



CANADIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
COMMISSION CANADIENNE POUR L'UNESCO

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Communiqué
For immediate release

Inclusive Education Chosen as Theme of 48th International Conference on Education (ICE) in Switzerland

Ottawa, November 24, 2008 –*Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future* will be the theme of the 48th International Conference on Education (ICE), to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, from November 25 to 28, 2008.

The ICE is the largest gathering of ministers of education in the world, bringing together some 1,500 participants, including Ministers, government officials, education experts, representatives of United Nations agencies and NGOs. The Conference is organized by the International Bureau of Education (IBE) in Geneva. The IBE is a UNESCO Institute specialized in the content, methods and structure of education, and the sharing of expertise in curriculum development in all regions of the world.

In the context of the Conference, inclusive education is seen as a process that transforms schools and other centres of learning to meet the needs of all children—including minorities, those affected by HIV and AIDS, and those with disabilities and learning difficulties. It also addresses the needs of the estimated 72 million children who are not in school, the high rates of repetition and drop-out, and the relevance of what is being taught. Finally, it also includes the approximately 774 million adults who still lack basic literacy skills – more than 75% of whom live in only fifteen countries.

The ICE will examine the role of governments in the development and the implementation of policies on inclusive education, draw attention to education systems that offer opportunities and best practices for life-long learning, and emphasize the role of teachers to meet the learners' diverse expectations and needs.

The Canadian delegation will play an active role at the 48th session of the ICE. The Canadian delegation will be headed by the Honourable Kelly Lamrock, Chair of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) and Minister of Education for New Brunswick. CMEC represents the education interests of the provinces and territories internationally. David A. Walden, Secretary-General, will represent the Canadian Commission for UNESCO on the delegation.

More information about the 48th session of the ICE is available at:
Council of Ministers of Education, Canada www.cmec.ca
International Bureau of Education www.ibe.unesco.org

Canadian Commission for UNESCO

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO operates under the aegis of the Canada Council for the Arts. Its role is to act as a forum for governments and civil society, and to mobilize the participation of Canadian organizations and committed individuals in UNESCO's mandated areas: education, natural and social sciences, culture and communication and information. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the only member of the United Nations System to have National Commissions performing this role in its Member States.