

Final Declaration XVI Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean

26 and 27 February 2009

The XVI Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 26 and 27 February 2009, ratifies the validity of the principles that propitiated its establishment, inspired in the recognition of the importance of culture for sustainable development in all states of the region.

Likewise, after the debate held in this meeting, devoted to the topic *“Culture Within the Context of the Current World Crisis: Challenges and Opportunities”*, the Latin American and Caribbean States recognize the existence of cultural models in the origin of the crisis and at the same time, underline the potential of culture as a way for drafting solutions, and declare they are in favor of:

- Acknowledging and preserving the rich cultural diversity of the region, following the terms of the Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and urge all states in the region to ratify it,
- Promoting the process for the institutionalization of cultural policies and favoring a comprehensive dialogue between the countries within the context of the various mechanisms of regional integration,
- encouraging cooperation for the sustainable management of the natural heritage, conservation of biodiversity and ecological systems,
- reasserting the commitment for ensuring and implementing cultural rights of the citizens in the region,
- underlining the special validity, in the midst of the current crisis, of Article 10 of the Declaration of Salvador de Bahía, resulting from the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development (CALC): *As representatives of multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual societies, they [the Presidents] reaffirmed the importance of diversity and expressed their concern at the increase of xenophobia and discrimination in the world and at initiatives which impede the free movement of people. In this context, they condemned the criminalization of migration flows and measures that violate the human rights of migrants. They reaffirmed that the free movement of people is as important as the circulation of goods and capital.*

The current crisis demands that the foreign policy of member countries implements the recommendations formulated by the respective Ministries of Culture, mostly in the achievement of what establishes the above-mentioned article 10 in the relationship of immigrants with their countries of origin and countries of destination.

The Forum ratifies the validity of the progress achieved in the implementation of the following inter-regional cooperation projects:

1. Traveling Caribbean Film Showcase
2. Virtual Museum of Latin America and the Caribbean
3. Museum of Carnival of the Americas
4. CARIFESTA.
5. Portal of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean
6. Caribbean Capacity Building Programme for World Heritage

The following programmes and projects are furthermore included in the Forum's Agenda:

1. MERCOSUR Cultural Itineraries.
2. Project Collection 200 – Shared Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean.
3. Project CARICOM Website for Children.
4. Project SICSUR - MERCOSUR Cultural Information System.

The Forum recognizes the importance of the national experiences submitted and requests the Pro-Tempore Secretariat to include them in the Portal of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean so as member countries can analyze them for eventual implementation in their respective conditions.

The Forum submits the proposal to the Pro-Tempore Secretariat to study the possibility to convene a regional meeting on Cultural Policies for Diversity and Development.

The Forum especially acknowledges Casa de las Américas of Cuba, on its 50th anniversary for its remarkable work in the reclaim, preservation, and promotion of the cultures in the region.

The Forum ratifies the will expressed during the XIV and XV meetings of the Forum to strengthen the cooperation with UNESCO through the following actions:

- Promote in the 35th UNESCO General Conference so as to ensure recognition of the Forum as the major representative to UNESCO regarding the cultural policies for the Latin America and the Caribbean Region.
- Propose the signing of a cooperation instrument between the Forum and UNESCO to strengthen the cooperation carried out during the last 20 years and with the purpose of contributing to the achievement of the goals established by both organizations in the field of Culture and the

- Submit a proposal to the programme for regional participation, with the support of the respective National UNESCO Commissions, to fund projects earmarked for the institutional strengthening of the Forum.

To implement these actions, the Forum bestows on the Pro-Tempore Secretariat¹ the powers to carry out the necessary actions and make the necessary consultations with Member States.

The Forum acknowledges the support provided for the celebration of this meeting by the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Forum thanks the Government of the Republic of Argentina for its hospitality in the celebration of this XVI meeting.

The Forum congratulates the Governments of the Republic of Ecuador and the Republic of Bolivia for their decision to hold the venue of the XVII Forum and XVIII Forum in 2010 and 2011 respectively, thus ensuring the continuity of the work towards the integration of the peoples and cultures of Latin American and Caribbean States.

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA, 27 FEBRUARY 2009

¹ The Pro-Tempore Secretariat, permanent body of the Forum, is currently made up of the following states: Republic of Ecuador, Republic of Argentina, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of Cuba, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Dominican Republic and Republic of Bolivia.