

Final Declaration of the 15th Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean

June 28 and 29, 2007

The Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean, herein after called “The Forum”, gathered in Pot-of-Spain, on June 28 and 29 2007, hereby affirm the relevance of the Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, as the founding body for intergovernmental dialogue among our countries in support of regional integration.

The 15th Forum ratifies the validity of the principles that underlie its constitution, inspired by an understanding of the cultural dimension as an indispensable factor for the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean, based on the recognition, the respect, the protection and promotion of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of its peoples.

The Forum notes the growing importance and influence of the culture and creative industries in the world. Moreover, it is inspired by and would like to replicate these developments in the region by providing an enabling environment.

The Forum endorses and encourages Member States to consider the recommendations contained in the Caribbean Negotiating Machinery Study on the Cultural Industries.

The Forum renews its full support for the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions adopted by UNESCO in 2005 as the mechanism to promote our cultural diversity in all its forms, and the full development of the creativity and the cultural industries in our countries.

The Forum, aware of the current challenges, declares the need to strive for the strengthening and perfecting of the working mechanisms and procedures, reaffirming the will to advance together in the implementation and expansion of the projects approved in this Forum and included in its Plan of Action

The Forum therefore acknowledges the following projects for interregional collaboration:

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

The Forum also acknowledges the development of the ALBA Funding mechanism for cultural projects in the Americas and the CARICOM Foundation of the Arts.

The Forum notes that this year, 2007, marks the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade and supports Member States in their efforts to appropriately commemorate this occasion.

The Forum takes the opportunity to express its gratitude and appreciation for the support and co-operation granted by UNESCO and its Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean to this Forum since its formation in 1989. The Forum reaffirms the decision to submit to the 34th General Conference of UNESCO a draft resolution aimed at strengthening such co-operation, ties and relations, and the will of its Member States to advance towards the signing of an agreement for mutual co-operation.

The Forum thanks the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and acknowledges the hospitality, generosity and spirit extended during the hosting of the 15th Forum.

The Forum also congratulates the Government of the Republic of Argentina for its decision to host the 16th Forum in 2008, thus ensuring the continuation of the work towards the integration of the peoples and cultures of all the Member States of Latin America and the Caribbean.

PORT-OF-SPAIN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, 29 JUNE 2007