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UNESCO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR CULTURE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, HAVANA, CUBA
www.unesco.org/havana · www.unesco.lacult.org
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CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT Nº 11

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CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT IS A PERIODIC MAGAZINE PUBLISHED BY THE UNESCO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR CULTURE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN SINCE 2000. THE MAGAZINE IS A SPACE FOR REFLECTION, EXCHANGES AND DISSEMINATION OF IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES DEALING WITH CULTURE AS A PRIORITY ELEMENT FOR THE HUMAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION. THE DIGITAL VERSION OF THIS MAGAZINE IS AVAILABLE, BOTH IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH, AT: WWW.UNESCO.ORG.CU WWW.UNESCOLACULT.ORG.
UNESCO KINGSTON (CHRISTINE NORTON, HIMALCHULI GURUNG AND YOLANDA GARDENER) AND UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE (SACHIKO HARAGUCHI AND CÉSAR MORENO-TRIANA) HAVE CONTRIBUTED IN THIS ISSUE Nº 11.

THANKS TO JULIO LARRAMENDI FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF CUBAN SITES WHICH ILLUSTRATED THE MAGAZINE.

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EDITORIAL



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The recent ratification of the Convention of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage by the Bahamas is an important and necessary step to advance the protection, conservation and management of the rich cultural and natural heritage of the Caribbean. This idea, together with the promotion of good practices in sustainable development and intra- and inter-regional cooperation, will mark the celebration of the International Year of Small Island Developing States in 2014.

Culture, in the third resolution on Culture and Sustainable Development adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 December 2013, is enhanced once again as an engine for sustainable development, contributing to a sound, feasible economic sector through income generation and decent employment, and making it possible to address the economic and social dimensions of poverty in the context of cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries.

In this regard, the Heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Havana, Cuba, at the 2nd Summit Conference of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held on 28-29 January 2014, agreed to work on heritage protection and promotion and on the dissemination of the diversity of cultural expressions that characterize Latin American and Caribbean identities, and foster the role of culture at all levels in favour of economic growth, poverty eradication, sustainable development, employment generation, and integration in the subregion.

In addition, two special declarations were signed at the CELAC Conference: one on Culture as an Engine for Human Development, and another one on Small Island Developing States, which are presented in this new edition of Culture and Development dedicated to World Heritage in the Caribbean.

At the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Phnom Penh (Cambodia), in June 2013, the results of the Second Periodic Report on the State of World Heritage in Latin America and the Caribbean were presented, thereby opening a new phase for the Action Plans for World Heritage in Latin America and the Caribbean. The UNESCO Office in Havana, with the aim of supporting the development of the new Action Plan for the Caribbean and its Capacity Building Programme (CCBP), has made an assessment of the impact of World Heritage and of CCBP in the subregion, whose results are also presented in this issue.

CCBP, with the support of the Netherlands, Japan, Italy and Andorra, has helped to establish a comprehensive approach to Caribbean heritage, linking cultural and natural resources, biological and cultural diversity, material productions and intangible expressions, and, ultimately, emphasizing the relationship between heritage and sustainable development.

Undoubtedly, there is a need to intensify capacity building efforts for the protection, conservation, management and promotion of heritage sites, encourage the participation of local authorities and communities in these processes, and boost the establishment of cultural routes between and among sites of Caribbean States, with a focus on the Slave Route.

I thank the colleagues of the Organization and the Caribbean experts for their support and contribution to this new issue of Culture and Development, which shows the diversity of cultural and natural heritage in the subregion and its potential to foster the development of its peoples and countries.