



Encuentro
de Ministros de Cultura
y de Responsables
de Políticas Culturales
de América Latina
y el Caribe

VII - ADDRESSES

- Inaugural Session

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY HERMAN CRESPO TORAL,
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNESCO

It is my pleasure to bring the warmest greetings in the name of Mr Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Director General of UNESCO, to the honorable Ministers of Culture and Cultural Policy Authorities of Latin America and the Caribbean, who are meeting for the fifth time in this magnificent city of Caracas with the purpose of pronouncing the integrational role which Culture must play in the new era we are witnessing in our Continent. He has asked me as well to express his satisfaction at the accomplishments of this long journey, which has led not only to creating the philosophical and theoretical foundations of the process of regional integration, but also to a series of concrete projects of co-operation and exchange, whose fruits have already begun to benefit our people. Federico Mayor has closely followed the meetings of the Ministers, given the great interest which UNESCO has in the development of its member States, and above all because he is personally a great admirer of Latin American culture, convinced as he is of the relevance of its profound values to this new era of Humanity. In this spirit he has accompanied the Ministers from their founding meeting in Brasilia and has collaborated with all the means at his disposal in the implementation of the aims of this exalted Forum.

To speak of Culture at this moment in history is to raise the deepest questions concerning the essence of human beings and their destiny on the face of the earth.

The giddy events of our day have led us to a climactic vertex. Some speak of the end of history: others believe we are entering a new era. Only a short time ago, with the fall of the walls and the end of the Cold War, the world seemed on the verge of entering an age of peace; we thought that at last the hour of justice and equality had arrived, when the richest and most developed countries could contribute part of their resources to improving the life conditions of the vast impoverished majority of the earth. Our disillusionment was fast in coming. An unspeakable war demonstrated how mankind has advanced in sophisticated technology aimed at its own destruction, proving that peace is a goal yet to be achieved. It became clear that we would have to wage an unrelenting struggle to reach this goal. Then to our astonishment we witnessed the spread of terrible conflicts in the wake of the Soviet Union's demise: ethnic extermination, erasure of cultural memory, overweening nationalism, repressed ancestral rivalries that burst into uncontrollable strife.

In the face of this desolate panorama UNESCO considers, more than ever, that its mission is to promote a "culture of peace" founded on mutual respect and tolerance, which will enable the consolidation of open and pluralist societies, within which the

rights of man, fundamental freedoms and democracy may be developed, and which assume the duty of protecting their minorities.

To reach this goal we must set our sights on a most vital element of human nature: the right to be different, which implies consecrating, understanding, respecting "the culture of others". This is all the more evident if we define culture as understood by T. S. Elliot, as "the universal way of life, the way a people lives from birth to death, from morning to night, and even when asleep".

There is a different panorama in Latin America and the Caribbean, the antithesis of what is happening in the socialist world, for here there is an increasingly greater tendency towards integration. The forces of cohesion draw their strength from democracy and a powerful internal vocation of our people for mutual understanding and exchange. Old barriers and prejudices are falling away, new bridges are being built, regional and sub-regional alliances are being consolidated. The political will to continue in this direction is manifest, as has been made clear by the Ibero-American Summits of Guadalajara and Madrid and those of CARICOM. Culture is at the heart of the process. One may even assert that integration will be consolidated in Culture and by means of Culture.

This Encounter of Ministers of Culture and Cultural Policy Authorities is spokesman for the yearnings of our people and, at the same time, agent for the construction of the new era which our America is entering. In the construction of this new era man is the subject of development, and in order to attain a humane and sustained development Culture will necessarily be a prime ingredient. Only by incorporating the cultural dimension in the development processes can we guarantee the permanence and strength of cultural identities, the irreplaceable wealth of our America, "pluribus et unum", one and multiple. Herein lies the key to building a harmonious relationship with nature, enabling our children to enjoy the fruits of the earth; the key to utilizing our prodigious technology for the benefit of our peoples, instead of for creating dependency and alienation.

The activities which you are engaged in are directed toward these same objectives and UNESCO is ready to join you every step of the way. This year UNESCO has fulfilled important commitments to the Region, both in its regular programme and in those relating to commemorate the Fifth Centennial of the Encounter of Two Worlds, and to "Amerindia 92", which propitiated expression by the indigenous world ---- often forgotten and demeaned ---- thus contributing to a dialogue with other cultures. The programme,

"Encuentros en Cadena" continues and strives to bring to light the other agents of the culture of the Americas. Also, the stage has been set for launching other important projects: "The World of the Maya", aimed at promoting a harmonic and sustained development of this vast and unequalled region, respecting and

dignifying its people, heirs of an ancestral culture; and, secondly, "The Spaces of the Baroque", an exhaustive study of one of the characteristic traits of our identity, both in its architectural expression and as a unique world view which has enlightened our peoples.

In a sphere closer to the purposes of the Ministers, UNESCO, acting on the recommendations of the IV Forum of Havana and as a part of its programme of the World Decade for Cultural Development, has assigned to the Regional Office of Culture, which I am honored to direct, in conjunction with the Pro-Tempore Secretariat, the resources for two projects which are crucial to the goals of this Forum: The creation of the System of Cultural Information for Latin America and the Caribbean, which will guarantee the validity of cultural policy and programmes, giving them the benefits of modern technique; and performing a feasibility study for the creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Fund for the Development of Culture and the Arts. Thanks to the valuable and untiring efforts of the Pro-Tempore Secretariat the bases for these projects have been established, leading to their discussion on this Forum's agenda.

In closing, allow me to express the satisfaction which UNESCO and its Director General, Federico Mayor, feel at having Venezuela as the venue for this event, a nation that has pioneered the great ideals of America, committed always to noble causes. UNESCO has always had the support of Venezuela in its campaigns and conquests. Venezuela's intellectual contribution has illuminated the way toward many of its great accomplishments, aiding it in crucial battles. Venezuela's generous contribution to the Fund for the Promotion of Culture and the Arts has enabled the implementation of many projects. Furthermore, Venezuela made it possible to establish the International Simon Bolivar Prize, which honors the name of the Liberator on a universal scale and which has distinguished the names of those who have contributed decisively to "liberty, independence and solidarity among nations and to a new economic, social and cultural order". Those so honored include King Juan Carlos of Spain and Nelson Mandela.

I do not wish to refer to the outstanding position of Venezuela in the fields of culture of our America and to her leadership in thinking, visual arts, music, theatre I simply want to point out the immense labor which this country has performed in the realm of culture in recent years due to the intelligence and dynamism of Jose Antonio Abreu. Venezuela allocates great resources to culture and has set an admirable example in this time of economic crisis, in contrast to other countries which have postponed investment in culture at the risk of irretrievable loss.

Finally, distinguished Ministers, I believe that this Forum constitutes an act of faith in the destiny of our peoples. Isn't it a good omen to be meeting in Caracas, birthplace of the Liberator? Is not our cultural project the very one that would nurture the great nation envisioned by Simon Bolivar?

INAUGURATION SPEECH BY DR. JOSE ANTONIO ABREU,
PRESIDENT OF THE VENEZUELAN NATIONAL CULTURAL COUNCIL

I am immensely honored this morning in greeting the presence of the distinguished personalities of 25 countries and 6 international organizations. We are meeting in Caracas at the V Encounter of Ministers Responsible for Political Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean. Simon Bolivar was born in Caracas 209 years ago, for history and for immortality. The Liberator, the greatest Venezuelan of all times, the glory of America. In the name of his cause, this 15 November and also at the meeting by excellence of the Venezuelan people and the Brothers of the Continent, regarding the scenario challenge of the assembly that the universe reveals for its content and in comparable encouragement, testimony of the valid category of Latin America and the Caribbean in the realization of the cultural summits and in the technological gesture of man.

The presence of attentive and responsible organizations in the Encounter which is directed by our beloved friend Hernan Crespo Toral, corroborates the incontestable fact that our gesture in the Latin-Caribbean System responds to the clamor of the whole Continental Community. We are today more conscious than ever, the trance of the social and historic crisis, the answer of culture illuminates infallibly the well founded course, that determines and conditions, irreversibly, the sign and the destiny, the substantial everyday life of the people of our countries.

From there, in August 1989, on finishing our First Meeting, the declaration of Brasilia, stimulated with the passionate fervor by José Aparecido de Oliviera, proclaimed Culture as an instrument without rival for the Integration and Regional Development, establishing cultural dimensions of Society that contains and defines the common identity of our countries and the possibility of cementing among ourselves a spiritual solidarity. During that meeting a relevant declaration of the English speaking countries of the Caribbean took place that emphasized the need to recognize and gradually reduce to the minimum the historical-cultural barriers that until now have impeded the full integration of the Caribbean Region and Latin America.

In Mar de Plata, under the beautiful motto "Starting Dialogue" with "Everyone"; we insisted in our diversity, far from constituting a stigma, of representing the unalienable authentic riches of Latin America and the Caribbean, forging an identity that could never be understood as an immutable essence subjacent to collective existence, but even more, the fusion of that subjacent with the dynamic balance of accumulative and stormy sequences, generated by the increasing contact and greater identification. All to find gradually, but with rhythm and density much more complete and eloquent those significant elements that permit us to recognize ourselves in the mirror of

approximation and convergence and not only a dialogue among ourselves but in the vigorous opening of Latin America and the Caribbean to the World and the coming times.

The fundamental Letter of Mexico, the optimum fruit of the III Encounter confirms the most radical Latin American challenge with the prodigious energy in the Cultural Environment. In effect it is true that the most crucial of our continental perspectives concerns precisely the well-being of Society, the quality of existence, self determination, solidarity and pacifistic and democratic coexistence it is evident that none of these elements allude exclusively the political-economical structure but before all the harmonic and supreme mobilization of pluralist volunteers that base there essence in containing of all the Continental Cultural Project capable of penetrating and at the same time making full sense of the social activity of man in his individual transcendent realization.

In the inaugural speech of the IV Meeting, held last year in Havana, his excellency Minister of Culture of Cuba underlined the convenience of franchising the path to Political Integration of the Continent by means of development and deepening the solid bond experience coming from the force of cultural integration that dates back to the highest dimension of Latin American thought.

From there at the threshold of our V Meeting, it is obviously valid the planning of our objectives. The preliminary stages have finished; the formulation of doctrines and principles has prospered; the round tables for interchange of ideas has matured; the debate and dialogue. Now we are ready to coordinate our collective action. We require the implantation every day of our Programs and Projects regarding lasting and efficient mechanisms. The moment has arrived to consolidate with a historical transcendent profile, a genuine Organic and Continental Project for the fertilization of Cultural Integration of our countries.

Precisely it is imperative to inspire in our vast collective project, encouragement, to multiply efficiently operational dynamism, technical output and a creative inspiration, moving to help in Havana, as Headquarters of the Secretariat Pro-Tempore responsible for the V Meeting, a preparatory Encounter in Margarita, during which the programs were carefully classified, Activities and Projects in process or subject to evaluation, with sights on the adequate reordering in function of the seven great programming lines that derive from the Plan of Action under the heading of Administration and Cultural Management; Cultural Information, Natural and Native Culture; Cultural Industries, Promotion and Cultural Diffusion and System of Regional Finance. The Encounter in Margarita was considered the elaborated Proposal by means of the valuable help of the Andres Bello and UNESCO pacts, relative to the strengthening of the Encounter as an instance of union, coordination and execution of Strategic Projects for the study by the specialized Encounter later by held

in Santiago. The work advanced in the Preparatory Encounter in Margarita has brought about a new and valuable analytical instrument whose conceptual profile programmatic design contributed considerably and the formidable results are reflected in the Pro-Tempore Secretariat report for the period 1991-1992.

Between the 27 and 29 of last April, the Pro-Tempore Secretariat met in Santiago carrying out the corresponding mandate that came about in the Encounter in Havana confirmed at the Preparatory Encounter in Margarita and examined in depth in diverse institutions oriented to the perfection of the Encounter as an efficient instrument suitable for the promotion and stimulus of the integrating process. The alternative proposals analyzed, with the priceless technical assistance of the International Organizations that are today represented here at this meeting, the Secretariat has agreed to raise respectively the consideration of the V Encounter by the strengthening of the Pro-Tempore Secretariat by means of adequate regulation of its diverse operational areas.

Also the Santiago Encounter considered as an important topic relative to the creation of the Latin American Fund for Culture and Arts. The agreement that the Secretariat proposes to assign to the Honorable delegates assisting the Respective Analytical Document headed by the distinguished professional Dr. Enrique Sarabia for later consideration by at the Encounter's financial experts.

Previous omens of our V Encounter constitute the latest initiatives adopted at the sub-regional level tendencies of strengthening cultural development integrated within each of the sub-regions and among these and the rest of the area. In this manner the Encounter named "The Caribbean World" held in Caracas in November of this year an important advance in the process, tending to approximate the objective of Continental Integration. At that moment representatives of Barbados, Belize, Martinique Puerto Rico, Surinam, Trinidad-Tobago and Venezuela with the valuable help of UNESCO, SELA, CARICOM, PNUD and the OEA agreed to establish mechanisms for concertation and the suitable coordination to conform the validity of the Inter-Caribbean Cultural System. As of the 25 August of this year the Encounter of the Secretariat of Culture and the Authorities of MERCOSUR undertook a notable force to perfect the tendency of coordinating cultural cooperating among Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay with the objective of assuring stronger Continental Integration in the global process. Between the 28 and the 29 of this month the Minister of Education and Culture for Education Coordination and Central American Culture - CECC - held in Managua with the objective of the XII Ordinary Encounter resolved to translate their programmatic orientation in specific actions to achieve the results of Regional impact in the spheres of Education and Culture.

In each of the indicated events with common theme revealing analogous anxieties and similar aspirations of converging paths. At least in this V Encounter we are confronting inexorably the question regarding the mission that corresponds to Latin America and the Caribbean in the Contemporary World.

On the 12 of October 1492 the historical commotion of the Planet came about. Since then our America has reaffirmed itself in ecstasy to bring about the work of Mayz Vallenilla that he assumes as the roots of our existence. The ideal of the New World reveals by definition that we are hopeful, of the advent. The perennial fight between the acceptance and the rejection of the past and the future, so fertile in terms of our fabulous myths and colossal utopias, reflects overall that the distinguished Latin American-Caribbean man of great thoughts of Zea, Mayz, Schwartzmann and Echeverria is nothing more than a fact of not being simply hereditary of other worlds and cultures, but called and compiled in the job of projecting and constructing its own universe as the New World. A similar historical vocation is the only one capable of constructing and creating its own work represented in the ontological antonomasia feat of Latin-Caribbean man, militant, tireless and sharp witted, imaginative, intuitive and persistent. With unquestionable properties William Raat attributes to the Latin American people the brilliant possibility of universalization, from a specific point of view to develop a philosophy of the New world that could be shared by all Humanity and that by construction of the future passes the dominions of conventional historical analysis to transmute to meta-language and overcome meta-history.

Due to this our Encounter in 1992 represents before the V anniversary the resounding affirmation of Latin America and the Caribbean as the New World, hope of the Universe, whose Cultural Integration determines the possibility of our guiding presence in the times of occurrence. Much more than rhetoric much more than the merely declarative and diagnostic plans, such Cultural Integration of the Continent of our Encounter now postulates as a living platform for action presenting to us the only that is compatible with coherent realization of the collective ideal; for the synthesis of our challenges and objectives under operational and realistic rules to deepen today more than ever the discovery of ourselves by means of the meeting, exploration, interchange, revaluation of our gigantic cultural, scientific institutional, political, spiritual, intellectual and mystical potential.

The period starting, 1992-1993, gives us the brilliant occasion of establishing and putting into practice new and substantive Projects in cardinal dominions of the Educational System and the Cultural tasks in all of our countries. Among the most important, it is worthy of mention without excluding many others those whose actual grade of maturity permits us to classify among them the maximum feasibility and efficiency. In this sense the Regional System of the Formation of Human Resources foresees 3 fundamental Strategic Components, respectively referred to as Cultural

Administration and Management, Artistic Teaching and the Presentation of Certificates, diplomas and Degrees. The Regional System of Cultural Legislation tends to the actualization of our judicial ordinances in achieving the Protection and Defense of Cultural Heritage by means of devices formulated in the excellent Meetings of Cultural Legislation realized in the past years of the Continent. The Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Information System shows us as fundamental contents, a Referential Sub-System another of Documented Information and a third of Communication and Inter change of Information. The Regional Systems of Artistic Formation and Cultural Circuits now lay out the elements, mechanisms and resources necessary to organize the continental scale of Aesthetic Education, the Formation for the Arts and Education; Artistic Interchange in the area of Scenic and of Music; the System of Continental Museums. The Book, Cinema, Television and in general the audiovisual media have at present the required instrument for the immediate plantation of the corresponding to the Regional System de Formation, Production, Promotion and Diffusion. The Commercialization System of Assets and or Cultural Services foreseen as a precise group of actions oriented to the organic definition within reach of perfecting its structural and functional structure.

A new and limitless horizon is opening in the sphere of the Artistic and Intellectual Relation Meeting. During the VII Conference of the European Ministers Responsible for Cultural Affairs held in Paris between the 15 and 16 of last October, prevailed the ideological discussion regarding the complex cultural perspective of the European Community with emphasis on the reciprocal understanding of the Cultures, the conservation and exploitation of cultural and written heritage and the development of all inherent phases of the Book industry and the Promotion of Reading. Our Continental creator imaginative and constructive, protagonist of the vast and prolific Cultures of the Planet, the riches of the world of our creators and artists, among them also aesthetic and inter-personal contact, open discussion and a group of highly novel and prospective ideas and projects which this Encounter of Ministers Responsible for Political Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean can and must open an active space without reserve. In this order we have the pleasure of the inclusion in our agenda of the V Encounter a special session dedicated to Artistic and Integration, forerunner to the new transcendental days of creativity and intellectual confrontation.

It is impossible to avoid the circumstances of 1979 on the occasion of the IX Latin American Congress of Philosophy, Santiago Vidal Muñoz insisted in the need of Promoting the conscience that interconnects our realities, significance and determining values for man today and tomorrow by means a frank advance in refining of the conceptualization and elucidation of language and with objectives of the analyzing the Latin American condition, Arturo Arnao confirmed that the evolution of

Philosophical Thought in our continent from the XVII century has reflecting emphatically and ardent practice of teaching and reflection as the transmission knowledge that constitutes and institutes the spirit of the objective and to exploit authentic and non authentic thought that definitely renews subjective spirit, that mixes with the great historical systems of Latin America and warns of the redemption as a function of radical emancipation.

Cultural development of the Continent cannot be unaware of the reaction of man in Technical Evolution and appearance of Modernism and the social phenomena. Felix Schwarzrnarm discovered that in the solitude of man and his hard search for human ties: one of the most important manifestations of our society in the advance of Modernism impregnated with impersonalism. The periodic Encounter of our artists and the confrontation of their aesthetics together with critical validation of their achievements dazzles us as the route to our collective gesture, a function of our pure pledge to synthesize the universal and the specific in noble expression of ourselves. Our conscience promotes colloquial intellectual and philosophical dialogue together with the approximation of the Technical-Scientific community. With strong identity and conviction that encourages us to stimulate the confrontation and artistic interchange, inter-institutional cultural cooperation, aesthetic formation, managerial ability. Crowning the Integrationist Day by establishing from now on a solid institutional base and Intellectual Encounter. We achieve this by ignoring the obstacles, guaranteeing solid sublimity of our linguistic heritage by means of resources and the highest academic cooperation in all the areas concerned with the teaching of languages, the diffusion and interchange of our rich narrative, the stimulation of our most recent dramatists, the development of poetry and editorial integration.

Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

The glory of the Nobel Prize for Literature shines once more in the Caribbean. Also once more from the Land of Plenty, the historical Encounter of Culture solemnly with perennial resonance, the doors of a solid participative continental conscience that summons us to our proteinic destiny, that our word, converted in a substance and fullness or a more dignified life of the Americas and the world.