

## THE DECLARATION OF PANAMA

The Declaration of Panama has been established with the help of national and regional Higher Education organizations, and the University Networks of Latin America and the Caribbean. Key policy-makers from these institutions recently attended a meeting in Panama (6-7 November, 2008) that was organized by the following Higher Education entities: The UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC-UNESCO); The Inter-American Organization for Higher Education (OUI); and the Union of Latin American and Caribbean Universities (UDUAL). The main item on the agenda was the "Latin American and Caribbean Area for Higher Education (*ENLACES*)". ENLACES is considered by all the aforementioned parties to be crucial to the development of Higher Education in the region. Below are the basic tenets and clauses of the ENLACES initiative:

- I. That the Fifth Clause of the 2008 CRES Strategic Plan be considered the basic framework of the ENLACES initiative, namely: "To Promote Latin American and Caribbean Regional Integration and Internationalization within Higher Education by establishing a Latin American and Caribbean Area for Higher Education (*ENLACES*) with an outline of its main tenets and recommendations." Second, that the development of ENLACES requires both cooperation and convergence to maximise the potential of key areas in Higher Education such as: Curricular Harmonization, Institutional Reform, Interdisciplinarianism, Mobility and Academic Exchange. In addition, ENLACES requires the planning and execution of a joint research agenda that is based on social relevancy, and the prioritization of objectives. Finally that, ENLACES is to be established within the framework of Higher Education and advanced Human Resource training methods- i.e., that it is to be centred on innovation, knowledge sharing, and the promotion of culture. In addition to the above, ENLACES may offer a vast range of services to the various public and productive sectors of the countries mentioned in this agreement.
- II. First, that ENLACES be considered an opportunity for change to improve the scale and scope of higher education from the perspective of regional integration and university internationalization. Second, that it be based on quality, social inclusion and relevance –to enhance accreditation policies, evaluation and quality assurance processes; third, to promote innovative education and research. Finally, to support the Regional Agenda for Science, Technology and Innovation, and to develop key strategies for the 2008 CRES Strategic Plan.
- III. That the IESALC-UNESCO partnership be seen as a significant accomplishment in promoting Latin American and Caribbean integration and leadership, i.e. in that the procedures for the Declaration of the Regional Conference on Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean and the CRES 2008 Plan of Action require a high level of management and leadership.
- IV. First, that the agreed parties are directly linked with the development of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean and the basic principles and agreements of the CRES 2008 project. Next, that innovative methods and regional integration are promoted in order to establish advanced and wide-encompassing strategies though scientific, technological, cultural and theoretical training in Democracy - thereby making a significant contribution to the economic and social transformation of the world's people through the promotion of equity and justice.
- V. That the organizations mentioned herein shall create synergies that form ENLACES and thus make it a strategic area of academic cooperation and integration, which in turn, foster development in the following areas: a) Science, Technology and Innovation b) Curricular Alignment Processes and Curricular Harmonization c) Regional Information Systems for Higher Education; d) Curriculum Alignment Initiatives for Legal and Regulatory Standards.

- VI. To recognise the existence of other common areas of Higher Education and similar initiatives within the ENLACES framework. Moreover, to acknowledge that the OUI and UDUAL agreed to join forces to promote the development of ENLACES, thereby offering a full range of institutional services.

The aforementioned parties hereby agree to:

- I. Formulate and publicly announce their joint plans to establish *ENLACES*.
- II. First, to recommend that Heads of State, Government Leaders, Ministers of Higher Education and their counterparts, as well as legislative bodies in the region implement policies and provide support for the ENLACES initiative. Second, to strengthen support provided by the Dominican Republic's Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology and the Vice-President of Parlatino concerning the relevant strategic lines of action.
- III. To arrange a meeting for the various university networks, national and regional organisations and Higher Education Institutes in Latin America and the Caribbean with the aim to positively contribute to the development of ENLACES.
- IV. To seek assistance from various international organisms for the implementation of ENLACES.
- V. To invite key players, business owners, and representatives from social sectors and Non-Governmental Organizations and society at large to help achieve these aims.
- VI. First, to hold a second meeting in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in the second week of March 2009 with the maximum number of university networks and national and regional organizations from Latin America and the Caribbean. Second, to make concrete proposals for future cooperation and regional integration based on key issues in this declaration.
- VII. To present a detailed report and list of proposals at the "5<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas" for the aforementioned group of organizations. (This event is to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in April 2009). It is to be noted that special support has been provided by HE President of the Dominican Republic, Dr. Leonel Fernández.
- VIII. To establish a Technical Committee coordinated by IESALC/UNESCO, OUI and UDUAL, which will have as its main aim a working proposal for the implementation of key topics that lead to the successful creation of a solid framework for ENLACES.
- IX. To issue a report based on the framework of this declaration at the 2009 World Conference in Higher Education in Paris.

Institutional signatories

<p>Gustavo García de Paredes Presidente de la Unión de Universidades de América Latina y el Caribe, UDUAL</p>	<p>José Renato Carvalho Director del IESALC-UNESCO</p>
<p>Luis Miguel Romero Fernández Presidente de la Organización Universitaria Interamericana, OUI</p>	<p>Francisco Telémaco Talavera Presidente del Consejo Nacional de Universidades, CNU Nicaragua</p>
<p>José María Antón Secretario General de VIRTUAL EDUCA</p>	<p>Albor Ángel Cantard Representante del Consejo Interuniversitario Nacional, CIN Argentina</p>
<p>Germán Anzola Montero Presidente de la Asociación de Universidades de América Latina y el Caribe para la Integración, AUALCPI</p>	<p>José Andrés Masís Bermúdez Representante del Consejo Nacional de Rectores, CONARE Costa Rica</p>
<p>Carlos Hernando Forero Robayo Secretario General de la Asociación Colombiana de Universidades, ASCUN Colombia</p>	<p>Eduardo Francisco Asueta Representante de la Asociación de Universidades Grupo de Montevideo, AUGM</p>

<p>Marco Romilio Estrada Muy Representante Consejo Superior Universitario Centroamericano, CSUCA</p>	<p>Miguel José Escala Figueredo Presidente Asociación de Instituciones de Educación Superior Tecnológicas de América Latina y el Caribe, AIESTALC Representante Asociación Dominicana de Rectores Universitarios, ADRU</p>
<p>Armando Villarroel Director Consorcio Red de Educación a Distancia, CREAD</p>	<p>Carlos Álvarez Representante Red de Macrouiversidades Públicas de América Latina y el Caribe, REDMACROUNIVERSIDADES</p>
<p>Ligia Amada Melo de Cardona Secretaria de Educación Superior, Ciencia y Tecnología de República Dominicana Testigo de Honor</p>	<p>Elias Castillo Vicepresidente del Parlamento Latinoamericano Testigo de Honor</p>

Panama City, November 7, 2008