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**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION
EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

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Meeting of the Education Committee at Ministerial Level

**TUAC STATEMENT TO
2004 OECD MEETING OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION
RAISING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING FOR ALL**

18-19 March 2004, Dublin, Ireland

At its 1071st Session held on 26th November 2003 [C/M(2003)26], the Council noted that the Secretary-General would arrange consultations with BIAC and TUAC preceding the meeting of the Education Committee at Ministerial Level.

In order to facilitate this consultation, TUAC has prepared the attached document which is circulated to the participants for INFORMATION.

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**TUAC STATEMENT
TO 2004 OECD MEETING
OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION**

Raising the quality of learning for all

Dublin, 18-19 March 2004

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Introduction

The first key message from the Trade Union delegation is one of the **strongest support for the goal of: *Raising the Quality of Learning for All***. The topic of the ministerial meeting encapsulates the central challenge – how to achieve quality and equity.

The trade union delegation to the OECD Education Ministerial meeting comprises representatives of both national trade union centres and education unions. Their constituencies share a common interest – and a common aspiration: excellence in schooling and equitable access to that excellence.

Consider the constituency of trade unions in OECD countries – salaried employees. They want the best education for their children and fair access to quality learning; they want equitable access to further education and training opportunities throughout life.

Consider the constituency of education unions – teachers and other education personnel. They want the satisfaction of working in education systems that perform well, in terms of both quality and equity criteria.

Given the nature of the challenges in education in the early 21st century, there is good reason for those with political responsibility for education – the Ministers – to **engage in partnership** with trade union centres and education unions. That is the second key message of the trade union delegation. But let us be realistic about this message. Relationships between education ministers and trade unions are often adversarial. One of the goals of a dialogue about partnership should be to move beyond reciprocal frustrations to acknowledgement of the value of robust but constructive debate about the aims of education and how to achieve those aims in our societies.

The third key message is that **trade unions and employers find a great deal of common ground** on education and training policy issues. TUAC and BIAC both assert the importance of a strong foundation of general education for all citizens, of the need to develop competencies beyond basic literacy, numeracy or vocational skills, of the significance of education for innovation, and of the relevance of life-long learning.

So trade unions are ready to engage in a constructive, result-oriented dialogue with both government and business about:

- Raising performance levels for all,
- Teacher supply, and the improvement of teacher effectiveness,
- Education and social cohesion, and
- Education for citizenship in democracies.

Ministers will understand that sharing of goals and openness to dialogue does not imply acquiescence. Far from it! On the contrary, trade unions whether representing workers in general (the “consumers”) or education employees in particular (the “providers”) often feel that a central issue remains the gap between declarations of intentions and the allocation of financial or other means required for the fulfilment of those intentions. Indeed, trade unions perform a valuable and often under-recognised function in democratic societies of providing reality checks. The messages of such reality checks may not always be welcomed. But the reality remains, and those with

political responsibility will generally benefit from paying attention to the messages conveyed by representative organisations. Most importantly, our societies and their citizens will benefit.

This paper from TUAC reflects and comments on the hard reality in the schools and other educational institutions across the OECD member countries. The message is a tough one, because the reality is tough. A central point we make is that governments simply have to face up to the investment question. Trying to drive change in education through so-called performance testing, without allocating the **resources required to achieve quality and equity**, is not the answer. We explain why. We also recognise this is an important debate, and we are ready to participate in that debate in each country.

The final message is that whatever dialogue is engaged at an OECD level in Dublin, with its time constraints and necessary level of generality, **the dialogue of government, trade unions and business must be pursued at the national level**. With a degree of vision and wisdom, the parties to such dialogue can work effectively together to realise the potential of education as a force for the balanced development of national societies, and the well being of their citizens.

I. Summary of main points

1. A broad concept of education policy is required to respond to new challenges in a global economy, a concept that takes account of changing societal needs. Education and training must become:
 - More accessible to all;
 - More learner-centered and collaborative;
 - More responsive to diversity in our societies and economies.
2. Trade unions continue to spread the learning message. They are prepared to contribute to transforming education and training systems to address more effectively the challenges brought about by economic and social changes, innovation and technological change. Our vision is for every worker to be a learner and every union representative a learning representative.
3. In many countries public investment in education and training has been affected negatively by a shift in public policy away from input towards output orientation. But alternative “fixes” lack credibility.
4. Trade unions support the goal of boosting the educational achievements of students. However, they are not convinced of the need for compulsory nationwide tests for students and teachers, based on one-size-fits-all standards.
5. Simply raising performance standards is not going to achieve better educational outcomes. Raising the quality of learning and teaching must be linked to equity.
6. Trade unions also have concerns about implementation that need to be addressed. In too many instances, education policymakers are pursuing standards as just another top-down reform, divorced from the needs and realities of the classroom. Moreover, they are paying too little attention to developing the curriculum necessary to achieve the standards.

7. Developing and implementing standards must become an open process of learning and participation. The risk that the regime of testing will gain dominance within the classroom must be addressed. Education must not be replaced by teaching to tests.
8. Policies to raise the quality of education must go beyond developing and implementing standards and tests. Investing in improving the quality of teachers and teaching must become a central feature of current and future education reform at all levels of education and training. Strategies to raise the quality of education must include:
 - Improved resources for schools and increased support for teachers;
 - Serious commitment to make the salaries of teachers more attractive and to tackle the excessive and unnecessary workload surrounding teaching;
 - Enhancing the status of teaching and education in our societies;
 - Improving initial teacher education;
 - The provision of continuing professional development as an entitlement for all teachers.
9. In order to achieve a truly learning society, we call upon Education Ministers to design policies in order to:
 - increase the level of investment in human resources, because failure to invest in education and training costs more in the long run;
 - ensure that schools are equipped and teachers are trained to prepare learners for the knowledge-based economy;
 - replace punitive methods of evaluation with ones which teachers and educational communities own and which provide support and encouragement;
 - empower teachers to participate actively in qualitative educational reform;
 - involve teachers and their unions in educational reform as well as in the governance of educational institutions, in order to ensure ownership of those reforms alongside more effective and more ambitious education and training.
 - maintain and strengthen the role of public educational institutions and encourage them to promote democracy, good governance, participatory development and human rights;
10. A social cohesion strategy must involve action to combat poverty and social exclusion, particularly in areas such as housing, health, education and training, employment and income distribution, education and social services. It must go beyond treating the symptoms of exclusion and also seek, more positively, to strengthen those forces that help to create solidarity and a sense of belonging.

II. The challenges for education policy in a global economy

11. We all know that education is the key to participation in the global economy of the 21st century, with its technological revolutions in communications and transfer of information, as well as major changes in production, transport and distribution, and the economic value of knowledge. This global economy is based upon levels of mobility unprecedented in human history - mobility of information, of finance, of goods and services, and of people; but also mobility of disease, of crime, of arms and instruments of repression. Extremes of wealth and poverty within and among countries are greater than ever before. In this new era

with its opportunities and risks, high quality education is more relevant than ever in seeking to build societies that are fair and just for all their citizens, that respect universal values of democracy and human rights, and whose development - social as well as economic - will be equitable and sustainable. The development of high quality education systems in all countries, including the expansion of primary, secondary and vocational education as well as of higher education, is an essential precondition for the training of workers needed for economic and social development. Priority must be given to capacity-building within the education sector as a whole.

12. The relationship between education, economy and society is interactive. Education has always both reflected and been influenced by changes in economy and society. So the current period of rapid, and even fundamental changes in economy and society, presents major new challenges for education. Those challenges include:
 - Achieving education for all;
 - Making life-long learning a reality for all;
 - Reaffirming the values of education in relation to personal development, the world of work and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in democratic societies;
 - Rethinking educational content and methods, taking into account the potential and the consequences of new technologies;
 - Recruiting enough qualified personnel to work in the education sector;
 - Re-defining and strengthening the key role of teachers as providers and managers of learning opportunities;
 - Interacting with a broader spectrum of partners, parents and local communities, trade unions and enterprises, and non-governmental organisations.

13. However, the global economy also brings threats to education, including:
 - Commercialisation of educational services, with consequent risks of increasing inequality, discrimination and deepening of the digital divide;
 - Pressures from a trade agenda that fails to take accounts of the role of education in national societies;
 - Changes in the role of the State, with more emphasis on regulation and less on guarantees of equity and non-discrimination;
 - Efforts to implement short-term and short-sighted solutions to new challenges, such as hiring staff without appropriate training and experience for teaching;
 - Decreasing attention paid to the values underlying democracy, and increasing attention to the values of competition and the market; indeed the introduction, under the guise of 'reform', of a culture based on self-interest to the exclusion of social responsibility, with the consequent risk of undermining the ethical values of education and of the teaching profession;
 - For the education sector as a whole, the very existence of education as a public service might be at stake.

14. Clearly, these issues – the challenges and the trends – have implications for the nature of education in general and for the working conditions of teachers and education employees in particular, and therefore concern the latter directly. Consequently, these issues must be tackled, as a matter of priority, by the unions which represent those working in the

education sector as well as by national trade union centres and their international organisations. For example, trade union centres and education unions assert that education policy and reform must guarantee citizens the right not simply to education, but to quality education, without it being undermined by international trade policy. Domestic policies aiming to protect the cultural diversity of their countries, communities and their minorities must not be considered as "obstacles" to international trade.

III. Trade unions continue to spread the message of learning

15. It has always been a central objective of trade unions to assert the right to education and training for working people and their families. That objective has also included the creation of opportunities for education and training, notably through the workers' education movement. In recent years, trade unions, realising the problems caused for their members by lack of skills and competencies, have worked to develop broader access to learning for employees. We now put learning and the development skills at the top of our agendas. We negotiate training agreements with employers, raise members' awareness of learning, advise learner members and help to broker the provision of education and training with colleges and universities. Union representatives are being trained and accredited as "learning representatives". Much innovative work is being done but much more is needed if lifelong learning is to be made a reality. We argue that there is a need for individual entitlements to access foundation levels of learning and skills, and for employers to be given obligations and incentives to provide such opportunities. Our vision is for every workplace to be a learning centre, every worker a learner and every union representative a learning representative.
16. Trade unions, in particular teaching and education unions, are working to strengthen high quality public education as a cornerstone of democratic societies. Teachers and education personnel are expected to manage new educational and teaching challenges. In a nutshell: trade unions are prepared to contribute to transforming education and training systems to address more effectively the challenges brought about by globalisation, related economic and social changes, innovation and technological progress.

IV. Developing and implementing standards for teaching and learning – raising the bar for student achievement – inputs and outputs

17. Education and training, ie human capital, is seen as an indispensable resource for the growth of modern economies. A broad consensus exists that education and training hold the key to the future, being among the most significant investments a society can make to further its own development. However, in many countries public investment in education and training has not kept pace with the widely acknowledged need, while the private sector has not been able to scale up substantially its levels of investment in human resources.¹

¹ See OECD (ed.): Education at a glance, Paris 2003, pp 216 f and Tab. B3.1 on p. 219

18. In many countries, public investment in education and training has been affected negatively by a shift in education policy away from input towards output orientation. For some commentators and politicians, schools, and in particular public schools, have become a new prime target of blame for all societies' ills. They have criticised public investment in schools and offered instead a menu of supposed alternatives to fix the schools, including testing, vouchers and ending certification of teachers. Thus, one of the underlying factors in this shift is the assumption that linking assessments based on high stake tests will motivate teachers to perform better and students to reach higher levels of achievement. Such alternative "solutions" avoid the central issue – the need to invest financial and human resources in education.

IV.1 Investing in learning and the acquisition of skills – the gap between rhetoric and reality

19. 20. OECD countries as a whole spend 5.9 per cent of GDP on their educational institutions at primary, secondary and tertiary level, mostly in the public sector, of which two thirds goes to general (as distinct from specialised tertiary level) education. About 13 per cent of all OECD public spending is devoted to education. According to the 2003 issue of Education at a Glance the share of GDP spent on education showed a decrease for about two thirds of OECD countries. The average spending of 24 countries in 2000 was 0.1 % below the average for 1995² . Reducing public resources allocated to education has worsened conditions of learning and teaching. Recruitment and retention of teachers has now become a real problem.
20. Current trends in the financing of education and training are in striking contrast to the rhetoric about their increasing importance. Conventional wisdom says that governments have reached the limits of spending because neither voters nor corporations will accept tax increases or new levies to be used in order to provide for increases in public spending on education and training. Against this background, pressures from policymakers focus on controlling costs in education, on the implementation of education standards, on the measurement of learner outcomes, on increasing the efficiency of teaching as well as on privatising parts of the public school system. In order to bring the promise of a quality education for all, policymakers are pressing for higher standards, and the development and implementation of high standards of teaching and learning has become the stated objective of education reform. We agree. But you cannot do it without the resources. While it can be argued that increased funding in itself is not sufficient to improve the quality of education, it is not credible to argue that decreased funding will allow for the quality of learning and teaching to be improved.
21. An OECD report, released in January 2004, provided further evidence of insufficient public funding of educational institutions.³ Whereas mainly public investment over the past 20 years has brought modern Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) into nearly all schools in the most advanced OECD countries, the extent to which computers are in day-

² OECD: Education at a Glance, 2003, pp 200-207

³ OECD: Completing the foundation for lifelong learning. An OECD survey of upper secondary schools, Paris 2004, pp 74

to-day use in these schools remains disappointingly low. Despite the money spent on ICT, fewer than 20 per cent of students attend schools where there are enough workstations for every teacher to have one. And in 11 out of 14 countries surveyed, a shortage of computers for students was cited as one of the biggest obstacles to wide ICT use. According to the report, educational use of computers is in fact sporadic across all countries. On average, the principals of around only 20 per cent of students across the countries surveyed reported that computers are used "a lot." Given the explosion in use of ICT in other walks of life, these figures are surprisingly low. Principals also report that recruiting ICT teachers is by far the most difficult recruitment problem that they face.

IV.2 The current focus of education reform: development and implementation of standards for teaching and learning

22. Trade unions support the goal of boosting the educational achievements of students. However, we are not convinced that compulsory nationwide tests for students and teachers, based on one-size-fits-all standards can be applied. Moreover, we are concerned about the potential misuses of testing. For instance, many of the qualities required for successful and effective teaching – passion, dedication and the joy of teaching – are exactly the qualities that cannot be measured by a test. Tests can be used in an arbitrary manner. Trade unions oppose the abuse, misuse or overuse of standardised testing.
23. Higher educational achievement is possible and many initiatives have successfully demonstrated the improvements that can be accomplished. However, aiming to simply raise standardised test scores is not going to achieve better educational outcomes. High, clearly defined standards should be set and the means provided for all schools to enable students to work to attain them. It is not acceptable for education policies and governmental financial allocations to encourage or sustain two-tier education systems – one for those with socio-economic advantages, the other for the poorer and disadvantaged people in society. The concept of raising the quality of teaching and learning must be linked to the concept of equity, so as to ensure that no student is left behind.
24. Standards-based education reform must address both equity and quality concerns facing public education. Assessment as part of standards-based reform must be founded on well-designed tests providing an objective measure of how well students are doing. They can and should motivate youngsters to learn. However, it is important to emphasize that in a standards-based system, the primary purpose of assessments should not be to sort "winners" from "losers" – rather, they should ensure that all students have the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed at the next level and trigger help and support for those who would otherwise be left behind.
25. While supporting for standards-based reform and rising achievement rates, trade unions have concerns about implementation that need to be addressed. In too many instances, education policymakers pursue standards as just another top-down reform, divorced from the needs and realities of the classroom, neither giving enough attention to the content and quality of standards nor to the participation of education practitioners in the process of designing and implementing them. Moreover, they pay too little attention to developing the

curriculum necessary for achieving the standards. Needed support for children at risk is too often unavailable, and where it is, the quality is often doubtful. And, high stakes tests which have the effect of narrowing standards and the curriculum are being imposed with negative consequences for students, teachers and schools. While concerns about implementation take many forms, a central issue has been the inadequacies of the tests, particularly when they are used for accountability with very high stakes.

26. If we want all students to reach higher standards, education policymakers and governments must pay more attention to proper implementation. Sufficient resources must be made available to get the job done. Teachers must understand what the standards are and how to teach to achieve them. They must be offered opportunities for professional development that focus on deep content knowledge, clear instructional strategies, and the assessment tools necessary for determining student progress toward meeting the standards. Evaluations must be compatible with the standards and curriculum.
27. In order to achieve the goals of standards-based reform, education policymakers and governments must develop:
 - High-level content and performance standards for what students should know and be able to do;
 - Standards aligned with the curriculum;
 - The capacity of schools and teachers to help students meet standards;
 - Assessments aligned with the curriculum and standards;
 - Accountability systems that use the results of assessments and other variables to provide support to schools that fail behind.
28. Moreover, educational policymakers and governments must:
 - Explain and justify the standards they set and the performance levels they require
 - Work with teachers, students, parents and the public on a shared development of standards, and a shared understanding of what is expected;
 - Ensure that teachers and their unions have a voice in the development of standards and curriculum assigned to them as well as in the development, implementation, evaluation and use of curriculum-based assessment;
 - Develop approach to assessment which do not lead to a two-tier curriculum, in which subjects such as art, music, foreign languages are placed on the lower tier;
 - Provide resources to ensure that all children, especially those in high-poverty areas, have properly trained and credentialed teachers and that they get the added support and time they need to meet the standards.

IV.3 Developing and implementing standards must become an open process of learning and participation

29. The call to raise the quality of learning and teaching by implementing higher standards, testing and by making schools accountable has certain political appeal. However, without a significant investment in school education and in the training of teachers, so as to raise all young students up to the new standards, the move to implement new testing regimes can be counterproductive. “High-stakes” testing has been promoted by education policymakers and

governments as a way to raise educational standards of poor and disadvantaged students, but it has been shown in a number of cases to adversely affect the quality of education for these students. Teachers, education administrators and parents are therefore increasingly concerned that the growing emphasis on testing could adversely affect the quality of education and make it increasingly difficult to recruit, train and retain effective teachers of high quality in the public system.

30. Within the classroom, the regime of the test is gaining dominance - education is replaced by teaching to the test. A particular pressure to raise test scores and assessment results, caused by a rigid “pass or fail” regime and related financial rewards or punishments, can lead teachers to spend more class time drilling students in preparation for the tests, often at the expense of the substance of the curriculum. A similar effect can result from merit pay systems in schools, whereby teachers are punished or rewarded on the basis of their students’ performance on the tests, and are thus expected to contribute to raising achievement levels.
31. Moreover, efforts of schools to maintain achievement levels or to prevent them from dropping in order to avoid budget cuts or sanctions have contributed to the creation and ongoing expansion of a global testing industry with huge financial stakes and its own vested interest in further growth. Thus, more and more specialised companies are providing schools with software and facilitators to coach students in “test-preparations”, such that test-taking becomes a skill in itself. It is worrying that the expanding assessment industry is bound up with the agenda of “educational reform” in an increasing number of countries.
32. In a number of cases the implementation of standard based reform has come at a major cost: dropout rates rose, teachers had to emphasize tests and drills at the expense of the broader curriculum, or administrators manipulated the process of testing for the sake of maintaining schools. There is a simple conclusion to be drawn from this: serious policies to raise the quality of learning and teaching must provide more help and fewer sanctions for low performing students and schools.

IV.4 Quality education: The focus must go beyond attainment levels

33. Policies to raise the quality of education must go beyond developing and implementing standards and tests. They must include the development of a broader set of quality indicators as well as their application for quality evaluation of schools and learning outcomes. In addition to indicators focusing on educational achievements, particular attention must be given to the need to monitor at least three important areas. First, the area of educational success and transition, second the process of steering school education and the participation of parents and other stakeholders and third the area of educational resources and structures.
34. Indicators regarding educational success and transition must include dropout-rates and the completion of upper secondary education as well as participation in tertiary education. Because school performance and the outcome of learning are also determined by the infrastructure and resources provided, some more indicators are required. They should cover at least educational expenditure per student, participation rates in pre-school education as well as education and training of teachers.

V. Making the profession of teaching more attractive and providing better opportunities for professional development

35. In OECD countries, a positive point to make is that the quality of pedagogy amongst teachers is the highest it has ever been. Yet quality can always be improved. Teachers need to receive continuing professional development as an entitlement, not as a “bolt on” to all their other responsibilities. Professional development needs to be properly funded and allocated specifically for that purpose.
36. Improving the quality of teaching in our schools continues to be a central focus of educational reform policies. There are several good reasons for this. Many students attend schools that are old, overcrowded and in need of repair. Schools are facing a wave of teacher retirements. At the same time, the retention rates of new teachers are shockingly low – a high percentage of newly appointed teachers leave the classroom within the first three years. One reason is that the pay of starting teachers is low compared to other professions requiring the same level of qualifications. Not surprising, teachers who resign often refer to inadequate salary and benefits as well as a lack of professional prestige as major reasons for leaving the profession. Other reasons why teachers leave, like the workload surrounding teaching, a lack of support from the administration and a lack of effective professional development, mirror the loss of financial resources to education. Thus, making the teaching profession more attractive and providing better opportunities for professional development must be made central to any strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
37. It is important to note that the process and objectives of policy reform in education have also impacted, often negatively, on the status of the teaching profession as well as teacher supply and demand. Policymakers often blame teachers for the “failure” of schools, or of their “reforms”. They blame their professional education, what they teach and how they teach. Simplistic and punitive reform efforts that rely on “high stakes” testing reflect a tendency to blame the personnel, particularly teachers, for all that is wrong with education. The same applies to the increasing importance of free market rhetoric and economic rationalism in education. It is rhetoric which emphasizes an individualistic, competitive and user-pays model with winners and losers. This contrast with the collaborative, co-operative and democratic approach which most teachers believe underpins quality teaching and learning and their strong commitment to the education and welfare of every student. It is an approach which seeks to raise educational levels for all, not just a few.
38. The profession of teaching is also affected by social change within our societies. Changes in the structure of families, the increasing social and cultural diversity of school populations, prevailing youth unemployment, the negative impact of flexible working time regimes, labour market activation policies promoting low wage employment leading to long working hours, have meant that greater responsibility for much of the socialisation and general care of students has fallen onto schools and, in particular, teachers.
39. As a consequence of these and other developments, there has been a significant increase in both the general workload and levels of stress and strain experienced by teachers. The effect of this on teachers’ morale is exacerbated by their perception that they are not receiving

sufficient support from governments and communities. In order to address the issue of teacher shortage, focused and long term policy strategies must be implemented linking the raising of standards to policies that are tackling the workload of teachers and strengthening their professional development, ensuring that reform and investment are dealt with together.

40. Investing in improving the quality of teachers and teaching must become a central feature of current and future education reform. Strategies that would gain the support of TUAC and education unions must include:
- Improved resources for schools and increased support for teachers, including improved induction programs and an increase in professional development and training programs, facilitating the development and acquisition of new professional competencies;
 - A serious commitment to improve salaries of teachers and to tackle the workload of teaching;
 - Governments must ensure that teachers do not routinely undertake administrative and clerical tasks; have a reasonable work/life balance; have a reduced burden of cover for absent colleagues; have guaranteed planning, preparation and assessment time within the school day to support their teaching; and have a reasonable allocation of time available for participation in school governance;
 - Enhancement of the status of teaching in our societies and
 - Resources to improve initial teacher education.
41. TUAC and teachers unions urge governments to develop national action plans to address the issue of improving teacher supply and effectiveness in close co-operation with all major stakeholders of education, unions, employers and parents. Teachers must also be given a say in governance decisions affecting the ways in which their institutions are organized in order to educate and train better, more effectively and more ambitiously.

VI. Education and social cohesion

42. Educational institutions at all levels have a role in promoting democracy, good governance, participatory development and human rights. Their role is to respond to all educational needs, including special learning needs, those whose first language is not the home language and those with disabilities. The entitlement to lifelong learning must be extended throughout society. Full access to education and training for everybody will reinforce the foundations and processes of democracy. When democracy is underpinned in this way, citizens are more likely to promote and defend it. Education and training must include the use of new technology in teaching and learning - one of the characteristic features of the transition to a knowledge-based economy. However, with regard to the new challenges facing education, old questions re-emerge. What is the purpose of education? What are the social and political commitments to education? How does one define quality education? What should be taught and learnt and at what stage and in which context should that learning take place? Also, it must be emphasized that education has intrinsic value. The promotion of the pleasure of learning for its own sake will enhance education and training for vocational purposes and employment. It also contributes to social cohesion and a sense of involvement in society.

43. Social cohesion relates to what binds societies together. Social cohesion is an essential condition for security. Divided and unequal societies are not only unjust, they cannot guarantee stability in the long term. Many people are excluded in practice from the benefits of social and economic progress. When governments commit but fail to deliver, loss of confidence, alienation and disillusion with political processes become more apparent – and thereby weaken democratic foundations. It is increasingly recognised that governments need to aim not only at making the economy work but also at enabling society to work for all. Economic development without accompanying social development will result sooner or later in serious problems.
44. A social cohesion strategy must involve action to combat poverty and social exclusion, particularly in areas such as housing, health, education and training, employment and social services. Gross disparities in the distribution of income and wealth also impinge on social cohesion. But any strategy must go beyond treating the symptoms of exclusion and also seek, more positively, to strengthen those forces that help to create social solidarity and a sense of belonging.
45. Policies contributing effectively to social cohesion must:
- Recognise human dignity, making the individual person the centre of policies and guaranteeing human and social rights;
 - Help to revitalise economies and capitalise on the contribution made by the social partners and other interested bodies, particularly in creating employment, stimulating enterprise and ensuring employment opportunities for all;
 - Meet people's basic needs and promote access to social rights⁴;
 - Develop an integrated approach bringing together all the relevant policy areas.

⁴ These goals are expressed in international instruments such as the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, UNESCO and ILO Conventions, and the Council of Europe conventions in the fields of employment, education, health, social protection and housing