

## More than 10 million new teachers needed to fill education goals, UN warns



5 October 2010 – The United Nations marked World Teachers’ Day today with top officials calling on governments to make up a projected deficit of over 10 million teachers by 2015 and stressing the crucial role teachers play in recovery from natural disasters and conflict.

“Without sufficient numbers of well-trained and professionally motivated teachers, we risk falling short of the promise made 10 years ago at the World Education Forum to the world’s children and youth [of education for all by 2015], because teachers are at the heart of the education system,” the heads of four major UN agencies said.

UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) Director-General Irina Bokova, UN Development Programme (**UNDP**) Administrator Helen Clark, UN Children’s Fund (**UNICEF**) Executive Director Anthony Lake and International Labour Organizations (**ILO**) Director-General Juan Somavia issued the joint statement.

“Low status, low salary and poor working conditions infringe on the rights of teachers whilst discouraging talented young people from joining and remaining in the teaching profession. The situation must be redressed at a time when the world needs an estimated 10.3 million new teachers to reach internationally-agreed education targets by 2015,” they added.

They stressed that teachers offer continuity and reassurance, both during and after natural disasters and other crises, by giving hope for the future and providing structure and a sense of normalcy and much-needed psycho-social support to ease the trauma of youngsters who have witnessed extreme violence or lived through destruction of their homes and the loss of family members, a major **focus** of the Day’s main celebration at UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

This year’s theme is ‘Recovery begins with teachers,’ and in a discussion teachers from Haiti, Israel, Lesotho, Mali, Laos and France shared their experiences in dealing with crisis. A presentation of the latest statistics on the global teacher shortage and the opening of a photo exhibition on teachers who work in particularly daunting conditions also marked the Day.

In addition to teachers' testimonies about supporting recovery from natural disasters, HIV/AIDS, conflict and violence, other presentations covered such topics as promoting excellence in teaching and accelerating teacher development through new technologies.

In their messages the UN agency chiefs returned repeatedly to the need to honour teachers for their critical role in society. "We appeal to governments, communities, national and international institutions worldwide to renew their commitment towards teachers, particularly in the poorest countries and those affected by conflict or disasters," they declared.

"Recovery begins with teachers. We can best honour teachers by giving them decent working conditions to fulfil their mission of preparing the younger generation to become responsible citizens, equipped with the knowledge and skills to shape a sustainable future," they concluded.

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