

# SURINAME DECLARATION

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**T**he review of the Millennium Development Goals, by 2015, will be a great opportunity for culture to be recognized as a essential pillar of development, aside from economy, society and environment. Such recognition will undoubtedly help to establish a development model focusing on people and seeking to improve their quality of life. Culture plays a key role in the eradication of poverty and the reduction of social inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean, as part of the process towards more equitable societies, better prepared to face current challenges.

This view was shared at the 19th Forum of Ministers of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean and at the 1st Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in Paramaribo, Suriname, on 14-15 March 2013. The Final Declaration of the Meeting recognized the role of UNESCO Conventions in the field of heritage and creative industries, urging Member States that have not ratified it to do so, bearing in mind that they are essential tools for boosting development and the effective implementation of cultural policies in the area.

Recognizing the symbolic importance of the very first meeting of Ministers of Culture of CELAC, the Declaration also stressed that respect for the cultural diversity that characterizes Latin American and Caribbean identities as multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual societies provides the basis for cooperation and for actions aimed at achieving regional integration. In the spirit and under the principles of this Community, such integration should be based on respect for pluralism and the sovereign right of each people of the region, as well as on adherence to the rules and standards of international law.

The ministers also ratified their unanimous support for Resolution 65/166 on Culture and Development, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, as well as for UNESCO efforts to integrate culture into the Sustainable Development Goals to be adopted in 2015.

A total of 24 Member States were represented at the regional meeting: Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The Declaration of Suriname is certainly a recognition of the role of culture in development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and a sign of the region's commitment to building a more caring, equitable and humane world.

## ■ SURINAME DECLARATION

**W**e, the Ministers of Culture and Heads of Delegations gathered at the 19th Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean and the First Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), aware of the historical significance of this gathering held in Paramaribo, Suriname from March 14-15, 2013, with the objective of advancing cultural integration, preserving cultural heritage and promoting culture for economic growth and the eradication of poverty for sustainable development in the region:

1. Ratify the validity of the principles and objectives that brought about the establishment of the Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean in 1989, its vanguard role in recognizing the importance of culture for the sustainable development of all Member States of the region, as well as its contribution to Latin American and Caribbean cultural integration;
2. Recognize that the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) constitutes a landmark in the history of the region, as for the first time a regional entity is established with the mission of advancing political, economic, social, and cultural integration in Latin America and the Caribbean;
3. Reaffirm the relevance of the agreements adopted by the Heads of State and Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean contained in the Caracas Declaration of the Founding Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), December 3, 2011 in Venezuela, and the First CELAC Summit Declaration, adopted on January 28, 2013 in Santiago de Chile;
4. Recognize the symbolic importance of this meeting, being the first held among Ministers of Culture within the framework of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC);
5. Ratify our respect for the cultural diversity characterizing the Latin American and Caribbean identities as multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual societies, which constitutes the basis for cooperation and actions aimed at achieving regional integration which, in keeping with the spirit and the principles of CELAC, shall be built on the basis of respect for pluralism and the sovereign right of each of our countries, as well as full respect for the norms and principles of International Law;

6. Recognize, on an equal footing, all Latin American and Caribbean cultural values and its important contribution to the cultural heritage of mankind;
7. Support the adoption of the required measures to safeguard and recover traditional knowledge and wisdom of the indigenous peoples of the region, the Afro-descendant communities, as well as communities of other geographical origin which today are part of Latin American and Caribbean identities, while, at the same time, protecting the individual and collective rights attached to all this knowledge and preventing any arbitrary action against them;
8. Ratify the importance of cultural rights within the set of human rights, as well as the importance of paying the necessary attention to them, in order to ensure their full enjoyment;
9. Recognize the merit of cultural policies as promoters of values that reflect the respect of life, human dignity, multiculturalism, the principles of justice and tolerance, and the rejection of violence as integral elements in the construction of a culture of peace that identifies the region;
10. Reaffirm our support to the proclamation by the United Nations on December, 2012, of the International Decade of Afro-descendants and welcome the inclusion in its Program of Action of a permanent forum on Afro-descendants as well as the drafting of a Universal Declaration on Afro-descendants, among other on-going initiatives;
11. Emphasize the relevance of the set of International Conventions in the field of culture adopted by UNESCO and urge States of the region which have not yet done so to ratify them in accordance with their national legislative frameworks so that their concepts, guidelines and instruments may support the cultural policies of the region;
12. Ratify the role of culture in the eradication of poverty and in the reduction of social inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean, as part of the process to attain more equitable societies better equipped to face the current challenges, incorporating strategies for sustainable development;
13. Request UNESCO, in collaboration with ECLAC, to carry out studies - using an agreed methodology - that quantify the impact of culture and the cultural industries on the achievement of the objectives outlined in paragraph 12 above, as well as a catalogue on best practices on the topic, to be shared through the Portal of Culture. These studies shall be submitted to the meeting of National Coordinators of CELAC to be held in Havana, Cuba on November, 2013;
14. Express our will to continue the battle against illicit traffic in cultural goods in the region and take note of the recommendations in this regard put forward by Member States participating in the Training Workshop for Caribbean Member States held in Saint Lucia in December, 2012;

15. Reaffirm our unanimous support to resolution 65/166 and 66/208 of the United Nations General Assembly on Culture and Development and fully support all efforts to include culture in the Sustainable Development Goals as defined within the Rio+20 Conference and which will be adopted in 2015;
16. Assume the mandate to act as CELAC on the basis of consensus in the framework of its Procedures, and to carry out our proposals and experiences on cultural matters to the multilateral fora, including the International Congress "Culture: a key aspect for sustainable development" to be held in the Chinese city of Hangzhou, from May 15-17, 2013 and the Substantive Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) 2013, to be held from July 1-26, 2013 in Geneva;
17. Welcome the achievements of entities in charge of Culture in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), the South American Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), and reaffirm our commitment to work together in the integration process, by promoting the synergies among them;
18. Welcome the meetings held in the framework of CELAC on regional and subregional integration mechanisms and call for a wider presence of culture in such meetings, in order to contribute to its full integration in sustainable development policies;
19. Welcome the recommendations made by filmmakers, authorities and experts gathered at the Latin American and Caribbean Film Festival held at Isla Margarita in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on October, 2012, regarding the importance of audiovisual archives in terms of heritage and content, the initiatives for the creation of new TV channels dealing with fiction films and documentaries, the establishment of study groups for production and training program projects, among other subjects;
20. Support the ongoing processes for the development of cultural information systems which allow for the knowledge and assessment of the important role played by culture in the economies and social development of our countries, providing us thereby important elements for the design of public policies. We welcome the relationship established between different experiences and urge working on a system that reaches out all members of CELAC;
21. Welcome the initiative of the Cultural Corridor of the Caribbean as a project that facilitates the gathering of all our countries for the creation of a socio-cultural space aimed at the development of activities that stimulate exchange, promote cultural economy, facilitate the marketing of cultural products and enhance means of communication and transportation between our countries for the wellbeing of our communities, and urge all the members of CELAC to join this initiative;

22. Express our appreciation to UNESCO for the historical support given to the Forum of Ministers of Culture through its Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean and in particular, the assistance of its Technical Secretariat;
23. Decide to work for the gradual integration of the Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in charge of Cultural Policies and the Meeting of Ministers of Culture of CELAC from its meeting to be held in 2014;
24. Resolve that as of that moment the meetings of Ministers of Culture of CELAC shall subsume the activities of the Forum of Ministers of Culture, the agreements reached within that framework, the continuity of the projects and programs developed so far by the Forum and its meetings;
25. Agree on the creation of a Working Group that shall develop the vision and mission of the Meetings of Ministers of Culture of CELAC and its procedures, in accordance with CELAC Procedures, as well as make proposals in matters of cultural-economic cooperation to strengthening it among the members of CELAC. This Group shall contribute to the work of the CELAC Working Group on cooperation. The results of this Group shall be submitted to the Meeting of CELAC National Coordinators that will take place in November 2013, in Havana, Cuba;
26. Express our appreciation to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for assuming the Meeting of Ministers of Culture and Officials in charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as for the full organization of the Second Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in 2014, and also express our appreciation to the Republic of Cuba for the organization of the meeting in 2015;
27. Welcome the realization of the 6th World Summit on Arts and Culture, event that will be organized by the National Council of Culture and the Arts of Chile and the Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies (IFACCA) which will take place in Santiago de Chile from 13 to 16 January 2014. We welcome the interest of Chile in the participation of the member-countries of the Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean, and of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States;
28. Recognize the significance of CARIFESTA as a space for the promotion of integration and the marketing of our cultural products and as such support the invitation by the Governments of Suriname for a strong presence of our countries in that event;
29. Pay homage to Commandant President Hugo Chavez, for his unwavering dedication to the sovereignty and integration of our nations and to the promotion of solidarity among the peoples of our region. We express sincere condolences to his family, to the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and to the



Festival of Saint Francis of Assisi, Quibdó, Colombia

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Venezuelan people, to which he dedicated his life. For CELAC, of which he was one of the principal founders and promoters, his example will stimulate us to redouble our efforts to achieve unity;

30. Express our profound gratitude to the Republic of Suriname for having assumed the Presidency of the Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean since the end of July, 2011, as well as for its efforts and the facilities provided for the celebration of the joint meeting of the 19th Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean and the First Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Paramaribo, Suriname, March 15, 2013