



# REGIONAL CULTURAL POLICY OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY



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## Introduction

The First Meeting of Ministers responsible for Culture held in Georgetown, Guyana in 1985, in establishing the Terms of Reference of the Regional Cultural Committee (RCC), agreed that the RCC should:

*"advise on, and participate in the development of a regional cultural policy".*

This was seen as one of the ways in which a focus could be placed on what was then proposed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for the World Decade for Cultural Development.

At the First Meeting of the RCC held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago in 1987, the start of the decade, a sub-committee was charged with the responsibility for the:

*"identification of aspects which should constitute a Regional Cultural Policy."*

The Meeting's discussion of all aspects of a regional cultural policy, resulted in the identification of the elements which should be addressed in the formulation of such a policy, including:

- ◆ definition and concept of culture within the Caribbean Community;
- ◆ the role and importance of culture in the overall development of the Community;

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- ◆ rationalisation of the cultural resources available to the Region;
- ◆ role of the media and the educational system in the appreciation of culture and the development of artistic expression;
- ◆ recognition by decision-makers of the importance of cultural development - which recognition translates into positive consideration of requests for technical assistance for cultural projects;
- ◆ the facilitation of cultural exchanges through bilateral agreements and support for culture networks;
- ◆ increased levels of support from Member States for the Regional Publishing Industry;
- ◆ the commitment to and the allocation of resources by Member States towards Regional information/communication on the Arts;
- ◆ the institution of measures which would assist in protecting cultural practices and practitioners.

## **Introduction**

**The Seventh Meeting of the Standing Committee of Ministers responsible for Education held in Georgetown, Guyana in May 1988:**

**"Endorsed the elements recommended by the Regional Cultural Committee in the formulation of a Regional Cultural Policy;**

**Approved the establishment of a Policy Sub-Committee of the RCC with responsibility for developing a policy brief for the consideration of Member Governments; and**

**Mandated the Secretariat to seek funding from multilateral sources to support the activities to be carried out in connection with the policy formulation exercise."**

**The Third Meeting of the RCC held in Kingston, Jamaica in 1992 reconstituted the Cultural Policy Sub-Committee to include:**

- Ms. Mildred Lowe, Director of Culture - Guyana
- Dr. Joseph Palacio, Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous Peoples - Belize
- Mr. Kendell Hippolyte, Playwright/Director - Saint Lucia (Chairman).

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The Sub-Committee met and produced a first draft which was discussed by the Fourth Meeting of the RCC in Bridgetown, Barbados in 1993, out of which a second draft was prepared.

A Special Meeting of the Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Education (SCME) in Antigua in September 1993, suggested further amendments but accepted the document as options for Regional Cultural Policy.

The Fifth Meeting of the RCC in Guyana in 1994 again made inputs which were incorporated by the Sub-Committee in the production of this document. As a means of broadening the perspective, a consultant, Mr. Earl Lovelace with the CCS Cultural Officer conducted a series of National Consultations in six CARICOM Member States - The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, between June and July 1994. The process has served to tighten the text, while maintaining the thrust of that which was previously agreed upon. The document is intended to serve the following purposes:

## **Introduction**

- (a) to provide CARICOM Member States with an overall rationale of the significance of culture in development; this rationale is by no means put forward as the final say on the matter, but is intended to serve as a useful framework of principles for analysis and decision-making in the development process;**
- (b) to provide some guidelines for Member States in the formation or adaptation of their national cultural policies, notwithstanding that specific programme priorities will naturally vary from Member State to Member State within a given period;**
- (c) to help ensure to some degree, unity of outlook at the Regional level on the role of culture in the development process and to give some focus to the idea of Regional priorities in culture;**
- (d) to indicate some areas which should be targeted for specific action within certain time-frames.**

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**The document accordingly is divided into:**

- (i) Introduction;
- (ii) The Context for Regional Policy;
- (iii) The Policy Framework and Objectives;

The successful realisation of this Policy therefore requires the support and involvement of the Community. Governments therefore need to create strategies to ensure the participation of the public at all levels.

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## **The Context for Regional Policy**

Cultural Policy is to be seen as an instrument that aims at empowering people to be liberated to their creativity and self development. In the Caribbean Community this Policy is to be located within the framework of the struggle for the democratic society.

The ideal of a democracy here refers to principles rather than form: to a system of government in which there are realistic, accessible political mechanisms for the people, whether as majority or minority, to have power and responsibility in the major and minor decisions which shape their lives, both as individuals and as members of a community. It is this view of democracy which is referred to throughout the document.

Locating the meaning of culture within the context of creating a democratic society is not simply a possible theoretical approach. It is the approach that has emerged out of the historical experience of the Region over the last 500 years.

During this time, the majority of Caribbean people have been pursuing an ongoing struggle for liberation against forces that sought to actively impose upon them those dimensions of powerlessness that inhere in enslavement, indenture and colonialism, the systems of domination by which they were ruled.

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It is essential if we are not to risk oversimplifying the nature of the Caribbean challenge, to recognise that there have been beneficiaries of these systems and that these beneficiaries have been separated from the victims by race and in some instances by colour. This has placed dimensions of racial consciousness, racial antagonism and racial suspicion at the centre of the Caribbean experience and at the heart of the challenge facing us today.

What this makes comprehensible is the fact that the powerlessness to be overcome goes far beyond that granting of political enfranchisement. It lets us know that the ongoing struggle for democracy requires as an indispensable component, the healing of wounds and the liberation of our people from both guilt and victimhood and confusion. Our people must become full, unapologetic, self-confident, sovereign human beings, capable of embracing and accessing the wealth in our diversity in language, religion, art and technology.

Perhaps the greatest danger we shall have to combat is the idea slyly taking root in the Caribbean once more that full democracy is incompatible with economic prosperity. What abounds are not ideas and programmes pertaining to the need to have us develop ourselves, but articulations which lead us to accepting the view

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that we will be developed principally by foreign investment and by foreign expertise. While we cannot deny the value of such expertise and investment, there is in this emphasis on the foreign imagination the increasing suggestion that the Caribbean people do not have the capacity to develop ourselves.

What is being reinforced is the idea that with our small size, the nature of our population and the economic realities of the world, the most we can hope to contribute to our own development is our labour, our sea and sand, and our friendly people.

In addition, pressures in the global economic situation, the movement towards mega-blocs in the area of trade, the stringencies and social dislocations often attendant on structural adjustment, the uniformity of thought and lifestyle engendered by mass communication media, are some of the factors which have a negative impact. In addition the plethora of images in our media and hence in our imagination that suggest wealth, grandeur and accomplishment as unattainable by communities like those of the Caribbean, are creating a Caribbean person who has less and less loyalty to, feeling for and identification with his or her history and

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environment and little belief in his or her ability to create economic prosperity in an authentic, many-faceted culture.

Formal independence in many Caribbean countries is a little more than 30 years old. Not surprisingly the institutions that foster intellectual exchange and criticism are very much in their infancy. The education systems, arts policies, media policies, cannot be said to foster the self confidence needed for creativity in the people of the Region.

But we are not without resources and advantages, the greatest of which is that we have scarcely begun to tap the reserves of creativity and imagination expressed in our 500 year old Caribbean liberation movement, for self development.

If the democratic frame-work is expected to remove the barriers from the people to their possibilities for self development, it is the Cultural Policy that must give them the self-confidence for creativity and encourage a fresh enthusiasm for the address to our challenges here in the Region.

In all of this, where and what is "culture"? What part does it play? What part should it play?

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While there is no wish to become embroiled in the controversies that accompany even the simplest definitions of culture, there is nevertheless a need to indicate what we see as the general ideas connoted by the word and the implications for development in all its dimensions and levels.

In our usage of the word "culture" there are implied axioms which should be fully stated in a philosophical overview such as this. People have always searched for a meaning to existence and, within this, to human life. Human beings have always tried to understand that meaning and to live their lives by the light of that understanding. Further, the peoples of the world have explored and expressed that meaning in various ways throughout history. It is because of this innate impulse to find meaning that human life can never be lived on the purely biological, material plane. There is, consciously and unconsciously in us, a process of emotional response and intellectual reflection concerning the objects, events and persons among which we live.

This response to life and reflection on life seeks and finds expression in myriad ways, so that even our basic actions of biological survival become imbued with wider meaning. Even in the simple,

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necessary act of eating, this response and reflection are revealed in the design of utensils, in the practice of communal meals (in some Caribbean societies, a communal pot!), in prayers before meals, significant positions at a dining table and so on. In our simplest actions we reflect the values we live by as a people, the understanding that we have of life. Our need to explore and express the meaning of our existence seems ineradicable.

When we use the word "culture", we are referring to the distinctive ways in which a particular grouping of people - whether classified by ethnicity, nationality, religion or some other category - has responded to, reflected on and expressed their historical and presently continuing experience of life. These ways are explored and expressed in everything from clothing and cuisine - from the dimension of biological survival - to dance, painting, story-telling or any of the other art-forms, which have no apparent immediate survival value. This sum total of intricately connected ways of being, as it were, the particular combination of these ways worked out and being worked out by a people in relation to a particular environment and with a particular legacy of ideas, beliefs and practices is what gives a people a sense of cohesiveness, a sense of having a particular irreplaceable value in the world. It is this we refer

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to in our usage of the word "culture" and, on the really human plane - as opposed to the biological one we share with the rest of nature - we need this sense of a distinct, authentic way of understanding and expressing our being alive, as much as we need food. It is our culture which makes it possible to bond ourselves meaningfully to our physical and social environment and to each other. It is our culture that makes us one people.

But we need to be careful that we do not come away with the idea that this distinctiveness is the sum total of culture. The very fact of distinctiveness is possible because people are engaged in the substantial task of responding to, and reflecting on the creation and re-creation of their lives. This process of making a life for themselves places them at the centre of their universe, and gives them the fullest opportunity for cultural expression.

This does not mean that dispossessed or colonised people do not have a culture. All people have that culture afforded them by their political and economic power. When their political and economic power is limited, their culture is limited by their preoccupation with affirming their humanity. All their actions are then directed

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**toward this one goal, the limited scope being reflected in their technology, their politics, their economics, with their arts, while also being affected by the limitations, remaining the most potent liberating force.**

**The central challenge of the society is to provide the democratic framework and an informed cultural policy so as to enable people to overcome these limitations, find their place at the centre of their own development and devote their creativity to developing themselves and their society, and to contributing to the world.**

**The Caribbean is a tremendously significant area because, for better or worse, the civilizations of the world have met here and out of their confrontation and mutual adaptation, both deliberate and inadvertent, the lineaments of a Caribbean Person have began to emerge.**

**This Caribbean Person has a distinct presence, embodies a distinct set of influences, a distinct combination of beliefs and practices and therefore has a distinct contribution to make to the world. The relatively peaceful co-existence and intermingling of cultural traditions which obtain here, while by no means ideal or unendangered, is of vital significance in affirming the principle of**

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diversity within unity which is so necessary in today's world.

As beings who seek to understand our mysterious existence, who seek to experience life as a harmonious unity, the arts have a special place in our lives. The state of our relationship with the potential harmony of life is experienced in our feelings and these feelings are most vividly explored and revealed to us in the various languages of the arts. We celebrate or lament or fear or wonder in the languages of bodily gesture, sound, colour and shape and so our inner life (our emotional response and intellectual reflection) is made known to us most vividly in dance, music, theater, painting, sculpture, oral and written literature. And it is by the light of this inner life of thought and feeling, expressed in the arts, that we build the external structures and systems of our economic, political and social life.

The arts, then - and therefore the artists - have a role which it is difficult to over-estimate or over-emphasize. As we struggle to shape the democratic society within which the Caribbean Person will flourish, it is the arts which will keep us in touch with our deepest feelings, so that we

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can know - by the 'images' provided for us, in whatever art-form, when we are shaping truly and when we are not. This places a responsibility both on the artist (to have integrity and high technical standards) and the society, especially its political directorate (to help provide the context within which the artist can carry out his function).

The nexus of artist, culture and political directorate in the creation of community was well understood and expressed by A.J. Seymour in the following words:

*"In the protection and development of this fragile sense of national cultural identity, the leaders of Third World countries are finding that there are two main agencies of power and support - the mass involvement of the people in understanding their cultural heritage and realizing that it is in themselves that the roots of their people's culture will be found and, secondly, the role of the creative artist in capturing a vision of the people and mirroring that vision for the people to see themselves and to realize their personal and national worth."*

The arts help us to understand and constantly remind us what it is to be human. It is when we understand the value to our development, of thought, of a sense of values, of an ethical standard by which our society guides itself that we approach an appreciation of the arts and hence the artist, whose freedom and well being must therefore be fiercely guarded.

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In this context then, the arts must be understood as being concerned not only with entertainment but also as embodying thought, reflection, analysis, criticism; and the holding up of a mirror to the society.

To sum up, then: the culture of a people refers here to the distinctive inter-connection of its inherited ideas, beliefs and practices (the traditional aspect of culture), the use and modification of these in the present and the developing of new ideas, beliefs and practices as the people attempt to fashion a meaningful life. In the light of the above, it may be said that all peoples of the world are always making and remaking their culture as tradition and adaptation are both brought into play in coping with the present.

Further, the basis of this process, in the final analysis, is the ineradicable human need to experience life as a meaningful, harmonious unity at both the personal and the collective level.

In this regard, we affirm what many others have increasingly recognised: that there is no hierarchy of cultures in the world. There are differences,

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certainly, but these differences are rooted in the same essential process of people interacting with their environment and each other and reflecting on this interaction. The culture of the Caribbean therefore is as valid as that of any other cultural Region.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that this emerging Caribbean civilization must find its highest expression in people. The purpose of the development of a democratic Caribbean society is to allow for the creation of the Caribbean Person who is at the centre of his or her development.

But who is this person? And what is the process by which he/she is to be brought to the centre of his/her development.

What qualities do we see when we envision this man, this woman?

We cannot name them all, but we passionately desire that the Caribbean Person:

- ◆ will be imbued with a respect for human life since it is the foundation on which all the other desired values must rest;
  
- ◆ of whatever particular ethnic group, religious or other adherence will accept

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and respect the existence of persons of other ethnic groups, religious beliefs, other ways of being; will indeed see this diversity as a source of potential strength and richness;

- ◆ will be aware of the importance of living in harmony with the environment;
- ◆ will have a strong appreciation of family and kinship values in all their various forms, community cohesion, and moral issues in general;
- ◆ will have an appreciation of and respect for the elders in our society not only as repositories of past knowledge, but as persons who can continue to contribute to the present shaping of ourselves in new and vital ways;
- ◆ will have an informed respect for the cultural heritage, for the beliefs, practices and persons of the past who have helped to create and maintain our sense of ourselves as a people;

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◆ will nevertheless value independent and critical thinking and be sufficiently analytical to question the beliefs and practices of past and present;

◆ will value the creative imagination in its various manifestations and nurture its development in all areas of life.

We note, in full awareness, that these qualities of personhood are desirable not only in the Caribbean Person, but indeed in every person, universally. Of what then does the 'Caribbeanness' of this person consist? It is in the manifestation and living out of these qualities in a Caribbean context, where they cannot but partake of the distinctive nature of this ethos.

One of the significant features of this ethos is multi-ethnicity, which upholds the value for people to have and maintain access to the cultures of their ancestors. All people of the Caribbean must feel themselves having a right to the democratic ideal to having a place at the centre of their development, and for participating in the building of Caribbean culture.

It is their engagement in this process which makes the Caribbean People at once universal and unique.

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This Caribbean Person is the final goal of our cultural policy. It is this being, whom we wish the coming generation especially to aspire to be.

The Arts and Cultural Policy, we hope, will bring us a step nearer to seeing this Caribbean Person come into being, particularly among these critical standard bearers of culture, our youth.

Culture and Arts policy focuses on the responsibility of the artist as well as on cultural institutions (such as libraries, museums,) for enhancing the quality of living. The value of support for these, as well as for trained people in the arts and other areas of cultural activity, for research and documentation through grants, incentives or other forms of support will be seen in what will be produced by the people, whether they work as artists or craftsmen, designers, agricultural workers, in industry, as well as in the quality of health care they give, the way we care for our aged, the way we train and educate our children.

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**This document seeks to:**

- ◆ outline some general principles which, it is felt, are of value in determining the practical measures that can be taken by the public and private sector to integrate culture into the process of nation-building;
- ◆ make specific practical recommendations concerning cultural activity in different areas of life;
- ◆ indicate some specific considerations relevant to the role of particular aspects of culture in national life;
- ◆ provide some guidelines and suggestions for the national cultural policies of CARICOM countries which will be flexible enough for each country to pursue its own cultural priorities, but still provide a common framework within which these priorities are tackled.

Recognising that any listing of areas of cultural activity must to some extent be debatable and certainly incomplete, the following are presented as some of the essential components which all CARICOM countries should consider in determining a direction and framing an action plan

## **The Context for Regional Policy**

for culture in development. This requires a shift in our present perception of development which is based on a restrictive economic model to a developmental model in which culture is a critical component.

The Policy Framework is therefore presented under the following headings:

- ◆ Cultural and Artistic Promotion and Development;
- ◆ Cultural Heritage - Preservation and Protection;
- ◆ Culture and Development;
- ◆ Cultural Relations;
- ◆ Cultural Financing and Administration.

## **P o l i c y      CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC PROMOTION Framework and      AND DEVELOPMENT Objectives**

### ***Policy Goals***

- To provide a cadre of persons trained in the arts, other areas of culture and cultural administration.
- To ensure the establishment, continued survival and upgrading of cultural institutions.
- To ensure proper management of heritage collections and cultural institutions.

There can be no doubt that cultural and artistic activity needs to receive the same kind of attention, incentive and support that other areas traditionally have received. Given the philosophical view of culture outlined above, the standard arguments of first seeing to the economic framework and then dealing with a supposed cultural superstructure are not relevant. Culture is not only the fruit but the root of development and must be considered in every phase and aspect

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Cultural and Artistic Promotion and Development**

of the development process. Indeed it may be more accurate to say that culture - the way of life of a people - and the physical and social environment are in a constant dialectic, shaping and re-shaping each other. Given this critical relationship, education about culture - what and how it affects and is affected by - should be far more emphasized than it is now. Our development model must be culturally framed and culturally based if we are not to subvert our own good intentions.

In the light of the above, action is necessary in the following areas:

- Training**
- Sectoral Activities/Institutions.**

#### **1. Training**

##### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) recognising and endorsing the value of training in cultural research (such as anthropology, ethnomusicology, etc.,) will

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support efforts which will increase national and regional expertise in this area;

- (b) will, through Cultural Policy recognize and endorse the value of training in the fields of art and culture to the same extent that this is recognized in the traditional fields of medicine, law and lately, such subjects as the various branches of engineering and management science;
- (c) acknowledge the value of the formal institutions which carry out this training function. In this regard, it is noted that there are formal institutions which are not perceived as performing a training function in cultural activity, e.g., libraries. The capabilities of all institutions which can play this role should be enhanced;
- (d) endorse the value of non-formal processes and institutions in imparting training (e.g., in traditional craft) and should support these in appropriate ways;
- (e) recognise that training should involve more than a passing on and refinement of technique; it should address itself to the passing on of a vision, as it were, of the

**Policy Framework and Objectives**  
**Cultural and Artistic Promotion and Development**

place of art and culture in Caribbean life and in existence generally;

- (f) recognise that training must encompass not only developing the skills required to produce the artistic/cultural product, but the skills of management, marketing, etc., to ensure that the product reaches the widest possible and appropriate audience/market. Thus not only practitioners but all persons related to the growth of cultural endeavour (e.g., lawyers and the issue of copyright) should receive the necessary training, appropriately devised to allow interested and capable persons from all walks of life to benefit from such training. In this regard, short and part-time courses are particularly critical since many of the needed personnel will not have been employed full-time in cultural activity;
  
- (g) support existing organizations which can carry out the various aspects of the work and should support the development of new organizations devoted to this purpose.

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## **2. Sectoral Activities/Institutions**

### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) recognize and endorse the value of and should give active, concrete support to sectoral (i.e., dance, theatre, craft, etc.,) and inter-sectoral activities among institutions and informal group networks;**
- (b) recognize and endorse the particular value of the following institutions and events and provide moral and practical support for their development: the CARICOM Foundation for Art and Culture, the Caribbean Inter-Cultural Music Institute and CARIFESTA. Their potential for setting high standards, developing a Caribbean ethos and fostering regional unity is tremendous and should be more deeply explored and utilized;**
- (c) recognise that in the training of all sectors, special, though not exclusive emphasis should be placed on research of and experimentation with forms that are**

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Cultural and Artistic Promotion and Development**

indigenous to the region, with traditional forms as a base;

(d) should take steps to develop and refine a vigorous, independent critical tradition of high standards steeped in a knowledge of our historical reality and cultural forms, without falling into parochialism. In this respect, the universities of the Region can play a strong role, as they did in the heady 1970s' era of Black Consciousness, Caribbean Identity, Capitalist and Non-Capitalist paths of development, in generating and promoting debate on the cultural and artistic issues which confront us.

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### Short/Medium Term Action Required

- (a) That Member States undertake to provide at least one scholarship per year over the next five years in the areas of art, culture or cultural research, museum studies, archaeology and conservation.
- (b) That each Member State identify at least one formal institution involved in cultural activity and undertake to support its work financially by subvention over the next five years.
- (c) That Members States liaise with the University of the West Indies, the University of Guyana and other relevant institutions to develop by the year 2000 within relevant faculties (e.g, management, law) modular courses which are of benefit to cultural practitioners and institutions.
- (d) That each Member State undertake to have within five years at least one person trained in cultural anthropology, museum studies, archaeology and conservation..
- (e) That by 1995 the CARICOM Foundation for Art and Culture be fully established with a minimum of three years financial commitment for staffing and recurrent expenditure.

# **P o l i c y   CULTURAL HERITAGE - Framework and   PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION Objectives**

## ***Policy Goals***

- To ensure that the necessary legislation is put in place to protect and recover our patrimony.
- To research, document and archive the cultural phenomena of the Region.
- To provide for the proper management and conservation of the Region's cultural heritage.

It is this area, cultural heritage, which constitutes the traditional aspect of culture - the aspect with which culture is most commonly identified - and which forms the matrix of the people's cultural identity. The cultural heritage is the collective memory, in various forms, of the people's response to life and reflection on life, going back several generations. And just as no individual can hope for a whole sense of self and authentic action in the world without his or her personal memory, so is it also futile for a people to hope for social harmony and true civilizing achievement without their collective memory. It is the collective memory, embedded and expressed in

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many forms (museums being a particularly striking and critical example) which shows us both the positive and negative aspects of ourselves which we must know in order to build truly. With this in mind, the Regional Cultural Committee recommends the adoption of actions aimed at returning the patrimony of Member States and at preserving, analyzing and disseminating knowledge of the traditional, historical and natural aspects of our culture. The recommendations are made under the subsequent headings:

- **Ethnicity**
- **Language**
- **Religion**
- **Archaeological and Historical Sites and Artifacts**
- **The Oral Tradition**
- **Aboriginal Peoples**
- **Research, Documentation and Archiving**
- **National Days.**

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Cultural Heritage - Preservation and Protection**

#### **1. Ethnicity**

##### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) recognise and respect the equality of the different ethnic groups which constitute our Caribbean heritage; consequently urge affirmation of and support for the national and local specificities of this multi-ethnic heritage;
- (b) recognise the inestimable value of the synthesis of the strands of this heritage where it occurs.

#### **2. Language**

- (a) given the critical role of language in shaping cultural identity, recognize officially, support concretely and help to develop the various 'nation languages' which Caribbean people have created here over the centuries;

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- (b) recognize the value of and encourage research into and preservation of the aboriginal languages of the Caribbean;
- (c) actively promote multi-lingualism in the major international languages generally used in the Region.

### **3. Religion**

- (a) recognise and give due consideration to the religious pluralism which exists in the Caribbean;
- (b) encourage and support all attempts to promote dialogue and mutual understanding among people of different faiths and belief systems.

### **4. Archaeological and Historical Sites and Artifacts**

- (a) actively promote and support all efforts aimed at the preservation and restoration of the Regional patrimony and create or strengthen legislation to support such

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Cultural Heritage - Preservation and Protection**

efforts, including the repatriation of artifacts and other cultural property;

(b) promote and support educational efforts aimed at developing an active and felt appreciation of the national and Regional patrimony.

### **5. The Oral Tradition**

(a) recognize the incalculable value of the oral tradition as a living and endangered repository and transmitter of information, beliefs and values;

(b) develop and support all efforts to preserve and disseminate knowledge of this tradition;

(c) support and encourage research into and analysis of this body of folk-wisdom for the insights it may provide into present individual and social issues.

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### **6. Aboriginal Peoples**

Bearing in mind that the original and on-going contribution of the Aboriginal Peoples to the Caribbean ethos is often overlooked; and bearing in mind the vision of a Caribbean civilization and Caribbean Person which informs the philosophy of this Cultural Policy document,

#### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) support active measures by governments and all concerned to ensure their physical survival as a people - i.e., that attention be paid to their basic rights to nutrition, health, etc;
- (b) promote and actively support efforts aimed at the maintenance and development of their culture;
- (c) adopt strategies to ensure that the concerns of Aboriginal Peoples are articulated at the highest possible levels.

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Cultural Heritage - Preservation and Protection**

#### **7. Research, Documentation and Archiving**

- (a) encourage and develop at all levels, through the fostering of museums, galleries and other facilities, through active support of the Memory Bank project, the documentation - in the audio-visual and print media - of historical and current cultural events, practices, processes, groups, institutions, etc;
- (b) encourage and actively promote by diverse means the dissemination of information and issues arising from such documentation;
- (c) provide where possible, assistance with monitoring and control of information-gathering or data-gathering on the culture of the Caribbean People with special attention to ethno-medicine, arts and craft and providing protection for their rights relative to Intellectual Property;

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

### **8. National Days**

- (a)** devise ways and means to ensure that days of national and regional significance are given to reflection on, discussion and - where appropriate - celebration of events and phenomena in our heritage which have influenced or continue to influence our development;
  
- (b)** establish an annual date in honour of Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean on which particular attention is paid to their role in the development of Caribbean societies.

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Cultural Heritage - Preservation and Protection**

#### **Short/Medium Term Action Required**

- (a) That Member States which have not done so, should adopt the policies and procedures recommended in the Report on the Status of the Caribbean Museums, (1993) for upgrading museums to ICOM standards, including adoption/adaptation of ICOM definition of Museums; Endorsement and support for the activities of the Museums Association of the Caribbean; Adoption of minimum standards for Caribbean Museums; establishment of regional and national standards of Museum Practice; Adoption of national policy on museums and museum management; inclusion of museums on the national emergency priority list on each territory.
- (b) That Member States become signatories to the relevant international conventions concerning patrimony, etc., and enact the relevant local legislation.
- (c) That all Member States have in place legislation for the protection and recovery of the national patrimony and intellectual property in the shortest possible time.
- (d) The Member States who have not yet done so establish Memory Bank projects within their countries.
- (e) That, following on the report of the West Indian Commission, Member States, with the collaboration of the Caribbean Organisation of

## Regional Cultural Policy

### Short/Medium Term Action Required cont'd

- (e) indigenous peoples; commission and complete a report on the condition of indigenous peoples within the next three years with a view to addressing the various issues that concern them.
- (f) That within the next five years governments ensure membership and participation in the international organisations devoted to the preservation and documentation of cultural phenomena.
- (g) That, notwithstanding any existing arrangements with NGOs for research, governments employ a research officer in their cultural departments.
- (h) That Member States to work towards the development of regional training and conservation facilities for the preservation of the Cultural Heritage.
- (i) That Member States enact up-to-date and effective legislation to protect and foster the growth and development of intellectual property in the Region.
- (j) That Member States sign and ratify the appropriate international conventions to facilitate the reciprocity upon which effective administration of copyright depends.

**Policy Goals**

- To research and create support systems for the economic contributions made by cultural phenomena to national economies.
- To establish education programmes in the arts.
- To acknowledge the value and importance of traditional health practices.
- To study the practices with a view to incorporating the findings in other spheres of national life such as education and industry.
- To take all steps necessary for the preservation and proper management of the environment.
- To ensure gender equality at all levels.
- To create awareness of the significance and potential of traditional technology.

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Culture and Development**

The connection between these two generative concepts, culture and development, are at the heart of this document. Development should be the *raison 'etre* of government and its policies. In every plan proposed and decision taken, there is the implied proposition that these will lead the community or nation or region closer to the optimum state of development possible at a given time. The various agents of development - formal organisations, informal networks, social institutions, etc. - are assessed by the political directorate (itself a social institution but with an overall co-ordinating function) in order to enhance the role that each can play in a given situation.

What is being attempted in this section is to bring considerations of culture into the assessment of the roles of these various agents of development. This section therefore looks at some of the main issues and areas of activity which engage the attention and efforts of the political directorate. An attempt is made, without going into detail, to indicate the present status and potential of culture in each case. It must be pointed out that the list is by no means seen as exhaustive, nor does the order indicate a suggested priority. But they are all areas which can only benefit from a greater

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Culture and Development**

sensitivity to the cultural dimension in both their policy formulation and implementation.

#### **1. Culture and National Planning**

National planning is focussed largely on the economic aspect, not taking sufficient account of the cultural context within which this planning must be realized.

Noting that this has implications both for the culture of the people affected by such planning and the ultimate success of the plans,

#### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

support the establishment of mechanisms to address this and urge that cultural considerations become a normal element of national planning.

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

### **2. Culture and Economic Development**

There is a perception among planners that cultural activity is not economically significant. As a result of this perception, its contribution to the national economy is under-rated, despite the evident economic significance of reggae music, calypso or festival arts such as Carnival. This negative perception is reflected in a severe lack of infrastructural and other support which is given as a matter of course to the traditional areas of private sector activity.

In the light of the above,

#### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) encourage the initiation of and support research into and quantification of the economic contribution of cultural phenomena (e.g. major festivals) to Member States;
  
- (b) establish infrastructural and other support to allow for the development of cultural industries;

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Culture and Development**

(c) devise strategies for existing resources to be rationalized and brought into greater service.

A clear case in point - and an urgent one, requiring immediate and special attention - is the need to establish the infra-structure for a Caribbean steelband manufacturing industry, thus minimizing the present trend of inadvertently exporting our expertise in this field to countries which evidently value it more.

### **3. Culture and Education**

Noted with emphasis is the critical, irreplaceable role of education in developing the creative imagination, not only for artistic interests but problem-solving in general and the importance of education in developing self-reliance and an awareness of the possibilities of the cultural heritage for stimulating self-reliance and self-realisation.

Noting, too, that some of our educational content, methodologies and structures are no longer

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

relevant to our present aspirations, the CARICOM Governments and People are urged to ensure that measures be set up to secure greater relevance in all these areas. (There are implications here for the philosophy and methodology of teacher training).

### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) recognise and value the non-formal as well as the formal modes of disseminating information and fostering desirable values;
- (b) support a special focus by government and private sector to develop programmes, both within and outside the formal system, which nourish this orientation to creativity, self-reliance and self-realization.

## **4. Culture and Health**

Given that nearly all aspects of social activity depend on good health and given that our foreparents had some knowledge of health practices by which many maintained good health,

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Culture and Development**

#### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) support the recognition and evaluation of the philosophy and medical and health practices of previous generations;
- (b) support research in those areas and scientific development of them for more widespread use where feasible; it should be noted here that the economic aspect of this may have some significance, both in terms of saving on imported medicine and in terms of generating economic activity at home;
- (c) support the recognition of the importance of traditional cultural beliefs and practices and seriously taking them into account in designing and implementing programmes to deal with health issues and problems.

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

### **5. Culture and Agriculture**

Noting that agriculture has been the main economic activity of the majority of Caribbean People for centuries and that beliefs, attitudes and practices have grown around it,

#### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) support the recognition and evaluation of the beliefs and practices surrounding agricultural activity;
- (b) encourage research into and scientific assessment, where possible, of the value of such beliefs and practices;
- (c) support the recognition of the importance of these beliefs and practices in designing and implementing agricultural programmes.

### **6. Culture and the Environment**

Attention is called to the pivotal importance of the Caribbean environment in the global environmental system, and calls attention also to

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Culture and Development**

the role played by our cultural environmental practices in maintaining our environment and therefore that of Mother Earth.

#### **CARICOM Governments and People therefore:**

(a) urge greater recognition of the significance of micro-environments in the national context and the significance of cultural belief and practice in their preservation;

(b) urge greater sensitivity to the cultural considerations and implications in attempting to work out solutions to environmental problems; in so far as is feasible, the solutions should be culturally accommodating;

### **7. Culture and Gender**

Given that 50% or more of the Region's population is female, the concerns addressed under the various headings of this document automatically address some aspects of their

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

situation. However, it should be recognized that women have special needs which are rooted in the issue of gender relations, and that any constraint on the development of their potential results in a loss of contribution to the entire society.

Additionally, Caribbean culture has also shaped the way in which men and women of the region relate to each other and any attempt to change these relations will have to take the cultural context into account.

### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) encourage special attention to gender issues in all areas of development;
- (b) support the removal of all legislation which discriminates against women;
- (c) urge recognition of the particular contribution that women make to the process of culture-bearing;
- (d) support all research which provides information on the contribution of women to the economy.

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Culture and Development**

#### **8. Culture and the Mass Media**

Recognising the overwhelming potential of the mass media for both good and ill in shaping perceptions and values and influencing action,

##### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

(a) support and encourage the use of the mass media to present a positive portrayal of ourselves and to encourage honest reflection and discussion on our overall direction and goals;

(b) encourage the use of the mass media to disseminate more widely the knowledge of the work of Caribbean artists;

(c) support efforts to develop among audiences the capacity to critically assess the media product;

(d) actively promote and support efforts to utilise the media to foster a spirit of

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

Caribbean unity, including joint production of Caribbean Films.

## **9. Culture and Sport**

### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) recognise the vital role that sport has played in integrating the Caribbean and in giving a sense of a collective cultural identity at home and internationally;
- (b) support all efforts to promote and develop a high standard of sporting activity nationally and regionally, bearing in mind the personal and social benefits of discipline, co-operation, etc., engendered in playing to a high standard;
- (c) support and encourage research into and promotion of sporting, recreational and leisure activities traditional to the Region, some of which are in danger of disappearing (e.g. warri, wawee).

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Culture and Development**

#### **10. Culture and Tourism**

Recognising the significant contribution of tourism to the economy and its potential for the developing of good international relations, but bearing in mind its potential hazards in the cultural sphere,

##### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

(a) encourage measures to ensure that the development of tourism does not impact negatively on the integrity of our cultural identity in all its manifestations;

(b) encourage and urge the development of programmes which are more oriented toward the cultural heritage and contemporary cultural activity and that as part of this orientation, more space be made available within the conventional touristic activities for such programmes.

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

### **11. Culture and Technology**

#### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) fully recognise the importance of technology for preservation of the heritage, for further development and enhancement of cultural activity and therefore undertake to initiate steps to secure the expertise and technology necessary in this regard;
- (b) support efforts to develop the creative imagination which can foster creative technological solutions to our problems;
- (c) recognise and accord valuation to the tradition of indigenous technology in the Caribbean and support efforts of research in this area, especially for possible adaptation.

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Culture and Development**

It must be reiterated here that the foregoing headings were not presented as definitive final categories within which the cultural dimension of development must be negotiated. These categories are pointers only to the various possibilities and considerations. In framing national cultural policies, particular countries may find it more relevant to look at categories such as culture and youth or culture and manufacturing. The essential point is that culture, in concept and practice, is integral to development and must be considered as such.

### Short/Medium Term Action Required

- (a) That Member States take steps to ensure free movement of artistes and cultural workers within the Region, to facilitate the growth of a viable market for cultural products and to provide cultural workers with opportunities for sustainable income.
- (b) That Member States remove customs duties and non-tariff barriers which affect the free movement of art, artistes and their materials and equipment within the Region.
- (c) That Member States undertake, by the year 2000, to collate quantifiable data on the economic contribution of cultural phenomena to the national economies.
- (d) That funding be sought for the regional study on the economic importance of the cultural sector to regional development.
- (e) that legislation be put in place, within the next five years, to provide fiscal incentives for persons and institutions to develop the cultural infrastructure.
- (f) That Member States ensure that by the year 2000, arts education programmes are fully established within the curricula of the primary school system.

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Culture and Development**

#### **Short/Medium Term Action Required**

- (g) That Member States put in place by the year 2000 a networking mechanism, utilising perhaps the University of the West Indies, the University of Guyana and other relevant institutions, which would facilitate the collation and dissemination of information on traditional medicine and medical practices.
- (h) That Member States become signatories to the relevant international conventions concerning the environment.
- (i) That Member States take the necessary steps to ensure that by the year 2000, each has an inventory of its natural heritage and the legislation necessary for protecting it.
- (j) That by the year 2000, Member States enact or modify legislation in order to safeguard the rights of women, examining those negative behaviors which have been traditionally acceptable in our culture.
- (k) That Member States undertake to have a full inventory of traditional games and that this information be made available to the education sector.

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **CULTURAL RELATIONS**

#### **Policy Goals**

- To ensure the cross-fertilisation of the Caribbean cultural experiences.
- To promote closer cultural relations between the Caribbean, Latin America and the wider world.

#### **1. Intra-CARICOM Relations**

In the spirit of the Treaty of Chaguaramas which includes cultural relations as a vital aspect of Regional unity,

#### **CARICOM Government and People:**

- (a) support and undertake to put in place mechanisms to foster exchanges of products and persons in the cultural realm through entering into specific cultural agreements which give form and focus to the intentions of the

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Cultural Relations**

Treaty of Chaguaramas in the area of culture;

- (b) support utilization of the universities of the region, with special emphasis on their creative arts centres, to facilitate such exchanges and to promote combined work among artists of the Region;
- (c) undertake to harness the resources of relevant agencies (e.g., Organisation of American States) to promote such exchanges.

### **2. The Wider Caribbean and Latin America**

It is recognised that there is a need for a common position by CARICOM Governments in relation to the Wider Caribbean and Latin America and recognises also the need for a closer working relationship with them.

Acknowledging the historical, geographical and cultural links and affinities which already exist

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

between CARICOM countries and those of the Wider Caribbean and Latin America and noting the global trend toward international power blocs of one kind or another, as well as the formation of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS);

### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) will continue to explore and progressively develop the common principles by which we relate to the Wider Caribbean and Latin America;
- (b) recognise the crucial role of culture in laying the groundwork on which full-fledged relations can be developed;
- (c) and, given the above, will continue to take steps to explore and develop linkages for the marketing of cultural products;
- (d) recognise the special importance of CARICOM countries which have a frontier with Latin American countries and the significance of Caribbean diaspora communities in the Wider Caribbean and Latin America.

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Cultural Relations**

#### **3. Wider World**

The need is recognised for a common position by CARICOM Governments in relation to the countries of the wider world as well as the need for a closer working relationship with them. With this in mind,

##### **CARICOM Governments and People:**

- (a) urge the exploration and development of the common principles by which we relate to the wider world, notwithstanding the acceptance of bilateral and other country relations;
- (b) recognise the role of culture in paving the way for further relations;
- (c) urge that close attention be paid to the position of Caribbean nationals and persons of Caribbean descent in the countries of the wider world especially in relation to issues of cultural identity.

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

(d) undertake to promote information and understanding of the contributions of Caribbean persons and culture in the wider world (e.g., C.L.R. James, Frantz Fanon).

### **Short/Medium Term Action Required**

- (a) That governments undertake to facilitate at least one cultural exchange a year with another Member State, beginning by 1995.
- (b) The Member States put in place by 1995 the mechanisms to give effect to the cultural components of agreements already established with each other, with Latin American countries and countries of the wider world.

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## **P o l i c y      CULTURAL      FINANCING      AND Framework and      ADMINISTRATION Objectives**

### **Policy Goals**

**To ensure the financial viability and effective organisation of cultural endeavours.**

### **Financing**

It is axiomatic that the cultural endeavour, if it is to develop its fullest possibilities, requires higher levels of financing than presently obtain. It is also axiomatic, though not as recognised, that a fair amount of cultural practice is self-financed and self-financing. Even less recognised is the financial contribution made by culture to the national and Regional economy.

In light of the central significance of culture to development which is presented in this document, it is time that consideration be given to the percentage of national budgets which is allocated to cultural endeavour, as well as to quantifying the contribution of this sphere of activities to the national product.

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

### **CARICOM Governments and People therefore:**

- (a) support research in order to determine**
  - (i) how much of the responsibility for the funding of cultural activity now resides with governments compared to that which resides with the private sector;**
  - (ii) the ratio between government spending on culture and total public expenditure;**
  - (iii) the ratio between the cultural product and the national product;**
  - (iv) the value of the contribution of the cultural sector to national economies with particular reference to levels and types of employment and foreign exchange earnings;**
- (b) support appropriate incentives to the private sector to encourage their inputs, by measures such as tax relief;**

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Cultural Financing and Administration**

(c) will seek to identify measures to achieve the goal of adequate financing for the cultural endeavour;

(d) given the dependence of tourism on the culture of the people, will seek to commit a percentage of their tourism budgets to cultural development.

### **Cultural Administration**

Closely tied in to the question of financing is the issue of cultural administration. Administrative as well as financial mechanisms need to be established in order to fulfill Cultural Policy objectives, which mechanisms themselves in turn become important aspects of Cultural Policy.

The inter-play of government, the private sector, semi-public bodies, NGOs and the like needs to be harmonized so that duplication of effort is avoided and maximum use is made of resources. It is vital that responsibilities be made clear and contradictions removed, while at the same time encouraging co-operation and linkages between

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

cultural endeavour and other spheres of national life.

**CARICOM Governments and People will therefore seek to:**

- (a) work towards the harmonization of regulations governing public bodies directly involved in implementing cultural policy such as Ministries and Departments of Culture, Cultural Councils or Commissions, with those governing other institutions with which they must interact, such as Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs;
- (b) work towards the harmonization of regulations and conventions between public and semi-public bodies, recognising that some activities are best conducted by semi-public bodies which need clear mandates so as not to seem to be in conflict with activities of public bodies, and in order that resources be efficiently utilized;
- (c) promote the support of NGOs and private individuals, recognising that

## **Policy Framework and Objectives**

### **Cultural Financing and Administration**

they traditionally have been active in the delivery of cultural services at both the community and national levels. Support must be given to continued contributions in this sphere, recognising that people are the bearers of culture, and that the whole society stands to gain from activity which enriches the national fabric;

- (d) encourage the promotion of adequate legal provisions in respect of cultural development, both at the constitutional level, and in terms of specific legislation;
- (e) support governments in ensuring that there is no constitutional provision which is at variance with Cultural Policy;
- (f) seek to have specific legislation in respect of protection of cultural heritage, copyright, public lending rights, statutory authorities or provisions, considered as an instrument for encouraging cultural and artistic development. Thought must also be given to the social position of the artist

## **Regional Cultural Policy**

or culture bearer in respect of health, disability or retirement possibilities.

### **Short/Medium Term Action Required**

- (a) That governments enact legislation and amend fiscal regulations to remove customs duty and non-tariff barriers in order to effect the free movement of cultural personnel, their materials and equipment, goods and services within the Region.
- (b) That governments, by the year 2000, provide incentives to facilitate private sector contributions to cultural endeavours.

## Conclusion

*"A nation's culture is its lifestyle and influences the way in which it assesses itself. Culture provides the framework within which the nation identifies its priorities and goals."*

*A. J. Seymour*

If, as we believe, A. J. Seymour was correct, then culture demands more attention.

In this document, we have tried to establish some of the principles which need to be addressed by all CARICOM Member States. Priorities, emphases and possibilities might vary from country to country, but it is hoped that the framework presented here may be accepted as being broad enough to allow for flexibility in adapting resources to what must needs be a dynamic and constantly evolving cultural scene.

It must be stressed that the adoption of national strategies for the involvement of the community is critical if the objectives of this Policy are to be met.