



XIEME FORUM DES MINISTRES DE LA CULTURE
ET DES HAUTS FONCTIONNAIRES
CHARGES DE POLITIQUE CULTURELLE
DE L' AMERIQUE LATINE ET DE LA CARAIBE

The Dominican Republic greets with due respect the holding of this 11th Forum of Ministers and Officials responsible for Cultural policies of Latin America and the Caribbean. Haiti shall guide their deliberations in this beautiful land, which is a source of liberty and a permanent cultural symbol in the heart of mankind.

At the close of this century and on the threshold of a new millennium, in the midst of the forces of globalization, Latin America and the Caribbean are living through unprecedented moment. The search and configuration of a common being stemming from its roots are bound by the mixing of races and cultural pluralism and by endless forms of sufferings and sharing of historical similarities. All this has firmly defined culture as the key for the transformation of its future and the determining force of its development and assumption of its own destiny.

This space for reflection, unity and solidarity is a unique moment of this new maturity, which is truly auspicious given the extent of its priorities and scope.

However, it is necessary to state that our countries continue to adopt actions, based on an extraordinary reciprocal lack of knowledge. Regardless of the fact that we are now more interconnected than ever before in this age of globalization, a myriad of hurdles impede our nations from coming together or from embarking on a new era of cooperation based, on an respect to our differences. As a result, I should like to submit the topic of Communication and Culture to your consideration for deliberation at the coming 12th Forum of Minister of Culture and Officials responsible for Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean. As you know, the Dominican Republic was granted the venue for this important meeting in Barbados, which will take place in the year 2000.

The adoption of this topic is of enormous symbolic importance, as it will enable us to address and design strategies for a more effective use of the novel and revolutionary communication technology. It would also ease the transmission of the cultural information, thus supplementing our databases and historical heritage. By reinforcing our national identities, we would attain a greater understanding of ourselves, analyze and structure more expeditious methods for the commercialization and dissemination of cultural goods. Thus, achieving a greater communication capacity, which would allow us to successfully confront the challenges of the 21st century.

Ministers, on the other hand, we believe it is necessary to prepare a common, vigorous and pragmatic agenda. As far away from rhetoric as possible and as near to the enforcement of immediate and concrete measures

as possible. We also believe in the need of the creation of a greater number of regional coordination that would ease the implementation of policies based on consensus. They may be applied beyond the close scope of our countries allowing a greater mutual understanding and a growing capacity to solve the problems regarding preservation and defense of our national identity and of our cultural heritage.

Therefore, we should also affirm that culture is neither a means nor an end in itself. All our efforts towards the material development, thus, should be geared to the attainment of a better enlightenment and perfection of the human condition.

Although culture is like a pivot around which everything moves, including the economic models that stem from it, its power does not lie only here but rather to give a sense of meaning to society even with regards to its most primitive relations.