

November 24, 2003

I wish to share some recent news on the development of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the Caribbean. As of November 14, 2003 there is a new acronym in our vocabulary: **CANTA**. The Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies or CANTA is officially established. Now for the details.

The launch of CANTA:

On November 14th in Kingston, Jamaica, the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA) was born. The founding members include the HEART- NTA Jamaica, the TVET Council of Barbados and the NTA of Trinidad & Tobago. Witnesses and invitees to the event included from Jamaica, His Excellency, the Governor-General, the Minister of Education, Youth and Culture, other senior officials plus some 400 participants involved in the first Jamaica Skills competition. Overseas TVET representatives came from the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, and the ILO. It was a proud night for TVET and all in the region who have supported the need for this association for so many years.

What is CANTA's objective?

The attached Memorandum of Agreement elaborates on CANTA's major objective which is the establishment and governance of a regional training and certification system providing a facility for the free movement of skilled and certified persons within the CSME. With the establishment of CANTA we have a CARICOM recognized platform from which to voice out mandated positions more clearly and market them more widely in the region. The Association also offers the opportunity to share collectively our good practices, explore global issues on TVET and also obtain assistance in carrying out our individual TVET responsibilities.

How can I join CANTA?

The launch of CANTA has truly been a process that all of us involved in TVET in the Caribbean can be pleased about. While three members founded CANTA, we know that this number will increase quickly, which is one of the main reason for this note. The process of becoming a member is rather simple. Any national training agency within CARICOM may become a member of CANTA by signing the Memorandum of Agreement. If your TVET agency is in development and you currently cannot implement the objectives outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement, you can still become an interim member of the association.

While his note can not address all the many question you may have about the Association, I suggest that you forward a letter of interest to the Association's new Chairperson, Mr. Robert Gregory. The address is: CANTA, C/O Mr. Robert Gregory, Chairman, HEART Trust/NTA, 6B Oxford Road, Kingston 5, Jamaica.

As the Association grows, watch for more information in the weeks and months to come. Better yet, become a member of CANTA and help direct its growth.

Kind regards,

George Gamerdinger