using new technologies based on the idea of technological resource centres available to all and allocating sufficient public funds to them. Harnessing the potential of these technologies in order to create easily accessible services which are designed to help and advise teachers in their daily work;
- 6.4.5 encouraging and assisting the least developed countries to acquire and efficiently use the new information technologies in their education systems;
- 6.4.6 strengthening joint efforts among governments, educational authorities, teachers and teachers' organizations, businesses and industry to ensure the availability of adequate new information technologies at all levels of education;
- 6.4.7 developing research and information exchange on the impact, role and limitations of the new information and communication technologies in education.

RECOMMENDATION No. 7:

PROFESSIONALIZATION AS A STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING THE STATUS AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF TEACHERS

7.1 Even though the ICE is not the appropriate forum to analyse the working conditions of teachers, it is however evident that working conditions cannot be separated from policies on strengthening the role of teachers in a changing world. Concern about the decline in the status of teachers is encountered frequently.

7.2 Although national and regional situations are highly diverse, improving the status of teachers often appears as a necessary condition for strengthening their role. But this improvement cannot be the outcome of a single measure or a single factor. On this subject, improving the material circumstances of teachers, particularly their salaries and other social benefits, is a necessary but insufficient condition for improving their status; it is the whole complex of educational issues that must be improved. In an integrated policy to improve the status of teachers, professionalization represents the most promising strategy in the medium and long terms. Beyond the recommendations made about their recruitment, their training, their participation in management and their autonomy in taking educational decisions, improving the status of teachers could be carried out along the following lines:

- 7.2.1 promoting teacher professionalism, notably by the implementation of high levels of initial teacher education and career-long professional development, the creation of diversified career structures underpinned by appropriate appraisal systems and improvements in the material and social status of teachers;
- 7.2.2 providing the necessary resources to ensure teacher training at the level of higher education;
- 7.2.3 implementing systematic strategies for drawing attention through the media to innovations and successful experiments carried out by teachers and groups of teachers;
- 7.2.4 exploiting pedagogical research effectively and making relevant use of existing information, in both the teaching and learning process and in the decision-making process;
- 7.2.5 establishing performance incentives for teachers. These incentives need not be limited to monetary incentives but could include opportunities for advanced training, formal recognition and career opportunities;
- 7.2.6 establishing a balance between the rights and responsibilities of teachers, as envisioned by the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers.

RECOMMENDATION No. 8

SOLIDARITY WITH TEACHERS WORKING IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

8.1 Teachers in numerous countries are faced with the problem of teaching particular population groups (destitute people, marginalized groups, refugees, migrants, street children, delinquents, women from some traditional societies, etc.) or working under particularly difficult conditions (remote, mountainous or rural regions, multigrade or overpopulated classes, etc.). Armed conflicts, often crossing international borders, represent a particularly worrying situation. Children are always the victims who suffer most from conflicts and who will be affected by the psychological and moral consequences throughout their lives. Whatever the situation, whether it is a question of special population groups, remote regions or areas affected by armed conflict, an integrated and urgent strategy is needed to confront in practice specific educational situations. Despite their variety in size and type, all of these situations require of teachers, more than in any other circumstances, the mobilization of their emotional and psychological capacities and their various skills, in short, true polyvalence. Yet, as has been observed, little or no time is devoted to the preparation of teachers to live and work in difficult situations.

8.2 Under such circumstances, the school and the teachers need, first of all, moral and material support and - in the case of armed conflicts or natural catastrophes - expressions of solidarity from the national and international communities, as well as rapid aid and intervention.

8.3 As a result, the following actions, modified for each particular case, could be foreseen:

- 8.3.1 encouraging teachers originating from difficult areas and those motivated to work in such areas by organizing pre-service and in-service training in these very places, backed up by a professional and psychological support network;
- 8.3.2 during the training of teachers expected to work in such situations, envisaging a further specialization, such as training as educational therapists, school psychologists or rehabilitation teachers. It would also seem desirable to reinforce preparation for the art of communication, negotiation and conflict resolution during their training;
- 8.3.3 backing up teachers and educators with support services, particularly by specialists in educational and vocational guidance and in educational psychology. This assistance could be provided, for example, by mobile advisory teams of specialists;
- 8.3.4 with a view to ensuring the recruitment of experienced and motivated educational teams, implementing incentive measures including, for example, allowances, advantages, an appropriate system of promotion and the possibility of transfer to calmer regions after a certain number of years of service in difficult situations or zones;
- 8.3.5 ensuring the security of educational staff;
- 8.3.6 strengthening links and co-operation between teachers and the local community and, above all, with families and parents' associations;
- 8.3.7 developing all forms of national, regional and international solidarity with teachers who are working under difficult conditions, both from the material and from the technical and moral points of view.

RECOMMENDATION No. 9

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION: AN INSTRUMENT TO PROMOTE TEACHER MOBILITY AND COMPETENCE

9.1 Participants in all the regional meetings expressed the opinion that strengthening the roles of teachers and their in-service professional training requires joint efforts at the national, regional and international levels. This co-operation could be useful in supporting measures undertaken at the national level.

9.2 Member States are invited to enhance the role of teachers' competence through strengthening international co-operation in the following fields of action:

- 9.2.1 the development, mainly at the regional level, of networks of information centres, teacher training and educational research institutions to facilitate the exchange of experiences, information and comparative research results concerning educational innovations and teacher education;

- 9.2.2 encouraging in-service training courses, study visits and exchange opportunities for teachers abroad, as well as partnerships between schools, teacher training institutions, and educational research institutes in different countries;
- 9.2.3 strengthening technical and financial assistance for the least developed countries in the field of education, particularly with the objective of improving educational materials and means, and developing pre-service and in-service teacher education;
- 9.2.4 seeking specific possibilities for improving the status of teachers in the least developed and the most indebted countries, for instance by reducing their debts by sums corresponding to the increases for this purpose in their budgets;
- 9.2.5 promoting and expanding the participation of schools in the Associated Schools Project (ASP) of UNESCO;
- 9.2.6 marking the celebration of International Teachers' Day - 5 October - as a special opportunity to congratulate teachers, to make known their experiences and thus to contribute to improving the profession's social value and the teachers' image;
- 9.2.7 UNESCO and its partners should be invited to:
 - strengthen their assistance to Member States in order to develop their national systems of educational information, innovation and their teacher-training systems, having recourse particularly to the possibilities offered by new technologies and the existing regional and sub-regional networks;
 - make Member States aware of the outcomes of comparative studies concerning innovations in teacher training and in ways of employing new information and communication technologies in education;
 - assist Member States in applying the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966).