

## **FINAL DECLARATION OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF CULTURE OF THE COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES (CELAC)**

Considering that culture is an essential and irreplaceable element in the sustainable development of our nations and in the unity and integration of our region, we, the Ministers of Culture of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, meeting in Havana on the 18th and 19th of September of 2015, agree

1. To ratify the role of culture as the engine contributing to the sustainable development in harmony with Mother Earth, to the eradication of poverty and to diminishing the social inequalities present in our region, as established in the Special Declaration on Culture as promoter of human development, approved at the Second CELAC Summit.
2. To ratify the agreements of the First Meeting of CELAC Ministers of Culture (Suriname, 2013), reaffirming respect for the cultural diversity that characterizes Latin American and Caribbean identities, in terms of multiethnic, multicultural and plurilingual societies, thereby contributing to the sovereign rights of all of our peoples.
3. To acknowledge that the protection of cultural and heritage properties, as well as the use of Communication and Information Technologies in the promotion of knowledge and culture, are included among the most relevant priorities of the cultural policies of our countries.
4. To urge the Latin American and Caribbean countries to adopt a regional position towards the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural and heritage properties; to encourage the creation of optimum mechanisms to achieve the appropriate response of the Convention on the measures that should be adopted to prohibit and prevent the importation, exportation and transfer of the illegal ownership of cultural properties (1970) and other international instruments undersigned and ratified on the topic to meet the needs and specific problems of the countries in the region.
5. In that sense, to acknowledge the role of Latin America and the Caribbean for their approval of the Operational Guidelines of the Convention of 1970 and to urge all the countries in the region to implement the principles and recommendations in said instrument.
6. To recognize the importance of Internet as a public, global and open property that should be handled and developed according to public interest, as a key tool for cultural promotion and interchange and to foster Latin American and Caribbean identity, taking specific actions and measures to make a better use of Internet and Information and Communication Technologies in favor of culture and strategic management of knowledge, multilingualism, as well as to strengthen cultural and creative industries in the region and cultural information systems.
7. To ratify the importance of individual and collective cultural rights, including identity and memory, beliefs, concepts and ideologies, languages, customs, traditions and heritage, both material and immaterial, of all our peoples, including the indigenous, native and rural peoples and Afro-descendant communities.
8. To foster the debate around cultural rights in the digital environment, with emphasis in the construction of joint strategies of the countries of CELAC to seek a global solution for the challenge of authors' rights regulations, the assurance of freedom of expression and free manifestation of the diversity of cultural expressions in the Internet.
9. To promote the defense of cultural subaquatic heritage, respecting the mechanisms that each country has identified, understanding that not all countries state parties of the Convention for the protection of subaquatic cultural heritage (2001) and that the issues and needs of each country in the region are unique.

10. To make real and substantial contributions to the implementation and fulfillment of the *CELAC Cultural Action Plan (2015-2020)* approved by all our countries at this meeting, essential part of this declaration, and to achieve that it should be element and instrument of integration of the cultures and identities of our region and for the application of a culture of peace, in accordance with the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, approved by the Second CELAC Summit.
11. To entrust the Ministers of Culture of the CELAC Quartet with the monitoring of CELAC Cultural Action Plan (2015-2020) and with the elaboration of annual reports regarding its implementation, to be presented at each meeting of Ministers. The Quartet will make suggestions to enrich and update the Plan of Action in consultation with Member States.
12. To firmly and steadfastly provide follow-up for the World Decade for Afro-descendants proclaimed by the United Nations with the purpose to ensure the full exercise of economic, social and cultural rights of this people, and to develop actions contributing to the fight against discrimination, racism and intolerance, as well as to the repair of damages caused by slavery.
13. To highlight and validate the declaration made about the Bicentenary of the Jamaica Letter of the Liberator of the Americas, Simón Bolívar, and ratify its validity for the political, social and cultural integration of our region.
14. To celebrate the Seventieth Anniversary of UNESCO which, through the use of intercultural dialogue, has worked for and contributed to the achievement of peace, development and poverty alleviation, as well as the improvement of human potential. Likewise, to welcome and unite in the celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of the adoption of the UNESCO Convention on the promotion and protection of the diversity of cultural expressions (2005), a truly significant international regulatory instrument, particularly for the developing countries.
15. To welcome the initiative of UNESCO to elaborate a Work Plan for Culture for Latin America and the Caribbean (2016-2021) and to encourage its fulfillment through an inclusive and joint work with members states of CELAC.
16. To support all actions allowing the inclusion of Culture in the Post-2015 Agenda, fostering culture as a right, element of cohesion, identity and force of society transformation.
17. To provide follow-up for already created Projects, especially the Project for the Regional School of the Arts of the Caribbean that is being initiated at the present.
18. To ratify the decision of the Second Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the CELAC, celebrated in Caracas, to choose the Plurinational State of Bolivia to host the IV Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the CELAC, to be held in 2016.

Havana, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015