

**SYNTHESIS OF THE RAPPORTEUR'S DOCUMENT ON THE 14TH FORUM OF  
MINISTERS FOR CULTURE AND CULTURAL POLICY-MAKERS FOR LATIN  
AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 28 and 29 September 2005.

**First Day: 28 September 2005**

**Morning**

**Opening Session**

The XIV Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean was opened on Thursday 28 September 2005 by the Minister of Culture of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Caracas, Francisco Sesto Novás in the Gran Salón of the Hotel Hilton in the city of Caracas.

Twenty Seven (27) Member States were present:

Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Granada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, St Kitts & Nevis, St Vincent & The Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Representatives of CARICOM, UNESCO and the OEI were present as observers.

**The Minister of Culture of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Francisco Sesto Novás**, in his opening remarks, emphasized the intention to grant the XIV Forum a somewhat different character to the usual in this type of meeting of high-level cultural authorities considering this type of meeting is the most authentic and the one that really creates the bonds between all the Latin American and Caribbean countries and turns the region into a huge motherland. He therefore emphasized the interest in propitiating a true open dialogue, a very honest exchange and so that stronger and more intense bridges could be built towards a single united Latin American and Caribbean mother country.

After the opening remarks by His Excellency Arch Sesto Novás, the Agenda was approved and the Committee was elected by acclamation:

**Chair:** Francisco Sesto Novás, Minister of Culture of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

**First Vice Chair:** Manuel de Jesús Salazar Tetzagüic, Minister of Culture and Sports of Guatemala.

**Second Vice Chair:** Elestom Adams, Minister Responsible for Culture in the Ministry of Housing, Culture and Social Transformation of Antigua and Barbuda.

**Rapporteurs:** Osvaldo Rivera Sundt, Vice Minister of Culture of the Ministry of Economic Development of Bolivia; Pilar Entrala, Co-ordinator of the Division of International Relations of the National Council of Culture and the Arts of Chile, and; José Fúnez Rodríguez, Sub-Secretary of State of the Secretariat of Culture, Arts and Sports of Honduras.

**Moderator:** Silvia Díaz Alvarado, President of the National Council of Culture of the Bolivarian Republic Venezuela (CONAC).

The President of CONAC, in her capacity as Moderator then opened the debate on the first item in the Agenda: ***“Open Dialogue Between Ministers of Culture and***

***Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies of the Region on the Strategies Towards the Cultural Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean.”***

His Excellency Mathew J. Walter (**Minister of Community Development, Gender Affairs and Information of Dominica**): Referred to the serious communication problems prevailing in the region both due to the language barriers and the transportation because of the lack of interconnections, which results in long trips with many stops and changes of airplanes, for example from the Caribbean islands to the continental Member States.

Regarding the first case, he proposed working for the mandatory teaching of foreign languages starting at primary school level thus encouraging and promoting language learning. In the second case, he called on Venezuela to be made a hub so as to facilitate in some way travel between the Caribbean and the continent.

He also called for a broader participation of Latin America in CARIFESTA (Caribbean Festival of Arts), as well as foster cultural exchanges in the region without any impediments for the visits of cultural groups from one Member State to the other. He advocated for the establishment of a Latin American and Caribbean cultural fund for the preservation and promotion of culture, and called for the organization of training workshops in various areas of capacity building, for example in event management, event production, research methods in artistic skills and also museum management skills in order to effectively and efficiently deal with the issue of cultural integration. He also expressed the need to forge closer ties between indigenous peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

His Excellency, Luis Federico Hernández Aguilar (**President of the National Council for Culture and Arte of El Salvador**): Continued on the subject of cultural communication between Caribbean and Latin American countries and called on the Members to make all possible efforts to reduce or close such communication gap. As an example, he proposed establishing permanent programmes of publication of Caribbean authors in Central America, and Central American authors in the Caribbean, as a way of reducing the information gap and lack of cultural contacts between Central America and the Caribbean.

He also offered support from Central American Member States to CARICOM countries in drawing museum heritage policies and offered their experience in the organization of cultural events.

In his view, it is timely for the region to establish these programmes for intensive cultural exchange.

Her Excellency, Magdalena Úbeda de Rodríguez (**Director General of the Nicaraguan Institute of Culture**): Proposed studying the publication of stories by Caribbean authors in Central America, even if these are not translated into Spanish, stories could be published in their original languages. She underlined the importance of developing cultural industries strengthening the various expressions of popular cultures, rich in cultural diversity. She also emphasized the importance of the conservation of cultural heritage within the strategy for cultural integration of the region. In this regard, she stressed the importance of the struggle against illicit trafficking of cultural property, the actions related to cultural diversity and subregional integration in cultural objects, the actions related to cultural diversity and subregional integration. She also called for increasing technical and scientific exchanges in the field of historic-cultural research. She furthermore advocated for the promotion of reading and books at the regional level, to improve the access to education and information for all the countries in the region and strengthening the publishing industry with emphasis on national literary production, especially those related to science, technology, arts and popular cultures. She also proposed the complementation of the actions of the observatories of cultural policies by means of studies and strategic analyses aimed at socio cultural development, and likewise indicated the advisability of the participation of universities and other independent cultural institutions in the management and analysis of these bodies. She also

expressed her satisfaction with the progress achieved in the cultural integration of Central America.

His Excellency Mr. Rodwell Ferguson (**Minister of State of Belize for Education, Youth, Sports and Culture**): Emphasized the special position of his country as a bridge between Central America and the Caribbean and the great cultural diversity of the country, appreciated through the presence, for example, of the Garifunas, Mayas, Mestizos and Creole cultures. He also stressed his country's linguistic diversity. He underlined the significance of the exchange and free movement and travels in the region and the holding of meetings such as this Forum.

Dr. Avelino Stanley (**Sub-Secretary of State for Culture, Creativity and Popular Participation of the Dominican Republic**): Urged to discuss integration strategies, aimed at identifying the activities that will favor such integration. He strongly supported the proposal for the creation of a Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Fund with the contributions from member States and other funding agencies.

His Excellency Mr. Luis Federico Hernández Aguilar (**President of the National Council for Culture and Arts of El Salvador**): Stressed the importance of accurately defining the strategies and profiles of projects before submitting applications to international organizations. He informed the Forum of his country's decision to initiate a national dialogue for culture, so that the topic of culture is given top priority within the national agenda, aimed at involving all sectors of the Salvadoran society. He referred to the Social Charter proposed by Venezuela in the framework of the OAS, particularly to the statement that culture does not depend on institutions, culture is made by the peoples and it is they who must decide what should be done with it.

Dr. José Antonio Fúnez Rodríguez (**Sub-Secretary of State for Culture, Arts and Sport of Honduras**): Pointed the need to use cultural activity as an instrument to struggle against poverty. He proposed establishing an exchange of cultural projects that have been successful in the struggle against poverty. He presented as examples the experiences of the work developed by the Venezuelan Symphony Orchestra with young people and the Cultural Industries in Brazil.

Mrs. Silvia Díaz Alvarado (**President of CONAC of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**): Invited observers from international agencies present in the meeting to actively participate in the debate and feel on an equal footing with the Member States of the Forum.

Dr. Eudoro Fonseca Yerena (**Director General of Cultural Relations of Mexico**): Referred to the need of defining medium-term strategies and substantial actions to establish the preconditions for cultural development. He recalled that there are still no reliable indicators to measure cultural development, that it was a recently initiated task and there is much work to do. He said it is particularly important that each country defines the cultural indicators that it requires, which would later facilitate the definition of minimum basic indicators for the regional work and Latin American and Caribbean integration. He likewise emphasized the importance of having reliable inventories of cultural industries, especially small- and medium-sized enterprises. He called for the formation of networks of Cultural Promoters and referred to the actions taken by Mexico in this area.

He confirmed CONACULTA's support for cultural integration strategies in Latin America and the Caribbean and stressed the importance of actions such as analysis of the economic impact of culture, definition of supporting mechanisms for generation of employment in the cultural sector, promotion of joint studies for the preparation of cultural indicators, comparative studies on cultural policies to measure the contribution of culture to the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean, the exchange of experiences on strategies, methodologies and best practices regarding cultural industries, promotion of quantitative and qualitative studies on the cultural industries and their contribution to the Gross Domestic

Product in each country, promotion of the region's tangible and intangible heritage, exchange of experiences of each country at the national level with regards to artistic education and the training of cultural promoters. For all these areas, he offered the contribution of Mexican experiences and expertise as well as Mexican experts.

He called for the creation of a Latin American and Caribbean network of cultural promoters, a Latin American and Caribbean network of festivals organizers and a closer approach to the festivals that already have a regional dimension.

He confirmed the importance of strengthening CARIFESTA and mentioned the Afro-Caribbean Festival of Veracruz, Mexico.

He also recalled that in 2006 Mexico will celebrate the bicentennial anniversary of the birth of Benito Juárez, and invited all Member States to join the festivities, for example, organizing competitions for children and youth and possibly linking the figure of Juárez with Bolívar and Martí and other leaders of independence from the region.

He also mentioned the importance of cultural tourism in Mexico's relations with CARICOM.

Mr. Oswaldo Rivera Sundt (**Vice Minister of Culture of Bolivia**): Referred to the sources of Latin American and Caribbean cultural policies: the powerful development of the Pre-Columbian cultures, the process of cross breeding and intermixing after the encounter between the two worlds and the impact of the universal culture as product of modernization.

He called for the protection of the cultures of the autochthonous peoples and the preservation of the wealth of their cultural diversity.

He emphasized unprecedented experiences such as integration between Bolivia and Chile through their national folkloric ballets.

Dr. Avelino Stanley (**Sub-Secretary of State for Culture, Creativity and Popular Participation of the Dominican Republic**): Recalled that even though Latin American countries do not have much economic power they do have a great cultural power.

He proposed that the Forum adopt decisions on the role of culture to strengthen the democratic processes in the countries of the region, the struggle to include culture as a key element in the development planning of countries, the achievement of economic indicators that show which is culture's the share in the Gross Domestic Product of the countries, the promotion of cultural and educational policies that contribute to raise awareness on the need for the cultural integration of Latin America and the Caribbean, closer links between educational and cultural programs to effectively build a Latin American and Caribbean cultural space, respect for the cultural heritage of Latin America and the Caribbean for the universal recognition of its value, adoption of a cultural diversity as integrationist philosophy based on respect for the differences and raising awareness about the arts and creators. In the area of integration, he called for a respectful and solidarity change towards Haiti so as to prove that UN-like formulas of carrying bayonets to a brethren country are not enough, but on the contrary promoting a Pilot Plan that would contribute to the cultural work that this country requires for its cultural and democratic strengthening.

Mr. Luis Guillermo Cortés Carcelén (**Head of the Secretariat of Inter-Institutional Relations and International Technical Co-operation of Peru**): Stressed his satisfaction in seeing that everyone was concerned about how to generate mechanisms for the protection of both tangible and intangible heritage, not only in terms of conservation but also how to achieve the active participation of society in the appropriation of and identification with this heritage.

He emphasized that in a world where globalization generates many risks, the promotion of cultural industries means not only that creators shall generate a larger production, but also that the access and use by all citizens of all that production should be observed.

He called for a space of integration space in specific terms that would lead to a mutual knowledge and also to the circulation of the cultural goods of the region.

Regarding the difficulties in the integration process he recalled that not all Member States are in the same situation with respect to investment in culture, priorities, etc. He indicated that the search for a balance requires common actions such as the transfer of capacities at bilateral, subregional and regional levels, definition of indicators, protection of heritage, struggle against illicit trafficking of cultural properties, as well as the exchange of experiences either successful or not. In the area of heritage, he also called to join the actions that several agencies, such as UNESCO and its Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, the World Heritage Centre and the Convenio Andrés Bello, are undertaking so as not to duplicate actions.

He emphasized the importance of the creation of a Regional Centre for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage based in his country and sponsored by UNESCO, a process that in its preparatory stage has already counted on the cooperation of several member States of the Forum. He expressed his hope in that such institution will become the model for the exchange and strengthening of capacities.

His Excellency, Mr. Abel Prieto (**Minister of Culture of Cuba**): Expressed his support to the statement that Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the most powerful regions in the world in terms of culture, and that its cultural heritage is rich, diverse, strong and vigorous.

He expressed his confidence in the revitalization of the Forum following this meeting in Caracas, which would lead to proposals for new actions, so that we become powerful in cultural terms.

He emphasized the importance of the Convention on Cultural Diversity currently under discussion in UNESCO and called on all Member States to support this convention aimed at protecting diversity and the Convention itself from its very powerful enemies.

He underlined the efforts made by Francisco Lacayo, former Director of the UNESCO Regional Office of Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, in support of the Forum. He also expressed his confidence that the new Director of the Regional Office, Mr. Van Hooff, will also support the Forum.

He endorsed the Honduras' proposal to exchange projects with a focus on poverty, marginalization from culture, taking into consideration that throughout the region the problems of marginalization and violence undermine societies. He said he had no doubts about the role of culture in fighting against marginalization.

He mentioned that, among the achievements of the Forum since the previous meeting, is the "Portal of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean" and acknowledged the support of the UNESCO Regional Office of Culture in this in this aspect. He added that the Portal is a tool now available in Spanish and English and urged for the continued use of new technologies to create virtual museums, galleries, anthologies of poetry, etc.

He also expressed his support to the promotion of reading, and the initiative to help CARIFESTA achieve a Latin American dimension. He called to promote the participation of all Member States in the international events that are held in the region. He wondered how could such participation be facilitated, and as an example said that participation in exhibitions and fairs could be encouraged granting special rates per square meter or giving the space for free. He outlined the plans of Cuba and Venezuela around the ALBA, the idea proposed by President Chávez of a Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas in the field of culture. He said that progress has been made and that the creation of an ALBA Cultural Fund is being studied not only to benefit Venezuela and Cuba but with a more regional orientation, a Latin American and Caribbean orientation.

He defended the integration of the living memory of our peoples and underscored the progress made in this respect by the *Fondo de Cultura Económica* of Mexico and the *Biblioteca Ayacucho* of Venezuela and the series of *Editorial Casa de the Américas* of Cuba.

He called for actions in the fields of audiovisual and music.

Mr. Herman van-Hoof (**Representative of the UNESCO Director-General and Director of the Regional Office of Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean**):

Recalled with satisfaction that UNESCO, through its Regional Office of Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean based in Havana, has closely followed and accompanied the Forum from the very beginning in 1989. He ratified that UNESCO considered the Forum to be an important space of excellence for strengthening the cultural policies of Member States, the promotion of the cultural integration of the region, and for exchange between UNESCO and the Ministers of Culture of the Region. He emphasized the important and intense work of the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture under the direction of Francisco Lacayo with the support of the Technical Secretariat. He ratified that the UNESCO Regional Office will continue with this support and will try to deepen it, expanding co-operation between UNESCO and the Forum of Ministers of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean.

He also expressed his satisfaction with the presence in the agenda of the XIV Forum of the Preliminary Draft of the Convention on the Promotion and Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions to be discussed at the next UNESCO General Conference.

With respect to the need to define strategies and action plans mentioned by some speakers, he said UNESCO and its Regional Office were ready to work jointly on the execution and follow-up of the action plans of the Forums of Ministers of Culture and guide the programmes in response to the needs expressed by the Forum.

The Portal of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean could be used to disseminate exchange and share experiences of cultural actions, and eventually, collect the materials on a CD or in books for wider dissemination.

He referred extensively to the UNESCO culture programmes, emphasizing, among others, cultural diversity, protection of tangible and intangible heritage, cultural policies, and cultural industries. In particular, he called on all Member States to adhere to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

#### **Afternoon session**

His Excellency, Arch Francisco Sesto Novás, Minister of Culture of Venezuela announced that the moderator of the session would be Alberto Murillo, Director of International Relations of the National Council of Culture (CONAC).

Her Excellency, Mrs. Magdalena Úbeda de Rodríguez (**Director General of the Nicaraguan Institute of Culture**): Requested the support of Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, Cuba, Chile and Convenio Andrés Bello in the field of cultural indicators and other aspects of cultural management. Specifically in the case of cultural indicators, suggested that Member States and the above mentioned agency prepare jointly a booklet or a book that could be distributed among all Member States. She indicated that that the request could also be submitted to the UNESCO Regional Office of Culture for support, and in these actions the "Portal of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean" could also help as a tool.

Mr. João Luiz Silva Ferreira (Juca Ferreira) (**Executive Secretary of the Ministry of Culture of Brazil**): Underscored the importance of having this Forum on the eve of the approval of the Convention on the Promotion and the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

He called for a change in paradigm, transforming culture into a strategic reference point. At the same time, pointed that this will require a dialogue with other areas of government, an articulation, a horizontal dialogue so that culture will no longer be a peripheral decorative element and becomes a core element. He also underlined the importance of culture in the construction of a national identity, and the need to systematize all cultural information. In the area of co-operation, he said that a concrete element within the strategy is the defense of cultural diversity, and for this, it is necessary to establish a cooperation model, a common methodology.

He also spoke about culture as a resource, as an instrument, as a possibility of making a qualitative change in human relations, of contributing to economic

development, even in the area of democratization. He called to work in the creation of new markets that facilitate the free circulation of cultural products and services in the region.

He referred to the topic of safeguarding the memory of heritage, the creation of a system of museums, the defense of copyright and the right of intellectuals not to be affected by the cultural homogenization. He also urged to work for the creation of new markets to make possible the free movement of cultural goods and services in the region.

Mrs. Magali Comeau Denis (**Minister of Culture and Communication of Haiti**): Thanked the Latin American countries that participate in the United Nations Peace Corps in Haiti, especially Brazil and Chile, who, she said, understood immediately that in a country that is undergoing a political crisis, it is not enough just to intervene with a military force, but is also necessary to intensify cultural exchanges. She also acknowledged the comments of the representative from the Dominican Republic on Haiti. She warned about the need to emphasize in the obstacles that prevent or integration or other issues of common interests. She said she considers a consensus has been achieved on the construction of a common space for common projects, particularly in the area of conservation and preservation of heritage. She said that this particular topic could involve the "Latin Caribbean". She added that a significant obstacle is that Member States do not each other enough and urged to hold meetings of the Forum to foster new policies that also express the concerns of the populations of each country. She proposed the creation of a sort of traveling popular University for the Caribbean and Latin America on topics of heritage. She acknowledged the importance of increasing the participation in festivals and that these festivals should have also a pedagogical approach and not be merely festive, so as to facilitate the follow-up from one event to the other.

She underscored the significance of launching projects that could be implemented jointly by several ministries in the same country to fight against poverty. She called upon the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for her solidarity support to the Youth Orchestras. She indicated that projects like this one aim at a sustainable development.

She also referred to a project designed by the Ministry of Culture of Haiti for the organization of an International Biennial on Photography. She said that very soon 70% of the Member States of the Forum will receive an official communication inviting some of the photographers in their respective countries to participate in the Biennial.

Ms. Leslie Mock (**National Director of Publications and Communication of the National Institute of Culture of Panama**): Proposed the creation of a biennial of Latin American and Caribbean art, starting with the idea that in almost all the Member States biennials are held at national or similar level offering a space for young creators. She said that, in her opinion could be held in a different venue each time and with the participation of two works by two young artists from each Member State, based on the national biennials according to the selection mechanisms established by each country. This will give international projection to these young talents. She also proposed to invite the commercial sector, the galleries and distributors in each country to participate.

Mrs. Rianne de Haas-Bledoeg (**Representative of the CARICOM**): Indicated that the Caribbean Community has recognized the need for co-operation between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen the political and economic integration of the region. She also said that various cooperation agreements have been signed between CARICOM and Latin American countries, mostly trade related, and at the same time other bilateral cooperation agreements have been established between CARICOM Member States and Latin America. However, CARICOM also strives to strengthen cultural integration in the region to enable the people of the Caribbean and Latin America know about each other's cultures, their cultural heritage and cultural property, which will lead to a better understanding, mutual respect and closer friendship and co-operation. She said that CARICOM is currently working to

strengthen the cultural relationships with Cuba. She said that the Caribbean Community also recognizes the importance of promoting cultural diversity, safeguarding cultural heritage and developing creative industries for the sustainable development of the region. She said that central to this is the recognition of the need to create opportunities for the full development of the creativity of individuals and the community, in particular of young persons. She said it has been recognized that Caribbean Member States are faced with serious vulnerabilities socially, economically and environmental and that the development of dynamic indigenous cultural industries is seen as a potential economic strategy to reduce the impact of the world economy. She recalled that Caribbean Member States are in the process of creating a single market in which culture should play a major role in promoting a strong regional identity and sense of community and assist Member States in building their resilience while adjusting to these fast and immense changes in the global economy.

She pointed that Caribbean Member States have a comparative advantage in the creative industries, in areas such as music, art, crafts, literature, cuisine, fashion design, festivals, theatre, film and cultural tourism, and that are precisely many of these manifestations that identify the Caribbean internationally. She indicated these are, therefore, a focal point of departure for building competitive export industries that are rooted in local talent and resources. She also expressed the hope that the development of these industries has a positive impact on poverty reduction, diversification of the tourism product through the promotion of cultural and festival tourism and a positive engagement of the youth in the region.

She mentioned Festivals tourism as a subcomponent that has had a significant growth during the last decade. She mentioned CARIFESTA as the flag festival of the Caribbean Community. She said this is one of the potential areas for cultural integration in Latin America and the Caribbean and has been identified as a potential vehicle for stimulating festival tourism in the region. She referred to the origins of the event and to the major results achieved regarding number of participants. However she also pointed there are still some deficiencies in CARIFESTA, in areas such as planning, management, funding and marketing. She said that a strategic plan has been implemented since 2004 to deal with these problems. She urged all Member States of the Forum to participate in CARIFESTA and expressed the interest in receiving technical assistance in the areas of marketing, merchandising, program development, economic impact and others. She also invited the representative from Trinidad and Tobago, venue of the next CARIFESTA to take the floor on this topic.

Mr. Eric Butler (**Cultural Officer of the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago**) Also referred extensively to the next edition of CARIFESTA, which will be held in Trinidad & Tobago in August 2006. He indicated the interest in the economic development of the Festival and in the widest and greater participation, not only of Latin American Member States, but also of countries from the entire world, which will contribute to a greater knowledge of the rich cultural diversity of the region. He mentioned the large number of activities that will take place during the ten days of the Ninth CARIFESTA and informed the Tenth CARIFESTA will be celebrated in the Bahamas.

Mrs. Beatriz Parra Durango (**Vice Minister of Culture of Ecuador**): Referred to the issue of cultural diversity and the importance of cultural integration of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. She indicated that the Ministry of Education and Culture of Ecuador has adopted a true policy of integration within the country, for recognizing diversity and traditions of all the regions that integrate Ecuador, acknowledging the value of the sense of being Ecuadorian. She underlined that this work is being implemented in particular with children and youth.

She also outlined in the arena of Latin American integration, a project called "Bolivarian Musical Theater". She also thanked Venezuela for the support to the Ecuadorian Youth Symphony Orchestra, an experience that is also being developed in other Latin American Member States with the support of Venezuela.



His Excellency Mr. Luis Federico Hernández Aguilar (**President of the National Council for Culture and Art of El Salvador**): He asked the meeting, "What do we do so that our Ministries of Finance do not consider the cultural sector as if it were a resource drain? He indicated such is the situation faced by all Member States in one way or another. He called to redirect the resources allocated by UNESCO for Latin America and to prevent their use in small forums and small workshops that do not have a great social impact in culture. He said that his country is ready to initiate a national cultural dialogue which he described as historic, aimed at defining cultural concepts and indicators. For this action, they count on the support of UNDP, OIS. He also said that he has talked about his country's priorities with the representative of UNESCO to his country and that he understands. He stressed that when culture and development is mentioned, we are referring to an all-embracing development. He also referred to some successful experiences implemented in other regions of the world in which culture has played a major role in the positive changes achieved.

His Excellency, Mr. Manuel de Jesús Salazar Tetzagüic (**Minister of Culture and Sport of Guatemala**): Proposed that the opening remarks by the Minister of Culture of Venezuela be included in full as part of the documents of the XV Forum.

Summarizing the interventions of the working sessions during the first day of the Forum, he pointed that two great needs for the cultural integration of Latin America and the Caribbean have been identified: one, communication, or the language barrier and direct transportation between countries. Regarding the first need, he expressed he is in favor of bilingualism and trilingualism in education and cultural management. As for the second, it is necessary to work towards the political will in each country to find points of regional interconnection. He likewise, stressed the importance of establishing and organizing cultural, artistic and identity festivals, in the spirit of a community of communities of Latin America and the Caribbean with the support of government institutions. He proposed the promotion of a multilingual publishing effort that nurtures the heart and the minds of children, youth and elders in the region in favor of a Latin America and Caribbean cultural community. Lastly, he indicated that the strategic factors of the Latin American community include a system of cultural information in which all the countries participate with their values of multiculturalism and interculturalism; their experience of technical and political management, along with the permanent updating and exchange of cultural indicators of each country supported by a basic conceptual methodological framework. He underlined the importance of having studies on economic impact of culture at national and regional level. He also supported the proposal of building a Latin American and Caribbean network of cultural promoters and managers, as well as identifying and recognizing the signs and symbols of all Member states which constitute contributions to the cultural community of the region such as the "Trilogy of Distinguished Heroes" composed by Benito Juárez, Simón Bolívar and José Martí. He also underlined the importance of the principles and values of the Cosmo vision of indigenous peoples of America as a source not only for the Latin American union, but also for the continental union.

His Excellency, Arch Francisco Sesto Novás (**Minister of Culture of Venezuela**): Said that each country and each people must seek its own model in its own way. He said he thinks no one should interfere in any country. At the same time, he said it was important to build bridges so that a real permanent exchange could take place in the pursuit of a deep integration of the people. In this respect, he said that at least the officials, as responsible persons, should establish the bridges and be in permanent contact. He said that the Forum should be in permanent session, functioning as a network of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Culture in constant communication.

He mentioned the actions undertaken by Venezuela for the IV Centenary of Don Quixote, and the publication and free distribution of the book among the population. He also mentioned the publication of an English edition of 7,000 copies for the English-speaking Member States and 5,000 in French for Haiti. He explained that the method of delivery to these Member States would be announced soon.

Her Excellency, Mrs. Magali Comeau Denis **(Minister of Culture and Communication of Haiti)**: She heartfully thanked the contribution of the books in French language for her country announced by Minister Sesto from Venezuela. She extensively referred to a colloquium organized in Haiti together with the Latin Academy of Sciences in which some 600 Haitian young persons that do not have financial resources participated, who expressed their interest in the various publications presented during the workshop.

She pointed that poverty is not only lack of food, economic resources and medical care, but most of all lack of learning and no access to books, and in general no access to cultural goods and services.

She mentioned that, as she has expressed in other international meetings, she considers proper that the meeting knows the current transition government in Haiti was created as a consequence of a popular uprising that demanded justice, freedom, democracy and learning.

She called for libraries, books and teachers for the Haitian people as well as other possibilities in the field of educational training.

His Excellency, Mr. Neville W. Wisdom **(Minister of Youth, Sport and Cultural Affairs of the Bahamas)**: Excused himself for his late arrival and explained that in the case of many of the small Island Member States, ministers in charge of cultural affairs also have in their portfolios other responsibilities, which is a great challenge for them. He therefore indicated the significance of constantly defining and redefining what we are and what we should do for the implementation of culture through a practical vision. He indicated the importance of watching for a better quality life for the people and to create opportunities for all. These actions related to the national development, he said, can be achieved by means of culture. He stressed the role of regional cooperation and said that in this area special and peculiar changes are taking place and that his country will support actions in this area. He also expressed his interest in facilitating cultural exchanges that would enable the Bahamian people to enter in contact with other cultures, life styles, experiences and quality life, both from the region and from the rest of the world.

His Excellency Mr. Rodwell Ferguson **(Minister of State for Education, Youth, Sports and Culture of Belize)**: He indicated that the debate of this first session make everybody realize how important is culture for national development. He therefore called upon all participants to reiterate, on their return to their respective countries, to the central governments the importance of culture as an important part for development and consequently within the national strategies aimed at development. He referred to the need of equal rights and equal opportunities for all indigenous peoples of the region in all areas of the economic, social and cultural life. He called upon all the participants, once the Forum concludes to maintain a continuous communication through its Chair, its Vice Chairs and Permanent Secretariat (Pro-Tempore Secretariat) to continue with the dialogue initiated in the Forum.

Mr. Thomas Mathew, **(Head of the Cultural Office of Grenada)**: He stressed the significance of defining common bases and terminologies for the construction of more effective ties between Latin America and the Caribbean, for they all constitute a same region, a same people. He pointed that even though Latin America and the Caribbean have been separated for years by language barriers, and also by the barrier of "water", major difficulties are derived from the fact that it is extremely difficult to travel from one Member State to the other.

He indicated that all this reinforces the need to make greater efforts in the exchange of ideas, mostly in favor of future generations. He also stated that the children most of the time know more about the United States and about the heroes of that country, than about our own countries and our own heroes. He thanked Venezuela for the publication of texts and books in English. He also stressed the contribution of Cuba, Venezuela, and Mexico presenting grants to his country and other Member States of

the English speaking Caribbean. These professionals will speak another language after finishing studies and on their return to their respective countries.

Mr. Guillermo Carcelén (**Head of the Secretariat of Institutional Relations and International Technical Co-operation of Peru**): Said that peoples are culture, because the people inherits the culture, and at the same time recreate culture, assimilate it and share it with the rest of the peoples. Therefore, he said, every action related with cultural policies cannot exclude the participation of the civil society, of the agents directly related to cultural creation and their unions, etc., who should participate in decision making as beneficiaries of the actions undertaken in this sense.

His Excellency, Arch. Francisco Sesto Novás (**Minister of Culture of Venezuela**): Referred to the phrase that his Ministry defends: "The people are culture." He emphasized the fact that there are enormous forces among the people, without exception, for creation, but culture goes much further than creation; culture in the sense of what identifies us, where we come from, what we are, and even our project for the future, our hopes that are also part of culture: what we were, what we are, what we want and what we can be.

He explained that Venezuela has focused on two definitions of culture. One has to do with its diversity and identity, which defines the country as pluricultural and multiethnic. The other concept of culture is the amount of information and understanding of the world that a person, a people, can accumulate, which does admit hierarchies; it is the concept that José Martí uses when he says "be cultured to be free". An individual or a people can become more cultured; can better themselves, to the extent that they have a better understanding of themselves, more information, technological skills, and a more integrated view of the world and the relation of mankind with nature.

He informed the Forum of Venezuela's decision to offer assistance for the creation of a virtual museum of the cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean as a site of knowledge and exchange that could be a section in the "Portal of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean," a project of the Forum, and which could enrich it considerably. He informed his country is committed to contribute \$500,000 dollars for the project. He also said that a methodology could be established through the Pro Tempore Secretariat, aimed at implementing such important scenario for the relationships of the peoples in the region.

His Excellency, Mr. Neville W. Wisdom (**Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture Affairs of the Bahamas**): With regards to previous remarks on the need to consider the participation of civil society in all the actions aimed at the promotion of culture, he referred to his country's experience, with the establishment of a "Cultural Commission" with the participation of experts in culture in the country, who bring their wisdom and advise and expertise. He therefore expressed his satisfaction for the presence, within the delegation of his country to the Forum of Mr. Winston Sanders, well-known intellectual in the Caribbean region and in the world.

Mr. Joao Luiz Silva Ferreira (**Executive Secretary of the Ministry of Culture of Brazil**): He said that in complying with the mandate of his minister, His Excellency, Mr. Gilberto Gil, he informed all member States of the celebration of the Third World Festival of Black Art, which will be held in Senegal in 2007; Brazil holds one of the vice-chairs of the Festival, and has been asked to invite all the Ministers of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean. He indicated that his country will convey all the information regarding the modalities to participate.

(As a balance of the sessions of the first day, in general, all the delegates acknowledged the support of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as venue of the XV Forum. Likewise, all the representatives congratulated the Minister of Culture of Venezuela for his opening remarks, and expressed consensus with the ideas presented by the Minister).