



ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
Inter-American Council for Integral Development
(CIDI)



**SECOND INTER-AMERICAN MEETING OF MINISTERS OF
CULTURE AND HIGHEST APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES**

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DECLARATION OF MEXICO

(Adopted at the sixth plenary session, held on August 24, 2004)

We, the Ministers and Highest Appropriate Governmental Authorities responsible for cultural policy or for the support for cultural activities in the Americas, mindful that cultural expressions are vectors of identity, value and meaning and that cultural diversity is essential in the promotion of economic growth with equity; and is an essential condition for social development and the fight against poverty, and a fundamental element of any conceptualization of democratic governance, met in Mexico City under the auspices of the Organization of American States (OAS), and within the framework of the commitments made at the Third Summit of the Americas, in Quebec City, Canada (2001), and at the Special Summit of the Americas, in Monterrey, Mexico (2004).

We reaffirm the Declaration of Cartagena de Indias, in particular that it is necessary to strengthen dialogue on cultural and linguistic diversity directed at recognition of and respect for diverse cultures, including, among others, those that are indigenous and those that are of African descent, with a view to eradicating all forms of discrimination, and to acknowledging the contributions of all cultures given the need to promote their full and equal participation in our societies. We encourage greater cooperation between governments, civil society and the private and voluntary sector in order to develop new and dynamic cultural policies and programs aimed at promoting the diversity of cultural expressions of the hemisphere, maximizing the benefits of globalization and mitigating its negative effects on the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity in the Americas.

Considering the opportunities afforded us by our rich and varied cultural diversity, we analyzed, explored, and established lines of action to bring about more effective cooperation among our countries, using as a focal point the role culture plays in integration and economic, social and political development in our Hemisphere. We therefore recognize the importance of the mandate issued by the latest OAS General Assembly to elaborate a draft Social Charter of the Americas and a Plan of Action.

We consider that it is vital for all states to recognize our cultural heritage and fully appreciate and encourage the creative expression of our peoples. We support the need to create and maintain a climate that encourages and fosters freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry and that promotes full expression and access to cultural activities.

We recognize the important link between development and culture and we agree that cultural dialogue contributes, among others, to sustainable development, stability and peace.

We reaffirm that the safeguarding of cultural heritage in all its forms has a role in promoting cultural diversity. The places, objects, and living traditions of the diverse groups that make up our countries constitute a lasting legacy that needs to be recognized and preserved.

Therefore, we encourage the deepening of inter-American cooperation in the identification, preservation, and appreciation of heritage resources as expressions of our diverse cultural history. Further, we condemn the pillage, illicit traffic, destruction, and unauthorized possession of cultural objects, as well as the commensurate damage to archeological and historic sites, which results in irreversible losses to cultural heritage, identity, and the related sustainable economic potential of our peoples.

Recalling the efforts made by UNESCO in support of cultural diversity, including the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, and the resolution adopted by consensus by the UNESCO General Conference at its 32nd Session, with a view to drawing up the preliminary draft of an international convention on cultural diversity; we will promote regional dialogue on this matter.

We consider cultural diversity to be a crosscutting issue for the three main topics of this Declaration. For that purpose, we issue the following:

DECLARATION

CULTURE AS AN ENGINE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, EMPLOYMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT

We recognize the need to examine the relationship between economic growth with equity and strengthening of cultures and respect for cultural diversity as a fundamental part of our identities. We also recognize the need to develop indicators that enable us to measure the social and economic impact of cultural activity and to establish a closer bond between cultural policies and economic, trade, social, and fiscal policies.

We recognize the important role that artists and others engaged in cultural activities play in our societies and their contribution to our national economy and identities.

We acknowledge the importance of enhancing cooperation and partnerships and of forging new relationships with international and regional organizations, industry associations, cultural industries, civil society, nongovernmental and non-profit organizations, in order to promote cultural cooperation effectively in the Americas.

We recognize that the interrelationship between educational, social, economic, and cultural policies should be taken into consideration in sustaining and promoting diversity in cultural contents and artistic expressions.

We encourage international financial institutions, agencies, and foundations to expand programs that support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises that promote cultural as well as economic goals, since vibrant Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) constitute a fundamental source of economic growth and job creation.

CHALLENGES FACED BY CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

We agree on the need to strengthen and promote all actors in the cultural field, including cultural and creative industries that constitute one of the most dynamic sectors of our economies, and generate employment and wealth. Similarly, they open up fundamental opportunities for forging and transforming cultural identities and offer a great potential for strengthening the cultural community of the Americas.

We reiterate the role of all actors in the cultural field, including cultural and creative industries, as components of economic activity and stimuli of social cohesion. In this context, we recognize the need to formulate integral public policies that encourage respect for and the promotion of cultural diversity.

We commit to promote the growth of all actors in the cultural field, including cultural and creative industries, to which end it is necessary to develop initiatives to strengthen and foster trade in related goods and services, with respect for their fundamental value as an expression of diverse cultural identities.

We share an interest in promoting markets for all actors in the cultural field, including those for cultural and creative industries, within the legal framework agreed to by our governments, with a view to ensuring the preservation and promotion of the diversity of artistic and cultural expressions and contents.

We recognize the ability of States, consistent with international obligations, to adopt or maintain the measures they consider adequate to promote cultural diversity and to take into account the various needs of all actors in the cultural field, including cultural and creative industries, especially in the context of the process of economic liberalization.¹

CULTURE AS A TOOL FOR INCLUSION, SOCIAL COHESION, AND THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY

We reaffirm the need to develop policies and programs in the cultural sector aimed at reducing poverty and social differences and at creating jobs.

We are convinced that culture is a factor in social cohesion that offers opportunities for advancement and sustainable economic development.

We recognize the role culture plays in all sectors of development, such as trade, the economy, education, science and technology, and tourism; and that this role must be taken into consideration when formulating sustainable development policies. We recognize the benefits of promoting creativity and the interests of cultural creators including: public recognition, the preservation and dissemination of their work, and the design of strategies in pursuit of the well-being of cultural creators.

¹ The delegations of Argentina, Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Lucia record reservations regarding this paragraph. Bolivia records a reservation exclusively regarding the phrase "*consistent with international obligations.*" Venezuela records a reservation exclusively regarding the phrase "*especially in the context of the process of economic liberalization.*"

We share the conviction that cultural expressions, manifestations and traditions reflect our people's creative freedom and diversity. To that end, we will seek to take appropriate measures to promote creativity and the economic sustainability and freedom of creators.

We will seek to establish strategies, through closer regional cooperation, for promoting increased circulation of goods and services with cultural content among all countries of the region.

We recognize the need to strengthen the expression of our national, sub-regional, and hemispheric cultural diversity. We also acknowledge the importance of culture in the creation of opportunities for economic growth for a large sector of our populations, as well as in the promotion of their individual and collective expressions.

We value the input of civil society and encourage the implementation of cultural policies that involve civil society's participation in the development of programs on poverty reduction and income generation, especially those targeted at the vulnerable and marginalized sectors of society.

We emphasize the need to include and prioritize, in the poverty reduction strategies undertaken by various countries of the Americas, cultural programs and projects geared toward the strengthening of all actors in the cultural field, including cultural industries and micro-enterprises that create jobs and make local economies more dynamic.

We encourage member states to continue working towards salvaging, safeguarding, and disseminating intangible culture expressed in oral literature, festivals, gastronomy, and traditional arts, as factors that promote cultural diversity as well as wealth and identity.

We recognize that having a technical and political forum like the Inter-American Committee on Culture has allowed us to move on from aspirations and possibilities to concrete programs. In particular, we congratulate the Committee's officers for the excellent work they have carried out, and the OAS Technical Secretariat for its support.

We extend our sincerest thanks to the people and government of Mexico for their hospitality, and to CONACULTA for its excellent organization of the meeting's work, demonstrating once again Mexico's commitment to strengthening the cultural agenda of the Americas.