



Organization of
American States

2011 – INTER-AMERICAN YEAR OF CULTURE
Our Cultures, Our Future



The member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) are pleased to declare 2011 the Inter-American Year of Culture in recognition of the central role that culture plays in the economic, social, and human development of all communities. In addition to celebrating the diverse cultures of the Americas, this Inter-American Year will lead to the formulation and implementation of public policies, especially for the strengthening of cultural industries and for promoting culture as a tool of social inclusion. Initiatives will aim at providing lasting impact beyond 2011. It is with great enthusiasm that we invite governments, cultural organizations and individuals to contribute to the success of the Inter-American Year of Culture.

The value and contribution of culture have been highlighted by the Heads of State and Government of the OAS member States, who, gathered in Port of Spain during the Fifth Summit of the Americas in 2009, reaffirmed their commitment to promote intercultural dialogue and respect for cultural diversity in order to encourage mutual understanding, which helps reduce conflict, discrimination, and barriers to economic opportunity and social participation. The OAS is equally pleased to highlight the role of the Inter-American Committee on Culture (CIC) in developing the strategy for the implementation of the Year and coordinating its activities. In this context, the CIC works in alliance with other governmental agencies, non-governmental and international organizations, the private sector, foundations, and other social entities to promote dialogue and cooperation in the field of culture.

Celebrating the Inter-American Year of Culture will increase the recognition of the impact of culture on the well-being of our societies and national economies. We also seek to emphasize the role of cultural industries, not just as vehicles for knowledge, information and entertainment, for promotion of creativity, support for educational processes, and the construction of more democratic societies, but also as an engine of development. Investing in culture offers, among other benefits, better opportunities for employment, increased youth participation, and contributes to the overcoming of poverty.

The commemoration of the Inter-American Year of Culture will be diverse, pluralistic, and inclusive, with the purpose of promoting the Americas' wealth of cultural and linguistic diversity and its contribution to the economic, social and human development of our peoples. *In our richly diverse cultures lies the future of the Americas.*