

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION SUMMIT
NATIONAL STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT
GRENADA
SEPTEMBER 2022

Grenada braved the challenges wrought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating the usual resilience and determination that have historically defined us as a people. The Education sector proved to be malleable responding well to the many innovative adjustments initiated to ensure continuity in the educational offering and to minimise learning loss. The pandemic brought into sharp focus the areas that had been working well, but could benefit from further financial resources, regulations, more explicit policy frameworks and governance structures.

The national consultations convened on 7th June 2022 in preparation for the Transforming Education Summit (TES), reflected the wealth of experience and insights of stakeholders. The emphasis on making adequate provision for students with learning disabilities and physical challenges, attending to the nutritional and psycho-social wellbeing of our students (and teachers) and expanding the curricula, is indicative of our commitment to inclusiveness in the education sector. Ultimately the goal is to promote access to quality education for all families.

As it obtains in most developing countries, much more needs to be done to cure the digital divide, which became even more glaring during the implementation of hybrid classes, with a strong online learning component. Teachers, students and parents alike had to confront very steep learning curves to master the educational technologies being used. Thankfully, many teachers availed themselves of the training that was provided, and were able to enhance their digital competency and proficiency in learning technologies. We also appreciate, that students too, should be introduced to an array of digital courses, ranging from keyboarding to more sophisticated computer programming courses to enhance their overall digital competency.

Ramping up ambition in the education sector must be supported with the commensurate financial investment to facilitate the anticipated innovations in learning and teaching. While Grenada has been a beneficiary of many programs to narrow the learning loss experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is still much to be achieved.

There is urgent need to address some foundational issues as well, ensuring that from the entry level, early childhood education provides a solid bedrock for

educational achievement. It is critical, therefore, that teachers in that sub-sector receive adequate training and that the Ministry set standards for learning development and care. In fact, more recently, given the prevalence of digital gadgets, the subject of game based learning has gained new prominence.

We are committed to ensuring that a reimagined education sector in Grenada will feature:

1. Continuous professional development of teachers (ensuring that educators are *au courant* with and able to leverage pedagogic developments);
2. Innovation in schools' curricula; diversifying the menu of educational and professional training options, including TVET as a staple for all students;
3. Adjustments in the physical layout of schools (to accommodate students with special needs);
4. Integration of learning technologies (strengthen the telecommunications backbone to facilitate wider use of and improve the affordability of internet services);
5. Expansion of counselling and related support services;
6. Strengthening of collaborations with the private sector and civil society to afford students more real life / immersive learning experiences;
7. Enhancing the e-literacy / e-competency of students, teachers and parents alike;
8. Integration of educational games (to encourage self-directed learning, increase team learning and team building skills, for example) and
9. Infusion of sustainable development themes throughout the curricula.

Grenada will in short order ratify and implement the Special Education Policy, ensure the smoother transition from infant to primary school and focus more attention on the nutrition and health of students. It is important to us that students receive the requisite nutritional sustenance in support of their cognitive development and physical growth. Increasingly, Government provides assistance to indigent families, through the school feeding program, bursaries and other types of material support.

COVID-19 underscored the value for developing education continuity plans and building resilience in the sector to better shield it from the vagaries of exogenous shocks. Grenada is fully committed to meeting the targets as spelt out in SDG4 which focuses on education. Tremendous effort is being exerted to ensure that there is alignment among the various initiatives within the sector and across various Government agencies, thereby promoting a whole of Government approach. By recognising the indivisibility of the various SDG goals and Grenada's own climate action ambitions, there is a heightened awareness of the need for a harmonisation of effort and the tremendous benefits to be had by leveraging the synergistic approach in the various pursuits and related

programs. But we certainly cannot do this on our own. We pray for the continuing benevolence of our development partners and diplomatic friends in the international community.