

## KEY FACTS AND FIGURES ON GUATEMALA / UNESCO COOPERATION

**1. Membership in UNESCO:** 2 January 1950

**2. Membership on the Executive Board:** No

Not candidate for 2013-2017;

Previous terms: 2003-2007, 1989-1993, 1978-1983

**3. Membership on Intergovernmental Committees, Commissions: 7**

- International Coordinating Council of the Programme on Man and the Biosphere Member (Term expires : 40th General Conference)
- Intergovernmental Council for the International Hydrological Programme Member (Term expires : 40th General Conference)
- Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Country of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation Vice-President Member (Term expires: 39th General Conference)
- Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication Member (Term expires : 39th General Conference)
- Legal Committee Member elected by the General Conference at its 37th session - Member of the Legal Committee from the beginning of the 38th session (2015) until the beginning of the 39th session (2017)
- Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee Member (Term expires : 39th General Conference)
- Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, Member

**4. Permanent Delegation to UNESCO:**

H.E. Mr Marco Tulio Chicas Sosa, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Guatemala in France, Permanent Delegate to UNESCO since 4 September 2013.

**5. UNESCO Office in Guatemala (Guatemala)**

In 1996 UNESCO established a **National Office** in Guatemala, UNESCO representative in this country. The Head of the Office is **Mr Julio Carranza (P-5, Cuba), since July 2014.**

**6. Guatemalan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO  
(Comisión Guatemalteca de Cooperación con UNESCO)**

- Establishment: 2 June 1950
- President/Chairperson (since January 2016): Sr. Don Oscar Hugo LÓPEZ RIVAS (Minister of Education)
- Secretary-General (since August 2012): Ms Jannina Padilla Fuentes, Technical Secretary
- Priority Areas: World Heritage; Education of children with special needs; Intangible Cultural Heritage; Gender Equality in Education, continuous education; bio-ethics; preservation of cultural heritage.
- Publications: The National Commission does not publish any information bulletin.
- UNESCO's contribution to the capacity building of the National Commission:

Ms Jannina Padilla, Technical Secretary, attended the Training for the programming on Youth and HIV (Panama City, 22-25 October 2013) and the Sub-regional Meeting of National Commissions for Latin America (Quito, Ecuador, 3-5 September 2013).

**7. Personalities linked to the UNESCO activities (Goodwill Ambassadors, Special Envoys, Chairpersons of Committees, etc): 1**

Ms Rigoberta Menchú Tum. Ms Menchú Tum was designated as a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador on 21 June 1996. In this capacity, she undertook the numerous activities aiming to support indigenous people. Ms Menchú Tum is considered, by UNESCO and the international community, as an asset in raising public awareness on the issue of respect for the rights of indigenous peoples.

**8. UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks in Guatemala: 2**

- *UNESCO Chair on Water Resources Sustainability*, established in 2005 at the University of San Carlos de Guatemala (Guatemala). In the field of water resources sustainable management, the purpose of the Chair shall be to promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation in the fields of water resources sustainable management. It will serve as a means of facilitating collaboration between high-level, internationally recognized researchers and teaching staff of the University and other institutions in Guatemala and elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in other regions of the world.
- *UNESCO Chair on Communication for the strengthening of Cultural Diversity*, established in 2006 at the Rafael Landívar University (Guatemala). In the field of communication and cultural diversity, objectives are: (i) to develop, jointly with other sectors of the Guatemalan society including indigenous communities, and other universities of Guatemala and the region, a space of excellence for the studying, research, training, and diffusion as well as the promotion of dialogue and plural, multidisciplinary encounter related to general communication topics; (ii) to strengthen a cultural diversity in particular, within the frame of the construction of a democratic and intercultural society and to reinforce the freedom of expression and the press, as well as of the human rights.

**9. Associated Schools: 18**

Guatemala joined the **UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet)** in 1965. There are 18 institutions participating in ASP (14 primary and 4 secondary schools) and the projects and activities on which the country works address the following themes: Climate Change, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Water. The **ASPnet National Coordinator** is currently Sra Peralta de Rodríguez Sara, Comisión Nacional Guatemalteca de Cooperación con la UNESCO.

The country participates in the following activity: "**OzonAction**" **Education Pack for Secondary Schools** (01-Sep-09) - (Ongoing). 75 countries all over the world pilot test the Ozon Action Education pack for Secondary Schools, developed by UNEP with the education expertise of UNESCO. A student's and a teacher's book were conceived in order to provide secondary school teachers a teaching tool to facilitate the inclusion of human and environmental issues linked to Ozone reduction within the teaching curricula: ozone layer depletion, protection and the health risks of strong ultraviolet radiation.

**10. Category 2 Institutes and Centres: None**

**11. Biosphere Reserves: 3**

- *Maya Biosphere Reserve* (1990) in the Petén region of northern Guatemala represents one of the largest areas of tropical forest north of the Amazon and the northernmost tropical forest in the Western Hemisphere. It is also the site of three contiguous UNESCO recognized biosphere reserves: the Maya Biosphere Reserve in Guatemala, Calakmul and Montes Azules Biosphere Reserves in the southern Mexico. The reserve has seven core areas, and includes four national parks and three wildlife reserves which contain high and medium lowland forest, inundated

savannas, small fields of pine, caves and rocky habitats, lakes and lagoons, rivers and wetlands and remnant mangrove forests. The multiple use zone is composed of tropical forest dedicated to the sustainable harvest of zate palms, chicle gum, all spice and timber. A southerly-located buffer zone has been rapidly changing from a forested landscape with scattered agricultural patches to an agricultural landscape with an increasingly fragmented forest. Promoting diverse sources of income-generation for local people is a major concern. Guatemalan and international conservationists work on core area delimitation and protection, combining efforts to find economic alternatives to slash-and-burn farming in order to forge a new future for local populations in the Maya Biosphere Reserve.

- *Sierra de las Minas* (1992). One of the truly wild places in Guatemala is the east-western mountain range that runs through the country's southeast highlands. Protection of the area is particularly important because it contains an estimated 60 percent of Guatemala's remaining cloud forest. Because of its geographic isolation, and wide range of elevation, the Sierra is home to at least 885 species of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles. More than 17 distinct species of evergreen forest are endemic to the area. The area is considered as an irreplaceable seed resource for reforestation and agroforestry throughout the tropics. Because the heart of the mountains is composed of jade and marble, mining has been carried out here for centuries (thus the name, which means mountain range of the mines). The reserve's managers are engaged in environmental education for local community leaders, many of who are Kekchi Maya. The goal is to discourage ongoing migration into the forest and to establish sustainable agricultural activities instead. Ecotourism is considered an important economic alternative.
- *Trifinio Fraternidad* (2011, Transboundary with El Salvador and Honduras) is the first transboundary Biosphere Reserve in Latin-America.

## **12. Sites inscribed on the World Heritage List: 3**

- *Antigua Guatemala* (1979) (Cultural). Antigua, the capital of the Captaincy-General of Guatemala, was founded in the early 16th century. Built 1,500 m above sea-level, in an earthquake-prone region, it was largely destroyed by an earthquake in 1773 but its principal monuments are still preserved as ruins. In the space of under three centuries the city, which was built on a grid pattern inspired by the Italian Renaissance, acquired a number of superb monuments.
- Archaeological Park and Ruins of Quirigua (1981) (Cultural). Inhabited since the 2nd century A.D., Quirigua had become during the reign of Cauac Sky (723–84) the capital of an autonomous and prosperous state. The ruins of Quirigua contain some outstanding 8th-century monuments and an impressive series of carved stelae and sculpted calendars that constitute an essential source for the study of Mayan civilization.
- Tikal National Park (1979) (Mixed). In the heart of the jungle, surrounded by lush vegetation, lies one of the major sites of Mayan civilization, inhabited from the 6th century B.C. to the 10th century A.D. The ceremonial centre contains superb temples and palaces, and public squares accessed by means of ramps. Remains of dwellings are scattered throughout the surrounding countryside.

### Tentative List: 21

- The Cultural Triangle (2002)
- The Cuenca Mirador (2002)
- The Core of the Mayan Area (2002)
- The Route of The Rivers (2002)
- Naj Tunich Cave (2002)
- The Mayan-Olmecan Encounter (2002)
- Route of the Franciscan Evangelisation (2002)
- Route of the Dominique Evangelisation (2002)
- Route of the Peace and National Identity (2002)
- Castle of San Felipe de Lara (2002)
- Route of the Agroindustry and the Architecture Victoriana (2002)

- Town of Chichicastenango (2002)
- The Green Route of Verapaz, Guatemala (2002)
- Sierra De Las Minas Biosphere Reservation (2002)
- National Park Sierra del Lacandón (2002)
- The Manglares Route of Pacific Coast of Guatemala (2002)
- Protected area of Lake Atitlán: multiple use (2002)
- Visis Cabá National park and Triangulo Ixil Vernacular Architecture (2002)
- Tak'alik Ab'aj National Park (2012)
- The Painted Murals of San Bartolo (2012)
- The Caves of Naj Tunich (2012)

### **13. Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity: 2**

- *Rabinal Achí dance drama tradition* (2008), which is a dynastic Maya drama, which developed in the fifteenth century and a rare example of preserved pre-Hispanic traditions. It comprises myths of origin and addresses popular and political subjects concerning the inhabitants of the region of Rabinal, expressed through masked dance, theatre and music. Since colonization in the sixteenth century, the Rabinal Achí dance has been performed on Saint Paul's day on 25 January. The festival is coordinated by members of *cofradías*, local brotherhoods responsible for running the community. By taking part in the dance, the living enter into "contact" with the dead, the *rajawales*, represented by masks. Recalling their ancestors is not simply a means of perpetuating the heritage of the past. It is also a vision of the future, since one day the living will join their ancestors. The impact of armed conflict especially in the departamentos of Rabinal and K'iche has almost led to the disappearance of this dance. Today, it is especially threatened by the precarious economic state of the custodians and the community as a whole. It is also confronted with folklorization and trivialization, which seriously threaten the transmission of knowledge and values associated to the performance of this drama tradition.
- *Language, dance and music of the Garifuna* (2008; Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua). A population of mixed origin incorporating cultural elements of indigenous Caribbean and African groups, the Garifuna settled along the Atlantic coast of Central America after being forced to flee from the Caribbean island of Saint Vincent in the eighteenth century. The Garifuna language belongs to the Arawakan group of languages and has survived centuries of discrimination and linguistic domination. It is rich in tales (*úruga*) originally recited during wakes or large gatherings. The melodies bring together African and Amerindian elements, and the texts are a veritable repository of the history and traditional knowledge of the Garifuna, such as cassava-growing, fishing, canoe-building and the construction of baked mud houses. There is also a considerable amount of satire in these songs, which are accompanied by various drums and dances, which the spectators may join in. These traditions are still very important to the life and survival of the Garifuna people.

#### List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding: 1

- *Paach ceremony* (2013), which is a corn-veneration ritual celebrated in San Pedro Sacatepéquez. The ceremony gives thanks for good harvests in a ritual that highlights the close connection between humans and nature and features prayers in the Mam language. The participants are mostly older farmers, both men and women, with extensive ties to the community and who are recognized as its leaders. Four prayer sayers, or *parlamenteros*, offer prayers during the ceremony, supported by four auxiliary *parlamenteros*; meanwhile four godmothers dress ceremonial corncobs and coordinate the preparation and serving of food. The Paach ceremony strengthens the identity of the community of San Pedro and its knowledge and respect for nature and its conservation. The transmission process is both oral and practical, with a group leader instructing new members at workshops and children accompanying their grandparents during the ceremony. In recent years, the Paach ceremony has decreased in frequency, with some young people seeing it as irrelevant, while economic insecurity has caused some bearers to withdraw from the practice. Furthermore, the advanced age of the elders, combined with diminished transmission, might result in the disappearance of this cultural expression.

- 14. Memory of the World Register:** None
- 15. Creative Cities Network:** None
- 16. Legal instruments:** 19 ratified
- 17. Anniversaries with which UNESCO is associated in 2016-2017:** None
- 18. Participation Programme**  
**2014-2015:** 3 projects approved for a total amount of US\$78 000
- 19. UNESCO Fellowships Programme:**  
 There is one fellowship awarded to Guatemala since 2010 for a total amount of US\$ 9 000.
- 20. Payment of assessed membership fees for 2016:** Owing  
 Assessment rate for 2016: 0,028 %  
 Last payment: 23 March 2015
- 21. Representation within the Secretariat (as at 03/04/2016):** 6, under-represented (Max. 4; Min. 2)
- 1 International Professional Staff at Headquarters (Geographical Posts)
  - 1 International Professional Staff in the Field (including institutes outside HQs) (Non-Geographical Posts)
  - 1 National Professional Officer in the Field
  - 3 General Service Staff in the Field
- Junior Professional Officer (JPO) /Associate Expert (AE) Programme: Guatemala does not participate to the programme.
- Young Professional Programme: Guatemala submitted 6 applications for the YPP 2015.
- 22. Use of UNESCO Coupons:** Guatemala does not participate in the Programme
- 23. Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) maintaining relations with UNESCO, with headquarters in Guatemala:**  
 The *Secretariat for Central American Integration (SICA)*, based in Guatemala City and established in 1960 is the technical and regional organization constituted as a legal entity which main function is to assist technically and administratively the Central American economic integration process promoted by the Central American Integration System (SICA). SIECA is the regional guard for the proper application of the Protocol to the General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration (The Guatemala Protocol) and other legal instruments of regional economic integration, and of the implementation of decisions of the organs of the Economic Subsystem. It is headed by a Secretary-General, Victoria Marina Velásquez de Avilés (El Salvador) since 27 June 2014, appointed for a period of four years.
- 24. Non-governmental organizations in official partnership with UNESCO, with headquarters in Guatemala:** None