

**Address of Dr. Ludmila Calvo
at the X Meeting of Ministers of Culture
and Officers in Charge of Cultural Policies
of Latin America and the Caribbean**

Hon. Mia Amor Mottley, Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture and President of the Forum

Honorable Ministers from Latin America and the Caribbean

Representatives of International Organizations

Delegates of the Forum

Ms. Celia Toppin, Executive Secretary of the Forum

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the President of the National Council of Culture of Venezuela, Dr. Oscar Sambrano Urdaneta, who for circumstances beyond his control cannot be here with us today, it gives me great pleasure to address such a distinguished audience, on the occasion of the Tenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officer in Charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean, which is being celebrated in this beautiful island of Barbados.

This Tenth Forum represents the continuation of a cultural integration effort in which Venezuela, through the National Council of Culture, has participated since its beginning and to which the Administration of

President Oscar Sambrano Urdaneta has dedicated a very special consideration. In this sense, Venezuela has carried out policies that support art and creation and has taken part in initiatives that favor cultural exchange and contribute to knowing us better and to define the common elements that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have in common.

From 1999, the National Council of Culture will have a new administration. We reaffirm the intention of our country in giving continuity and support to the programs of the Forum in which we participate today and in the future.

The result of our performance, in reference to the commitments derived from the meetings of the Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officers in Charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean, that took place in Port of Spain, in 1994, Managua in 1996, and Cartagena de Indias, in 1997, permit us to present concrete achievements in each one of the programs that were carried out.

In concordance with this thought, and in pursuance of the general guidelines of the Latin American-Caribbean Chair of Linguistic Integration, we have developed three editions of the Intensive Spanish

Course with the participation of more than 50 public officers in the area of Culture from the English speaking Caribbean. In this way the links of cooperation are strengthened between the English speaking Caribbean Countries and Spanish speaking America.

On the other hand, and in reference to the consolidation of the Cultural Information System of Latin America and the Caribbean, SICLAC, we have achieved the entire working of the National Cultural Information System of Venezuela, SINDIC. This important advancement permit us to offer technical assistance to those countries that would require it, consolidating the integration mechanisms through solid national structures related to the area of cultural information.

With relation to the theme of cultural heritage we have completed the National Inventory Project of Venezuelan Cultural Heritage, which involves the areas of Pre-Inventory of Cultural Goods, National Monuments, Building Inventory, Collection Inventory and Inventory of Archeological Sites. This information is compiled in a CD-ROM format, which constitutes a first class interactive resource to the service of universities, museums and centres of documentation and information.

On the matter of Cultural Tourism, Venezuela reaffirms its disposition to promote the study and analysis in view to achieve a more precise definition, as well as guidelines that conduct to the development of that important aspect without affecting the fundamental cultural values of our region. In this sense, we have developed specific programs of human resource training in the area of cultural administration and management, directed to professionals working in culture in the Latin American and Caribbean environment, through the **Latin American and Caribbean Centre for Cultural Development (CLADEC)**

The relationship between culture and commerce is evidence of the important and decisive role of cultural industries in the Latin American and Caribbean environment. For this we stress the development of the publishing and film making industries in our country as clear and successful examples of commercialization and production of goods and cultural services.

We, the members of the National Council of Cultural, who have shared so many happy moments with you, wish to bring to the consideration of the Forum this brief reflection.

At a time when we are developing the technology to make everything virtual, becomes of transcendental importance that we can look at each other eyes and give each other a hug, that we share our dreams and we put together our will to make then a reality. Because it is only through human contact that all the technologies of the universe will make sense and be of use. Let's not forget that the encounter of human beings is the fundamental aim of this Forum.

We wish to thank the Independent Nation of Barbados for allowing us to enjoy its sea, its light, its breeze, its blue, its aroma and its love, to reaffirm this mandate.

Thank you very much

AM/DA/AR