

Welcome from the President of Inclusion International

Dear Congress participants,

It is my great pleasure to welcome our members and friends to the 14th World Congress of Inclusion International.

I'm sure that as soon as you arrived in Acapulco you could feel the warm Mexican welcome. Thank you to the local organizing committee of our Mexican member, Confe, for all the work they have done to ensure that our stay here is productive, comfortable, and also fun!

It is especially appropriate to be meeting in Mexico in 2006, as this is the year that the United Nations finalized the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It was Mexican President Vicente Fox who introduced the resolution to draft the Convention to the United Nations General Assembly. At this Congress we celebrate this new international commitment to the rights of persons with a disability and we thank President Fox and the Government and people of Mexico for their leadership and support.

We especially thank our Honorary Chairs, His Excellency Martín Torrijos Espino, President of the Republic of Panamá and Her Honour, Mrs. Vivian Fernández de Torrijos, First Lady of Panama, for serving as Honorary Presidents of this Congress and for their ongoing support. As parents and longtime members of the Inclusion International family they have demonstrated leadership and commitment to the goal of full inclusion. They continue to take bold steps to demonstrate how families can influence change.

Last but not least, thank-you to our Congress Program Committee for creating a program that will allow us to learn from each other, to work together, and to draft an agenda that will help us to build an inclusive future for all.

With warm wishes that you leave the Congress with new ideas, new friends and new allies,

Diane Richler
President