

# Better pay and working conditions are key to ending alarming global teacher shortage, says landmark UN High Level Panel

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, February 26, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Convened by the United Nations Secretary General in response to the alarming global teacher shortage, the [High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession](#) has called for competitive, fair, and professional salaries and good working conditions to keep teachers on the job and to attract the 44 million more teachers the



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*Susan Hopgood, Education International President*

world needs. Simply put, governments must invest in teachers, according to a new set of recommendations released in coordination with UNESCO and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

“For the first time ever, a United Nations High-Level Panel examined the role of teachers and the support we need to do our work. It is a major breakthrough. The Panel’s recommendations give the world a blueprint to truly transform education. We must now make sure governments answer the call”, stated Susan Hopgood, [Education International](#) President and member of the United Nations High-Level Panel on the Teaching

Profession.

Due to chronic underinvestment in education, deteriorating working conditions, and lack of respect for the profession, the world is facing an unprecedented global shortage of 44 million teachers, according to the UNESCO-Teacher Task Force’s global report on teachers.

In countries from France, to the United States to Angola, Chad and Bangladesh, experienced teachers are leaving the profession they love and there aren't enough new teachers to join the profession the world needs. In too many regions around the world, schools are closing due to lack of qualified staff, students are sent home during school days, and the teachers who are left face overwhelming workloads and ever increasing teacher student ratios.

The High-Level Panel brought together a diverse group of experts and stakeholders including ministers of education, former presidents, academics, representatives from civil society, education unions, teachers, and students.

The [59 recommendations](#) chart the way to transforming education by strengthening the teaching profession.

The Panel states that investing in teachers is the most effective strategy to build quality and resilient education systems. Recommendation 8 echoes longstanding union demands: "Long-term funding for well-qualified and well-supported teachers is an investment in the quality and sustainability of education systems".

The recommendations urge governments to ensure competitive, fair, and professional salaries, in line with those of professions with similar educational requirements. Secure employment, good working conditions, balanced workloads, and the need to prioritise teacher well-being are also highlighted in the recommendations.

Furthermore, the United Nations Panel calls for equitable funding for education and urges governments to protect education from austerity measures. Tax revenue is identified as the best way to ensure sustainable education financing. In addition, debt relief and forgiveness should be considered to help countries ensure education funding.

Notably, the Panel calls on international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to end all measures that limit education spending and teacher salaries that have long undermined every student's right to a qualified teacher.

Teachers working in emergency contexts must also be supported. The Panel calls on the international community to establish a Global Fund for Teachers' Salaries. The Fund would ensure that teachers working in crises receive fair and timely salaries, recognising that their work to teach and support the most vulnerable children is essential.

"Education International welcomes the leadership of the United Nations in drawing the world's attention to the global teacher shortage and proposing comprehensive and effective solutions," stated David Edwards, Education International General Secretary, on the launch of the recommendations.

Edwards added that "education unions are ready to work with governments to implement all recommendations as a matter of priority."

Mugwena Maluleke, Education International Vice-President for Africa and General Secretary of the South African Democratic Teachers Union, highlighted the importance of the recommendations for his region, stating: "Nowhere is action to end the teacher shortage as urgent as it is in Africa: Our young people, our continent has the highest teacher deficit. The recommendations give us a clear path to quality education for all and it starts with investing in teachers. Unions in Africa and across the world must take this message to their governments and work to ensure these recommendations become reality."

“Marking 2024 as the Year of African Education, the High-Level Panel's recommendations come at a pivotal moment for our region's public education systems. They urgently call upon all governments to make significant investments in our educators. This push for qualified, well-paid and supported teachers not only addresses the pressing teacher shortage, but also aligns with the African Union's vision to 'Educate an African fit for the 21st Century,' ensuring every child's right to education. Governments must now act decisively, recognizing that valuing and respecting our teachers is fundamental to building resilient education systems for inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning”, added Dennis Sinyolo, Education International Regional Director for Africa.

The recommendations were launched on February 26 in South Africa, with the participation of Susan Hopgood, Education International President alongside representatives from the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, and UNESCO.

#### About Education International

Education International is the voice of teachers and education workers around the world. Through its 383 member organisations, Education International represents more than 32 million teachers and education support personnel in 178 countries and territories.

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