



## Netherlands Antilles

Omayra Victoria Elisabeth Leeflang  
**Minister of Education and Culture**  
**Minister of Public Health and Social Affairs**



*Mrs. Omayra Victoria Elisabeth Leeflang, was born in Curaçao the Netherlands Antilles. She is a teacher by profession who started her political career in 1999 as Member of Parliament of the Netherlands Antilles. In 2004 she became Minister of Traffic and Communications, in which capacity she bought a training vessel with a donation from the Government of The Netherlands for the maritime training of Antillean youth.*

*In 2006 she became minister of Education in which capacity she development the Deltaplan education implementation approach. At present Mrs. Leeflang occupies two portfolios: Minister of Education and Culture and Minister of Public Health and Social Affairs.*

### **Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future**

I am proud of our Antillean youth. Therefore, it is my wish that all our youngsters use the available opportunities to develop their talents.

Not all youngsters believe that education is important. However the youth is the wealth of a nation. Their development is of extreme importance for a sustainable social and economic development of any nation. However every year 350 youngsters in the Netherlands Antilles leave school before receiving a diploma.

This reality has led in 2007, to the introduction of a compulsory education act from 4 to 18 years in the Netherlands Antilles.

By means of this compulsory education act we want to guaranty that all our youngsters stay in school until they have a diploma. The Deltaplan, our massive education policy approach with the objective to create opportunities for all Antillean youngsters is based on the vision that all children are our responsibility. Not only should the focus be on the youngsters themselves but also the obstacles in their school career should be eliminated. No longer do we accept the pushing out of students that is the practice of declaring students not teachable. For that reason the Deltaplan has two instruments to guaranty the success of the compulsory education act e.g.: strengthening of the enforcement of the compulsory education act and availability of alternative learning opportunities.

These alternative learning opportunities are based on practical learning with a connection to the labour market. These courses consist of real life training projects such as: a maritime training program on a Government owned sea-going vessel called the Karla-Omayra; a hospitality training program in a public private training hotel run by students called The Academy hotel; a computer rebuilding course and an agriculture program. It is our goal to have solved the dropout problem and the youth unemployment by 2011.

*I have a dream that some day my country will not be judged by its physical size but by the quality of the competence of my people.*