

## KEY FACTS AND FIGURES ON COSTA RICA / UNESCO COOPERATION

1. **Membership in UNESCO:** 19 May 1950
2. **Membership on the Executive Board:** not currently  
*Previous terms:* 1966-1974, 1980-1985, 1989-1993, and 1994-1997
3. **Membership on Intergovernmental Committees and Commissions:** 2
  - Intergovernmental Council of the "Management of Social Transformations" Programme (MOST) (Term expires: 40th General Conference)
  - Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, IOC
4. **Director-General's visits to Costa Rica:** 1  
May 2013 (Official visit and World Press Freedom Day)
5. **The former Director-General's visits to Costa Rica:**  
2003 (Koïchiro Matsuura)  
1992 and 1998 (Federico Mayor)  
1976, 1979 and 1985 (Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow)
6. **Permanent Delegation to UNESCO:**  
Ambassador Jorge Eduardo Arroyo Pérez, Permanent Delegate to UNESCO since 2 April 2015  
*Previous Permanent Delegate:* Jacques Sagot Martino (January 2008 - August 2014)
7. **UNESCO Office in San José (Costa Rica):**  
Since January 2014, **Ms María del Pilar Álvarez Laso** (D-1, Mexico) is the Director of the Office, and *Cluster Office* to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama.  
*Representative* to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.  
In November 1981, UNESCO established a National Office in San José.  
The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UNESCO's Office was celebrated in 2014.
8. **Costa Rica National Commission for UNESCO:**  
**(Comisión Costarricense de Cooperación con la UNESCO)**
  - Established in 1947;
  - President : Ms Sonia Marta Mora Escalante (Minister of Education)
  - Representant of the Minister of Education and President of the Executive Committee: Ms Rocío Solís Gamboa
  - Secretary-General (a.i.): Mr José Rafael Alvarado Cortés
9. **Personalities linked to the UNESCO activities (Goodwill Ambassadors, Special Envoys, etc):** None
10. **UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks in Costa Rica:** 2  
UNESCO Chairs/UNITWIN  
Today there are two UNESCO Chairs established at the Costa Rican higher education institutions:

1. UNESCO Chair in Human Rights (2011) at De La Salle University
2. UNESCO Chair on Education for Sustainable Development (2012) at The Earth Charter Center for ESD in collaboration with the University for Peace (UPEACE)

These Chairs are implementing international programmes on Education and Values for Sustainable Development, International Law, Global Governance and the Earth Charter principles, Internalization of Sustainability Values and Principles, by promoting knowledge sharing, through online courses, seminars, regional meetings, workshops, conferences, academic exchanges and inter-university cooperation, involving higher education institutions in Costa Rica and elsewhere in Latin America, North America and Europe regions.

#### 11. Associated Schools:

With **191 member schools**, Costa Rica has proportionally the largest ASPnet membership in Latin America and one of the largest in the world, and a very dynamic and well-supported national network.

During the last biennium, Costa Rica participated in the online collaborative platform ASPnet in Action "Global Citizens connected for Sustainable Development" dedicated to enhancing information and knowledge sharing about school-based initiatives among the ASPnet members around the world. (<http://en.unesco.org/aspnet/globalcitizens>).

Costa Rican ASPnet schools actively engage in ESD and GCED and celebrate all International Days around UNESCO priorities. Recently, a special ASPnet Flag was created to make member schools more visible in their neighbourhoods and communities!

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

13. **Global geoparks:**           None

14. **Biosphere Reserves:**           3

- *La Amistad* (1982, review in 2002) - La Amistad Biosphere Reserve and National Park lies in the foothills and mountains of the Cordillera de Talamanca, between the mountain ranges of Panama and Costa Rica. The Cordillera de Talamanca is the highest and wildest non-volcanic mountain range in Central America, formed by the orogenic activity, which created the land dividing the Pacific and Caribbean Oceans. This site forms part of La Amistad International Park with Panama.
- *Cordillera Volcánica Central* (1988, review in 2003 and extended in 2010) - This biosphere reserve is located in the central highlands, about 60 km north-west to the city of San José. The Cordillera Volcánica Central reserve is one of the richest in both natural resources and cultural heritage. On its long axis there are several volcanic cones with their still well formed craters.
- *Agua y Paz* (2007) – The Biosphere Reserve is characterised by mountain ranges and plains. In the mountainous zones are the volcanoes Miravalles, Tenorio, Arenal, Chato and Platanar, among others, and in the plains area are lakes, flooded forests and swamps, some of which are Ramsar sites, such as Lake Caño Negro. The reserve is comprised of eight core zones that are protected wildlife areas legally constituted in the country and that are administered through the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC).

15. **Sites inscribed on the World Heritage List:**           4

- *Talamanca Range-La Amistad Reserves / La Amistad National Park* (1983, extension in 1990) (Natural) – The location of this unique site in Central America, where Quaternary glaciers have left their mark, has allowed the fauna and flora of North and South America to interbreed. Tropical rainforests cover most of the area. Four different Indian tribes inhabit this property, which benefits from close co-operation between Costa Rica and Panama.

- *Cocos Island National Park* (1997, extension in 2002) (Natural) – Cocos Island National Park, located 550 km off the Pacific coast of Costa Rica, is the only island in the tropical eastern Pacific with a tropical rainforest. Its position as the first point of contact with the northern equatorial counter-current, and the myriad interactions between the island and the surrounding marine ecosystem, make the area an ideal laboratory for the study of biological processes. The underwater world of the national park has become famous due to the attraction it holds for divers, who rate it as one of the best places in the world to view large pelagic species such as sharks, rays, tuna and dolphins.
- *Area de Conservación Guanacaste* (1999, extension in 2004) (Natural) – It contains important natural habitats for the conservation of biological diversity, including the best dry forest habitats from Central America to northern Mexico and key habitats for endangered or rare plant and animal species. The site demonstrates significant ecological processes in both its terrestrial and marine-coastal environments.
- *Precolumbian Chiefdom Settlements with Stone Spheres of the Diquís* (2014) (Cultural) - The property includes four archaeological sites located in the Diquís Delta in southern Costa Rica, which are considered unique examples of the complex social, economic and political systems of the period AD 500–1500. They contain artificial mounds, paved areas, burial sites and, most significantly, a collection of stone spheres, between 0.7 m and 2.57 m in diameter, whose meaning, use and production remain largely a mystery. The spheres are distinctive for their perfection, number, size and density, and placement in original locations. Their preservation from the looting that befell the vast majority of archaeological sites in Costa Rica has been attributed to the thick layers of sediment that kept them buried for centuries.

#### Tentative List 1

- *Corcovado National Park and Isla del Caño Biological Reserve* (30/01/2003)

#### **16. Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:** 1

- *Oxherding and oxcart traditions in Costa Rica* (2008) - The traditional oxcart, or carreta, is the product of Costa Rica's most famous craft. Dating from the mid-nineteenth century, oxcarts were used to transport coffee beans from Costa Rica's central valley over the mountains to Puntarenas on the Pacific coast, a journey requiring ten to fifteen days. The oxcarts used spokeless wheels, a hybrid between the disc used by the Aztec and the spoked wheel introduced by the Spaniards, to cut through the mud without getting stuck. In many cases, oxcarts were a family's only means of transport; they often served as a symbol of social status.

#### **17. Memory of the World Register:** None

#### **18. Creative Cities Network:** None

#### **19. Legal instruments:** 19 ratified

Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention. The Hague, 14 May 1954	03/06/1998	Accession
Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The Hague, 14 May 1954	03/06/1998	Accession
Convention relating to the Distribution of Programme-Carrying Signals Transmitted by Satellite. Brussels, 21 May 1974	25/03/1999	Accession
Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The Hague, 26 March 1999	09/12/2003	Accession
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Paris, 17 October 2003	23/02/2007	Ratification
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Paris, 20 October 2005	15/03/2011	Ratification
International Convention against Doping in Sport. Paris, 19 October 2005	27/02/2012	Ratification

#### **20. Anniversaries with which UNESCO is associated in 2016-2017:** None

- (1999) Hundred and thirtieth anniversary of the introduction of free, compulsory primary education in Costa Rica - The enactment of this law symbolized the fundamental role played by education in the effective and autonomous development of a country. Thanks to this step, which was taken more than 100 years ago, Costa Rica has an excellent record for the development of education. By establishing and maintaining the universal character of primary education, the country has elected to subscribe to the development of education for all, a concept dear to the Organization.
- (1998) *Fiftieth anniversary of the abolition of the army in Costa Rica* - In view of the unusual nature and importance of this event, not only for the country but also for the region and for the world, an exception could be made to the rule that anniversaries should be either centenaries or multiples of centenaries. Over the years, the abolition of the army has demonstrated the importance of the impact of a new concept of sovereignty and democracy based on social and economic equality and resistance to violence. This event has made Costa Rica one of the first countries to practice a culture of peace and development through its neutrality towards neighboring countries.

#### **21. Participation Programme:**

2014-2015: 4 requests approved for the total amount of **US\$ 83,000**  
2012-2013: 5 projects approved for a total amount of **US\$ 85,300**  
2010-2011: 7 requests approved for a total amount of **US\$ 111,950**, as well as an Emergency assistance for **US\$ 50,000**

#### **22. UNESCO Fellowships Programme:**

6 fellowships have been awarded to Costa Rica since 2010 for a total amount of **US\$123,796**.

#### **23. Payment of assessed membership fees (as at 31 May 2016):**

Assessment rate for 2016: 0.047 %;  
Last payment: 4 May 2016

#### **24. Representation within the Secretariat (as at 23 May 2016): 8; normally-represented (Max. 4; Min. 2):**

- 1 International Professional Staff at Headquarters (Geographical Posts):
- 2 International Professional Staff in the Field (Geographical Posts) :
- 1 National Professional Officer in the Field
- 4 General Service Staff in the Field

#### Junior Professional Officer (JPO) /Associate Expert (AE) Programme:

Costa Rica does not participate to the programme.

#### Young Professional Programme:

Costa Rica does not qualify for the Young Professionals Program, as it is normally represented.