



Grenada

Franka Alexis-Bernardine
Minister for Education and Human Resource Development



The Honourable Franka Alexis-Bernardine is a Senator in the House of Parliament in Grenada. She was educated at the St. Joseph's Convent in St. George's Grenada receiving her primary and secondary and tertiary education at that institute. She went on to study for a Bachelor of Science Degree at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica where she studied Chemistry, Zoology and Botany and continued on to a Master of Science Degree in Zoology at that same institute. Mrs. Bernardine also received management training at the Manitoba Institute of Management in Canada; she has had the opportunity to work in the education system of four countries and remains committed to the empowerment of minds through education and the belief that every child must have a chance. Mrs. Bernardine lectured in Zoology at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados and at the St. George's University in Grenada. She has been a former Associate Director for the United States Peace Corps in the Eastern Caribbean and has piloted a number of social programmes: the Programme for Adolescent Mothers, the Special Education Peace Corps Programme and the New Life Organization – a second chance at seventeen, are some of the programmes that she has developed and managed. Mrs. Bernardine is very involved in civil work in her country and has chaired the Prison Review Commission and also prepared the Anti-Drug Master Plan for Grenada. An avid sports enthusiast and former national player as well President of the Grenada Netball Association, she endeavours to work with Youth Empowerment to ensure opportunities for young people.

Inclusive Education: accepting diversity - embracing all

The newly appointed Government of Grenada is committed to the process of education and educational opportunities for all. Inclusive Education remains a priority area for Grenada and to this end, an Inclusive Education Desk has recently been established at the Ministry of Education to afford better coordination and a more planned and systematic approach to this area.

Special needs groups such as children with disabilities or learning difficulties are often marginalized within the education system. The new approach is a step to ensuring that everyone receives the same educational opportunities and experiences. Children with disabilities need to experience education in a meaningful way with the support of the community and their peers.

Education should not discriminate but rather seek to embrace the diversity and individuality that exists among people. Inclusive Education therefore, provides that opportunity. With an improved curriculum to be implemented in 2009, all children should be challenged to express their full potential and natural abilities in whatever capacity.

I applaud UNESCO's vision in having this conference and I look forward to a very rewarding and enlightening experience.