

5th *Culture and Development* International Congress

Participation of UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean in a Congress in Defense of Cultural Diversity

UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean co-sponsored, together with other institutions and organizations from Cuba and other countries the **5th International Culture and Development Congress**, held at the Palace of Conventions in Havana, Cuba, on June 11-14, 2007, and dedicated on the present year to the defense of cultural diversity

To continue the support that the Regional Office gives to these congresses, participation in the present one has included assuring the presence of important figures in the forums *Cultural Diversity in a Global World*, and *Cultural*

Industries and Technological Changes. The Office also participated in the organization of a round table on languages and oral traditions in Latin America and the Caribbean; in different meetings and workshops dedicated to cultural heritage; in the video and image contest; in the cultural development observatories, cultural networks and the Travelling Caribbean Film Showcase.

Given the acceptance of the authentic value of the relation between culture and development, the Congress has set as goals to propitiate reflection, debate and exchange on the relations between the arts and the cultural processes, and development in a globalized world in urgent need of the preservation of its cultures; to favor the analysis of the role of cultural industries, technological changes and marketing of cultural products and services; to stimulate the exchange of experiences, ideas and projects that promote human creativity in the face of the present challenges; and to promote the search for points of convergence and coordination of common strategies and projects that encourage cultural development through cooperation.

This 5th Congress was attended—in various simultaneous events- by more than 800 people from 64 countries, among them 20 ministers and authorities on culture, experts, carriers, artists and officials. It offered a space for debate on important topical issues



related to the cultures of our peoples, particularly the defense of cultural diversity as the possible alternative in an increasingly homogenized world that threatens to destroy autochthonous cultures and the fertile popular imagination with pre-established life models.

According to the introductory text to the present Congress, "in these circumstances, culture becomes a reason of resistance and participating will. That emerging reality requires study, debate, analysis and reflection for shaping a diagnosis tempered to contemporary needs. It is not about designing a single discourse, but about discovering the true dynamics in the multiplicity of our voices, born in different environments from contrasting and complementary practices: the academic exercise and the experience of our precarious cultural industries, the word of the excluded, of the carriers of autochthonous cultures and of the grass-root organizations of popular education. At present, to defend cultural diversity is equal to contributing to preserve the future of humanity."

Inauguration of the 5th *Culture and Development* Congress

The 5th *Culture and Development* Congress was inaugurated on the afternoon of June 11 with keynote speeches from First Vice Minister of Culture and president of the Organizing Committee Rafael Bernal; Director of UNESCO's Division for Cultural Policies and



Intercultural Dialogue Ms. Katérina Stenou, and Cuban writer and Chairman of the Fernando Ortiz Foundation Miguel Bernal.

The inauguration ended with the touching performance of *La Caridad de Oriente, Tumba Francesa* from Santiago de Cuba, declared by UNESCO the first Cuban Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

In his welcoming speech, Rafael Bernal invited all “to work with determination in this meeting, to reflect, to debate, to present criteria, proposals and discrepancies that contribute to clear the way of shadows and uncertainties, so that on closing this meeting we are able to launch a declaration that expresses the will of this Congress’ participants for claiming a universal support for the noble purpose of defending our Cultural Diversity.”

Bernal also said that the text of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, voted by the member states at the 33rd. UNESCO Conference, precisely depicts the Congress’ objectives. “What is urgent now,” he clarified, “is to identify all actions, forms and ways we can undertake, whether jointly or individually, to put those objectives in practice. The activity program for the forums and parallel events has been carefully drafted, as well as the one of Heritage, Internet Cultural Portals, Libraries, Community Image, Cultural Observatories, and Caribbean Cinema, all of which tribute from their own environment to the main thematic issue of the Congress — cultural diversity.” Mr. Bernal ended his speech with the words of Cuban poet José Martí, who back in the 19th century said that “there is no possible freedom without culture”, and “culture is the first thing to be saved.”

UNESCO representative Ms. Katerina Stenou then addressed the meeting and expressed her satisfaction for speaking on behalf of the Organization in this Congress dedicated to the defense of cultural diversity. On behalf of Director General Koïchiro Matsuura, Ms. Stenou thanked Cuban authorities, Minister of Culture Abel Prieto, and the Congress’ organizers for this

biennial meeting that has become an unavoidable reference.

Ms. Stenou pointed out the importance of having chosen as main issue the defense of cultural diversity, which has been UNESCO’s cause since its founding. The subject is proof of the Organization’s commitment to “the fecund diversity of cultures” within the respect to “free circulation of ideas through words and images” in order “to build up peace in the spirit of men”, according to the Organization’s Memorandum of Association, in force since 1946.

This line of action, she said, postulates the conviction of a plural humanity, with cultures considered as dynamic processes and in constant development due to its ability for communicating and exchanging. Cultural diversity has been a permanent issue at the United Nations Organization and particularly at UNESCO, its institution specialized in culture.



Ms. Stenou underscored the concept of “culture” set out by UNESCO since MONDIACULT (1982) and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001): a set of spiritual and material, intellectual and affective features that characterize a society or social group, and that includes, among others, art and literature, ways of life, traditions, systems of values and beliefs (MONDIACULT, 1982; Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001).

The principle of unity in diversity has been strongly reaffirmed after the events of September 11, with the unanimous adoption of the Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity, which summons us all to the defense of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as of contemporary cultural expressions.

In closing, she said: “On behalf of my colleagues at UNESCO’s Havana Office, and particularly of its Director Mr. Herman Van Hoof, who follow with great interest and diligently the cultural wealth of the region and particularly this Cuban initiative, a true catalyst of regional and international cooperation, I express my most sincere congratulations and warm wishes of success in your work.”



Subsequently Cuban writer and Fernando Ortiz Foundation Chairman Miguel Barnet expressed that although several UNESCO conventions had been approved for the protection of humanity's intangible cultural heritage, and for the protection and promotion of diversity of cultural expressions, the idea of preserving and defending cultural heritage and diversity, essential for the sustainability of our species, has not become yet a priority objective. Very powerful media want to standardize taste, trends, preferences, and even human biotypes, for the purpose of the excessive enrichment of transnational corporations, encouraging an eagerness for consumption of objects and images from cultural paradigms usually alien to its consumers. Day after day we can confirm how the increasing risks of the extinction of civilization are not only of our biological condition, when we face the irreparable disappearance of languages and traditions, but that at the same time the imposition of cultural models at a global scale is standardized, which results in a socio-cultural impoverishment, both for the tangible as well as for the intangible heritage.

Barnet added that "Cuba has been a pioneer in applying these policies and in the efforts for the safekeeping of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The country has undertaken sustained actions that go back to the creation by the Academy of Sciences of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore in 1961, until the recent setting up of the National Commission for the Protection of Intangible Heritage.

One of the premises of this effort has been the respect to the work of carriers of the most genuine expressions of traditional popular culture, an effort that led UNESCO to declare *La Caridad de Oriente, Tumba Francesa* as the first Cuban Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

On referring to UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, Barnet stressed the ethical principle that "The world's cultural wealth resides in its dialoguing diversity". But that cultural wealth of humanity not always propitiates a respectful dialogue;

instead, on many occasions that dialogue is concealed or minimized. The Universal Declaration was approved unanimously in a particularly convulsed international situation. The events of September 11, 2001 had just happened and the 31st. meeting of UNESCO General Conference was the first large ministerial level encounter after that tragic day.

This important Universal Declaration, Barnet went on, acknowledged and raised cultural diversity to the category of common heritage of humanity, for it is as necessary for human species as biological diversity is for all living organisms. Its defense becomes an ethical imperative closely linked to the respect for the dignity of every person. The Declaration set out to preserve cultural diversity as a living treasure, common to all human beings, and therefore renewable and transferable from one generation to another. This diversity should not be understood as a static and unmovable heritage, but as a continuous process that guarantees the survival of all humanity, rejecting any segregationist and fundamentalist approach that on behalf of cultural differences sacralizes those same differences and distorts the message of dialogue and mutual acknowledgment.

Barnet concluded that this Congress aspires to contribute to the enrichment of one of the Main Guidelines of the Plan of Action for Application of UNESCO's Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity; that is, to deepen international debate on the problems related to cultural diversity, particularly those referring to its links to development and its influence in policy making, both domestic and foreign. "We must inevitably go towards an intercultural understanding that assumes cultural diversity and respect for the other. It is about creating a true humanism that does not turn into theoretical abstraction, but in mechanisms put into practice in society as a whole, both in political as well as in social and economic rights. An integral humanism, long lasting and for all. I repeat, an integrating humanism that honors that poetic expression of crystal clear transparency that José Martí left as a legacy when he claimed: "The Motherland is humanity."

Discussion Forums at the 5th Congress

Discussion forums began after the inauguration, lasting the first two days of the Congress.

The first one —"Cultural Diversity in a Global World: Where to Start?"— was structured in several debating panels: Linguistic Diversity and its Cultural Dimension; Languages and Oral Traditions: A Diversity in Danger?; Clash of Civilizations or Dialogue Between Them?; Encounter among Cultures: The Cuban Case, Among Others.

The second one, "Cultural Industries and Technological Changes", dealt with the following subjects: Counterhegemonic Networks: Experiences and Alternatives; Copyright: Intellectual Property or Cultural



Right; The Caribbean: Integration and Diversity; Internet and Cultural Diversity: Reality or Illusion; and Cuban Cultural Magazines.

The forums ended with two plenary sessions on the general issues: *Identities and Hegemony* and *Global Networks, Industries and Cultural Diversities*.

Collateral events continued in session: the 2nd Meeting of Cultural Development Observatories of Iberian America; the 3rd. *CultureMondo* International Round Table; Libraries of the South; and the Video and Community Image Contest, IMACOM 2007.

Forum I: “Cultural Diversity in a Global World: Where to Start?”

On Tuesday, June 12 working sessions of Forum I began. In the morning’s plenary session the panel “Identities and Hegemony” was held, coordinated by Cuban essayist and researcher Eliades Acosta, and with the attendance of outstanding intellectuals such as Adolfo Colombres, Argentina; Héctor Díaz Polanco, Mexico, and Reynaldo González and Graziella Pogolotti, Cuba. Over 500 delegates were present.

The panel dealt with the issues of relations between hegemonic power and oppressed communities; sacking and destruction of Iraqi culture due to the war launched by the United States; use of cultural elements to exert domination, reinforcing the principle that dominating memory is the best way to dominate the people, and desecration of sacred principles, as demonstration of the absence of limits to enforce the hegemonic discourse.

The fact that among cultures there are more differences than similarities was stressed, and that the challenge is to use those differences to marvel of the diversity of the human adventure and not, as it has been up to now, to oppress and discriminate what is different. During the debate, the assurance was made that the necessary restoration of memory should begin by recounting history, and that the rediscovery of symbolic images, avoiding turning them into “images of consumption”, are priorities to confront cultural homogenization, for the emancipation of humanity and for the preservation of the species.

The panel advocated strengthening regional identities to counter the hegemonic will of neoliberalism’s

cultural industries. Coordinator Eliades Acosta expressed: “We are witnessing unprecedented phenomena for humanity’s cultural trajectory that claim, proclaim and say in a revealing manner that all human beings on the planet must consume the same and think in the same manner.”

Dr. Graziella Pogolotti said that “in order to talk about the diversity of our cultures, we must begin by retelling our history, by re-updating the history that we have lived in the past 50 years and that has been told to us in a reductionist manner.”

Subsequently Argentinean intellectual Adolfo Colombres considered that “the colonizing system banalizes and submits, based on mere rules of consumption, and even destroys the language of the peoples... It is not only a process of colonization, but it can even turn into a true anthropological mutation.”

On his part Mexican anthropologist and essayist Héctor Díaz-Polanco pointed out that in spite of the demobilizing strategies of the large media centers, “not only a process of homogenization has not happened, as they had announced, but instead we are witnessing a renaissance of identity reaffirmation, precisely in defense of cultural diversity.”

Finally, writer Reynaldo González reminded all of the World Day against Child Labor (June 12), considering the horrifying conditions of millions of children “separated from their original culture, sexually exploited and abandoned in the world’s cities”, and added that “they are lives blind to culture, to any kind of culture. We speak of human beings for whom the mere mention of a possible culture is nonsense.”

Panel – “Languages and Oral Traditions: Diversity in Danger?”

As part of the first discussion forum, the panel “Languages and Oral Traditions: Diversity in Danger?” was in session, coordinated by UNESCO’s Regional Bureau for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Congress’ Organizing Committee, which prepared jointly this meeting on linguistic diversity.

The panel was moderated by Dr. Nuria Gregory, Director of the Cuban Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Literature and Linguistics, and the participation of UNESCO experts Marlen Haboud, Ecuador; Griselda

García Galicia, México; and Lea Zuyderhoudt, Netherlands. Participating from Cuba were Dr. Sergio Valdés Bernal, senior researcher at the Institute of Literature and Linguistics, and Arièn González, researcher at Casa de las Américas.

The meeting began with a screening of documentaries by Discovery Channel-UNESCO that present linguistic diversity in several places of the world. The documentaries were highly valued and some of the



participants requested the audiovisual material in order to screen it to their students.

The panel dealt with the preservation of traditions and languages in Mexico; linguistic diversity in Ecuador; revitalization of Blackfoot language and traditions in the United States; linguistic diversity of the Caribbean; and the study by UNESCO and Cuba's Casa de las Américas on the languages of the Amazonia.

The UNESCO project, carried out by a group of prestigious experts, has brought on the analysis of the situation of languages and oral traditions in the Amazonia. The studies carried out in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela are included in the volume *Lenguas y tradiciones orales de la Amazonía. ¿Diversidad en peligro?* (*Languages and Oral Traditions of the Amazonia: Diversity in Danger?*), presented at Casa de las Américas, which was a co-publisher, on the World Day for Cultural Diversity.

The search and identification of projects on languages and oral traditions in several countries of the region has allowed the selection of pilot projects that will receive UNESCO assistance. At the same time, UNESCO's Regional Bureau has conceived the Orality network, which will include the region's experts.

As part of the activity of several regional events, round tables are organized with the participation of experts from several countries that deal with the issue of language and

oral tradition preservation, consistent with the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003).

The issues presented in this panel, particularly the one related to the danger faced by languages and oral traditions due to inadequacies in the education system, among other causes, and the urgent need of defining linguistic policies that propitiate their preservation, recovery and revitalization, led to a rich debate with

interventions by delegates from India, Ecuador, Mexico and Guatemala, among others, who set out the present dangers for the protection and preservation of their languages, and mentioned some good practices in indigenous communities.

Regional Office experts Frédéric Vacheron and Gilda Betancourt coordinated the details for the celebration of this meeting and fostered the partici-

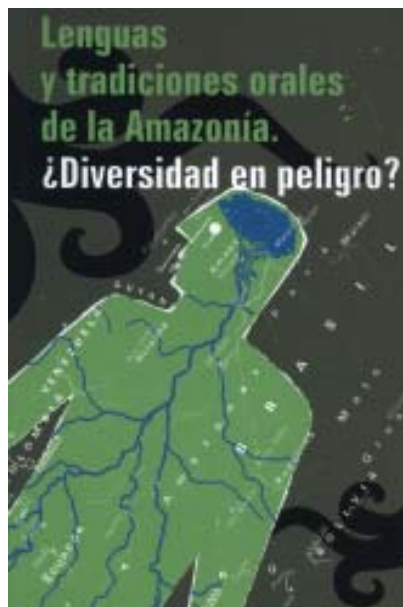
participation of experts and the screening of the Discovery Channel-UNESCO documentaries.

Forum II: Cultural Industries and Technological Changes

On Monday morning, June 13, a plenary session was held on the panel "Global Networks, Industries and Cultural Diversity", coordinated by President of the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry (ICAIC) Omar González. Attending were intellectuals Theotonio Dos Santos, Santiago Alba, Octavio Getino, Keith Nurse, Carlos Frabetti, Sigfredo Ariel and Alex Rosemberg, as well as 600 participants.

The panel discussed the concept of culture in the context of the present world and the effects of its relation with nature, the market, civilization and ignorance. It reaffirmed that the value of culture is in its content, in its creative and formative character; that in respect to audiovisuals, the hegemony of the United States can only be countered with unity, in order to cut costs, boost abilities, integrate agents and concentrate power.

Given the experience of cultural industries in the Caribbean, voices were raised in favor of investing on human capital; increasing marketing capability; protecting intellectual property; assisting in the development of cultural industries as strategic for Latin America and the Caribbean, in accordance with cultural policies that propitiate access to





cultural goods and services for all people, and promotion of the different cultural expressions of our peoples.

The fact that peripheral countries organize themselves as networks, take advantage of every space to create an audience, and design strategies that allow the displacement of banality by true artistic and literary creation that reflects cultural diversity was essentially shown as an urgent need. Protection of nature, cooperation among different cultures and religions, and the inclusion in legal systems of the concepts of cultural identity, diversity and cultural industries are unpostponable purposes. The development of projects that foster social changes in Third World countries, particularly in regions such as Africa and Latin America, was favored.

In his interventions, Brazilian Theotonio Dos Santos discussed the evolution of the left in Latin America and its isolation in relation to cultural industries, and trade and market associated to hegemonic power. He showed the need of preparing a new revolutionary conscience that allows the development of identities and cultures that are emerging together with social movements, and the need of acting also in the entrepreneurial and trade sectors.

Santiago Alba Rico, from Spain, presented the paper "Cultural Identity and Nihilism", in which he discussed the concept of culture from four different points of view: culture as separation from nature or dominion over it, which could destroy the planet; culture as the whole of works created for lasting enjoyment (this concept is contrary to the market, where everything has a short and limited life in order to give way to new products); culture as a structure or regulations of a community, country or region (this sense of the term has been displaced towards the word civilization, in order to counter Western civilization to other cultures considered barbaric); culture against lack of culture or ignorance (the organic union of the economic with the technological result in another culture, in which the human being does not relate with other human beings, but with an abstraction where all

the flows of conscience converge and symbolic destitution is produced).

Argentinean filmmaker Octavio Gettino read the paper "Cultural industries in Southern Latin America", and started from the analysis of culture as the relations of man with everything around him. Culture should not be analyzed as an access, but as generation in different fields. In consequence, we need policies that contribute to restore the relation of man with nature and his environment. Categories or concepts of cultural industries and economics of culture are recent, as well as copyright, cultural tourism and others.

The value of culture is in its content, not in the objects. Since its inception, audiovisuals had a link with technology and industry that influenced the artistic creation. Their contents reproduce the market, and thus are considered strategic in the United States. In order to counter the hegemony of this country in audiovisuals, we must unite and therefore be able to cut costs, boost abilities, integrate agents and concentrate power.

Keith Nurse read the paper "The Future of Cultural Industries in the Caribbean", in which he outlined the present panorama and gave recommendations to foster their development: invest more on human capital; increase creation of trade marks; protect intellectual property; link technology and strategies of innovation; promote organization and cooperation among different factors of the Caribbean; convince governments so that they give assistance to the growth of cultural industries as strategic industries; create a network of all institutions that work in the cultural sector in order to promote the work.

Italian Carlo Frabetti mentioned Hollywood films as tools of cultural colonization, particularly westerns, musicals, thrillers and Disney movie products.

Cuban writer Sigfredo Ariel presented an analysis of the impact in Cuban society —and specifically in the field of culture- of the fall of the Socialist world and the *special period*: banality and commercial exploitation were introduced in the country, which for decades had organized important popular music festivals, had widely published authors from Cuba and also from abroad,

had advocated women's liberation and developed culture and thought. Subsequently there has been an increasing recovery of cultural institutions. His proposition was to re-found or restructure Cuban cultural industries.

Noted art critic Alex Rosenberg (United States) reflected on the changes in the relation between the market and culture. Previously, control over art was seen as a sign of culture that permitted to penetrate a small elite group. Now it has a social and economic significance: it is one more article to be sold. It is seen as a source of money, not as a source of cultural acknowledgement or power.

At the end of the plenary session, Omar González discussed the issue of the hegemonic globalization by US capitalism, which annuls cultural diversity and banalizes any manifestation of culture. In the United States 5 percent of the culture is generated, and 95 percent in the rest of the world; however, what prevails is what is produced, distributed and eventually imposed by the US. A similar situation exists with Internet. The US and Canada have 69.7 percent of global access, while Africa only has 3.6 percent. Nevertheless, in recent times Africa is the region with the fastest growth, for the First World has begun to reach the limit of "development", while the poor countries constantly clash with the limits of poverty. We, the so called peripheral countries—culturally central- must organize ourselves in networks; take advantage of every space to create an audience, for without an audience, there is no visualization.

Panel - "Counterhegemonic Networks: Experiences and Alternatives"

As part of Forum II there was the panel "Counterhegemonic Networks: Experiences and Alternatives", coordinated by José R. Vidal (Cuba) and the attendance of José Steinsleger (Argentina), Humberto Solás (Cuba), Andrés Izarra (Venezuela), Alma Rosa Alva de la Selva (Mexico), and Magda Resik and Waldo Ramírez (Cuba).

At this panel, the presentations characterized the situation and perspective of digital networks and other alternatives, as well as their relation to Internet. The panel warned of the danger to networks developed in Internet, a non democratic space, in spite of the fact that it includes the production, the market, finances, and intimate life, and in spite of its ever increasing public.

There were also denunciations that the United States of America has given birth to a technological empire with the manipulation of these new technologies and that the only way to counter and face the challenge was to study the legal loopholes and obtain the unity of alternative trends against power and in favor of Internet solidarity. These alternatives are not only in the sense of making a different discourse, but also in

creating a different relation among communicating parties, so as not to reproduce mechanisms of domination, among them the underestimation of popular culture.

Participants in the panel presented several examples of alternative networks:

- Argentinean journalist José Steinsleger spoke about *La Jornada*, a digital counterhegemonic news-paper that has an independent editorial position in the context of Mexican media.
- Magda Resik, a journalist from Habana Radio (a local radio station located in the historical core of Old Havana) stated the station's objectives: to hold a dialogue with every citizen that feels responsible and takes part in the protection and restoration of heritage, which in itself is a unique project in the world.
- Cuban TV Director Waldo Ramírez spoke about *Televisión Serrana*, created with the goal of offering active participation and protagonism to farmers and local inhabitants of the mountain ranges in eastern Cuban. *Televisión Serrana*, a communication alternative over a decade old, makes some 30 audiovisual materials a year that reflect traditions, forms of culture and customs of thousands of mountain dwellers.

Televisión Serrana

The initiative began in 1993, sponsored by the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television (ICRT), the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), the UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the UNESCO Office in Jamaica.

Since the beginning documentaries, videos and short length features had an educational and formative intention in an area in which in the past there was no electricity, safe drinking water or roads. The great historical and social contrasts were issues treated by *Televisión Serrana*, which with its novelty and summoning power was an important factor in fostering health, education and social transformation plans.

The producers lived in the area and established a relationship with the mountain population in order to identify their interests and aspirations, and to reflect their reality. They worked in the midst of difficulties and deprivations. The result has been the production of valuable materials about true standards and values, customs, and also about protection of the environment, health preservation and public education.

Televisión Serrana has established exchanges with autochthonous communities in Latin America and the Caribbean, and its materials have received numerous awards at home and abroad for its originality and professionalism.

The seat of *Televisión Serrana* is at San Pablo de Yao, a community in the municipality of Buey Arriba, province of Granma, on the northern slope of the Sierra Maestra Mountain Range.

At present Televisión Serrana directs its efforts to longer range and more mature projects that includes the expansion of its activities and a closer relation with health care and education services, the system of video halls and the national TV channels.

Non-Budget Film Festival of Gibara

Cuban filmmaker Humberto Solás talked about the Non-Budget Film Festival of Gibara, Cuba. Taking advantage of the technological revolution, the festival is bent on challenging the hegemonic industrial system of cinematography and democratize production and distribution of films with different styles and conceptions.



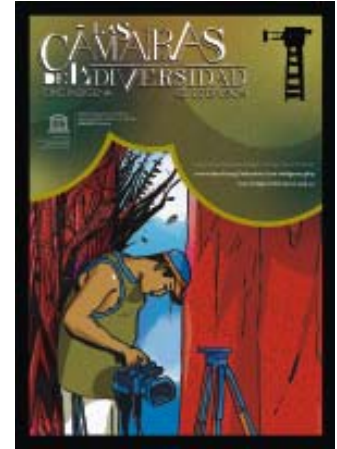
The 5th Non-Budget Film Festival held in Gibara (province of Holguín, Cuba) on April 16-22, 2007 gave visibility to the project *Cameras for Diversity*, sponsored by UNESCO's Regional Bureau, which represents two very important lines of work in the Organization: the perspectives of culture, and of communication and information. During the past ten years, UNESCO has given much attention to the intangible and linguistic heritage of cultural identities, a fact that complements its action in the preservation of cultural and natural heritage.

The support given to the International Non-Budget Film Festival, through the project *Cameras for Diversity*, is consistent with the spirit and the letter of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Experts of the Regional Office's programs on Culture and Communication have collaborated with the Festival with the purpose of assisting indigenous communities in the production and expression of their creativity, and offering different mechanisms of distribution and dissemination of their works.

In this sense, the assistance given to the Non-Budget Film Festival complements similar efforts, such as sponsoring the International Cinema and Video Festival of Indigenous Peoples (Chile), New Latin American Film Festival and New Filmmakers' Festival (both in Havana, Cuba), and the Travelling Caribbean Film Showcase.

The Gibara Non-Budget Film Festival accepted the indigenous subject at the suggestion of the UNESCO's Regional Bureau, which proposed the space and invited filmmakers. Also in 2004 and 2005, at the San Antonio de los Baños International School of Cinema and TV, training workshops were held for filmmakers from indigenous communities; that is, not only there has been promotion, but also training. At the 5th International Non-Budget Film Festival several documentaries produced by those communities were screened.

Through the Project *Indigenous Cinema-Dissemination Network: Cameras for Diversity*, the Regional Office promotes the work of indigenous filmmakers through different channels, such as the Portal of Culture, among others, for many of these pieces remain in the communities and do not have access to the main events. The goal is to be able to screen them in international festivals, for there is a growing interest for this type of productions, and participation allows filmmakers from the communities to exchange with professionals from all over the world.



A Summary of the Most Important Aspects Discussed in Both Forums

In conclusion, there was intense activity in the discussion forums during the four days of the Congress. On the subjects suggested by the agenda there were different and interesting interventions with dissimilar approaches. In sum, the following can be considered the most important aspects discussed:

- The need to create effective links to foster intercultural dialogue in the face of the attempt by hegemonies to prevent cultural exchange among the peoples; the importance of respecting diversity and the right to the identity of the peoples and persons, and the urgent need of designing programs and actions in two strategic environments: education and communication media.
- The clash of cultures, in which always one of them has considered itself above the other one, has led to the end of dialogue.
- The necessary reference to cultures in the plural, not to *the* culture, which demands that government budget take into account all strata of society and promote the foundation of multicultural and multi-national states.
- The need to re-think today the concept of civilization.
- The confrontation of an environmental crisis due to global warming, which together with little or no government action to stop forest devastation and to establish and enforce reforestation policies, are causes that do not favor the development of biodiversity, affect indigenous settlements, in the case of the peoples of the Americas, with its effects on the heritage formed by the different traditions and cultural expressions of which they are carriers.
- Problems associated to copyright and circulation of knowledge, mainly related to access, the high cost of technology and hegemonic globalization, which

pretends to impose a single vision of the world from North to South, which leads to the dilemma of free or private knowledge.

- The need to discuss the issues of cultural rights in the present world, in order to conform policies in the face of the imperatives of the defense of cultural identity, social creativity and access of the majority to culture.
- The shared concern for consolidating systems of cultural and economics of culture statistics, for which it is necessary to develop research lines whose results can be socialized.
- The importance of creating and strengthening a platform of dialogue and collaboration that helps less developed states in this field to begin studies based on the accumulated experience; for that purpose the creation of a regional organism that accompanies and unites countries in this endeavor is suggested.
- The signification of visualizing the production of cultural goods and services as a sector of the economy and the dangers that ignoring this has for the preservation of cultural heritage.

Other Events included in the Congress' Program: Previous Courses and Workshops

Before the Congress' inauguration, on the morning of June 11, there was a session dedicated to courses and workshops, attended by some 200 participants. One of the issues discussed was "The Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Sustainable Resource of the Community. Methodology of Identification. The Cuban Experience", which presented three case studies — the plan for the safeguard of the *Tumba Francesa*, Cuba's Ethnographic Atlas, and the *Parranda Remediana* (Remedios Carnival).

Other workshops were also held, such as "Identity and Diversities in Cuban Musical Expressions from Jazz", "An Anthropological Approach to the Diversity of the Cuban Cultural Development", and "Cuba's System of Artistic Education: a Monumental Work of the Revolution."

Plan for the Safeguard of the *Tumba Francesa*

Researchers Nieves Armas, Isabel Martínez Gordo and Pedro Moras, together with experts from UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean Monserrat Martell and Víctor Marín, presented the plan for the safeguard of the *Tumba Francesa*, the First Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in Cuba.

On November 7, 2003, UNESCO's Director General proclaimed Santiago de Cuba's *Tumba Francesa* "*La Caridad de Oriente*", as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. In his declaration, he considered the following criteria: its exceptional value, the roots in cultural tradition, the assertion of cultural identity, the source of inspiration and intercultural



exchange, the contemporary cultural and social function, the excellence in the application of techniques, unique testimony of living cultural tradition and in risk of disappearing.

The *Tumba Francesa* goes back to the 18th century, has African roots combined with French elements and was an artistic expression of those slaves.

Descendants of those slaves have continued to the present the practice of this rich tradition that involves songs and dances. Three expressions of the *Tumba Francesa* are practiced: *La Caridad de Oriente*, in Santiago de Cuba; *La Pompadour-Santa Catalina de Ricci*, in Guantánamo; and *Bejuco*, in Sagua de Tánamo, Holguín.

The safeguard project presented at the workshop includes several aspects: a multidisciplinary research of this phenomenon; renewal of wardrobe and instrument restoration; three training workshops for the local carriers and actors in relation to expression; design of a tourism-cultural route of the three *tumbas* based on a mapping, touring the archeological landscape of the first coffee plantations southwest of Santiago de Cuba (a Site of World Heritage) and passing through the three eastern provinces of Guantánamo, Santiago de Cuba and Holguín; and a multimedia CD on the results of the safeguard plan's implementation.

The work attracted the interest of more than a 100 attendants, who in the final debate asked several questions on the subject. Participants were interested in the possible regional dissemination of the experience and the information of UNESCO Guidelines on the subject. Considering the interest, representatives from the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean announced there was a course in preparation for Cuba on methodological experience, but that it could include the participation of other countries. The dialogue extended to other Masterpieces, of which there are 17 in the region, particularly the cultural space *Los Congos de Villa Mella*, in the Dominican Republic.

The workshop justly aroused the interest of participants because it is the result of a meticulous



compilation of expressions and manifestations of popular creation, kept, recreated and transmitted in an age old process that makes them traditional, and where ways of transmission such as words and examples are used. This work included also the field of traditional popular feasts, traditional popular music, traditional popular dances, and oral traditions.

In general, the course offered a set of factual information based on the laborious and systematic field research that included observation, participants, interviews, questionnaires, recordings, photographs, filming, diagrams, maps, etc. in all the regions of Cuba, which constitutes a source of inestimable wealth for scholars on Cuban culture and for the practical implementation of community projects and of cultural revitalization.

Third CultureMondo International Round Table

On June 11 and 12 the team of the Portal of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean of UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean attended the Third *CultureMondo* Round Table, organized by the namesake network, and the Cuban Ministry of Culture's CUBARTE Portal, on the issue "Cultural Portals: Promotion of Cultural Diversity Online. A Focus on Latin America and the Caribbean."

Regional Office's team members of the Portal (Olga Rufins Machín, technical secretary of the Forum of Minister of Culture and the Portal's team coordinator; Junior González Ramos, webmaster; Elba Suárez Menéndez, editor; Ana Elena de Arazoza, translator) participated in this round table, also attended by Mr. Vladimir Skok, president of *CultureMondo* and Director of the Canadian Observatory of



Culture; Mr. Carlos Mas Zabala, Director of CUBARTE and Mr. Guy-Marc Dumais, of the Heritage and Culture.ca Division (Canada). During the first session of the round table, Vladimir Skok and Guy-Marc Dumais gave a general description of the *CultureMondo* network and the development of its portal.

Subsequently, in the round table "From Cultural Information Systems to Cultural Portals", Olga Rufins presented the Portal of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean, at the request of the panel's coordinator, Mr. Alfonso Castellanos Ribot, from Mexico's Cultural Information System. Mr. Castellanos Ribot, whom is also Mexico's National Coordinator for the Portal, explained that they had chosen lacult.org for presentation at the event as an example of a regional cultural portal.



At that round table there were also presentations by Mr. César Parra, representative of Colombia's National System of Cultural Information (SINIC); Mr. Byron Ariel Pac, Guatemala's National System of Cultural Information (SINAIC); and Idelsis Gallardo, Portal of the Cuban Culture (CUBARTE), all of them national coordinators for the Portal of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mr. Pac mentioned the importance of the existence in the web of a tool such as lacult.org and insisted on strengthening and assisting the existing ones, such as this portal, instead of creating others.

The Team also attended the round table "The Users' Approach: Understanding the Online Audience", presented by Ms. Jane Finnis, of the 24 Hour Museum (Great Britain).

At the second session, on the afternoon of June 12, the Team took part in the workshops "Optimization of Search Sites", an essential feature for cultural portals, moderated by Mr. Thierry Arsenault, from *Canadian Heritage Information Network/Virtual Museum of Canada*; "New Opportunities and Audiences offered by web 2.0", presented by Mr. Sebastian Chan, from the Powerhouse Museum, Australia, and "Creating Cultural Portals with Limited Resources and Using Existing Tools", coordinated by Mr. Shih-Chieh "ILYA" Li, of the National Digital Archives Program, Taiwan.

In a bilateral contact with Olga Rufins Machín, coordinator of the UNESCO Regional Bureau's Team, Vladimir Skok, president of *CultureMondo* and Director of the Canadian Observatory of Culture, expressed his appreciation to the Portal of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean and commented on its use as a practical example in a seminar organized by OAS (Organization of American States) in Trinidad and Tobago for a group of countries in 2005. He also expressed interest in continuing contacts for the possible inclusion of the portal in the *CultureMondo* network.

The Team of the Regional Office's Portal organized a meeting with national coordinators participating in the event, attended by Ms. Idelsis Gallardo and Mr. César Parra, as well as by the national coordinator for Venezuela, Mr. Simón Alberto Osorio, and Mr. Gabriel D. Lerman, from the Laboratory of Cultural Industries of the National Direction of Federal Action and Cultural Industries, Department of Culture of Argentina.

Likewise the Team met with Ms. Chantal Lemire, coordinator of *CultureMondo*, and with Mr. Geo Ripley (Dominican Republic) who was the bearer of a report on the "Portal of Culture of Latin America and the Caribbean", drafted by Ms. Jeannette Villanueva García, Technical Director General of the Secretary of State for Culture of the Dominican Republic, in which she stressed the need of strengthening the portal's national coordinators network.

There were also meetings with Ms. Riane De Haas Bedloeg, Assistant Director of the Culture Program of the Secretariat of CARICOM, and Dr. Carole Maison-Bishop, a CARICOM consultant; with Mr. Geo Ripley, Dominican Republic; and with Mr. Gabriel D. Lerman, from the Laboratory of Cultural Industries of the National Direction of Federal Action and Cultural Industries, Department of Culture of Argentina.

All these meetings allowed the Regional Office Portal's Team to have personal contacts for the first time with several national coordinators, jointly discuss matters of the project and outline more precise collaboration strategies. It also permitted a closer look to other similar projects and novel experiences in the issue of digital information.

5th International Contest of Community Image IMACOM 2007

Another activity in which the Regional Office had an active participation was the 5th International Contest of Community Image IMACOM 2007. In IMACOM 2007 50 contestants from 10 countries, including Cuba, registered in the video and photography categories. Among the main issues were traditional and popular culture in Cuba and Brazil, ransoming of traditions, drug addiction, senior citizens, ecology and environment, feminism, heritage, children and youngsters, and mental health.

The competition included in its exhibit four pieces that are part of the UNESCO project *Indigenous Cinema -Dissemination Network: Cameras for Diversity*.

This new network of a regional scope is inscribed in the framework of the program *Information and Communication Technologies for Intercultural Dialogue* (ICT4ID), which stimulates training and professionalization in the matter of communication of marginalized communities, with the purpose of turning them into creative subjects of their own words and images, so that they can reflect their own vision of the world.

The Regional Office has been promoting with much force the works that form *Indigenous Cinema -Dissemination Network: Cameras for Diversity* project, which is part of the purposes of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. It is about safeguarding indigenous cultures, their access to expression means and communication media, as well as promoting pluralism in the media. The dissemination of indigenous communities-produced audiovisual materials in international and regional film and video festivals is one of the stages, after training and production, so that local content supports the intercultural dialogue and is expressed through true cultural industries.

Cameras for Diversity is a contribution to the struggle against stereotypes and cultural folklorization, and increases the value of the immaterial heritage of these communities (languages, myths, oral traditions, songs, ways of life, etc.)

Deborah Guidetti, consultant to UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, presented the *Cameras for Diversity* project.

While the Congress was in session, other materials of the network were screened at the *Acapulco* Cinematographic Cultural Center, together with a special program of indigenous cinema and video, courtesy of the New Latin American Cinema International Festival.

The IMACON 2007 brochure included *Cameras for Diversity* project as an example of the measures to promote cultural expression indicated by the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Both in the *Acapulco* Cinematographic Cultural Center as well as in the room at the Palace of Conventions dedicated to the screening of the competing audiovisual materials, the *Indigenous Cinema -Dissemination Network: Cameras for Diversity* was presented as part of the ICT4ID program and its relation with the 2005 Convention was stressed. The *Acapulco* Center welcomed representatives of the Cuban National Council of Culture Houses, Iberian American Fund of Photography, the Phototheque of Cuba, ICAIC and CREART, together with journalists and Latin American students of the José Martí International Institute of Journalism and the general public.

On the other hand, a room at the Palace of Conventions alongside where the competing works were screened, was reserved for the promotion of the project. Videos were screened there and brochures and posters were available.

As a result of these actions, the Regional Office established contacts with over twenty experts in indigenous affairs from Latin American countries' ministries of culture, local associations, universities and festivals. These contacts permitted to receive opinions and advice on the subjects of culture and development to improve and expand the project.

Parallel, the network and the 2005 Convention were promoted in the media by interviews with Cuba's National Information Agency (AIN), the daily *Granma*, and the Cuban international radio service Radio Habana Cuba.

Panel - "Strategies for the Collaboration and Integration in Cinema and Video in the Caribbean"

Another one of the events programmed in this 5th Congress, and which had great repercussion among guests and participants was the panel "Strategies for the Collaboration and Integration in Cinema and Video in the Caribbean". Its moderator, Cuban filmmaker Rigoberto López, introduced the rest of the participants on the panel: Barbadian writer George Lamming; Herman van Hooff, Director UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean; Arnold Antonin, President of the Cinema Association of Haiti, and Experts from UNESCO's Regional Bureau of Culture Monserrat Martell and Isabel Viera, the Exhibit's coordinators.

The First Travelling Caribbean Film Showcase is an initiative of the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry (ICAIC), implemented in collaboration with UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean. It has the support of the

UNESCO offices in Kingston and Port au Prince, of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Jamaica and other Caribbean institutions.

It is an intersectorial project that involves the programs of culture and of communication and Information. Its purpose is to contribute to the exhibition of the Caribbean's cinematographic offer, strengthen the cultural industry of cinema in the region, foster the production of diverse audiovisual contents of quality, and increase its distribution. It is also a contribution to the promotion of the diversity of Caribbean cultural expressions, at the same time that it propitiates a dialogue on issues related to the audiovisual and the cinema.

In his presentation, filmmaker Rigoberto López thanked in the first place the presence of experts from the Regional Office and mentioned the presence as a guest of Ms. Katerina Stenou, Director of UNESCO's Division for Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, for the support of the organization to the Travelling Caribbean Film Showcase. He also thanked Ms. Hillary Brown, Director of the Culture Program of CARICOM's Secretariat for welcoming and assisting this project.

Herman van Hooff mentioned that the Showcase has already toured a considerable number of countries in the Caribbean in only one year, with an impressive welcoming by the public in each venue. The project is consistent with UNESCO's vision of cultural diversity, for it is bent on showing not only the diversity of national cultures, but also diversity within each country, each community, and each group.

Barbadian writer George Lamming celebrated the meeting and stressed that the Caribbean people must create their own tools for analysis and construct their own perception.

Subsequently Haitian filmmaker Arnold Antonin, president of the Cinema Association of Haiti and director of the film *Does the President Have AIDS?*



(presented at the Showcase), mentioned the multiple existing obstacles among Caribbean countries and expressed his conviction that films can bring the region's countries together.

Antonin said that national cinema is much appreciated in Haiti by the public, for it depicts their problems and their reality, and he believes that his has been one of the reasons for the success of the Showcase with that public and where that public discovered a different world, but with common roots.

There is a great cultural diversity in the region and this diversity is something precious that we must keep and enhance, which is something we also have in common. Peoples that have been transplanted from other places, common problems of underdevelopment, single crop agricultures, plantation economy. Those problems are reflected by each country's cinema.

Antonin thanked ICAIC and the UNESCO's Regional Bureau for the assistance to the project and stressed the public's reception and the repercussion in all the Caribbean countries in which the Showcase has been present.

On the second day of sessions Bruce Paddington, from Trinidad and Tobago valued the importance of this dialogue for the development of the region's cinema. Subsequently Rolando Pardo, from Argentina, Academic Director of the San Antonio de los Baños International School of Cinema and Televisión (Cuba), offered the institution's support for the development of a strategy for collaboration.

Camilo Vives, ICAIC's director of production, pointed out that economic difficulties and the lack of support mechanisms by the governments make co-productions among the region's countries more difficult. He considered that the association among producers will be the first step toward integration, and suggested the creation of a work group as part of the Exhibit to assist in the development of co-productions.

The panel drafted a final document that summarized the proposals and results of the meeting.

Travelling Caribbean Film Showcase

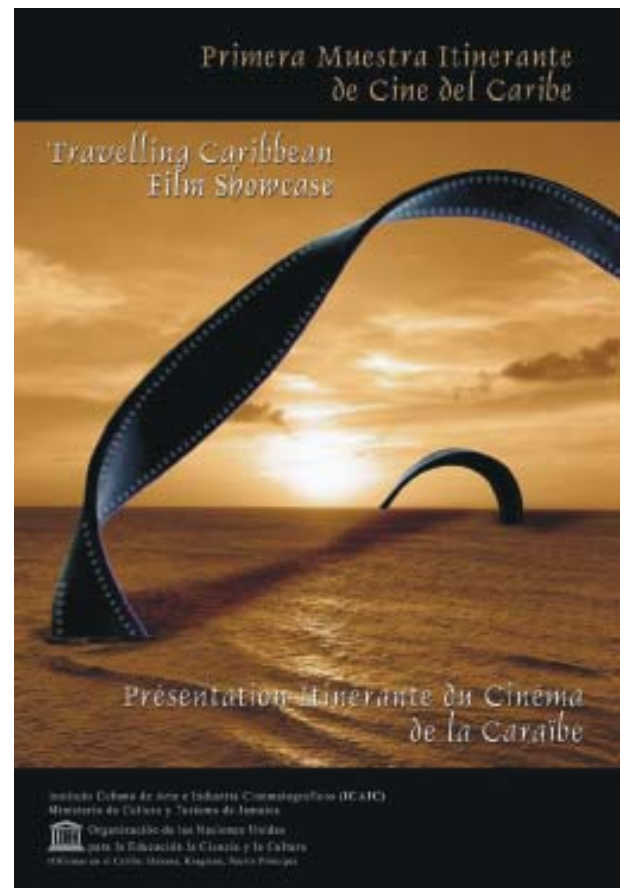
Parallel to the Congress, and as an example of a strategy for collaboration and integration in cinema and the audiovisual, the Travelling Caribbean Film Showcase opened at the Chaplin Theater in Havana. For a week the public was able to appreciate films from Curacao, Barbados, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guadeloupe, Aruba, Cayman Islands and Jamaica. Present at the inauguration were Rigoberto López, the Showcase's coordinator; UNESCO's Regional Bureau Director Herman van Hooff, and Arnold Antonin, President of the Cinema Association of Haiti.

In his opening speech, Mr. Van Hooff, after congratulating the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry for its success in organizing this First Travelling Caribbean Film Showcase, expressed UNESCO's

support through three of its offices in the Caribbean (Havana, Kingston and Port au Prince) to this brilliant Cuban initiative, "because we are an organization of international cooperation intrinsically committed with the safekeeping of the cultural heritage of every people or nation in our planet."

Van Hooff indicated that UNESCO, at the request of its member states, and in its numerous decisions, recommendations and agreements, has stated its interest in reinforcing "... creation, production, distribution, access and the enjoyment of the expressions contained in cultural activities..." as five inseparable links of the same chain, promoted by the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which was approved by its 33rd. General Conference in 2005 and came into effect on March, 2007.

The Regional Office Director also said that UNESCO's 2005 Convention on adopting as its own the claims by member states of the recognition of their cultural creativity, channels its efforts to ransom from isolation the cultures of the peoples, to make them known in and out of every geographical region and to strengthen the role of its cultural industries in the economic development of their own communities, creating the appropriate conditions so that cultural products can be sold nationally, regionally and internationally, contributing also to sustainable development.



It is true, pointed out Mr. Van Hoof, that the cinema industry of the Caribbean has not reached levels of sustainable development, but it is not for lack of its own image, colors, sonority or unsuspected creativity, but for lack of an economic and legal protection at the national, regional and international levels that accompany and supports its potential for development in the short, medium and long terms.

Van Hoof quoted UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura: "No UNESCO convention on the cultural environment has been ratified by so many states in so little time." Indeed, the ratifying process of the 2005 Convention has been "particularly fast". Why? Because this text responds to the manifest need of promoting and consolidating the presence of its cultural industries in the world market.

Further on he expressed that one of the manners of contributing to the achievement of this objective is precisely the result of actions that like the present one show the artistic-cinematographic creativity of the Caribbean countries and propitiate the joint action of the pertinent actors of the Caribbean, Latin America, and the world in favor of a creative and prosperous Caribbean cinema.

In conclusion, he thanked once again the Cuban authorities for having contributed to the Showcase in order to assist to the creation of a "rich and varied world that increases the gamut of possibilities and nourishes human abilities and values, thus constituting one of the main engines of sustainable development of communities, peoples and nations", as extolled by the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Subsequently there was the presentation of the Curacao film *Ava and Gabriel* (1990), by Félix de Rooy, considered an important film in the region, which was the opening of the Travelling Caribbean Film Showcase in Havana. The short feature fiction film *La carta* (The Letter), by Dominican filmmaker Francisco Rodríguez, was also screened.

Workshop - "Libraries of the South: In Favor of a Culture of Peace"

Over 25 librarians from several countries met on June 14 for the workshop "Libraries of the South: In Favor of a Culture of Peace", with the purpose of having an exchange on the role of libraries in the promotion of cultural diversity and strengthening of identities.

The UNESCO Regional Bureau for Culture's expert Isabel Viera participated in the workshop, for the subject of libraries is of great importance for the Organization.

Among the presentations at the workshop the one by well known Fernando Báez on the destruction of the National Library of Iraq was noteworthy. His words and the eloquent images underscored the importance of fostering a culture of peace that contributes to end

wars and other dangers that threaten to devastate Humanity, both materially and spiritually.

The workshop also debated the paper presented by Casa de las Américas (Cuba), a prestigious cultural institution, on its work on this field that includes among other projects, the Iberian American Colloquium *From the Papyrus to the Virtual Library*, traditionally sponsored by UNESCO's Office in Havana and dedicated to the role in society of libraries, archives and museums.

The workshop dealt with very interesting issues, particularly the function of libraries and archives as means of access to information, as well as platforms of training, aimed at conservation, preservation and restoration of each country's documentary heritage. The activity also permits promoting the use of information and communication technologies in the context of libraries, archives and museums, contributing to the preservation of information stored in these institutions, as well as facilitating professional training of librarians, archivists and museologists.

The different editions of the Colloquium have been an appropriate space to sensitize numerous experts in the region to UNESCO's work in this field, as well as to important documents, such as the Charter of States on the Preservation of Digital Heritage.

Other papers were read at the workshop, such as "Learning to Read as a Key for Normal Cultural Development of the Person", by Francisco Sacristán Romero, from Spain. The paper is in relation to a research for finding if high school students can distinguish between reading a text and understanding its philosophy or basic ideas. The main methodology used was a questionnaire based on several press texts and its subsequent codification and analysis by age groups. The results show that younger readers, and because of it, in principle less experienced, make a reading whose processes are simpler, immature, and in some cases incomplete, while older readers, and thus theoretically with more expertise, make a reading that implies more complex and deep cognitive processes.

Another interesting paper was "Libraries and Readings in Cigar Factories", by Araceli Tinajero (Cuba-US), on the importance of libraries, both public and private, in cigar makers' work environment, in whose cultural enrichment they have placed an important role. The paper is a synthesis of the book *El lector de tabaquería: historia de una tradición cubana* (The Cigar Factory Reader: A History of a Cuban Tradition), in editing process.

Several of the interventions mentioned UNESCO's action.

In the world context of the use of ICT, Internet and the development of the Knowledge Society, it is necessary to redefine the role of libraries and to identify and put into practice new techniques for acquisition, storing and accessing valuable information that they treasure. Emphasis on these objectives is undoubtedly one of the most important contributions of the workshop.