



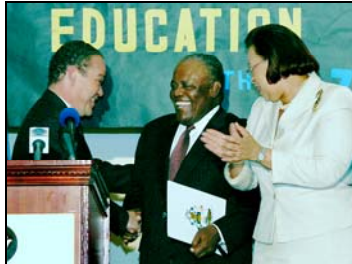
News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ministry of Education

Contact:
Ministry of Education
P. O. Box N-3913
Phone: 502- 2708
Fax: 356 -0007

Prime Minister tells educators Bahamas ahead of UN goals



Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham welcomed to the National Education Summit by Minister of Education, The Hon. Carl W. Bethel and Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Elma Garraway. The Prime Minister told Summit delegates that they have a friend in his Government.

Prime Minister, The Rt. Honourable Hubert A. Ingraham told educators attending the National Education Summit that it was with considerable satisfaction that The Bahamas was able to report to the United Nations that we had achieved the vast majority of the millennium goals for education even as they were just being articulated in international circles.

He further stated that it was to the credit of successive Bahamians Governments that every child in The Bahamas has access to education as a right and that the public sector guarantees that there is school space for every child in our country from kindergarten to Grade 12.

The nation's leader pointed out that The Bahamas has made remarkable progress in ensuring equality in excellence to education from Abaco to Inagua in the beginning years leading up to Independence when it was decided that every child would have the opportunity, should they wish to access formal education up through secondary school irrespective of their island of origin.

He noted that this goal was achieved simultaneously through a secondary school scholarship programme and through the expansion of the government operated school plant in New Providence and around the Family Islands.

Prime Minister Ingraham reminded the Summit delegates that the classical education system accepted as applicable to all children 40 years ago no longer respond to the needs of a 21st century economy. He noted that it is important that our education policies be reviewed to ensure that they are properly tuned to meet the needs of the economy and the needs of the country.

The educators applauded the Prime Minister when he stated that they had a friend in him and his Government. He also thanked educators for often taking the brunt of criticism for the failure of students to learn, and commended for them their immeasurable contribution which they make to national life.

Mr. Ingraham acknowledged that each year, the top echelon of the student body of public school graduates as accomplished scholars able to pursue tertiary level education at the best universities and technical colleges in the world.

“Regrettably, our success in getting every child into our classroom has not translated into every child achieving their all. When in the first half of the 20th century every child completing primary school could read and write, today many students leave our secondary school only semi-literate and semi-numerate, he conceded.

The Prime Minister said that he hoped the Summit would produce some practical and focused recommendations on how to invigorate the education system, stimulate young persons to want to learn and want to excel.