

JOINT COMMUNIQUE ON CULTURAL COOPERATION

El Paso, Texas

April 21, 2007

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (USA) and the National Council for Culture and the Arts (Mexico) have met on this day in El Paso, Texas, to affirm our shared commitment to cultural cooperation.

The governments of the U.S. and Mexico recognize that a nation's cultural life contributes to the vibrancy of its society, the dynamism of its economy and the strength of its democracy. We affirm our belief that the arts and the humanities are essential elements in international cooperation. We agree that artists, scholars and cultural institutions make a vital contribution to bridging differences and advancing a greater appreciation and understanding of the richness and diversity of our nations' peoples and natural landscapes.

We recognize that our nations are part of a larger geographic region known as the 'Americas,' a diverse landscape that encompasses a shared past and a vast array of cultural, natural and historic resources. Symbolic of this shared culture and heritage are World Heritage sites and related world-class cultural sites.

We recognize that such sites belong to all our citizens and that caring for them is a shared responsibility. Government and the private sector, including foundations, businesses and individuals, must form working partnerships to preserve, protect, sustain and broaden understanding of these unique places and their cultural, natural and historic resources.

We therefore dedicate ourselves to the following goals:

Advocating Sustainable Stewardship

- We seek to strengthen local cultural heritage resources, practices and values in international activities that affect World Heritage sites. We favor more public-private exchanges among sites of expertise, training and management techniques to promote sustainable development, tourism and economic opportunity. We note that cultural and natural landscapes are fragile and the repercussions of development and tourism should be measured by the potential effects on local cultural, heritage and natural resources.

Promoting Knowledge

- We agree that the learning and sharing of expertise through dialogue, exchanges, and cooperation to improve cultural and historic preservation policy and practice are important to all of us. As we encourage arts and humanities education in schools, libraries, cultural centers, museums, and other educational venues, we seek to instill in young people an appreciation and understanding of the interconnections between cultural, natural and heritage resources.

Expanding Cultural Opportunities

- We seek to increase the exchange of scholars, historians, artists, performers, artisans and cultural workers so as to enhance understanding and awareness of a shared heritage that encompasses a breadth of traditions, values and ideas that are embedded in cultural sites and landscapes in our countries. We aim to include more agencies, institutions, sectors, individuals and places in cultural and technical assistance exchanges.

These goals are exemplified by the forthcoming Sister Cultural Parks conference in Mesa Verde, Colorado, and we look forward to future opportunities to advance cooperation.

Adair Margo, Chairman
President's Committee on the Arts & Humanities
United States America

Sergio Vela, President
National Council for Culture and the Arts
México