

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Regional Center for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean

Ministry of Higher Education of the Republic of Cuba

Towards a new higher education



Collection "Responses"
GRESALC/UNESCO Editions

IAUP - IAU - AUGM - IDRC - CSUCA - IOHE - UDUAL - UNAMAZ - UNICA - WUS

United Nations Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization
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Latin America and the Caribbean
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of Cuba

Towards a new higher education

Proceedings of the Regional
Conference
*Policies and Strategies for
the Transformation
of Higher Education in
Latin America and the Caribbean,*
held in Havana, Cuba,
from 18 to 22 November 1996.

IAUP, IAU, AUGM, IDRC, CSUCA, IOHE, UDUAL, UNAMAZ, UNICA, WUS

Towards a new higher education / published by
CRESALC/UNESCO et al.- Caracas, Venezuela:
CRESALC/UNESCO, 1997.
245 p.:il., 22 cm.-(Responses, 4).-

1. Higher Education - Latin America
2. Higher Education - Institutions
3. Higher Education - Trends and Development
4. Higher Education - Transformations
5. Higher Education - Universities
- I. CRESALC/UNESCO, editor II. Collection Responses
- II. LB2321 1997

In the collection "Responses", CRESALC/UNESCO publishes essays, studies and research related to the transformations which are taking place in the field of higher education in response to the incentives coming from the economic, political and social environment, or from the institutions of that educational level themselves, particularly in the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The positions of the authors of this book do not necessarily reflect the official points of view of UNESCO. The terms used and the presentation of data do not imply the adoption of a position by the Secretariat of the Organization either with regard to the juridical status of a particular country, territory, city or region, its authorities, or with regard to the delimitation of the national frontiers.

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Published by the Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
(CRESALC). Apartado Postal No.68394, Caracas 1060-A. Venezuela.

Edition consisting of 1500 copies/February 1997

ISBN: (UNESCO) 92-9143-020-X

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Presentation

From 18 to 22 November 1996 the *Regional Conference on Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean* was held in Havana, Cuba. This conference was convened pursuant to a decision reached in the course of the 28th General Conference of UNESCO (October/November 1995), as a preparatory forum of the World Conference on Higher Education which the Organization intends to hold in the second semester of 1998. The meeting, which will be followed by similar events in Sub Saharan Africa, the Arabian States, Asia and Europe, was organized by CRESALC in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education of the Republic of Cuba.

Its basic objectives were to define the guidelines of the transformation of post-secondary education and to draw up a plan of action enabling, at that educational level, the "improvement of the pertinence and quality of its teaching, research and extension functions, offering equal opportunities to everybody by means of a permanent education without frontiers, in which merit will be the basic criterion for access, within the framework of a new concept of international cooperation".

The organization and execution of the event were facilitated by the coexistence and interaction of various factors and circumstances of the educational context and environment. Particularly worthy of note is the controversy triggered in the academic and political worlds by the interpretations and recommendations of various international experts with regard to the strategies of change and development of higher edu-

cation. Another element involved has been the reduction and reorientation of investments at that educational level decided within the framework of the macroeconomic policies adopted in the region in accordance with recommendations of international financial organizations.

Added to this is the great political interest aroused by education due to the progress made in the systems of subregional integration and to its inclusion as a principal item of the Agenda of the V Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government (Bariloche, 1995). Other important incentives were the growing social concern for the pertinence and quality of the educational systems and the motivation generated by UNESCO, through the multiple consultations on the situation and the prospects of higher education, held at the world and regional level since 1990 and summarized in the *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education*, published by the Organization in 1995.

In this context, CRESALC promoted the participation of over 4000 *individuals* connected with higher education in the region in the preparatory phase of the Conference, by holding *36 meetings*: 23 at the national level and 13 at the subregional level. These meetings helped to mobilize the social actors connected with higher education around the problems to be discussed in the Conference; provided theoretical and methodological instruments for the organization of the discussions during the meeting; generated inputs for the supportive documents; and made it possible to test and validate the work methodology designed for the Havana meeting.

The participants in these fora included high-level government officials (presidents, vice-presidents, ministers and directors of educational policies); members of parliament; presidents, secretaries and representatives of regional, subregional and national university associations and other higher education institutions; rectors, vice-rectors, deans and directors of administrative departments of public and private universities; professors; researchers; students; representatives of teachers and student associations; representatives of United Nations agencies and of regional integration organizations.

That intense preparatory activity gave rise to *8 proceedings* and *3 books* related to outstanding aspects of the problems of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean. The research centres and the specialists entrusted with the drafting of supportive documents *produced 5 principal documents* and *55 basic documents* respectively. The academic community, on its part, prepared spontaneously *72 free papers* which helped to enrich the discussions in the meeting.

A representative sample of the series of actors mobilized, consisting of *688 individuals*, belonging to all the aforementioned categories, at-

tended the Regional Conference, participating in the drafting of the papers and in the preparation of the documents arising from it, approving them by consensus and expressing their commitment to the transformation of higher education in the region.

The way in which the working papers were presented and the organization of the workshops - with approximately 20 per cent of the time destined to presentations and the remaining 80 per cent to discussion - responded adequately to the demand of a great many participants to take part in the discussions and present their experiences. The participants appreciated this distribution of the time, which is unusual in other Conferences which usually dedicate the greater part of the programme to lengthy verbal presentations.

The preparatory activities and the documents of the Conference showed the consubstantiation of most of the actors mobilized with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *Convention against discrimination in education*, the *UNESCO Constitution* and the recommendations of the *International Commission on Education for the XXI century*, with regard to: everybody's right to education, equal access for all in terms of the merits and capacities of each one, the transfer and shared use of knowledge and the development of the capacities of criticism and anticipation as regards the evolutionary trends of the society.

The products of the Conference, that is to say the *Final Report*, the *Declaration on higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean* and the *Guide for preparing an action plan*, emphasize and discuss the nature of social welfare of higher education ; they stress its nature as an instrument which is "irreplaceable for human development, production, economic growth, the strengthening of cultural identity, the maintenance of social cohesion, the struggle against poverty and the promotion of a peace culture"; and they assume most of the principles defined by UNESCO in its *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education* and in the *General Introduction* prepared by CRESALC (1996).

The analysis of the process of transformation of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean based on the principles mentioned in the previous paragraph, launched since the eighties as a consequence of the economic, political and social changes in the regional and world environment, and accelerated as of 1995 by the initiative of UNESCO, suggests that this process can evolve in the short and medium term (1997-2001) in the form of two possible scenarios: (i) that of *short-term neutralization* and (ii) that of *progressive consolidation and strengthening*.

The results obtained in the phases of preparation and development of the Regional Conference indicate that the second scenario is more likely to be realized if a forum is consolidated which harmonizes, promotes and coordinates the initiatives and demands generated by the sys-

tems of higher education, their integrants and the social actors connected with them, in order to establish the new "social consensus" which would place "the higher education institutions in a better position to respond to the present and future needs of sustainable human development".

The participants in the Regional Conference identified CRESALC as the appropriate organization to perform those functions and entrusted it with the preparation and coordination of the *Action Plan* whereby the process of changes approved in the meeting with regard to pertinence, quality, management, financing, the use of the new information and communication technologies and the reorientation of international cooperation can be put into practice. At the same time, they suggested to UNESCO the transformation of the structure of the Centre and the updating of its functions, in order that it be in a position to assume those responsibilities efficiently and help to satisfy the demands and remedy the deficiencies of higher education in the region.

Whilst working on its reorganization, the Centre has begun the mission entrusted to it by assuming the edition and publication of this book which contains the opening speeches and inaugural conferences; the report, the declaration and the action plan prepared in the commissions and approved in the plenary assembly; and the closing speeches, in which *Federico Mayor*, Director General of UNESCO, and *Fidel Castro Ruz*, President of the Councils of State and of Ministers of the host country, comment on the importance of higher education and express their first reactions to the results of the meeting.

The supportive documents prepared especially for the Regional Conference by experts individually and by groups of specialists of outstanding Centres of research on higher education established in the Latin American and Caribbean region, will be disseminated in the next number of this Collection.

On behalf of the Director General of UNESCO and the Secretariat of the Organization, I wish to thank the institutions and dignitaries of the host country and all the participants for the disinterested and solidary contributions which they made to ensure the fulfillment of the objectives of the meeting. At the same time, I have the great pleasure of conveying to the Association of Montevideo Group Universities (AUGM), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Inter-American University Organization (IUO), the World University Service (WUS) and the Union of Latin American Universities (UDUAL), UNESCO's recognition of the financial contributions which enabled the publication of the documents of the Conference.

Luis Yarzábal

Introduction

Strategic bases of the conference

CRESALC/UNESCO

ORIGIN OF THE CONFERENCE

Pursuant to the provisions contained in its Constitution, the mission of UNESCO is *to contribute to peace and security, strengthen the collaboration of nations via education, science and culture, so as to ensure universal respect for justice, law, human rights and fundamental freedoms... with no distinction whatsoever as to race, sex, language or religion ... for all peoples in the world.* Bearing these purposes in mind, the Organization must encourage the implementation of educational activities in the Member States, aimed at offering equal education opportunities for all, while at the same time promoting the conservation, development and transfer of knowledge and contributing to preserve and disseminate cultures.

Explicit mention is made of higher education in paragraph 1, contained in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that states *"Every person has the right to edu-*

Education must be free, at least in the case of primary and secondary education. Primary education must be compulsory. Technical and professional education must be generalized. There will be equal access for all to higher education, determined only by individual merits." These general principles -as defined by the signatories- upon being adopted by the countries are a most significant legal responsibility for those nations. Hence, these provisions must be the foundation for all the efforts aimed at organizing the education systems.

On the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the new requirements set out in the *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education (1995)* and pursuant to the guidelines issued by the General Conference at its twenty-eighth session, the Director General of UNESCO has made the decision to convene a world Conference on the issue of higher education. It will be held at the headquarters of the Organization, during the fall of 1998. This conference will be preceded by five regional conferences -held during 1996 and 1997- in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States and Europe.

The conference for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Havana, Cuba, from 18-22 November. It was, thus, the first stage of a process aimed at establishing a global worldwide action plan that helps renew higher education via a new "*academic pact*". This pact is based on three key concepts: *quality, relevance and international co-operation*, and it has been agreed within the framework of the process of the globalization of knowledge.

The main purpose of this document was to present a view of the situation of higher education in the region, along with some guiding principles which -according to UNESCO- must guide the transformations required to reinforce its contribution to peace-building. It also must be emphasized that

this process should be based on a human development founded on equity, justice, freedom and solidarity.

A LOOK AT THE REGION

Some general features

Together, Latin America and the Caribbean cover approximately 20 million square kilometres. Their projected population for the year 2000 stands at approximately 519 million inhabitants. This region covers approximately 13% of the total land surface of the planet and will account for 8.3% of the estimated world population for that same year. In general terms, its average population density, by the turn of the century, will be around 26 inhabitants per square kilometre, and the population 30 years and under will comprise almost 62% of the total for the region.

The region is bordered by the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans and it is rich in a wide variety of natural resources. Its biodiversity covers most of the animal and plant species of this planet. It is made up of a total of 33 countries¹ that are located in North, Central and South America, as well as in the basin of the Caribbean Sea, where most of the English and French speaking nations are to be found. In general terms, this region has a diversity of nations, languages and cultures. However, Spanish and Portuguese are the two languages most widely spoken.

Its population -mostly of mixed race- resulted from the interaction of American, African and European ethnic groups that started their process of cultural and physical integration during colonial times. The region still has numer-

ous native ethnic groups -transcultured to a greater or lesser extent- that express themselves and interact with their surrounding environments through the most varied and rich socio-political, artistic and cultural manifestations. Hence, they make up a pluricultural and multiethnic region.

Latin America and the Caribbean are undergoing a process of economic change, from the import-substitution scheme to open markets. Back in the early 1980's, several local economies started a sustained adjustment process. At the same time, the process of economic integration has been strengthened between several sub-regions and countries. Within the framework of the individual nations, the regionalization, decentralization and local development policies have been greatly favoured.

According to statistics of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the external debt of the 19 countries making up the region rose progressively from the US\$326,753 million registered in 1982 to a total of US\$525,430 million by the end of 1994.

The last UNDP Report on Human Development (1995) contained the following information: i) in 1990, there were 110 million people living on the threshold of poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean, ii) the GINI coefficient of land distribution is higher than 0,75, which points to a very high concentration of that resource, and iii) in the case of many countries, the share in the total income of the 20% richest sector of the population is 15 times higher than that of the 20% poorest sector.

The Economic Study of Latin America and the Caribbean for the 1994-1995 period, prepared by ECLAC, reports that *"the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Latin America and the Caribbean registered a 5.4% growth in 1994. This points to an acceleration of the moderate recovery that started back in 1991. Hence,*

the per capita product increased again -by 2.6% on this occasion. Nevertheless, as the regional 1994 product was only 30% higher than that of 1980 -before the foreign debt crisis erupted- the level of the per capita product was still lower."

As set out in a document prepared by UNESCO and presented before the recent meeting of Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean (MINEDLAC VII), held in May 1996 in Kingston, Jamaica, the countries in the region devote an average of 7% of their GDP to education and training of human resources. Furthermore, 4.5% of this total is financed with public funds. On the other hand, an ECLAC-UNESCO study suggested that this amount should be increased by 50%. Only then could the region ensure that the education system will respond to the needs of society. In this respect, a mean contribution by the public sector of no less than 6.5% of the GDP should be included.

In-depth transformations have been taking place during the past few decades in the different economic and social sectors of the nations that make up the region. The education sector is no exception. Even though the relationships between the changes that have taken place and their effects on higher education have not been studied in depth, the panorama of higher education that prevailed in the first half of the Twentieth Century has dramatically changed.

Some features of Higher Education

When talking about the most important transformations experienced since the decade of the fifties, special mention can be made of the following: i) the considerable quantitative expansion of the sector, ii) its outstanding institutional diversification; iii) the broader participation of the private sector; iv) the higher degree of internationalization; v) the

change in attitude by governments, and vi) the transformation efforts undertaken by some universities.

Quantitative expansion

Between 1950 and 1994, the number of students enrolled in higher education institutions increased 27 times, reaching around 8 million in 1994. Some studies that have been carried out suggest that this was mainly the result of the wider coverage of the other levels of the educational system. In fact, the *gross enrolment rate*, for instance, went from 58 to 87 per cent in the 6-11 age group, and from 36 to 68 per cent in the 12-17 age group, between 1971 and 1992.

However, it is believed that, despite the expansion in the *enrolment rates in basic education*, the quality and relevance of education is not adequate in most of the countries in the region. This seriously affects the capacity of the students admitted to the third level. In turn, this highlights the significance of the participation of higher education in the development of the educational system as a whole.

On the other hand, in the field of higher education, this *gross enrolment rate in third level education* has only accounted for a 17.7% of the corresponding age group. It is far from the coverage reported by the developed countries. In those nations, it has been estimated that, by the next decade, 40 per cent of the jobs will require a 16 year education, while the remaining 60 per cent will demand no less than a high school degree. Besides, there is evidence of marked differences between the sub-regions -Amazonia and the Southern Cone, among them- and between the nations that make them up. These differences are mostly related to their gross schooling rates and to the number of students per each one hundred thousand inhabitants.

It must be mentioned that the composition of the student population has changed considerably. This has been the case of both the incorporation of new age groups (economically active population and third age) and the educational needs, as well as the availability of time devoted to education.

The total number of teachers in higher education increased 28 times. It went from approximately 25,000 in 1950, to more than 700,000 in 1994. This growth was not accompanied by a simultaneous increase in the capacity to train teachers in the region. In fact, the significant drop in salaries forces most professors to work only part time in several institutions. In turn, this reduces the time devoted to education and, the possibilities of doing research to a minimum.

Diversification

The number of higher education institutions rose from 75 (mostly, universities) in 1950 to approximately 6,000 in 1994. This increase was especially evident in the case of universities that grew in number, from 70 to somewhat more than 800 -approximately 60% of them in the private sector. The increase was greater in the other higher education institutions. They rose to more than 4,000 from the previous levels where there were just a few units. In this respect, the private institutions clearly prevail.

If during the early stages of the period referred to most of the institutions were universities, in the first years of the 1990's, their share dropped to 15 per cent. Nevertheless, their missions, their academic skills and their dimensions are quite different in scope. Among them, special mention can be made of the following: the major ones, those that perform research, teaching and extension activities in different fields of knowledge and offer several degree courses; the entities of a smaller dimension that do not have a significant research ca-

capacity though they offer a wide range of degree courses; the small institutions that only offer teaching programs for a limited number of disciplines; and organizations that centre their activities around one field of knowledge.

Even though they are currently a minority vis-à-vis the other higher education institutions, universities hold approximately 70 per cent of the students enrolled, of the teaching staff and of the researchers that work in the sub-system. Likewise, they are in charge of most of the scientific and technological research projects that are pursued in the region.

There has been considerable growth in the number of non-university higher education institutions (third level or post-secondary), since the 80's. They have based this growth mainly on the expansion of demand, among other factors. Diversity in this group of institutions is even more marked. It includes very varied entities, among them: technological institutes, polytechnical schools, technical-professional centres, institutions devoted to training teachers or professors of secondary education and specialized academies.

Both the proliferation and the diversification of the higher education institutions led to the creation of sub-systems with different characteristics in the different countries. However, in general terms, they are all highly complex. They are comprised of institutions that vary considerably as regards their relevance, quality and equity and they require precise and objective assessment and accreditation mechanisms.

Privatization

Several authors refer to a sustained trend that points to the "*privatization*" of higher education. In some cases, the latter is due to the self-financing practices implemented as a survival strategy of the private universities. In others, it results from the relative drop in the funds granted by the State. Hence,

institutions are compelled to look for supplementary resources. Among other strategies, they resort to charging rates and widening their relationships with the business and with the industrial sectors.

Private higher education expanded and grew more specialized. In some places, new community institutions sponsored by Churches, municipalities, co-operative associations and other organizations of civil society, emerged parallel to the traditional institutions. They thus gave shape to what some analysts call a non-state public sector institutions. Specialization in the case of the private institutions *strictu sensu* led to the consolidation of two sectors: (a) the higher education institutions aimed at attracting the demand that is not satisfied by public universities, by offering students a profession, though with minimum academic standards, that act like lucrative companies of the sector and do not take into account the medium and long-term needs of society; (b) the elite higher education institutions, created to compete with the public sector on the basis of quality, though their high cost has made them impermeable to the penetration of the middle and low sectors of the population.

On the other hand, there is evidence of an unprecedented development of private universities. During the decade of the eighties, several of these institutions were founded. Likewise, in most of the Latin American countries, courses, programmes or affiliated institutions of higher education institutions external to the region were set up. Hence, the share of the private enrolments in the total registrations went from 5.8 per cent in 1970, to approximately 30 per cent in 1994.

In many instances, the legislation does not provide for this diversity. In fact, legal mechanisms are not adapted to reality. At any rate, whatever its organizational or legal structure, it is of the utmost importance that higher education does not lose its identity and continues to be a public function.

Hence the significance of involving the Parliaments in this debate and in the search for solutions to the problems faced by the higher education institutions.

Internationalization

The phenomenon of internationalization -a typical feature of higher education and scientific research- was considerably accentuated during the past few decades. However, this process was quite disorganized in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean. There was a clear South to North orientation and it did not significantly help strengthen the education, science and technology systems of the region. On the contrary, it has *brought about* a sustained and considerable drain of high-level professionals and scientists from the region to the industrialized countries.

On the other hand, the education systems, the research centres and the economies of industrialized countries are being strengthened by a high number of Latin American professors and researchers. This leads to paradoxical situations. Higher education and research turn into export products in those countries, based on the contribution of high-level human resources whose education is paid for by the developing countries.

Some of the answers observed

Given the main trends summarized in the preceding section, the governments, higher education institutions -especially, the universities- the private sector and the civil society in general, have been producing different answers, which have brought about major transformations in the panorama of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The governments have encouraged partial reforms based on a generalized change in the perception of the role of the State and of the public and private sectors vis à vis higher education. Based on this, some countries have promoted amendments in the legislation. These have enabled: i) new modalities for co-ordinating the higher education sub-systems; ii) loose controls of the private institutions; iii) different models for assessing the systems, institutions and programmes; and, iv) substantial modifications of the mechanisms for allocating public resources.

On the other hand, countless universities have attempted to adapt to the changes in the environment. To this end, they have developed new policies, namely: i) to seek for and consolidate dialogue mechanisms with government instances; ii) strengthen the links with the public and private production sector of goods and services; iii) accept the need to establish assessment mechanisms aimed at continuously improving their activities, ensuring the availability of planning instruments and a systematic accountability to society; iv) attempts at diversifying the funding sources via service agreements with public institutions and private companies, the implementation of R&D projects under the scheme of shared risks, the creation of university enterprises and the setting up of technology parks; v) encourage research on higher education; and vi) other initiatives aimed at redirecting the orientation of international co-operation.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF UNESCO

Activities during the 1990's

The International Meeting of Reflection on the "*New Roles of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean*" -held by

CRESALC in May 1991, in Caracas, Venezuela, was a key factor in generating currents of opinion around the need to design a new identity for higher education in the region. It was also instrumental in the implementation of diverse activities and projects.

That meeting was the consolidation of a series of regional events held by UNESCO between 1989 and 1992. It contributed to the process of consultation with government agencies and non-governmental organizations that ended in 1995, when the *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education* was published. Since then, the document has been submitted for analysis to countless fora and seminars held in several countries of the region. Many of the elements that support this proposal for the Regional Conference have emerged within the framework of that important process of consultation and collective creation.

The UNITWIN Programme was also launched during this period. Its purpose is to promote worldwide inter-university integration and co-operation via a system of Professorships and Networks. Currently, they cover virtually all the fields of knowledge and have found their way in a considerable number of countries in all the regions of the world. Based on the philosophy of the programme, every chair is now designed to be a focal point of the network. To date, this programme has supported the creation, or strengthening, of several academic centres in Latin America and the Caribbean that perform teaching and research activities in different fields of knowledge.

Four (4) of the twenty five (25) Professorships created in ten (10) countries in the region that are fully operational, are sub-regional, three (3) are regional and one (1) is inter-regional. With respect to the four (4) Networks, they have mostly extended their scope to cover inter-regional activities, via co-op-

eration agreements with associations of university networks that operate in other continents -specially Europe (CRE/ COLUMBUS, Alpha Programme, ORBICOM, etc.). Among the networks supported by the UNITWIN programme, the Association of Amazonian Universities (UNAMAZ) and the Association of Universities of the Montevideo Group (AUGM) must be mentioned.

In this context, approximately 14 university co-operation agreements have been entered into with institutions of six (6) countries in the region, some of which include the participation of some higher education institutions of the African Continent. This has been executed within the framework of the Spain/Latin America Programme, basically via the Santander Group and the Universities of Deusto, Granada and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Some of these agreements provide for the participation of the African continent. The last network installed in this framework was one of the universities of the islands in the Atlantic Ocean, with the Canary Islands as its focal point. The main purposes of the latter are tourism and development -the environment included.

Likewise, the Regional Programme of the Culture of Peace was started at the end of 1995. It currently has two (2) Professorships (Venezuela and Panama), while three (3) are under study (Mexico, Nicaragua and a sub-regional one including all the higher education institutions that make up the Association of Universities of the Montevideo Group (AUGM).

The contribution of the specialized Professorships in higher education that are co-ordinated by CRESALC in the region have been specially significant for the Regional Conference. This is the case of the UNESCO Professorships of University Management, Higher Education and University & Integration. They are part of the Centre for the Improvement of Higher Education (CEPES), of the University of Havana

(Cuba); the Master's Degree in University Administration, of the Higher Education Research Centre of the University of Los Andes in Colombia and the Centre of Educational Research and Services (CISE) of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), respectively. In the field of new information and communication technologies, special mention should be made of the collaboration of the specialized centre of the University of Colima, Mexico.

The Regional Conference as a Strategy

By design, the "*Regional Conference on Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean*" is a meeting for presenting proposals aimed at action. Principles and orientations for defining and triggering change should result from it. This implies modifying or generating policies, among them: the public policy (that of the State), that of institutions (authorities, professors, researchers, administrative and service staff and students), that of the related actors (among others, civil society, NGOs, the production sector of goods and services and the competent international organizations).

Its main objectives are: i) to define the basic principles that support an in-depth transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean as we enter the XXI century which, in turn, must efficiently promote a culture of peace based on a sustainable human development founded on equity, democracy, justice and freedom, and ii) contribute to improving the relevance and quality of its teaching, research and extension functions, offering equal opportunities to all, via a permanent education that has no borders, where merit is the basic criterion for access, within the framework of a new concept of regional and international co-operation.

Framed within that context, the Regional Conference will be an instrument for: i) involving politicians, university authorities and scientists, so as to ensure the relevance of higher education; ii) ensuring the quality of higher education, so as to promote the real value of human resources and the development of endogenous capacities; iii) improving the activities of higher education and generating new funding strategies; iv) promoting knowledge and the use of the new information and communication technologies; and, v) reformulating the process of international co-operation, so as to expand the transfer and exchange of knowledge.

Based on the analysis of the working documents especially prepared on the five topics mentioned above, the participants must prepare the following during the Conference: i) a Declaration on higher education in the region as we enter the XXI century; and ii) an Action Plan that enables its proactive transformation, on the basis of co-operation and solidarity.

Given the trends, challenges and problems posed by the changes experienced in this field, the Conference will have to ponder on why should it address them? as well as how and when can it be done and who will do it? Applying this method will help shape more concrete results that can be used by those who teach, do research or perform services, as well as by those who design and apply higher education policies and development plans. The main result of the meeting will be the Action Plan that encourages the implementation of the pertinent proposals, thus leading to a solid coordinated action of the academic community, the State and the civil society.

Change, in which direction?

A first challenge emerges in the context of the first general objective -defining the basic principles for supporting a

deep transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is a challenge of finding the adequate design for a model of change as a result of the deliberations of the Conference, and the principles of this model must indicate the direction to be followed by the innovating efforts. In other words: the models of the sub-systems, institutions and programmes that should be adopted in the short, medium and long term: *the possible utopia*. The contributions received at the Conference could be a key input for the region and for the *World Conference on Higher Education*, that will be held in 1998.

From reflection to proposal

A second challenge is to go on from declarations to concrete proposals. In this respect, the regional Conference itself could be a significant contribution. It would be the "cultural" prototype for changing mentalities. Thus, it would be the foundation in coming years for addressing the discourse and the strategy of change in the academic world and in the group of actors related to Higher Education.

From proposal to action

A third and no less important challenge is that of obtaining quality answers, those that can be turned into reality. Key requisites will be the relevance of the proposals and their strategic nature as they will determine the feasibility of their application at conceptual and practical levels.

Conceptually, they are aimed at clarifying ideas and generating currents of opinion about the "essential" value of higher education. Their strategic proposals could be linked to *communication policies* that can give the right value to higher education, taking it as a "indispensable", "unsubstitutable" and

“determining” factor of development. To this end, public policies must be devised on the basis of the following criteria: i) development is not possible without education; ii) a modern State cannot do without higher education, as it would run the risk of taking the countries to greater levels of under-development; iii) the production mechanisms must be based on an endogenous scientific and technological capacity, etc.

This type of proposals points to the need to involve the politicians who are responsible and to ensure the community attaches the proper value to higher education. In that case, the argumentative value, the power of the proposal, the “real” and “tangible” usefulness of the higher education institutions and the ability to convince are key elements.

In practice, they must be aimed at producing major intra-institutional mutations linked to missions, functions, processes, services and routines. In this case, it would be necessary to encourage endogenous change processes.

As the Director General of UNESCO has said, this type of proposal is based on the need to change the concept and the structure of the University. It is, thus, related to intra-institutional changes that help to give more significance to the institutions. In this way, they will later be taken at their full value. Answers will be sought for questions like: Who changes first? Who should be the first proactive player?

From yet another perspective -supplementing the first one- and in line with the two general objectives of the Regional Conference, the proposal stage might be broken down into two currents. The first one would address the analysis and profile of the model of national development, of the function of the State, of the higher education that is required and of the models of institutions sought. The second current of proposals would revolve around the specific analysis of each of the issues assigned to the Working Commissions.

Given the general philosophy of the regional Conference, the main result of the meeting will be an Action Plan to guide the implementation of the pertinent proposals. It will also lead to a solid coordinated action between the academic community, the State and civil society.

The Action Plan: why, for whom, when, how?

The need to prepare an action plan resulting from a real consensus and support for its implementation is indeed an unprecedented challenge in the history of academic co-operation of UNESCO in Latin America and the Caribbean. Formulating the plan is, no doubt, a fourth challenge posed by this Conference. Its execution is part of an exercise that should be in our minds now, though will only take real shape once the regional Conference is over, i.e. sometime during 1997.

The plan must respond to guidelines that satisfy the requirements set out in the general and specific objectives of the regional Conference. It must direct the logic and dynamics of the actors towards major proposals. And, whenever possible, the latter must be the result of a minimum degree of consensus for their implementation. The time framework of an Action Plan, like the one required, now that we are only months away from entering the new century, demands actions that reverse long-standing processes and encourage new interventions that lead to structural changes. In view of this, activities should start as soon as possible, so that they can be implemented in the short, medium and long term.

In a first approach, they could consist, at least, of the following: a) an introductory note that relates the issue to the major needs of the countries in the region, so as to guide the development of its higher education sub-systems; b) then, five chapters could be considered, one for each group of issues; c)

it would be necessary to include elements that verify both their progress and implementation, as well as warning mechanisms in case of difficulties and delays, along with guidelines for the pertinent corrective measures; d) closing with a statement on the importance of making systematic assessments and submitting follow-up and reproducibility options of the process for building alternatives for the future. In other words, *the possibility that the Action Plan becomes an end in itself should be avoided*. It should be acknowledged that the Plan is simply a lever that will make the regional Conference an instrument of change, as stated in the introduction to its specific objectives.

Each chapter should include at least the following elements: i) introduction, meaning, importance and transcendence of the topic. This will help identify its capacity to make a difference and to generate changes; ii) identification of the main needs to be satisfied with respect to the global issue and to the sub-issues and their specific aspects; iii) presentation of a situation that can be reasonably expected to happen during the next decade(s) -this being the time framework and the necessary guiding resource-; iv) incorporation of the proposals and identification of the "concrete" strategies that will enable their implementation and the irreversible achievement of its goals; v) identification of the roles played by each of the actors (central and local government, higher education institutions, production sector, university associations, NGOs and international organizations, among others.) in promoting and implementing proposals and strategies; vi) conditions for executing each proposal, along with the pertinent requirements of resources and inputs -the budgetary requirements included; and vii) expedite mechanisms in order to follow up the proposals during their implementation phase.

In line with its underlying issue, the agenda of the Conference is structured around five specific objectives. In each case, the discussion of problems and the generation

of proposals and strategies will be at an institutional level, both local and international.

The paragraphs that follow set out a first attempt at identifying the main elements and doubts that will lead to proposals and their contents. The purpose is to promote the search for basic proposals that can guide the work of each Commission and enrich the debate and results of the regional Conference.

In the case of Topic 1, which has the specific related objective of *involving the politicians, university actors and scientists who are responsible for guaranteeing the pertinence of higher education*, the following proposals would be pertinent: i) the relation of Higher Education with the national development model, contributions for designing and improving it; ii) how could Higher Education contribute to: the consolidation of a culture of peace, the preservation of national identity, regional integration and human development?; iii) its pertinence as a result of scientific-technological research and its insertion in the process of global development, the articulation which may be required and proposals to guarantee it; iv) its relevance as a response to real needs, how can this relevance be achieved?; v) its relevance as a support for training human resources, the articulation with the sector that produces goods and services and the economic-labour system, collaboration with civil society and the locally organized communities, as well as supporting the permanent modernization of the State and political co-operation.

In the case of Topic 2, which has the specific objective of *ensuring the quality of higher education, in order to promote the right value that should be placed on human resources and the development of endogenous capacities*, the commission would have to address: i) the need to define the quality of higher education, in terms of its adaptation to a pre-determined standard, via

criteria for its integral assessment, in an attempt to reach decisions and actions that will improve it; ii) the activities for specifying and analysing in depth the factors that influence and condition quality, in order to assess them; iii) assessment and institutional accreditation as instruments for improving quality; iv) strategies for improving quality; v) the aspect of designing a permanent education that has no borders and that is based on the new information and communication technologies; and vi) the elements that ensure the quality of both professors and students.

In the case of Topic 3, aimed at the specific objective of *improving the activities of higher education and generating new funding strategies*, the following aspects should be examined: i) the contents and strategies of the development policy in higher education institutions, including alternatives and designs change, as well as proposals to encourage research on higher education; ii) the mechanisms that may be required to build the anticipation and prospective capacity, and to define and achieve the “*intelligent institution*”; iii) modern management models of public policies and of higher education institutions, as well as the strategies for implementing them; iv) the new funding policies and strategies, including an analysis of the role of the State, via a study of the alternative funding strategies in restrictive scenarios and “*intelligent*” action-reaction proposals; v) how to implement the change in the public policy, in the sub-sector of higher education, in institutions and in the mentality of the university communities?; and vi) how to maintain the principle of equity when new financing modalities are adopted?

Topic 4 has the specific objective of *promoting knowledge and the use of the new information and communication technologies*, considering the treatment of: i) the value of information and knowledge, as well as their dissemination, within the framework of globalization and internationalization; ii)

knowledge of these as a basic component of the policies of the higher education institutions; iii) the social, economic and ethical effects of the new information and communication technologies on academic milieus and national environments; iv) their value as a point of State-higher education institutions encounter and co-operation, in the field of both consulting and specialization of the public administration professionals of the countries in the region; v) the race against time, "immediate" obsolescence, financial restrictions and technological backwardness; vi) knowledge for development and the internationalization of the higher education institutions; vii) the role of libraries, information centres, electronic communication networks and the users of information.

In the case of Topic 5, the purpose of which is *to reorient the process of international co-operation to increase the transfer and exchange of knowledge*, it will be necessary to answer the following questions: i) is a common higher education policy for the region necessary, advisable and possible?; what can and should be done?; iii) what are the more convenient strategies for ensuring university integration in the region, and its contribution to the support and development of sub-regional and regional co-operation and integration schemes?; iv) what is the value of the accreditation and transformation of the graduate profiles as a factor of regional integration in the framework of the sub-regional economic blocs?; v) what should be the role of co-operation with other regions?; vi) will it be necessary, possible and advisable to have a regional academic co-operation scheme?; vii) how could it be possible to achieve an integrated action of all the international and regional governmental organizations that act in the region? what role could the NGOs play? how could the private sector be involved? what functions can the students be assigned in this process?; and, finally, viii) what is the best structure for CRESALC in its endeavour to strengthen international co-operation?

Finally, it is suggested that special emphasis be placed on the analysis of the conceptual, pedagogical and management alternatives that enable the contributions of higher education to the global education system to be expanded and deepened. Special attention should be granted in this respect to: the training of teachers and professors, the transformation of students into active actors in their own education, the promotion of educational research and the creation of State policies ruling this sector, in the context of the idea of “*education for all*”, adopted by the Jomtien Conference (Thailand, 1990).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES²

Anticipation and Perspective

Education strategies must be designed for the long term. This implies the capacity to take advantage of opportunities, anticipate demands and face future problems. This anticipation capacity demands: reliable information about the local, regional and international realities and trends; a precise diagnosis of the situation to be transformed; and prospective units specialized in anticipation, long-term reflection and the definition of strategies for the future. On the other hand, systems, institutions and their members must modify their attitudes that oppose change. Rather, they should take up the risks and implement assessment mechanisms for adjusting the change processes as may be required. In this way, the undesirable effects will not be allowed to consolidate and corrective measures will be expensive and difficult to implement.

A responsible autonomy

As in the rest of the world, higher education institutions are currently heterogeneous in Latin America and the Caribbean, with respect to their missions, objectives, organization, size and funding sources. This includes universities, technology institutes, polytechnical schools, technical-professional centres and teacher training institutes.

Universities should keep their nature as autonomous institutions, that critically generate and disseminate culture, via teaching, research and extension, thus meeting the educational needs of the contemporary world. Hence, these entities must maintain a clear political, ethical and scientific freedom. They must keep control of their budget and be free to allocate their spending to fulfil their mission, via decisions and priorities based on the principles of autonomy and freedom to teach.

Accountability

Despite this, democracy demands the creation of a system where the freedom to create, teach and learn is combined with the obligation to render accounts of the objectives that were met or not. In a real democracy, universities must be willing to be constantly judged by the different organizations of the State, society and especially its citizens. The concept of accountability is associated with the internal and external evaluation of the institution. It should study both the specific and the global effects in relation to the system of objectives, processes and results of university practice.

A permanent education with no frontiers

Higher education should become a process of anticipation that responds to the new employment profiles, professional

recycling at all age ranges and research into the new domains of science. Knowledge about the human being and his environment is now fragmented into smaller and more specialized segments. However, a more in-depth knowledge of the matter and its characteristics leads us to an inter and trans-disciplinary vision and to a unifying notion of the world, in the fields of science and the humanities alike.

When scientific method is applied in its broadest sense, we come closer to a scientific-technical humanism, where reason is in balance with the sense of aesthetics, ethics and the transcendence of men. The essence of the concept of a permanent higher education is its integrating nature, and an attitude of constant investigation and search for new knowledge. The expansion of the objectives of the higher education institutions to include a permanent education is related to the modernizing conception of education. It opens spaces for the harmonious and complementary development of the different types of institutions.

Time has shown that there is no such thing as a stage to learn and a stage to act. Learning and training are components of an existential process of the human being. Hence permanent education finds its place in the process of changes and uncertainties that characterize modern society. It demands that members of this society have knowledge and acquire techniques for living in today's world. But even more so, it demands that they train to permanently learn, relearn and unlearn, as the only solution for adapting oneself to the future.

Access based on merit

There is an urgent need to increase the representation of the less favoured groups in higher education. To this end, admission should be based on the merits of the applicants. A

quality higher education must be accessible to all those who can benefit from it. Their own skills should be the only limiting factor. This is clearly set out in Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights: "*access to higher education must be equal for all, on the basis of their corresponding merits*". Higher education systems should be prepared to accept the wide variety of individuals that define a learning society. The classical "clientele" of 18 to 23 year olds will be reinforced by groups of adults, people in the "third age", professionals who need to update their knowledge, students less than 18 years old whose talent propels them more rapidly through the formal system and countless others who want to use their free time enjoy acquiring new knowledge.

Diversification

The starting premise is that institutional diversity is recommendable, but, within the scope of the general objectives of higher education and the specific objectives internal to its mission, each institution must fulfil the basic quality requirements demanded by the implicit code of ethics of any educational process. Any attempt to avoid this basic principle will be regarded as a spiritual fraud. It will be an educational, academic and professional fraud.

This diversification must be founded on assessment and include the learning-teaching institutions, degrees, diplomas, functions, structures and processes. The latter need to experience an immediate evolution that diversifies the methods, modalities and periods of teaching. In turn, this diversification of processes must be aimed at the use of didactic technologies that favour: creativity, learning through discovery, innovation, the constant practise of the critical skills of human beings, an ethical commitment to decisions, the aesthetic and affective sense, as well as the ability to pose and solve prob-

lems. These skills have to be developed to generate and search for information, select and interpret it.

Institutional growth and development have been promoted in many parts of the world by the need to respond to a market, political commitments, the marketing of immediately useful knowledge and the effects of an education for the masses.

However, this has taken place without the harmonization induced by an integral development, thus generating marked asymmetries in both quality and relevance, between the different modalities of post-secondary institutions. Hence, the variety of post-secondary institutions cannot be self-regulated. Excellence and quality should be their spokesmen. The institutional diversification of the universities is a desirable objective to respond to the multiple demand for education and training, within the framework of a wider higher education, or post-secondary education system. Moreover, whatever the form they adopt, it is essential that higher education institutions offer a public service.

Curricula flexibility

The curricula designs that exist in most of the higher education institutions of the region are shaped around subjects or courses grouped together in pyramidal or tubular structures. The latter are somewhat more rigid. At the university level, once a student is admitted, he/she is assigned a special field or degree course. There, he/she will spend several years, cut off from the knowledge of other sciences and humanities, until he/she finally joins the labour force. These designs indeed lack flexibility. They are incompatible with interdisciplinary exchanges. Though they are systematized insofar as the acquisition of specific knowledge is concerned, they "train"

on the basis of a high degree of segmentation. Thus leads to isolated languages in the same sciences or humanities, thus resulting in a complete lack of communication between them. This is one of the most important causes of the "professional individualism" vis-a-vis the interdependent reality of the world, as well as the interdisciplinary interaction required by research and the new labour market.

Added to this is a lack of communication between the members of the university community; the withdrawal of teachers and professors into small groups or departments; the increasing costs of teaching and research brought about by the tubular system, as efforts and resources are doubled; the harm inflicted on the students wishing to explore other areas, disciplines or special fields, without the need to start all over again.

As this tubular system shifts to a pyramidal structure, the curricula becomes rather more flexible. The more horizontal and less vertical it is -though keeping both orientations- the more flexibility will increase. There should be total horizontality in the basic levels. Verticality gradually starts to appear, though never to the point of reaching a single vertex. This strategy adapted to the objectives of each basic and applied area of knowledge enables multiple forms of the curricular structure to be co-ordinated. It also makes room for transfers between degree courses and specialities, between institutions, universities and other organs of society. It offers "intermediate outlets and staircases" to other types of studies. Students can join the labour market and then opt to go back to the academic world.

Culture of Peace

Finally, it must be stated that higher education is not simply an educational level. In this most peculiar period in his-

tory -characterized by the presence of a culture of war- it should be the prime moving force of the moral and intellectual solidarity for mankind. It should encourage a culture of peace built on the foundations of a sustainable human development, inspired by justice, equity, freedom, democracy and full respect for human rights.

FINAL COMMENTS

All the information, interpretations and suggestions above are purely for reference with the object of contributing to the approach of the proposals that will be submitted to the regional Conference. In this perspective, the exercise is self-limited in scope. It should only be regarded as an additional step in the search for answers and as an element that will promote transformations for the development of higher education.

UNESCO is thus strengthening the mobilization process aimed at transforming higher education systems, with the object of: expanding the possibilities of access to its programmes and institutions; increasing its quality and relevance; improving the management capacity of all its components; reinforcing the links with society, especially the labour sector; and increasing its contributions to renewing all the levels of the educational system.

The approach adopted is based on well organized and mature relationships set up with all the social actors related to higher education. This would include, in the first place, the democratically organized State which is expected to give a clear definition of the global legal and financial framework -based on consensus- where higher education institutions will operate. In this respect, it is very important to stress the legislative

function, especially in relation to the regulation of non-university institutions and the participation of the private sector in the system.

UNESCO believes that higher education institutions must predominantly contribute to an equitable development and progress of societies. This is not compatible at all with a system of elites and entails substantial modifications in society as a whole. These can be achieved by eradicating -or, at least, decreasing- poverty, misery and hunger, the shocking social differences and the concentration of both wealth and knowledge.

The new modality of international co-operation should point in that direction. This modality is founded on a real association, a horizontal relationship, mutual confidence and solidarity, these being unavoidable conditions for improving the quality that is related to relevance. A renewed international co-operation must imply a fast transfer of knowledge and technologies. It must also offer incentives for maintaining students, teaching staff and researchers in their local centres, thus reducing the stimulus for the emigration of talents to countries outside the region.

Notas

- ¹ Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Barbados, Belice, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherland Antilles. Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.

— *Opening Speeches*



— *In search for a commitment
for action*

Luis Yarzábal

Director of CRESALC and of the UNESCO Office in Caracas

Several feelings are combined now in this significant occasion for the history of higher education in our region. I would like to share with you now two of them. In the first place, the happiness and honour of meeting here in order to take up a most extraordinary task. We are here to set the bases, to foster and to materialize the transformations of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Indeed a significant task that we are starting today.

In the second place -though equally significant- the profound acknowledgement and respect for the great effort made by all the participants present in this auditorium. It has been the effort of experts who have contributed with almost one hundred papers. It has been the effort of professionals who have presented us with their free papers. It has also been the effort of directors and organizers of the Regional Conference. Latin America and the Caribbean have taken up their commitment as a region and are ready to fulfil it conscientiously. Thus,

they will enable our peoples to face the challenges of the XXI century under more favourable situations than the ones prevailing today.

The General Conference of our Organization opportunely decided that this Conference was to be held this year in this city that has been declared by UNESCO a heritage of mankind. We are thus fulfilling a most significant governmental resolution. We are very honoured indeed to acknowledge that strategic determination of the representatives of the peoples of 184 Member States.

In this way, UNESCO -acting as an inter-governmental organization- opens again its doors to a wide diversity of players. For the first time in the history of our region and probably the last during this century, it offers the possibility of assembling knowledge, experiences, desires and wills. All of them combine to proactively take up the transformation of higher education and, even more so, that of its environment. In this endeavour, what is opportune converges with what is a priority. Likewise, what is contextual takes precedence over what is individual or institutional.

When we are about to enter a new millennium, we are confronting old and new intellectual challenges. At a more existential and human level, the challenges are also highly complex and quite different in nature. We cannot attempt rhetoric stances. The solution of imposing rules will not suffice. We must generate proposals that lead promptly to action. Hence, we must face the challenge of combining knowledge, decision and the will to run risks in order to give an adequate response in the multiple fields where we have a contribution to make, though it might seem small. The peoples that have made our training possible expect our contributions here and now.

The political nature of our work should be the guiding light of our deliberations. Strategic creation should be the guide

in the actions that are taken. We need to go from design to construction, from thought to action. And we must act promptly. The world reality we are a part of urges us to do so, and to do it relevantly.

We have to avoid any possibility of creating a scenario where rhetoric rules the debate. This would limit the possibilities of generating proposals and identifying policies and strategies that should start shaping the *Action Plan* and the *Declaration* that we are willing to draft.

In retrospect, I would like to evoke another scenario where the participants of this meeting will generate the necessary proposals for attaining a possible reality. In turn, this retrospective exercise is founded on the acknowledgement of the quality of the authors, the significance of the problems that have been identified and the magnitude of the challenges that we have to face.

Barely 12 months have elapsed since the 28th General Conference of UNESCO adopted a resolution for starting up the process that led to the meeting we are opening today. This has been indeed a short period for that task to be fulfilled. However, once again we can prove the great interest of our players and institutions in finding solutions to our problems.

This intellectual agreement and the major process that creates awareness and procures contributions have made this possible. They fully guarantee that the transformation and development of higher education in our region are irreversible processes.

Several consultations -13 national meetings, 11 sub-regional meetings and countless creative sessions- have contributed to the preparatory process of this Regional Conference. This is a most special meeting. The ideas set forth are original, the organization is innovating and its deliberations are participative.

I would like to most specially highlight the creative nature of this meeting. The process for identifying postulates and priorities is already underway and it is based on the creativity of you all. You are called, all of us are called to jointly and collectively build the desirable future. We are not near the end. We are barely starting our journey in a saga that must continue, expand and be reproduced, during the years to come.

For the information of this distinguished audience, we have distributed the documents entitled "*General Introduction*" and "*Ideas, problems and proposals*". The first of them presents the vision of CRESALC, expressed in figures, guidelines and principles. The second one reflects a careful and innovating summary prepared specifically for this meeting by a distinguished group of Latin American researchers. Both of them contain elements that will be the foundation for our work, together with the papers of the members of the working commissions and the main documents.

As you will read the "*General Introduction*", I will not indulge in unnecessary repetitions and I will take this opportunity to highlight the following elements:

- *The general objectives of this meeting are:*
 - i) To define the basic principles that will be the foundation of the in-depth transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, as we enter the XXI century. Hence, it will turn into an efficient promoter of a culture of peace, on the basis of a sustainable human development, founded on equity, democracy, justice and freedom.
 - ii) Contribute to increasing the relevance and quality of teaching, research and extension, offering equal opportunities to all people alike via a permanent education

that has no borders and where merit is the basic criterion for access, within the framework of a new concept of regional and international co-operation.

- *The conference will be an instrument for:*
 - i) mobilizing the political, university and scientific players who are responsible, in order to ensure the relevance of higher education;
 - ii) ensuring the quality of higher education in order to foster the development of human resources and of endogenous capacities;
 - iii) improving the management of higher education and generating new financing strategies;
 - iv) promoting knowledge and the use of new information and communication technologies; and
 - v) reformulating the process of international co-operation, in order to increase the transfer and exchange of knowledge.
- The Conference will pose the following questions: what to do? and how to do it? This modality will help design more concrete results that can be equally used by those who perform teaching, research and service activities, as well as by those who design and implement policies and development plans in higher education.
- The main result of the meeting will be the *Action Plan*. It will facilitate the application of the pertinent proposals and lead to a solid coordinated action between the academic community, the State and society.

As we are unable to address all the problems at the same time, we have only identified five major fields of work that will be analysed by the five working Commissions respectively.

These Commissions will be made up of speakers and panel members who will follow the Working Agenda of each Commission. The sessions of the Commissions will start this afternoon and their deliberations will have to end by Wednesday November 20, at 6:00 p.m., so that we can start drafting the final documents of the Conference.

The Agenda has been designed in a manner that favours a wide participation, debates, in-depth analysis and due consideration of the papers and proposals that may be submitted. We have specially set aside the time required for collective creation, as the topics that will be addressed are highly significant, complex and of a great magnitude.

We have a wide range of working documents. In each Commission, you will find at your disposal the documents of renowned panel members and speakers, as well as the main documents prepared by excellent research and study centres of our region.

I wish to attach special significance to the free papers. They undoubtedly reflect the intellectual initiative of the region, as well as the proposal capacity of the authors. These free papers will be available in the Palacio de Convenciones, in spaces that have been specially set up for that purpose. These papers can be read by the participants and quoted during their interventions in the analysis sessions. Let us derive from them both knowledge and the proposals they set forth.

Our document, the "*General Introduction*", also contains some elements and questions contained in paragraphs 60 through 66 that will help identify proposals.

Paragraphs 67 through 81 of this same document identify and present certain guiding principles. We believe that they should rule the transformations expected for the Higher Education University Institutions.

In UNESCO, we acknowledge that we must propose regional policies that go beyond case studies and isolated recommendations. That is indeed a clear need. We are convinced that it is both necessary and possible to design regional policies and strategies. However, this should not mean that we set forth proposals that do not take into account the national realities and the specific scopes of action of the institutions themselves.

The time has come to visualize the transformations of higher education at a regional level and in the perspective of the coming decades. This effort is aimed at having an effect on the trends that emerge from structural problems. Hence, it has to be undertaken as soon as possible. Only then will its results be turned into concrete actions, something we should achieve as soon as possible.

We live in a region that is marked by contradictions, hopes and resources. Even though our peoples daily fight for their living and for improving their lives, poverty is perpetuated in cities and rural areas, in contrast with the wealth that is present and generated in the countries in this area. This distressing reality has led us to think that our region could very well be the most inequitable of the planet. Public policies still underestimate the task of harmonizing growth and a sustainable human development. In turn, this demands the intellectual contribution of our study centres.

The time for creating and implementing formulas aimed at ensuring joint economic and social progress is running very short. We cannot delay any longer the practices that will satisfy the needs of the present generation and, possibly, of the next. In objective terms, we cannot lose any more time and should rather take up immediately the strategic task of transforming higher education and thus having an effect on the transformations of its surrounding environment. The inhabit-

ants of our countries require that knowledge be promptly applied to the search for a substantive improvement of their quality of life.

The governance of institutions, their modern management, their ideal financing policies and their national and international co-operation policies are regional issues that affect us all. Among many others, the latter clearly reveal the complexity of the problems that we are facing and the urgent need for solutions we must produce in varied and dissimilar areas and under the approach of the coordinated action of many players.

We have to work together and we have to do so at the same time. We have to give due significance to the institution/country/region interfaces, on the one hand, and to the circumstance/long term interface, on the other. There lies one of our greatest challenges. I am sure that we will be able to perform the task provided we do so jointly.

I would not like to close these words without expressing to you my deepest personal and institutional gratitude for your contributions and determined response. They have made this most significant Regional Conference possible.

The authorities and the staff of UNESCO would like to let you all know that we sincerely thank you and are obliged to you for your collaboration. Qualified representatives from different institutions are present here today. There is no doubt that they will generate the most varied and valuable contributions. Based on them, we will draft the *Declaration* and the *Action Plan* that we all require.

On behalf of UNESCO and on my own behalf, I would like to most specially express my gratitude to the people and to the government of Cuba. Acting on this occasion as the host country, they have offered all their best efforts to ensure the success of the historical meeting we are opening today.

Let us all -jointly and co-operatively- take up the noble exercise of finding the road that will be followed by Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean in these difficult and turbulent times, that nonetheless offer considerable opportunities. Let us do so from the global perspective of our region.

*Utopian realism
in the reform of higher
education*

*Marco Antonio R. Dias
Director of the Division of Higher Education of UNESCO*

INTRODUCTION

I would like to extend my warmest greetings to the representatives of the Government and the academic community of Cuba. Indeed, in this most difficult period, they have made the decision to overcome all the obstacles and to support this conference that is now being held in Havana.

I would also like to extend my greetings to the countless participants present here today. They have all accepted the invitation of UNESCO to attend. Upon launching a movement that has an international scope, this organization is attempting to turn into reality the utopia of constructing higher education systems where the institutions are characterized by their quality, relevance and equity, by not promoting discrimination and by defining access policies based exclusively on merit.

The Director General of UNESCO will be with you during the closing session of this conference. By the way, I would

like to take this opportunity to convey to you the best wishes of Georges Haddad, Chairman of the International Consultative Group on Higher Education of UNESCO and Colin Power, Deputy Director General of Education of UNESCO. Due to circumstances beyond their control, both of them have been unable to travel to Cuba.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE

Acting in my capacity as Director of the Division of Higher Education of UNESCO, in Paris, and being a native of this region (Latin America and the Caribbean), it is indeed a great honour for me to be with you in the opening session of this first Regional Conference. This is a preparatory meeting that will lead to the World Conference of Higher Education, to be held in 1998, which has been convened by the Director General of UNESCO with the objective of:

- i) defining the main principles that will be the foundation for an in-depth transformation of higher education. This transformation will, in turn, enable higher education to become an efficient promoting agent of a culture of peace, based on a sustainable human development founded on equity, democracy, justice and freedom.
- ii) contributing to improve the relevance and quality of its teaching and research functions, offering equal opportunities to all individuals alike, via a permanent education that has no limits, where merit is the basic criterion for ensuring access to the system; and
- iii) further strengthening inter-university co-operation, involving all the players of higher education.

The International Consulting Group on Higher Education of UNESCO -presided by Georges Haddad, Honorary President of the University of Paris I-Sorbonne- was asked to define the organization and development of the World Conference of Higher Education on the basis of these objectives. This group is made up, among others, of several representatives of the region. Among them, mention can be made of Carlos Tünnermann Bernheim (Nicaragua), Jorge Brovetto (Uruguay), Eunice Durnham (Brazil), José Sarukhán (Mexico) and Alfonso Borrero Cabal (Colombia).

As mentioned by Luis Yarzabal, the Conference that is starting today will be the first of a series of regional meetings. The one scheduled for Africa will take place in Dakar (Senegal) at the end of March, 1997. The one for the Arab countries will be held in Beirut (Lebanon) during April, 1997. Finally, Tokyo will be hosting the Asia Pacific meeting in July, 1997. The latter will have the participation of the University of the United Nations. Insofar as Europe is concerned, the activities corresponding to this region will be held jointly with the meetings of the Association of European Universities (CRE). The first of them has been scheduled for Palermo (Italy), during September, 1977. Later, a meeting will be held in Bucharest (Romania) in April, 1998.

Plans have also been made for holding sub-regional meetings. To mention just a few, one will take place in Thessalonica (Greece) in 1977 and it will be specifically for the countries of the Mediterranean basin. Negotiations are underway in Canada and United States for holding a Conference for the Americas. It will have the participation of the Inter American University Organization (OUI) and the International Association of Presidents of Universities (AIUP). It will take place in Canada, at the beginning of 1998. Undoubtedly, it will have the participation of UDUAL, as well as the Universities and Colleges of Canada. In March 1997, a conference will

be jointly held in Paris with an NGO - International Education. It is also worth mentioning that a Youth Forum has been set up with the associations and groups of students

On the other hand, the NGOs are working within the framework of their own assemblies and general conferences, via studies, conferences and round tables. Likewise, discussions have been provided for with international organizations, as is the case of the World Bank, the WHO, the IDB, the OECD, etc. For its part, the University of the United Nations has organized a seminar on the future of the University, which will be held next week in Santiago de Chile. As mentioned before, the UNU will also co-organize the regional conference for the Asia Pacific region.

MAY 1968: THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

This is an action that is aimed at the future. This is the reason that accounts for and justifies the mobilization that has taken place in Latin America, and the one that is taking place throughout the world.

However, as stated by Octavio Paz, we are clear that "the search for the future ends inevitably with the reconquest of the past".

And the past is indeed rich in this field! There is no need to go very far back.

Very few would not be willing to acknowledge now that society underwent many changes as a result of the events of 1968. In France, as well as elsewhere in the world, a bottled-up society experienced a real blossoming. Speech was set free. This brought about changes even in the modalities of expression of the mass media. The male chauvinism underlying social struc-

tures -including the family and the companies- felt the impact. It produced more freedom in the manifestations of sexuality. However, many of the utopias of the students did not become a reality. The movement was absorbed by traditional political and unionist organizations. The political system was not renewed. The reform was unable to transform the University into an efficient instrument for creating a more equitable and fair society.

In May 1968, I was a third-semester student at the University of Paris. I still remember -as if it were today- one morning when I saw how the shop windows and the cars were destroyed before my very eyes. Those objects were perceived as symbols of a society that was rejected by students. Then, I told my wife: "This is like the Commune of Paris in 1848. What we live today will be a subject to be studied by future generations".

In 1978, when I was vice-rector of the University of Brasilia, I was invited to the headquarters of UNESCO. I was asked to represent the region in a symposium on higher education. A group of Brazilian students that was in Paris at that time knew that I had lived the experience of May 1968. They invited me to explain to them what the movement had really been about. For them, ten years later, it was simply like the world wars in the song of the Frenchman George Brassens. It was an event as remote as the "War of the Hundred Years". It was part of history, part of the past.

In 1988, twenty years after May 1968, there was a revival of these events in both the written press and television. Radio France International discovered that the Director of the Division of Higher Education of UNESCO had been a foreign student in Paris at that time. Consequently, I was one of those who were interviewed during the special programmes commemorating those events. As is usually the case, many interesting things were said. Likewise, many of those present

showed they had not understood a movement that was difficult to understand, simply because it had been spontaneous, it had not been planned and, in a certain way, it had been anarchical. During those same days, during a debate that took place in the University of Nanterre, the former leaders of the Movement of May 1968 had to listen to the irreverent and critical statements of the youngsters of the 1980's. For instance, a student seemed to be tired of listening about remembrances. So, after telling these old leaders that they were living on nostalgia, she simply asked: can we speak about the future?

The young student of Nanterre was right: we have to speak about the future! However, once again I would like to clearly state that we cannot forget the past. In fact, the Movement of May 1968 had a very profound effect on the people of my generation. I still remember quite frequently the events of those days, as though they had taken place yesterday.

The first confrontation between the police forces and the 25 thousand students who were parading along the avenues and streets of Paris took place on May 6th, 1968. More than four hundred students were imprisoned as a result of the clashes. Likewise, more than six hundred -students and policemen- were wounded. While the confrontations were taking place, the French Minister of Education proved that he was totally unaware of what was really happening. He declared on radio and television that the movement had no significance whatsoever and that the parents should tell their children to behave and devote their time to studying.

As I mentioned during the programme aired by Radio France International, one of the things I really remember regarding the events of 1968, was the generalized inability of the political leaders and opinion makers to understand reality and anticipate the measures that would be required in order to face the crisis. Pierre Vianxon Ponté -the most famous columnist

of France at that time- published an article in the first page of the newspaper *Le Monde* on March 15, 1968. The article was entitled “la France s’ennuie” (France is bored) and there he showed that, from the social and political points of view, apathy was generalized in that country and that nothing important would happen.

When the conflict finally erupted, Edgar Pisani -a Gaullist leftist congressman- addressed the French National Assembly, on May 8th, 1968, in the following terms: “Nobody asks themselves if those really responsible are the professors, the parents and the politicians, because they had proved themselves incapable of conveying to young people a satisfactory image of our society. Sometimes, I must remain silent before my son and his friends, or else, I must lie because I do not always find an answer to the questions they ask me”.

UNESCO -indeed a privileged observatory of matters related to education- did not see or feel the storm that was in store. It reacted later, in 1971, when the General Conference of the Organization made the decision to create an International Commission for the Development of Education. It was presided over by Edgar Faure, a former Minister of Education of France. The commission reached the conclusion that the educational systems of the whole world were blocked and that pressing measures had to be taken. They saw a need for a real revolution of the spirit, in order to set forth what was known as the “culture of learning to be”. The analysis of this document shows that, even though it was drafted twenty five years ago, it is still up to date. Its message is still relevant. Currently, we have the Delors Report. And, in the field of education, we have the “*Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education*”, so that UNESCO can attempt to exercise its function of anticipation and vision.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND MERIT

I would like to take this opportunity to state that it was precisely in Latin America where the Director General of UNESCO -Federico Mayor- stated that the time had come to start reflecting in-depth on the functions and missions of the higher education institutions vis-à-vis society. This took place in the Palace of Itamaray, in Brazil- in July 1988, during a special meeting of the Board of the University of the United Nations. Federico Mayor mentioned that, to this end, the starting point should be the original idea that has ruled the creation of these institutions. Their evolution in time and space should be analysed. This should include the role they have to play within the framework of a society which is undergoing a period of ultra-fast changes.

The final step in the action that was generated as a result was the *"Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education"* that was published. Now, we have this summons to the world conference on higher education.

It is quite clear that the situation we face today is not the same as the one that prevailed in the decade of the sixties, Nevertheless, we have not been able to turn most of our utopias into reality. In the 1960's students stated: "Nous refusons un monde ou la certitude de ne pas mourir de faim s'échange contre le risque de périr d'ennui".

Nowadays, it is quite common to listen to youngsters who are raising their protests against the fact that, in many places, they are not even granted the right to "périr d'ennui". That alternative has ceased to exist. They feel that the doors of society are closed before their very faces. Access to higher education is further complicated. A degree is no longer a guarantee for finding a job. Unemployment growth increases at an accelerated pace and is at critical levels throughout the world.

There are countries -in both the Eastern and the Western hemisphere- that are considered to be real models of civilization. However, in this world of increasingly globalized information, they daily witness examples of moral delinquency. They have enabled corruption to pervade both private and public spheres. They have acted most irresponsibly -as was the clear case of the affair of the crazy cows, where financial considerations prevailed over the respect for both the health and the life of several million people.

Our generation cannot feel proud of the society that we are bequeathing our children. I am sure that Carlos Túrnemann will present a panoramic and detailed outlook of the social and educational situation of Latin America. Hence, I would simply like to state that some progress has been made. One example in this respect would be the eradication of military dictatorships during the decade of the seventies. However, it has not been possible for us to solve the problem of a debt that we are not able to pay. Thus, the inequalities observed in the region have only increased. In most of our countries, the differences between those who have and those who have nothing are rated among the highest in the world. Even in the field of higher education we cannot state that education for the masses has meant a real democratization in access to education. We are now seeing attempts at elitist changes that add to our countless problems the risk that systems are created at a double-paced speed with efficient institutions for the rich and mediocre institutions for the poor. In many cases, this would amount to a new modality of social apartheid, where those who have nothing would be simply thrown out of the system.

In fact, this is precisely against the provisions contained in the *Declaration of Human Rights*. In its article 26, paragraph 10, the latter states that: "every person has the right to education" and that "the access to higher education will be the same for all on the basis of the merit of each person". There is a simi-

lar provision in the *Convention against discrimination in education* (1960). Its article IV states that the signatory States will take up the commitment to... "make higher education accessible to all, under full conditions of equality and on the basis of the capacity of each individual". In turn, Article 13 of the *International Pact related to economic, social and cultural rights* (See "Pactes Internationaux relatifs aux Droits de l'homme et Protocole facultatif - pages 9 and 10 - New York, United Nations, Bureau of Public Information), states that "higher education must be accessible to all under conditions of equality, on the basis of the skills of each individual, via all the pertinent methods, and, most specifically, setting up a system of free education".

FOR A NEW SOCIETY

The principle of merit is a basic one when attempts are made at attaining equity and, through it, a fairer society. The experience of reflection and action of UNESCO in the field of higher education has shown that rather than asking what type of universities one wants, there is a need to determine the type of society that one wants to build.

After the series of summits that started with the Earth Summit held in Rio in 1992, the United Nations launched a movement that was disseminated via a series of documents. Among them, the "*Agenda for Peace*" and the "*Agenda for Development*" are worth special mention. In the case of the latter document, actions were provided for eradicating -or, at least-decreasing poverty, maintaining peace, protecting the environment and training human resources. In this respect, higher education institutions play a most significant role. Hence, United Nations offers its contributions to a new order that is not an instrument for domination.

When dealing with this issue, UNESCO reflects the comments that have been received from the academic community of the whole world. Hence, it states that the search for a fairer model of society should be the priority that guides both the higher education systems and the remaining levels of education. The University must serve society. Furthermore, in view of the current conditions of the world, it must help promote the development of a more friendly and supportive society.

This is a basic principle. During the reflection that led to the publication of the *"Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education"*, it was clear throughout the world that "the answers of higher education in a world undergoing transformations should be guided by three criteria that determine its hierarchy as well as its local, national and international activities: relevance, quality and internationalization". These three issues are part of the agenda that you will be discussing. The reflection does not start from scratch. It is a process that has been underway for many years now. All the other regional conferences will also analyse these issues. Hence, via joint actions, we will have an opportunity to develop a reflection for identifying common problems. In this way, we will be able to prepare and approve -first, at a regional level, and then, internationally- a declaration on the mission of the University in this turn of the century. Likewise, we will prepare and approve an action plan that groups together all the players that interact within the framework of the higher education institutions: the families and the academic communities. The latter comprise the administrators, professors, students, political parties that are responsible for this field, university associations and the representatives of the labour world.

THE LATIN AMERICAN INITIATIVES

It is not by chance that the Latin American and Caribbean conference is the first one. When preparatory conferences were planned, due consideration was given to the fact that a considerably strong mobilization had already been started. It was centred around Luis Yarzabal -Director of CRESALC- and Carlos Tünnermann -President of Advisory Group of CRESALC and Special Advisor of the Director General. This was confirmed last year, in November 1995, when the General Conference granted its approval for holding this conference in Cuba. At that point in time, approximately four thousand people were directly involved in its preparation phase. They participated in debates, symposia, national or regional conferences and started to prepare studies and documents.

Latin America can set the example. Once again looking back to the past, we see that it is not the first time in the history of universities that this happens. In the year 1968, frequent references were made to the 1918 Cordoba Reform. Via that movement, Latin Americans have made their contribution to world university thought. Indeed, that reform created and established a system by means of which the University has to be related to the society and culture in which it operates in order to convey and generate knowledge. For Darcy Ribeiro, the Cordoba Reform is "the main force of renewal of our universities". For Carlos Tünnermann, the so-called "Movement of Cordoba" was the first important confrontation between a society that started to experience changes in its internal composition and the Continent as a whole. Its ideas were disseminated throughout the world. Even though it responded to the needs of a society which was quite different to the present one, it established principles that are still in effect nowadays. This is the case, for example, of the principles of: university autonomy, democratization of the admission criteria for enter-

ing universities, the need to be related to the national education system, the development of the social function of the university, Latin American unity, the struggle against dictatorships and imperialism.

Carlos Tünnermann B. quotes German Arciniegas, who stated that after 1918, the University "was not what it should be, though it was no longer what it had been". Cordoba was the starting point of a process that you are further implementing today, granting it continuity. However, you are now facing different problems and their solutions have to be different. However, there is a need to always bear in mind the idea that the University -as well as the remaining institutions of higher education- must exhibit quality. Furthermore, quality only exists when there is relevance, i.e. when it is linked to the problems of the Latin American society. This will only be possible if these institutions collaborate among themselves in trying to search for common objectives, doing so with autonomy, though willing to accept their accountability to society.

A NECESSARY CONSENSUS

We start today a faster pace towards the world process of reform of the higher education institutions. To this end, in the case of Latin America, all the players involved in the field of higher education have been invited to participate: government representatives, members of the academic community and of the NGO's, representatives of international organizations and of the labour world. The response to this invitation was indeed impressive. This is proved by the fact that thousands participated in the preparatory work and in the high number of participants that are attending this meeting. The fact that representatives from so many organizations are present here is another clear indication. However, there is much

to be done. In the first place, we must prove that in the Latin America of the 1990's, there is a real dialogue capacity and that consensus can be reached on issues that are sensitive in some cases. In the second place, we cannot think that the process will simply end here. At an international level, the results of this conference will be submitted to the consideration of the world conference. However, at a regional level, we have to continue in our path of progress. Resolutions have to be implemented. In so doing, we have to more actively involve students, representatives of civil society, other international organizations. We must also involve far more actively the countries that make up the French and English speaking Caribbean, that share similar problems to those of Latin America.

CONCLUSIONS

In the recent past, everybody considered that higher education was a key element for development. Nowadays, there are many players -and I also refer to individuals who belong to international organizations that work in the field of education- that act as though this were not real. They behave as though the developing countries could achieve their real independence without an efficient and quality system for third level education and research. These positions confirm the re-emergence of what the French economist François Perroux defined as "economism", the search for cost/benefit at any price, the identification of the market as the exclusive and determining factor in people's lives, which implies a mechanical perception of history, according to which all the societies must follow the same paths and processes in order to attain the "soi-disant" well-being of the rich and developed countries. It is an ethnocentric vision, according to which the economy explains and solves everything.

We have to denounce this as something indeed detrimental to the developing countries, most specifically those of Latin America and the Caribbean. Ana María Cetto, from the National Autonomous University of Mexico was quite right in this respect. In her opinion, in our region, "we pertain to the large periphery of the present world system, in the economic sense, in the political sense, and of course in science as well". This has to change. As she mentions, we have "to be ready to make the transition from dependence to interdependence and to select our own modalities of evolution within this context".

Finally, I would say that it is absolutely necessary to consolidate an international co-operation where solidarity is the main foundation. Hence, as mentioned in a seminar held in Cochabamba in June this year, we can work together for the human development of the region and for a better higher education in a society that is more free, democratic and equitable. *It is an utopia. But, who knows? Without utopias progress cannot be accelerated.*

— *Inaugural conferences*

— *Higher education in Cuba:
History, present situation
and perspectives*

Fernando Vecino Alegret
Minister of Higher Education, Republic of Cuba

Upon starting my presentation, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my warmest welcome to our country to all the participants of the Regional Conference on Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, which I am proud to inaugurate.

It is indeed a great honour for me to offer you a panorama of the historical development of higher education in Cuba. Likewise, I will refer to academic, scientific and extension activities of the universities at different points during their development, as well as to the role they have played in the political, economic and social life of the country. Considering time limitations, I will also attempt to give you a brief report on the main facets of the work and activities that have been undertaken by our higher education institutions during the past few decades. I will also comment on the projections, present and

future aspirations, as well as on the challenges that we are aware we will have to face during the next century.

During the XXI Century, we will commemorate the three hundred years of the foundation of the University of Havana. In 1728, this institution wrote the first page in the history of higher education in Cuba. It was first known by the name of the Royal and Pontifical University of San Jerónimo of Havana. At that time, the island was under the rule of colonial Spain. Students were trained according to the principles and methods of the Thomist scholastic current.

By the end of the XVIII Century, complaints demanding the modernization of higher studies in Cuba started to be aired. A typical example in this respect was Father José Agustín Caballero. During the first decades of the XIX Century, the voices heard were those of Father Félix Varela -considered in the history of our country as the "first one who taught us to think"- and the teacher José de la Luz y Caballero -qualified by José Martí himself as the "silent founder". Their voices were raised to pass judgement on education in Cuba. They included in their criticisms the education offered in the university. They were clear that it gave no answers, nor could it help make the transformations that the island needed so badly. As could be expected, both the country and the University turned a deaf ear to those complaints and petitions.

It was precisely during that same century that national Cuban sentiment and Cuban nationality per se were born. The university classrooms of Havana were considered by some colonial governors to be real "nests of vipers", on account of their liberating currents. In them, were trained men of the stature of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, who started in 1868 the Ten Years War and who is acknowledged in history as the Father of the Homeland. Another illustrious student was Ignacio Agramonte, a real example of courage and commitment and dedication to the freedom of Cuba, who was Major General

after that war. In 1871, eight medical students of the University of Havana were executed and that has been taken since then as a symbol by the Cuban students.

As you all know, our republic was created in 1902, burdened by the Platt Amendment that encroached upon the real independence and sovereignty of the country. Back in 1900, the famous Cuban intellectual Enrique José Varona stated that the University had shut itself away in an extremely closed circle from the demands of modern life and it was necessary to change this and harmonize it with the requirements of the Nation. However, the submissive stance with respect to our powerful Northern neighbour that was shown by our different rulers in power left an imprint on our nation and on its education system. This was also the case of the corruption and social injustice that prevailed in the country throughout the neo-colonial republic. This notwithstanding, it is worth mentioning that the Córdoba Reform had an important impact on the Cuban university milieu. During the decade of the twenties, Julio Acosta Mella -prime moving force of the First National Congress of Students and founder of the University Student Federation, which has been since those years one of our dearest and most glorious organizations- gave new characteristics to the claims for change promoted by both students and professors. In fact, he reached the conclusion that no university revolution would be possible in our country if it was not preceded by a social revolution.

As stated in the Preamble to the 1962 Reform of Higher Education in Cuba, which I will refer to later, there was an increasingly clearer and more precise definition of the two sectors involved. On the one hand were those who understood that it could be possible to have a different University without profound socio-economic transformations. On the other hand were those who believed that these transformations were in-

dispensable in order to really have a University that could serve the basic interests of the Nation.

Mella -a symbol of the ideal of relating the University to the workers and the people- was brutally murdered when he was in Mexico by henchmen sent by Machado, the tyrant. His death further promoted the struggle of the university students and professors -along with the workers and the progressive intelligentsia- against the dictatorship of Machado. They also fought against the interference of the United States in our domestic affairs. Around the second half of the decade of the forties, another student leader -Fidel Castro, who was then a Law student in the University of Havana- headed several courageous battles against the unsustainable situation of social injustice that prevailed in the country and against university corruption.

It would really take too long to give a chronological and detailed list of historical events that would end with the victory of the revolution in 1959. Suffice it to state that the leading role played by the best Cuban university students and professors in the struggle for a more equitable society did not end then. Besides, they were also fighting for a University that was really worthy of being considered a social institution that could train professionals who were committed to offering their skills and intelligence to the service of the interests of the nation. It was to be an institution that would be in charge of maintaining and fully developing culture, progress and social well-being.

The university life of the country was further expanded when the University of Orient and the Central University of Las Villas were created in 1947 and 1952 respectively. As had also been the case in the University of Havana, these two new state universities turned in the decade of the fifties into intense sources of rebelliousness, though on this occasion their

attacks were addressed against the tyranny of Batista. Thus, the name of José Antonio Echeverría -who was then the President of the University Student Federation- and those of other martyrs who emerged from our classrooms were engraved for ever in golden letters in the history of Cuba. They offered their lives for truth and justice to succeed.

The panorama of higher education changed during that decade. In fact, some sectors of the Cuban society set up several private universities. When the three state universities were closed by the tyranny, the private ones continued operating until they were discontinued during the early 1960's. This was the result of the decision of making free education a reality at every level of the education system.

Hence, we can see that the successful revolution of January 1, 1959, inherited a solid revolutionary student movement. However, it also received "a dismantled higher education system, affected by corruption and, mostly useless, unable to fulfil the high objectives of the renewal, as well as the economic, political and moral development of our country". When the three state-owned universities started to operate again, the student roll had registered an increase. From the 15,000 students that they had before their doors had been closed, the number rose to 25,000 for the 1959-1960 academic year. The structure of degree courses prevailed and the ones that predominated were those pertaining to the field of the humanities, to the detriment of other fields of science. Except for most praiseworthy and precise exceptions, neither students nor professors were involved in scientific research. Besides, postgraduate courses were both scarce and insufficient.

When the time came for the social revolution, the time had also arrived for the university revolution. Changes immediately started to take place in higher education. They were related to all the socio-economic and political transformations that the nation was undergoing.

In December 1960, the Governing Council of Universities was created, in an attempt to attain an efficient organization of the university system as a whole. Among others, one of its main objectives was ensuring that the University helped develop the new society that we had decided to build.

On January 10, 1962 -the date that commemorated the thirty third anniversary of the day when Mella was murdered-the Reform of Higher Education of Cuba, that I mentioned before, was implemented. I will try to summarize its guidelines and most salient characteristics. Based on the 1962 University Reform:

- a very broad system of student scholarships was organized in order to guarantee that no student who had the required intellectual skills be deprived of the possibility of studying for a degree, simply because he lacked economic resources;
- very strict provisions were established in order to ensure a really active teaching system. The latter banned verbalism, memorism and passivism. Rather, a rational system of assessments of the academic performance of the students was set up, to guarantee a conscientious and participative learning process.
- the Research Commission was set up, in charge of promoting and developing scientific research within the universities in a systematic way and with the rigour demanded by higher education;
- the Commission of University Extension was created. It was a especial organ that was entrusted with very high and noble aims. Likewise, it was the basic element of the university-people integration process.
- a new structure of degree courses was established in an attempt to satisfy the needs of a wide range of profes-

sionals. Its main purpose was to guarantee that the country would have the highly qualified staff it required in order to pursue its development.

Indeed, a most significant aspect of the Reform was the fact that it considered that the improvement of the universities had to be regarded as a continuous process. The latter would be further enriched and transformed via the inherent dynamics of society, along with the development of science and technology and the continuous flow of human progress. It was quite clear that a task of endless construction was being started. The attitude that prevailed was one of constant renewal and improvement.

As a consequence, fundamental issues and aspects of Cuban education were gradually improved during the decades of the sixties and the seventies. Among them, mention can be made of the universalization of teaching -in order to further expand the access to universities and to cover the whole of the national territory- and the Martian and Marxist principle of combining studies and work. The latter became the cornerstone of the teaching-learning process in Cuban universities. In other words, this meant ensuring that the future professionals who were being trained would acquire knowledge and develop skills that went beyond the narrow framework of a classroom, so that they were not kept away from the realities of life.

In this respect, our purpose was to develop a philosophy and a pedagogic projection that explicitly stated that students had to learn by doing. In fact, this was simply an expression -among many others- of the incessant work that has been carried out in order to obtain and maintain, at all costs, a top quality higher education system. This required a design that could harmoniously balance two aspects. On the one hand, academic activities and research activities carried out in the

University and on the other, the development of practical professional skills in the real environment where the students would work once they graduated. In this way, they could be successful in their professional life.

As could be expected, on-the-job training has undergone several stages of improvement during these years. It has also been adapted to the requirements of each degree course. It was founded on the principle of the university hospital -what we now refer to as the teaching unit. This is an external unit that is set up in industries, farms, schools, museums. In that setting, university professors and practising professionals jointly take up the responsibility of developing in their students the practical skills that pertain to each professional activity. This has proven to be a feasible modality. It will not only help attain teaching objectives. It has also helped students to shape their professional personality as they are directly related to the real problems of both production and service environments. They can really be aware of the needs of their profession and of the responsibility they have as citizens in the different sectors and fields of their country. In this way, they are trained to be active participants in the process of sustainable human development.

From the very start, alternatives were sought so that workers had access to university studies. During the first stage, the latter received student loans, so that they could enrol in the day courses. At a later stage, Courses for Workers were designed. The classes were offered in afternoon and evening sessions and on the basis of special meetings. In this way, they could study without the need to quit their jobs.

Half way into the decade of the seventies, there was an explosion in student registration in the Cuban higher education system. This was the result to be expected from the great efforts made by the Cuban Government and State, since the

victory of the revolution in 1959. To give you an idea, I mention the fact that during the 1975-1976 academic year, registration already stood at approximately 84,000 students. On the other hand, the teaching staff consisted of approximately 6,000 professors. There was clearly an evident need to restructure higher education. In this way, the country would be able to attain the necessary progress in the university milieu to face the challenge of education for the masses, which was turning into a reality in the case of pre-graduate courses. In this way, they would also satisfy the need for a wider participation of the University in the scientific research activities carried out in the country. It would also enable it to intervene and help organize and develop postgraduate studies and the system of scientific degree courses.

The creation of the Ministry of Higher Education in 1976 was one of the results of the work performed during those years aimed at organizing and developing universities. The Ministry of Higher Education took on the responsibility of acting as the organization in charge of methodologically guiding this level of education. In this way, it would guarantee the activities and development of the network of higher education institutions as a system. During the twenty years that have elapsed since it was restructured, the system of universities has founded its work on the basic principles of the educational policies and strategies of the higher level of education. It has done so by means of a collegial board for decision-making where all the rectors, representatives of student and union organizations of professors and workers of higher education participate. The system as a whole has been undoubtedly enhanced with the specificities and significant contributions of the institutions that make it up.

The restructuring gave way to a wide network of higher education centres throughout the country -currently, a total of 56. The latter include independent schools and affiliates, along

with degree courses characterized by a set of common subjects during the first years, followed by specialisation and special fields in the last years. This design of the study programme is known in our country as the "A" Study Plans. They were in effect between the 1977-78 and the 1981-1982 academic year, with national study programmes, as well as guidance and indications for developing the teaching process in all the universities. After a careful analysis of the virtues and deficiencies of those plans a second generation emerged, known as the "B" Study Plans. The latter eliminated some specialities and specialisation. However, they maintained some degree courses that could be classified as those that have a narrow profile. These were in effect from 1982 to 1989.

In my opinion, one of the main achievements of this period was the boom of teaching activities in the higher education centres. It was based on the criterion that the third level of education has its own pedagogic characteristics. Likewise, it was founded on the premise that the university professor is not only the individual who has a wide and proven culture and a successful professional record of activities. He is also a person who has a wide technical knowledge and a solid capability for both teaching and learning. This technological notion generates, in turn, an emotional atmosphere in the development of the teaching-learning process. The latter facilitates the conditions for assimilating knowledge and for training individuals in both skills and values. In other words, this enables students to be self-fulfilled in their academic activities.

Another salient feature of this period was the emergence of the modality of distance education, which took place during the 1979-80 academic year. It was a response to the reality that the existing facilities of our universities were no longer enough to satisfy the demands of high level studies posed by the population. Ever since it was implemented, this modality set the bases for ensuring the widest access possible to all those

who wanted to pursue university studies. Indeed, the only requirement for being admitted to those courses was that of having passed the preceding education level.

In the case of Cuba, distance education did not emerge as an institution that was independent from the ones that were already operating. On the contrary, it was inserted in the organizational structure of classroom education. Hence, it was developed as a bi-modal model in fifteen centres that provide a nationwide coverage.

Currently, Cuban universities are implementing the third generation of study programmes, the so called "C" Plans. The latter have been in effect since the 1990-1991 academic year. They were designed with the purpose of attaining a wide profile training of professionals during pre-graduate courses. This was achieved via a higher degree of integration of the academic, research and labour components. Studies pursued on this basis -where all the universities and professionals of different sectors participated- clearly pointed to the need to train professionals who have a solid training in the basic knowledge of a degree course. However, professional skills of a more general nature were also offered. Hence, they would be better prepared to acquire and update knowledge in the postgraduate course and to develop the new skills required on account of the wide and growing needs and demands of the dynamics of the labour world and the progress of society.

To this end, the characteristic set of problems of each degree course was determined individually. These problems were the starting point for this new curricular design. In this respect, the professional model is the pedagogic expression of the social assignment and responsibility of each university degree course. Among the different aspects that characterize this design, the notion of an integrating discipline, as an important element for systematizing and integrating the curricu-

lar concepts, has had the strongest impact. Via the integrating discipline and identified with the professional activity, it is possible to better emphasize the link with practice. Likewise, it is a harmonious structuring of the labour and research activities throughout the degree course.

Based on our experience, all these activities of continuous improvement of higher education demonstrate the way in which Cuban universities have understood the relevance of higher education. The latter has acquired new and urgent dimensions on account of the need to ensure that knowledge is up to date and that new knowledge is acquired. Hence the specific relevance not only of pre-graduate studies, but also of the responses that the different modalities of postgraduate education must offer.

Back in the early years of this decade, a need to generate a decrease in the entry into higher education became evident. During the decade of the eighties, university education in Cuba had approximately 300,000 students in its different types of courses, which accounts for approximately 3% of the total population of the country. Hence, today approximately 5% of the Cuban population -a little more than 560,000- are professionals trained in university classrooms after 1959. This explains why the demand for graduates from certain fields was not fully satisfied. Satisfying the need for graduates from some fields and the most sudden and rapid changes that have taken place in science and technology in this turn of the century, led to changes in the Cuban higher education. In fact, the system reformulated the type of professional that had to be trained, an aspect that I have already referred to before.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize a reality that has been most significant for Cuban society during the past thirty years. The State has fulfilled its commitment to guarantee that every university student has a job when he

graduates from the regular day courses. The social service system was set up in 1973 within the framework of this policy. This system is fully in effect to date. By means of this system the young graduate works during two years in those entities where their assistance is most urgently required in the country. There is no doubt that you will understand the complexity of all this process. Indeed, this would imply reconciling the demands of the country in the different production and service sectors, as well as in the different spheres of social and economic development, and the graduating university classes.

The decade of the nineties has been especially difficult, as a result of the events that took place in what used to be the socialist Eastern Europe. The effects of those events had a very strong impact on our country. Likewise, this has been the case of the intensification of the anachronistic and very tight blockade imposed upon by the North American government. This stage has been given the name of the Special Period. It is characterized by economic contraction, the postponement of several projects that are of the utmost importance, the closing down of countless industries and material limitations and wants of a different nature. Although nowadays certain symptoms of economic recovery have started to appear on the horizon, the country is aware of the great efforts that still have to be made in order to definitely leave behind this special period.

Despite all these difficult situations, I can assure you that the Cuban universities are not factories of potential unemployed on account of the sound and well-aimed policy of the State. In fact, the demands for professionals are reconciled with student registration and each graduate is found a space. Several modalities have been tried for this purpose. Among them, mention can be made of the placement of these graduates in positions of scientific reserve, as well as staff for labour training. These have been solutions -among many others- that have been implemented in order to offer employment sources to

the new generations of professionals. To this end, a close consultation has been necessary between the universities and the organizations and entities that hire the graduates.

This accounts for the noble mission taken up by the universities, that of graduating professionals. This task, along with the consolidation of civic values, ensures that graduates will have a solid basic education that will enable them to adapt more rapidly and efficiently to technological changes. Likewise, they will have versatility when trying to find a job. To a large extent, this has been possible because of the proven responsibility and dedication of the university professors who are real educators. Besides, they are unconditionally committed to the social function they have been entrusted with. Our academic staff currently consists of 22,000 full-time professors, 48% of whom are women. We would have to add to this a considerable number of renowned production and service professionals who also work in the universities as associate professors. It is also worth pointing out the significant fact that the social function of Cuban university professors has gone beyond our national borders. They have worked in the universities of other countries. In fact, they have helped set up some of their schools, especially the schools of Medical Sciences, basically in Africa and the Middle East.

It is indeed a great satisfaction for me to acknowledge that our professors have proven to be men and women of their time. They have demonstrated a sense of belonging to their institutions and they have intensified efforts, searching for alternatives and developing creative initiatives, so that the training process of professionals in their universities does not cease. Basically, this has demanded a greater awareness of the need for a permanent education. This is the case not only with respect to their pertinent sciences, but also in relation to the following technologies: educational, didactic, technological, information sciences, professional communications, management

techniques, among others. I would like to reiterate that all this has taken place under the most adverse economic conditions that have prevailed during the past years.

Another aspect that is related to the relevance of higher education is the fourth level of education, i.e. postgraduate studies. This level has gradually gained a wider space in the higher education system. This level was practically nowhere to be found in the history of Cuban higher education before 1959. However, it has also gone through different stages. It started with the initial activities of the decade of the sixties. However, when the Ministry was created in 1976, postgraduate education was finally organized as the highest level of the national education system. Its purpose was to guarantee the continuous improvement of university graduates throughout their professional careers.

There is a demand that cannot be ignored and that is rather a responsibility. I refer to the need to update and further supplement the professional training of all those who studied in our universities during the past three decades. In fact, it might be one of most important ones that has to be assumed by the education system in these current times. The requalification and updating of those who have had confidence in us and have entrusted us with their technical and professional training has to be fostered.

Currently, the academic postgraduate programme is designed on the basis of specialities, master's degrees, as well as development programmes aimed at obtaining PhD degrees. Another important line of postgraduate education is the one known by the name of professional improvement. In this respect, special mention can be made of the development of graduates, training and refresher courses, requalification programmes and professional complementary schemes. The sectors that have been given top priority within the framework of postgraduate education are: tourism, the sugar industry, bio-

technology, agricultural and livestock production and the food programme, the economic sector, mining and others.

A most significant aspect of the postgraduate education system is the fact that it has both domestic and international projections. Domestically, national strategies have been devised. The latter are supplemented with the specific needs of the territories where the higher education centres are located. Improvement centres have been set up and accredited, in order to attend to the wide range of requests for professional improvement. They are operated by the different branch organizations, under the guidance of the Division of Postgraduate Education of the Ministry. Internationally, our professors and researchers have collaborated significantly to the graduate programmes, the master's degrees and the PhD's offered by several universities. This has been basically the case in Latin America. Likewise, summer courses are being offered in many of our institutions, along with other modalities of continuous improvement. For example, the last course that was offered was attended by more than 1,000 professionals from those countries. All this entails a considerable economic contribution to the universities, an aspect which is of the utmost importance in these difficult times we are undergoing.

Now, as we enter the XXI Century, it is impossible to think of a modern society where scientific research does not play a most significant role in university activities. However, this is the case not only because of the concept itself. There is a clear awareness among the Cuban university professors and researchers that the best way of thanking the country for the privilege of being able to do science is by contributing concrete results that promote the development of the country.

Scientific research has also experienced the continuous impact of the difficult economic situation that we have been suffering. This has been most evident in the limitations of

material resources and in the physical and moral obsolescence of our equipment. Despite all this, our universities and research centres -with their scientific results- have managed to play a leading role in the fields that have been identified as priorities by the country, such as plant biotechnology, high technology medical equipment, drugs and medicines for human and veterinary use, animal feedstock, tourism, sugar agro-industry, energy, community work, studies related to Cuban thought, society and economy, and others. This has enabled us to have a wider share and a more active participation in the different scientific and technical programmes that are implemented nationwide, by the branches and territories, that make up the National System of Science and Technological Innovation. In fact, almost half the scientific activities of the nation are carried out in the universities and research centres of the higher education system.

These years of the special period have been characterized by an in-depth and broad expansion of university scientific research activities. This has had a most positive effect on higher education. However, these activities have been unequally distributed and have had their contradictions.

If the key question: why is research performed in the Cuban universities? was posed, I could answer, that we do research in order to:

- improve the training of professionals, by raising the level of the scientific education of the professors and the direct participation of all the students in the research component of their study programme. In the case of our universities, more than 75% of our professors do research. Likewise, 35% of the students also participate in research activities, though this is for them an extracurricular activity. However, 6% of the students do research in a more intensive manner, via tutorial assistance within

the framework of the movement of students that have a high academic performance;

- train scientific-technical and teaching cadres, to be the research support of the academic postgraduate programme. University research has to be, essentially, an important trainer of scientific cadres, thus decisively contributing to the sustained development of the scientific potential of the country;
- maintain, develop, promote and disseminate culture within the framework of a co-ordinated strategy of university extension with a strong activity devoted to disseminating scientific knowledge to the public;
- obtain new scientific knowledge with a high quality and relevance, which should be expressed, above all, in the amount and degree of impact of our scientific publications and in national and international awards and acknowledgements received by our professors and researchers.

However, currently our universities do research basically to solve problems having a technological relevance, impact and consequence, on the basis of the needs of the socio-economic development of the country, which is manifested in the satisfactory fulfilment of our high commitments in relation to the levels of results and their general spread, the resources that are found for sustaining research, the registrations and patents of new products and technologies. The latter demands a significant component of professional improvement for the transfer and assimilation of technologies, within the framework of a good technological management.

All this has been possible simply because the country believes that scientific development is a pre-requisite and not a consequence of economic and social development. It has also been possible because of the adequate policy aimed at giving

power to the role played by universities in this development. More than two decades ago, President Fidel Castro stated that the future of our country had to be, necessarily, the future of men of science. More recently, referring to the degree of scientific development that the country has attained, he mentioned something that means a great responsibility for us all. He said that we have a great strength in science, but that the University had to be in the vanguard.

The main strategy of the Cuban model of a scientific and technological university is national and international co-operation, along with the search for material and financial resources via different alternatives.

In the organizational aspect, provisional scientific work groups have been created, as well as more stable multi-disciplinary teams that work on complex and concrete objectives. Likewise, a whole network of study and research centres has been set up. All this has enabled us to overcome departmental barriers, while at the same time working on the basis of programmes, besides doing so on the basis of projects. Via integration -generally, at the level of specific schools of the universities- attempts are made at ensuring that the teaching function is benefited, rather than suffering as a result of the greater hierarchization of the research function.

Co-operation has been organized at an inter-university level in networks and programmes of higher education. Likewise, at a regional and national level it is organized within the framework of the activities of the production scientific poles and the national, sectorial and territorial scientific-technical programmes. Internationally, it has been organized on a basis of direct inter-university agreements, projects and programmes, as well as with international, Latin American, European, Canadian and United Nations organizations and entities, with the support of UNESCO.

The work carried out by the National Union of Science Workers, the Movement of the Forum of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment are specific examples of the search for a greater integration in Cuba. It is worth mentioning, by the way, that universities definitely and strongly contribute to this endeavour.

A list of the aspects that we are giving more attention to follows: university-enterprise relationships, the improvement of the interfase mechanisms and the optimization of the proportions and complementariness of basic research, technological development and technological innovation.

We have not lost sight of the fact that basic research generates new knowledge and thus should play an important role in our scientific activities. In this context, the so-called strategic research which has a very basic dynamic and a short-term potential applicability, which is characteristic of high technology, should begin to solve the contradiction between applied and basic research. In fact, in our centres of excellence, applied research has opened opportunities and paved the way for basic research. In turn, the latter has enabled results to be obtained faster and within the framework of an interactive process.

The objective of this global strategy that has been implemented in the universities, has been to turn them into real research centres, where science is an inherent aspect of the activities of both students and professors.

Another pillar of higher education -university extension- has undergone a process of reconsideration. Furthermore, it has been consolidated as one of the main branches of activity of our universities. It has been gradually leaving behind the narrow concept of culture that is founded almost exclusively on artistic and literary considerations. Hence, it has been able to grow in scope, to fall within a wider meaning, one that is

related to human ideas and achievements in their highest expression.

Indeed the most important aspect has been that of promoting extension in the cultural dimension of development and in the social dimension of culture. The former is understood as a prime moving force that can guarantee the growing and stable satisfaction of the material and spiritual needs of mankind as a whole, though not simply as another element of development. Likewise, the latter is interpreted as the socio-cultural work carried out in the community, not only locally, but also nationally and internationally.

Work with and in the community encourages a mutual interaction and enhancement. Besides both elements are required in order to achieve a real university-society link. As mentioned before, this has been a real dream for the Cuban University. Among the extension activities that university professors and students carry out in co-ordination with several social institutions in the different territories, mention can be made of the following: joint research into the communities living in the mountain and into youth; programmes for promoting the habit of reading; programmes for rescuing customs and traditions; and the development of the university artistic and sports movement. This has enabled the University to reach wide sectors of the population. In turn, it has enabled it to be fuelled by the creative nature and the sensitivity of the great popular masses.

The effectiveness of the university extension has been determined -among other criteria- by its concrete contribution to the strengthening of the ethical, aesthetic, moral and patriotic pillars of society. When we work, we do so convinced that only a University that is unconditionally committed to the fate of its people will be able to guarantee the upward path of the social, scientific and technical development of the country.

Likewise, we are also convinced that access to the university is a highly sensitive element for the people. This is even more the case in a society where most of the families believed during the former regime that it was impossible for their children to obtain a university education. I have already referred to the progress achieved with the 1962 University Reform. The latter guaranteed equity in access to this level of education with no distinction whatsoever as to sex, race, religious beliefs or economic resources. It is true that pre-graduate studies in the regular day courses are quite selective in nature, based on the personal effort of the students. This is demonstrated by the academic results attained in the preceding level and in the admission examinations. It is also based on the planning that is required in the structure of student registration in agreement with the economic and social needs of the country. Furthermore, I could say that our population has full confidence in the morality and justice that characterize the process of admission to our higher education institutions.

I would like to emphasize that the young high-school graduates who are not admitted to the universities can pursue their studies in the technological institutes. There, they are trained to become expert technicians in a wide variety of intermediate level professions. The latter also have a significant contribution to make to the training of a labour force that stands out for its quality. Besides, it is quite obvious that all the labour force cannot be made up of university graduates, when trying to maintain an adequate balance in the occupational pyramid.

An interesting piece of information bearing on the structure of student registration is that almost 60% of the students are women. Unlike the situation that prevails elsewhere in the world in almost all countries, this high participation of women in student registration is not only to be found in degree courses that have been traditional for this segment of the population -

Pedagogy, Economics, Arts. On the contrary, currently approximately 40% is accounted for by agricultural and livestock degree courses, 60% by degree courses in the field of natural and exact sciences, almost 30% by technical courses and more than 70% by medical sciences, to quote just a few examples. In turn, this clearly reflects the special attention that has been devoted to the full development and equality of women in our society, within the framework of the Cuban Revolution.

Likewise, higher education has welcomed thousands of foreign students, mostly from developing countries. This has not been the case because we have abundant resources, but rather, it clearly reflects our expression of solidarity and internationalism. More than 11,500 foreign students on scholarships have earned their degrees in Cuban universities. Even today, in this most special period, approximately 4,000 foreign students are attending our courses.

I would now like to briefly refer to the policies and strategies that we have designed in order to face future challenges and to promote the university development and excellence that we all expect to attain.

The challenge faced by Cuba is quite considerable. In fact, our nation has a very powerful enemy barely 90 miles away and it does not have the necessary financial resources. However, despite this we fight tenaciously to preserve health and education for all, among other social achievements. Undoubtedly, the achievements made during these years enable us to ponder on how the university of the future should be and what should we do to attain it. In fact, it requires us to do so. In this respect, we propose to anticipate the development of higher education in a scientific way.

Almost four years ago, in the Ministry of Higher Education, we started to work along the lines of Management by Objectives. During the early days of this activity, we started to

prepare ourselves for the future. As time went by, we gradually realized that it was very important to work not only in operational tasks, but also in projections that have a wider scope. Furthermore, on account of the fact that the technological process of the method itself used to lead us to a strategic projection, we took up the challenge of applying the latter. This was the feasible mechanism for achieving the university of the future.

In the first place, this projection process enabled us to design our mission, or *raison d'être*, as well as our vision for the year 2000. On this basis, ten strategic directions of the Ministry of Higher Education have been defined. In each case, the objectives and measurement criteria have been defined. Founded on these general guidelines, each higher education centre has prepared its own projections. As an illustration, it could be stated that one of the strategic objectives of the organization is that of attaining by the year 2000 the goal that 50% of university professors will have earned the scientific degree of PhD in Science, which is only the case of 19.2% currently. This is seen as a necessary condition that will lead to a qualitative leap in the activities of the universities.

Another significant aspect has been the current and prospective programme related to computer sciences and the new information technologies, because of the implications it has for our organization. The latter consists of mastering, using and developing computer techniques that go beyond the promotion and enhancement of the skills and capabilities to process the most diverse information. They include: facilities for exchanging, storing and retrieving different kinds of information. Without such a strategy, it would be impossible for our institutions to train highly efficient and competitive professionals. Likewise, it would not be possible either to develop postgraduate studies that satisfy the requirements of the new

century, nor to attain a higher degree of quality and productivity in their scientific activities.

Evidently, in order to make this strategy a reality, quite significant economic resources are required. Quite proudly, though still humbly- we can publicly declare that we have received the moral and financial support of the State for developing what is known as the Higher Education Computation Programme. Nevertheless, it is also true that in the conditions of economic recovery affecting the whole country, higher education -as an organization- has been seeking for new funding sources and will continue to do so. In this way, the State will be relieved of the high cost of maintaining and developing universities and, within the universities, of computation.

In this respect, there is a self-financing design in all the universities. In fact, I have already referred to some of these sources. They have been designed to decisively contribute to attaining the objectives in the field of computation, as well as in other university activities. Our professors and students have clearly accepted the need to encourage and diversify the fundraising activities of each specific university. This is seen as a logical response to recognizing the care and efforts made at the top governmental levels, aimed at ensuring education for the people as one of its most valued priorities. It also results from the vision of the State that regards higher education as a long-term national investment which will no doubt result in the development of the nation at all its different levels.

The basic purposes of the Management by Objectives philosophy are as follows: increasing a participative management; granting more freedom and a leading role to higher education institutions when planning and attaining their objectives; defining a long-term step-by-step strategy; and introducing new self-control and self-management modalities, among others.

I would like to clearly specify that the institutional assessment of universities is a key element that has been gradually improved during the twenty years that have elapsed since the restructuring that took place in 1976. General and partial inspections -external controls and assessments carried out without notice- have indeed been effective. Hence, we have been able to know the qualitative transformations that have taken place in the higher education sub-system, and to disseminate the relevant attainments of each university. As a result of these inspections, universities design the necessary and pertinent actions to improve work in those aspects under control whenever wants and incapacity have been detected.

In order to have a demanding and strict control of the integral quality of the performance of universities, inspectors are selected among the best working professors and professionals in the country. Even though they do not make up a formal and permanent group of inspectors- they are summoned when necessary to assess the quality of the work, award gradings on the basis of a set of indexes and parameters established by all the rectors and set out in the inspection regulations. Students themselves play an important role. In fact, their knowledge and skills are evaluated by the inspection commissions, as the results of the assessments determine the quality of the university work. One of the priority tasks of our organization is that of continuing to seek ways and modalities to ensure an increasingly more objective assessment. Undoubtedly, that demands a systematic revision of the measurement criteria, so that they correspond to the growing needs of the dynamics of our society, thus guaranteeing the academic excellence that our institutions aspire to.

Finally, I would like to share some reflections with you. There is no doubt that the end of this century and the coming of the XXI. Century appear to be full of complexities. The gap between the rich and the poor countries is widening, basically

as a result of the concentration of the notable progress of technology and information sciences in the developed countries. Neoliberal currents -with their shock policies- make unemployment figures grow. Likewise, social mobility shows a downward trend towards the impoverishment of an ever growing number of people from different sectors of the population. As could be expected, the consequence of this is none other than social conflicts that become more and more tense.

We are living in a world that proclaims the end of the cold war. It is being clearly stated that the menace of a nuclear holocaust has disappeared. Despite this, armed conflicts are proliferating, along with waves of nationalism, xenophobia and oppression of the ethnic minorities. As if this were not enough, we are also witnessing a ruthless aggression against the environment.

Universities operate in the middle of this convulsed panorama. Their budgets have been cut back. They face internal contradictions with respect to their own concept of the professional that they have to train. University graduates -who will be the leaders in charge of guiding economic and social development- are faced with a harsh and excessive competition in the labour world when they leave the classrooms.

It has been said, quite rightly, that the progress of human resources is a *sine qua non* condition so that mankind can face the challenges ahead. However, our discourse as educators cannot be a contradiction between what should be and what really is. We cannot fall into the absurdity of setting education itself against reality and the results of a development policy that only and exclusively envisages success via competitiveness. A culture of peace through education for all has to be accompanied by a balanced national and international development that will enable inequalities between men and nations to disappear gradually until they are fully eliminated. Furthermore, far from increasing the gap between those who

are favoured and those who are not, it will guarantee that every man has a right to his own space and self-respect from birth onward.

The training function of the university is not limited to knowledge and skills, but at the same time involves the formation and consolidation of values. Universities must become increasingly aware that the challenges are academic and scientific, moral and ethical in nature. In order to offer an integral formation that leads to a sustainable development, there is a real need for high levels of technical capacity that guarantee development. There is also a need for people with complete personalities that reject, in a conscious and active way, any trace of social injustice that might exist. Likewise, they must be feel proud of the fact that they are trained and that they work in the country where they were born, feeling proud of their Latin American and Caribbean identity.

Bolívar's dream of unity acquires a greater significance in all the sectors and circles of the life of our countries. The academic community must play a key role in the attempt to achieve a regional integration that will benefit us all. I am indeed convinced that the vital feature of our mission is to strengthen and expand the collaboration programmes between our institutions. This will permit the common use of resources, as well as the exchange of technical knowledge and experience, and professors and students.

While I was analyzing the *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education*, I thought that in order to really fulfill the new academic pact that UNESCO is urging us to subscribe, we have to assume the commitment, to instil, especially in the minds of our future graduates, the wise legacy left to us by one of the greatest men of all times, our José Martí, who said that "being cultured is the only way to be free".

— *Higher education in Latin
America and the Caribbean in
its economic, political and
social context*

Carlos Tunnermann Bernheim

Special Consultant of the Director General of UNESCO

INTRODUCTION

This Regional Conference on Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean is being held at a crucial moment in our history and in circumstances in which Higher Education is going through a period of crisis and is being seriously questioned. Hence, the significance UNESCO ascribes to this Conference for the future of our Higher Education, now that we are about to enter a new century and a new millennium.

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, university reform processes were the order of the day in Latin America. In general terms, it could be said that those processes fully coincided with the shift in our region from an elitist higher education to a higher education for the masses, and the adoption of the so-called "*inwards development*" model promoted by ECLAC. At

the same time, regional and subregional integration efforts used protectionist tariffs and fiscal incentives as instruments for industrial development, in order to supply an internal demand expanded by wider markets.

Thirty years later, higher education is once again a topic for discussion. But while in the sixties few people doubted the key role of Higher Education in the efforts leading to development, as the shaper par excellence of high level human resources and it was often assigned the role of "*critical awareness of society*" and the moving force of social progress, the current debate is characterized by a whole school of thought -promoted even by some international funding organizations- that calls the efficacy of higher education into question, especially the public one, questions its economic effectiveness and its social profitability, and discusses the priority and amount of investments allocated to this educational level.

The contemporary debate on Higher Education is far more complex than the one held thirty years ago because what could now be at stake is the confidence of society and the State in Higher Education as one of the privileged means a country has to promote endogenous human development, strengthen its national identity and guarantee its self-determination.

In each historical period, the region has faced the need to redesign its systems for training the elites of leaders and professionals, in line with the prevailing model of economic and social development. But while in the past these efforts became concrete in the so-called "*university reforms*", generally promoted by academic communities themselves and related to the objectives of democracy and social transformation, the current processes are aimed more at a redefinition of the relations between the State, Society and the University, where the initiative does not only come from the university sectors, but is brought about by the questioning from outside the

Academia. *"Unlike past decades, Rollin Kent states in a paper prepared for this Conference; "we are now faced with a society that criticizes the University, a University that must be accountable to external audiences, and a higher education system where traditionally excluded actors (under the concept of autonomy) are now jointly participating or are even leading characters in the change".*

Consequently, this Conference offers the opportunity to reflect on the essence and the work of our Higher Education, in the context of a changing world and at the dawn of a new century. Hence its strategic nature and its design as a meeting for presenting proposals aimed at action, as has been stated. The academic community that is represented here is offered this most valuable space to discuss and define the basic principles that can guide a deep transformation of Higher Education in the region, which prepare it to face the new challenges and assume the commitments that had been hitherto unknown in its traditional activities.

In the first place, it would be fitting to make some comments about of the current situation in Latin America and the Caribbean in the international context, and to mention - even if only briefly- the challenges that the region is facing that could generate more assignments for Higher Education. It is not a matter of examining those assignments as simple responses, but of analysing them from a proactive perspective, that is, on the basis of how our highest Centres of Study can influence the changes our societies need, contribute to perceiving the different future scenarios and design alternatives for a sustainable human development, inspired by the principles of equity, democracy, justice and freedom -the irreplaceable foundation for a real culture of peace.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN VIS-À-VIS CHANGE AND GLOBALIZATION

During the past few decades, mankind has entered a process of rapid change which manifests itself in all the spheres of the political, social, scientific and cultural life, so that it can be said that we are living the beginning of a new era of civilization, where education, knowledge and information play a key role.

However, it is worth demystifying the arrival of the year 2000 as if it were a magic date capable by itself of transforming the world. The truth is that deep changes are the result of long processes of gestation and do not emerge as a result of special dates. What the conventional analysts tell us is that the XXI century really started to be shaped during the last decades of this century.

Another consideration to be made here is that not all the countries nor all societies will enter the new century at the same time. Even in the Nation-State itself, modern sectors will have access to it sooner than the more traditional ones. Thus, the observation made by Ernesto Sábato is quite valid when he says that centuries do not end or start at the same time for all peoples, at the sound of a single whistle. At any rate, the passage to the new century -and to the new millennium, on this occasion- offers mankind an excellent opportunity to reflect on its evolution in history, its successes and failures, its wise decisions and mistakes. It is also a good time to look boldly into the future, and give free rein to our imagination and creativity to design new utopias, real "*dreams of reason*", which humanity should never give up.

Latin America and the Caribbean - as a region- does not escape this process of change, or to the challenges emerging from them, whose most relevant characteristics are summarized below.

When addressing the issue of the probable scenarios for Latin America and the Caribbean, a most schematic analysis possible of what the 1980s meant for the region cannot be avoided. The current situation and the challenges we must face will also have to be analysed.

The proposal of ECLAC: *"Productive Transformation with Equity"*, states that in the last decade most of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean experienced a considerable economic and social decline to the extent that the 1980s are commonly referred to as the *"lost decade"* or, at least, as the *"decade of painful learning"*. If we only take into account the global indicator of the evolution of the gross domestic product per inhabitant, we can see that it dropped to the level it had thirteen years ago and to even lower levels in the case of some economies. The average rate of economic growth reported in the 1960s and 1970s was 5.8% for the region; on the other hand in the 1980s, it was only 1.3% on average. ECLAC reports: *"Consequently, the countries of the region entered the decade starting in 1990 with the burden of the recessive inertia of the 1980s, plus the liability of the huge external debt (still the biggest obstacle for of any attempt at economic recovery, currently amounting to more than half a trillion dollars), and with a basic lack of adaptation between the structures of the international demand and the composition of Latin American and Caribbean exports."*

This decade of the nineties is referred to by some people as the *"decade of hope"*, arguing that during the past few years, our countries managed to stop hyperinflation, balance the macroeconomic indicators and show signs of a renewed growth. However, if we examine the social costs resulting from these achievements, maybe the most adequate term to describe this decade would be the *"decade of an increase in poverty and exclusion."* In this respect, Juan Somavía warns that *"it is politically dangerous to balance finances on the basis of unbalancing peoples lives"*.

Let us now look at some indicators of the current situation in the region:

1. On the basis of the data corresponding to the first semester of 1996, ECLAC estimates that the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean will grow around 3% on average this year, thus returning to a road of moderate expansion, but still insufficient to promote a solid development with social equity and bring about a considerable drop in unemployment -one of the worst social evils in the region. In addition, real salaries have remained practically unchanged.
2. The drop in inflation continues to be a positive element in the economic performance of the Latin American and Caribbean countries. According to ECLAC, by mid 1996, the average inflation rate for the previous twelve months was 22 per cent, in comparison with 26 per cent in 1995 and 600 per cent during the 1990-1994 period. However, the regional inflation rate is still high vis-à-vis the international average.
3. Latin America is the region that has the most unfair distribution of wealth (*"the most extreme distributive polarization in the world"*, in the words of the World Bank itself). The average distance between the 20 per cent of the poorest population and the 20 per cent richest population is between ten and fifteen fold. Conversely, in industrialized countries, that ratio is six, and it is seven in the case of the Asian countries. The inequalities were further increased as a result of structural adjustment plans that were applied without any social corrective measures.
4. 200 million people (46% of the total population) live in poverty and 94 million of these (22% of the population) live in critical poverty i.e. in an extreme misery. Opti-

mistic estimates forecast that we will reach the year 2000 with half our population living in poverty. It might be pertinent to quote here a statement made by the President of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Enrique Iglesias, who said: *"There is no information of any country in history that has been able to be internationally competitive when 40 per cent of its population lives in a condition of poverty and low productivity."*

5. Our region of the world is the one where the population grows at the fastest rate (2.3 per cent annually). It has been estimated that, by the year 2000, we will have a population of 540 million inhabitants, 70% of which will be urban. Furthermore, 30% will live in cities of more than one million inhabitants. By the turn of the century, four of the twelve major human agglomerations (the megapolis with more than 13 million inhabitants) will be found in this region: Mexico City, with 26 million; Sao Paulo, with 24 million; Rio de Janeiro, with 13.3 million and Buenos Aires, with 13.2 million. United Nations estimates state that, by the year 2000, 90% of the human groups that live in a condition of critical poverty will be in the cities; basically, the most populated ones.
6. According to SELA, 60% of the economically active people in the region currently face employment problems. They are either unemployed, or else, they belong to the informal sector and thus have a low productivity and a low remuneration.
7. The following data show that the relative situation of Latin America in the world economy has deteriorated:

The share of Latin America in world exports has dropped significantly. According to figures presented by UNCTAD, in 1959, Latin America exported 11% of the world total. In 1970, this figure

dropped to 4.8% and by 1990, was only 3.6% of the total (of this, 1% is accounted for by oil). In contrast, the so-called "*recently industrialized countries*" of Southeast Asia, have raised their share to 8% of the world total.

- In 1992, the region transferred 30 billion dollars to pay for the debt service. Between 1982 and 1990, the Latin American and Caribbean countries transferred outside the region US\$ 230 billion dollars, amounting to 200 per cent of the value of their exports. We have become net capital exporters.
- International prices of the main export products of Latin America suffered a considerable deterioration between 1981 and 1992.
- Conversely, the region's imports rose to almost 17% by 1992, as well as the price of imported products;
- If the prices of the goods that are imported are compared to what we have exported, between 1981 and 1992, Latin America indeed registered a loss of 28% in terms of commercial exchange. In other words, with the same amount of export products we can now buy 28% less industrialized products.

Consequently, we can affirm that during the past few decades, Latin America and the Caribbean -as a region- have grown poorer and more marginal. The only exception is to be found in the urban high classes of the major cities that are related to the world market economy. They are virtual "*islets of modernity in oceans of poverty*". In fact, according to World Bank figures, 10% of the richer households receive 40% of the total income.

Nevertheless, Latin America and the Caribbean is a region very rich in natural resources. Hence it has vast possibilities, provided they are exploited rationally. The ecological heritage of the region is among the most privileged in the planet. Let us look at some data:

- Latin America is the most biodiversified region in world, although currently thousands of species are in a process of extinction.
- The tropical rain forests -mainly those of the Amazon region- are considered to be the "*green lung of the planet*". They produce almost 42% of the plant biomass and of the oxygen for regenerating the soil, as compared to the 14% accounted for by the forests in temperate climates. Besides, the so-called "*green belt of the planet*" plays a key role in climate and meteorological norms because of its huge genetic variety. It covers approximately 10% of the earth's surface and more than half the life forms of the planet live in this region. However, according to the FAO, it is disappearing at a rate of 11.5 million hectares per year. At this rate, the tropical rain forest will be irreversibly damaged in 50 years.
- The three major hydrographic basins of the Amazon, the Orinoco and the Río de la Plata rivers account for two thirds of the world's total surface of river water.
- Latin America has 19.5% of the world's hydroelectric potential, though it only accounts for 21% of the energy derived from that source that is consumed in the planet. It also has 3% of the reserves of fossil fuels.

- Latin America has between 693 and 736 million hectares of potentially cultivable lands and 23% of the potentially arable lands of the world, representing between 34% and 36% of its total surface. Only 90% of the total is cultivated, representing 12% of the cultivated land of the planet.
- In Latin America, 46% of all the tropical forests of the world are to be found, as well as 23% of all the forests of the planet and 17% of the cattle-raising lands.

The list of the enormous wealth that make up the ecological and natural heritage of our continent is almost endless. The problem is the notable inequality in its distribution and the insatiable appetite it arouses in the transnationals and their local allies.

One of the most typical characteristics of the end of this century is the emergence of *globalization* or *internationalization*, which modifies the paradigm of interstate relationships that has prevailed to date, which gave the *national States* the role of main actors in the international system. In the new scheme, States are now a link in a wider system: *the global or world system*. As stated in the recent report of the International Commission of Education for the XXI Century, *“planetary interdependence and internationalization are basic phenomena of our times. They are already acting in the present and they will leave their imprint on the XXI century.”*

The notion of *“globalization”* does not only relate to purely economic aspects. In fact, it is a multi-dimensional process that includes aspects that are related to the economy, finance, science, technology, communications, education, culture, politics, etc. At the same time, technological advances are deeply modifying the nature of productive activities. *“Indeed, in the past development used to depend on the amount of energy, natural resources,*

labour and capital. Currently, it depends on the capacity of knowledge and information available to act on a work process", Salvador Arriola, former Permanent Secretary of SELA has stated in this respect. Hence, there is a trend towards the "dematerialization" of the productive process, that is, towards a relatively lower use of raw materials and at a greater incorporation of "intangibles". The wealth of the nations depends mainly on knowledge and information.

However, the globalization process is not generating a uniform increase in progress and development in all the regions of the world. Rather, there is evidence of a *fragmented or segmented globalization* that focuses the advantages of development on the development of a relatively small sector of the world population. This creates wide gaps of inequality in terms of quality of life and access to economic and cultural possessions among the different elements that make up national societies, both in the industrialized nations and the underdeveloped countries. As James Gestate Speth, Administrator General of the UNDP has said: "*an emerging global elite, mostly urban-based and interconnected in different ways, is amassing both power and wealth, while more than half of mankind remains in a marginal situation. For the poor in this world of two classes, this is a world fertile in hope, anger and frustration.*" The Delors Report mentioned above warns that: "*the main risk is the possibility of a rupture between a minority able to move in this world being formed and a majority that feels carried away by events and without the power to exert an influence on the collective fate, thus running the risk of a retreat in democracy and multiple rebellions. The guiding utopia that must lead our steps should be aimed at ensuring that the world converges in a mutual understanding and the intensification of a sense of responsibility and solidarity on the basis of accepting our spiritual and cultural differences*".

On a world level economic polarization is constantly increasing, according to the UNDP. Almost 80 per cent of the

world gross domestic product belongs to the industrialized countries and only 20% to the developing countries. However, 80% of the world population lives in the latter. Currently, the 20% richest of the countries of the world is seventy times wealthier than the 20% poorest. Thirty years ago, this was only thirty times.

Faced with the processes of globalization and the creation of the major economic blocks, the States need new approaches and clear policies to strengthen their negotiating capacity, encourage competitiveness and improve their insertion in the international economy. This is a challenge that Higher Education institutions must also assume as an imperative of these times and they must contribute to the formulation of these policies.

One of the key elements for our favourable re-insertion in an open world economy lies in the substantial improvement of our *competitiveness*. Competitiveness implies knowledge, technology, information management, skills. It also implies raising the *quality* of our educational systems and training our high level human resources, as the countries of Southeast Asia understood very early on and made considerable investments in their people. Competitiveness implies incorporating technical progress in productive activity, so as to go from the "*perishable rent*", based on natural resources and cheap labour, to a "*dynamic rent*", that incorporates value added as a result of technological development. Hence, it is worth distinguishing -as ECLAC does- between "*spurious competitiveness*", based on salary reductions and social service restrictions, and "*authentic competitiveness*", that implies the capacity of a country to promote its participation in international markets, while at the same increasing the level of living of the population, via scientific and technological progress.

As has been clearly stated by analysts, nowadays, not only do economic forces compete, but also social conditions,

educational systems and scientific and technological development policies. In fact, society as a whole and the entire country are competing, not only the business sector.

However, it is not a matter of turning competitiveness into an ideology. In this respect, it is worth repeating here the warning that the Brazilian educator Cristovam Buarque made during the Forum of Cartagena de Indias *"Ibero American Vision 2000"* (March 1994): *"we require economic competitiveness, but mostly, we need social dignity. Nothing ensures that the former will lead to the latter."* Competitiveness should not make us neglect equity, nor the guarantee of environmental sustainability. The above mentioned Forum highlighted what was referred to as the *economic efficiency of equity*, as a guiding principle of the strategy of a sustainable human development. In the words of Federico Mayor, Director General of UNESCO, this is a development strategy that will satisfy the demands of economic growth and social equity: *"Only economic growth with equity in the distribution of its benefits will allow the Latin American countries to overcome the crisis and consolidate democracy."*

However, the last report of the UNDP on human development -the 1996 issue- clearly warns that *"there are no automatic links between economic growth and human development, though when those links are forged by means of deliberate policies, a mutual reinforcement can be attained in such a way that economic growth can promote development in an efficient and rapid way."* Hence the need for public policies that interrelate economic reform, social reform, Reform of the State and political reform. Higher Education institutions should help generate *national consensus* to support those policies with their research and proposals.

If competitiveness implies technical progress and mastering new technologies, there is no technological progress without scientific development, which in turn, has its roots in

a high quality education system. *"The tree of knowledge only blooms if it is deeply rooted in the education system"*. Those countries that wish to compete in the new economic spaces must give preferential attention to the training of high level human resources, to scientific development, technical progress and information accumulation, all of which implies setting priorities in the investments in education, science, technology and research. It is an education for competing, but also for sharing.

According to the figures of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) quoted by UNESCO, in 1991, the Latin American countries devoted between 0.3% and 0.7% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to Research and Development. The Latin American average is approximately 0.5%, i.e. half the 1% recommended by UNESCO more than twenty years ago. These percentages are far from the 3.1% of the GDP that Japan devotes to Research & Development (R & D). They are also behind the 1.6% funds that go to R & D in the *dragons* of South East Asia (South Korea, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan).

But, science does not emerge spontaneously. As we have already mentioned, its roots are deep in a high quality education system, in which its active didactic methods promote innovation, creativity and a spirit of investigation in students. In this way, they will *"learn to learn"* and also *"to undertake"*. They will thus be able to absorb new knowledge and technologies. They will be prepared to reformulate scientific hypotheses and adapt what they know to new conditions. In short, they will be able to follow the track of knowledge whose dynamism makes what has been learnt in school obsolete in shorter and shorter periods of time.

Hence education must become the priority investment in our countries. However, as we have already warned, there

is a school of thought in the international debate that questions the efficacy and priority of investments aimed at Higher Education in developing countries. In this way, when a decision has to be made regarding priorities, this school of thought clearly recommends investing in preceding levels of education, i.e. primary and basic education. It has even recommended that these levels should be assigned a considerable portion of the resources that currently go to Higher Education.

Nobody doubts the priority and importance of offering all our children and teenagers a quality basic education centred on effective learning. This was acknowledged in the *“World Declaration on Education for All”*, signed in Jomtien in 1990. However, it added two concepts that are worth bearing in mind. The first one acknowledges that basic education *“is more than an end in itself”*. *“It is the basis for a permanent learning and human development. Based on it, the countries can systematically build new levels and new types of education and training.”* The second concept establishes that *“society must offer a solid intellectual and scientific environment for basic education. It is thus necessary to improve higher education and the development of scientific research”*.

This was also acknowledged by the Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean during the *“Consultation Meeting of the World Conference on Education for All”* (Quito, November 1989). They said that: *“The satisfaction of basic knowledge needs must be seen as a ‘floor’ and not a ‘roof’*. In other words, the adoption of this aim cannot be an excuse for lowering the degree of attention to other educational demands. Its spirit is an appeal to widen educational coverage, while at the same time improving quality, relevance and equity of education, in search for a higher efficiency. Nor does it imply, depriving other levels of teaching, research and scientific and technological development of the investments they require so that each country can enjoy a relative autonomy in the concert of nations.”

During the Seventh Meeting of Higher Education Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean -recently held in Kingston, Jamaica (May 13-17, 1996)- the ministers referred to Higher Education as the "*critical factor for the development of the region*". However, they also warned that "*among the problems currently faced by Higher Education, the low quality of many programmes stands out, along with the inadequate way in which different institutions respond to the demands of economic development, the labour market and the requirements of scientific and technological development.*" On account of this, they made the following recommendation: "*To promote policies to strengthen the capacity of higher education institutions to fulfil the highest quality standards and their mission as trainers of human resources. In this way, they become scientific and research nuclei in close collaboration with productive sectors. They also promote changes that enable universities and other higher education institutions to be factors that help improve the quality of the preceding education levels. Special attention is given to the programmes and initial training for teachers.*"

It has been mentioned that our region overinvests in university education, to the detriment of primary and basic education. However, recent studies (1994) were carried out by Dr. Fernando Reimers, professor of the "*Harvard Institute for International Development.*" They show that Latin America invests less per higher education student than the other regions in the world. Even the countries in sub-Saharan Africa invest three times more per third level student than Latin America. Reimers reached the conclusion that it is not advisable in Latin America to take away all the funds that go to higher education and divert them to primary education. Rather, the countries in the region should invest more in the education sector. Comparative figures show that Latin America invests less in education than the other regions of the world ("*Education, Equity and Economic Competitiveness in the Americas: An Inter-American Dialogue-OAS Project*", 1994).

Therefore, it is not a question of redistributing the scarce existing resources among the different education levels. Rather, more resources should be transferred to the education sector, taking them from other sectors that have a lower priority. Undoubtedly, the challenge faced by our countries is that of improving quality, relevance and pertinence of the education system as a whole. To this end, the education system must be taken as a whole and not segmented into levels. Besides, the challenge lies in offering a different education and not more of the same. This could be the road for assuming the perspective of the "lifelong learning for all", the new education horizon proposed by UNESCO as the "key to enter the XXI century".

The example of the countries of South East Asia is quoted very frequently. They are the so-called "Recently Industrialized Countries" (RIC) that have achieved outstanding levels of development in a relatively short period of time. One of the strategies followed by those countries was to direct huge investments to all the sectors of the education sector. A study was prepared in this respect by Jasbir Sarjit Singh (Malaysia) and published in No. 79 issue of the UNESCO magazine "Perspectives" (Vol. XXI No. 3, 1991). The author stated: "*Having acknowledged the significance of Higher Education in creating highly qualified labour, the RICs made the decision to heavily invest in that sector. In all the Recently Industrialized Countries, education expenditures as a percentage of the GDP rose constantly. Besides, there was also a constant increase in the share of higher education investments in the total budget for education.*"

As regards the rate of social return, recent analyses tend to highlight that it would be impossible to assess the contribution of universities to the strengthening of the cultural identity and the self-determination of a country with conventional methods. These two are aspects related to the national academic and scientific communities. The real rate of return of higher education could be even higher vis-à-vis primary and

secondary education, if the so-called "intangible" results of higher education could be adequately quantified. As UNESCO has said: "if a country neglects its higher education system, it will not be able to keep fruitful contacts with the scientific and intellectual community. It will not have the capacities and knowledge it requires to take charge of its own development with due autonomy." (World Report on Education, 1991). In Latin America, 85% of scientific research is carried out in universities, mainly those of the public sector. The UNESCO report adds that: "The State and society must not see Higher Education as a burden for the public budget. Rather, it should be considered a national long term investment for increasing economic competitiveness, cultural development and social coherence." (Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education, Paris, 1995).

In our countries, universities are the backbone of the scientific-technological subsystem. They concentrate the bulk of the scientific activity of the region. This highlights the key role played by universities in any study aimed at promoting scientific and technological development for the region. Universities must promote creative thinking and scientific research. They are the starting point for scientific-technologic improvement. They have the responsibility of helping us join the contemporary scientific civilization -modernity. And they have to help us do it in an autonomous fashion, and not as mere intellectual appendages. As Alain Touraine has said: "We are undertaking the journey to modernity. What we need to know is if we will do it as galley slaves, or as travellers that have their own baggages, projects and memories."

The concept of modernity is not limited to what Darcy Ribeiro referred to as "reflex modernization". In the words of Luis Enrique Orozco: "our modernity implies modernization, though it is not restricted to the latter. The region has to reconvert the productive apparatus and increase productivity and competitiveness of its countries in the international arena. However, the region

also needs to strengthen its democratic processes, adopt the cultural codes of modern citizenship and look for strategies that contribute to the utopian project of a sustainable development. This is a project where all find more and better opportunities for personal improvement and the development of their communities."

Hence, modernity is for us a matter of building an endogenous model of sustainable human development founded on our own cultural identity. It is a model that cannot ignore the opening of the economy and the search for a favourable insertion in the current international context.

Besides the changes brought about by globalization and the key role of knowledge and information in the new productive paradigm, a gamut of phenomena influence the political, cultural and socio-economic life of our peoples. Higher Education must take them into account when it reformulates its mission and function in contemporary society. Among them, we can mention the following:

Crisis of the State

The globalization and interdependence processes have brought about a crisis in the role of the State and the concept of national sovereignty itself. The boom of neoliberal currents stimulated the trend to curtail the role of the State, while strengthening that of the market. In turn, decentralization processes led to decreases in the duties of the central government.

As a result, the State seems diminished at both its higher and lower levels. In the words of Jacques Delors: *"The globalization of the world economy -tending upwards- and decentralization and regionalization -tending downwards- are the two forces that currently shape the nation-States"*. However, the State is still the ideal framework for citizens to clearly know their rights and duties. Even if it gives the market its due place, the State is still

a required intermediating body. The modern national State has to play a functional role: inwards, via decentralization (micro-sovereignty) and outwards, via its incorporation in regional and subregional integration processes (macro-sovereignty). Hence there is a double opening of the State: external, pushed by globalization; and internal, promoted by decentralization.

However, the attempt to reform the State and render it more functional and less bureaucratic does not simply imply cutting it back. State modernization is not simply an exercise in State redimensioning, nor can it be confused with privatization. It is more a question of redefining the role of the State. We could even say it has to be *re-invented*, to make it more in tune with its new functions as we enter the XXI century. The State is a historical product. Thus, it has to adapt to the rhythm of times and to the new economic, technological and socio-cultural paradigms. As Norbert Lechner, researcher of FLACSO, says: *"it is not a question of more or less State. What we need is another State. Choosing between the State and the market is a fallacy. We need them both. However, we must finally determine the ideal relationship between state regulation and economic dynamics"*.

State Policies

The strategic role of the State -as a generator of long term policies- makes it necessary to improve the quality of the State, and introduce the culture of prospective vision, strategic planning and the permanent assessment of its activities. The redefinition of the State must also lead to a more constructive relationship with civil society. Through this relationship, it can redistribute tasks. However, the State should not become a captive of the market and the business sector. The key functions of the State, its role as facilitator, compensator and promoter of equity and social solidarity cannot be privatized. However, when the State is not efficient, it is difficult to fight

for a greater social investment. Hence, it is not simply a matter of choosing between a bigger or smaller State. It is not a matter either of substituting the State with the market. The real option is a *different State*, one that stands out by its quality, intelligence and the capacity to design and implement the policies and strategies of a sustainable human development. It should be a State that manages public affairs in a more efficient manner; one that is more responsible and accounts to its citizens. In other words, it should be a *modern State* that can promote a *consensus* that is the basis of long term policies, i.e. "*State policies*" that transcend the limited time in office of a specific administration. These policies are especially required in the social sector, to guarantee the indispensable continuity for its efficiency.

A better State and a better market

It is obvious that, we cannot go on with the same scheme of the almighty State. With this scheme, it is not possible to adequately satisfy the needs of contemporary society, or the challenges of the future. However, the reform of the State must be linked to an objective: to achieve the political and social changes that promote a higher degree of equity. According to a UNDP report, currently, "*the National State is too small for the big things and too big for the small ones*". A response to the neoliberal offensive against the State and in favour of the market could be that our countries need a better State and a better market. The State has functions it cannot refuse, among them the regulating of economic and social policies in order to take the compensating measures required to promote equity.

I believe it would be convenient to quote Carlos Fuentes, who wrote the introductory paragraph of the Report on Social Development of the Latin American Commission presided over by President Patricio Alwyn for the Social Summit of Copen-

hagen. It says: *"The doctrinal struggle between the public and the private sector in Latin America is false, ideological and disastrous. It does not promote efforts for reducing inequalities and promoting a development with equity. We must strengthen our public sector so that it can efficiently fulfil its obligations: feeding, educating, creating infrastructure, guiding the monetary and fiscal policies, foreign relations, defence, justice, as well as facilitating production, encouraging savings and tending to the needs of human resources. However, we must also strengthen our private sector, so that it invests more and better, produces more, efficiently administers its labour sources, feels that personal initiative is encouraged and identifies its destiny with that of a growing number of consumers."*

Redefining the relationships between the State and the Civil Society

The process for strengthening civil society makes it necessary to redefine its relationship with the State. The State versus Civil Society antinomy is both false and dangerous. There are some functions and responsibilities that only pertain to the State and which it cannot decline. The key functions of the State, its role as facilitator and promoter of equity and social solidarity, cannot be privatized. It is not true that decreasing the role and the size of the State, while at the same time, developing the market would be enough to ensure more equity and to strengthen democracy. However, it is true that the withdrawal of the State from certain social areas has brought about more inequality and poverty in our countries.

- The trend to redefine the relations between the State and civil society, between the public and the private, is accompanied by a re-evaluation of citizenship. In this respect, Antonio Luis Cárdenas, Minister of Education of Venezuela, has pointed out: *"In the XXI century, we will have less omnipotent states. They will be more adjusted to*

their essential functions. Likewise, more mature societies will assume greater responsibilities via several channels and mechanisms. Hence there will be a greater degree of direct participation of citizens in the affairs of the polis. In short, there will be a healthier and more significant politicization of life.”¹

- Although democracy is incorporated in our Latin American political culture, the problem lies in the fact that democratic governments have been unable to offer all the sectors of the population an adequate level of well-being. Nor have they been able to solve the problems of development. This causes frustration and leads to a credibility crisis in the democratic system. Hence the topic of democratic governance is especially significant in the current debate. As we enter the XXI century, our countries face the challenge of strengthening those democratic institutions. They are an indispensable support, the means to enter modernity. However, it is an inclusive not an exclusive modernity. Our recent history reflects a paradox. There is both a progress in the democratic endeavour and a stagnation, if not an outright worsening, in the economy and in the levels of living of the bulk of the population. This situation led Francisco Weffort to wonder: *“Is democracy in Latin America doomed to having decadence as a companion, rather than modernity?”* If the feeling that a huge social inequality prevails in society is deep-rooted, it will be difficult to ensure the stability that a sustainable human development requires. Analysts believe that there has to be a certain *“feeling of social equity”* so that governance does not run the risk of facing constant polarization and social explosion.

Regional integration

The figures given above to illustrate the share of Latin America and the Caribbean in world trade clearly show that there is a real danger ahead. Our region could be left out of the ruling trade circles, investments, financial flows and technological processes. It is true that our position is currently more marginal than was the case ten years ago. We could thus ask: Are we facing a process of change from a situation of "*dependence*" to another of "*omission*". Faced with this reality, Latin America and the Caribbean have to design a development strategy aimed at a more favourable re-insertion of our region in those circles. In that respect, we must bear in mind that there are no "*individual deliverances*" in this era of expanded economic spaces, not even for the major countries. Hence there is a need to reinvent and relaunch integration processes, if we want to have some significance in the new international scenario. Our region needs to design a clear response to the processes for creating major macroeconomic units like the ones set up in industrialized countries. It is unacceptable that while these processes are strong and expanding in the North, the South is still immersed in a situation of isolation and fragmentation.

- The idea of Latin American integration was present in the dreams of our national heroes. Bolívar referred to the need to reconstruct the great "*Motherland of Nations*". However, for them, integration had a wider political-cultural dimension than the simple economic and market dimension that has prevailed until the second half of this century. When Bolívar convened the Congress of Panama (1826), he had in mind a great political project, like the one he outlined in his famous "*Letter from Jamaica*" (1815).
- The integration process of the 1960s and the 1970s was a projection of the "*inwards development*" model. Therefore,

it was inspired by the sectorial-industrial scheme of import substitution. More than twenty years later, ECLAC acknowledged that the expectations regarding this process had not been met, not even as an industrialization instrument.

- Given the new international context that we have described, Latin America has to revise its concept of regional integration. The schemes that might have been valid in the 1960s and 1970s would not be adequate at this point in time. Those schemes were too ambitious - insofar as their globality or totality is concerned. Besides, they were defensive and closed. ECLAC has considerably modified its concept of Latin American integration. Currently, ECLAC is promoting two key ideas with respect to integration. The first of them establishes that it is convenient to promote the subregional processes that are underway (MERCOSUR, Central American Integration System (CAIS), GROUP OF THREE (G-3), Renewed Andean Pact, CARICOM) and to encourage their *convergence*, without neglecting the aspiration for a global Latin American integration. Subregional processes are not in conflict with the global concept. This strategy has recently been referred to as "*pragmatic integration*". The second key idea revolves around the so-called "*open regionalism*", or "*open integration*". In this case, the Latin American region must simultaneously promote its integration and open its doors to international markets. These ideas were well-accepted by the *IV Ibero American Summit of Heads of State* (Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, June 14-15, 1994). In the Final Report of this Summit, the heads of state mentioned that it is of the utmost importance to "*reinforce Ibero-American economic and commercial relations, go deeper into the regional integration processes, promote their convergence and further expand markets via a*

hemispheric trade liberation". The Report welcomed the concept of an open regionalism, understood as "the objective of reaching a conciliation between the expansion of the process of external opening and the commitments derived from regional integration. The final purpose of this integration process should be the convergence of the different integration schemes."

- There is also a new element that makes it necessary to restate the very conception of Latin American integration and its modalities: the entry into force of the *North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)* that includes Mexico, USA and Canada. This treaty foresees the possible incorporation of new partners until December 31, 1997. Several Latin American countries have already stated their intention to adhere to this treaty, though they may not have weighed the advantages and disadvantages. However, as observed by analysts, new geoeconomic criteria will prevail over the geopolitical criteria of the past in determining their entry.
- The issue of Latin American integration has been one of the concerns of our universities. The famous movement known as the *"Cordoba Reform"* had a clear Latin American vocation. The Manifesto that led to this movement in 1918, states: *"we are now living a Latin American hour"*. The *Union of Universities of Latin America (UDUAL)* has kept the issue of the University and integration as one of its basic concerns. The Agenda of Commitment *"Creative Freedom and Human Development in a Culture of Peace"* was supported by hundreds of university authorities and professors from all over Latin America who attended the *"International Meeting of Reflections on the New Roles of Higher Education at a World Level - The case of Latin America and the Caribbean"*, held in Caracas, in May, 1991. It reiterated the high moral obligation of universities in the

integrationist process: *“Regional integration must take a path that balances the management of national sovereignties and political vocation and will of an action where the universities and higher education centres of the region strengthen their ethical and social function.”*

The role of universities in the integration processes has to bear in mind the new world reality and the characteristics of globalization referred to. The tasks that the universities and other Higher Education institutions of the region might have to assume as part of a *“Latin American Agenda”*, could be the following:

- Universities should pose the issue of Latin American integration as one of their major topics for interdisciplinary research. The context should be a wider reflection on what a *Latin American Project of Endogenous and Sustainable Human Development* should be.
- In this new stage in the integrationist process, the universities would have to help clarify the role of Latin America and the Caribbean in the current world scenario, and their insertion in the world economy in the most favourable terms.
- An unavoidable task for our universities would be to create an *“integrationist awareness”*, linked to an *“integrationist culture”*. It would be worth promoting the concept of the *“continent-nation”* in all the social sectors. This is the only concept that would enable us to take the role of real interlocutors in a world that is increasingly characterized by leaving decision-making to the major economic blocs. We are not advocating a simple rhetorical commitment by the universities to the integrationist discourse. This goes deeper: we are referring to the diffusion of an authentic *“integrationist conviction”*. And it should be the result of interdisciplinary research into this

topic carried out by our universities if they are to assume the challenge and be *co-actors in this process*, and not mere *spectators*.

- The study of Latin American integration in its economic, social, cultural, ecological and political aspects as a university task would commit all the range of activities of our Higher Education Centres: their academic and research activities and their social projection. The *interdisciplinary* discussion of these issues will demand new modalities of academic work from our universities. The analysis of integration is founded on a knowledge of our history and our current reality. Hence universities should emphasize the studies of our past and of the factors that separate our countries or generate frictions among them. They should assume the praiseworthy task of compiling a *History of Latin America and the Caribbean* that analyses that past as stages in a long integration and disintegration process, to arrive at the present where integration is unavoidable. This endeavour would not be limited to political events. It should include an understanding of the history of ideas, culture, education, literature, etc.
- Universities should help create an *integrationist thought* for today, one that will help find clear answers to pressing questions, like the following: How to achieve the convergence of the current subregional integration processes, in the context of regional integration? What should be the position of Latin America as a region vis-à-vis the North American Free Trade Agreement and proposals of an "*open regionalism*" and "*hemispheric integration*"? How should Latin America become related to the European Union and Japan? Would it not be more convenient for the region to understand *open regionalism* as the possibility of being related to the three major economic

blocks, without being absorbed by one of them in a “*subordinated* or dependent *integration*”? Is it not better to promote a strategic diversification option with respect to international relations? What is the experience that Latin America could derive from the “*East Asian miracle*” in terms of education and university reforms, as well as technology appropriation? What are the costs of non-integration? etc...

- The contributions of the universities to the definition of regional and subregional policies of cultural, educational, scientific and technological development could not be absent from this *Latin American Agenda*. A greater international competitiveness implies incorporating technological progress in the productive process in a deliberate and systematic way, as well as training high level human resources. However, there can be no technical progress without scientific development. But, there is no scientific development without a high quality scientific education at every level
- In order to carry out these activities, universities should set up *Institutes or Departments for Studies and Research on Latin America*. We have always believed that it is a contradiction that in North America or Europe these entities outnumber those of our region, where there are very few Institutes or Departments that address the problems of Latin America as a central issue. If these Institutes existed in our countries, it would be easier to set up a network of interinstitutional co-operation to facilitate studies on Latin American integration via regional or subregional university co-operation.

CURRENT SITUATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION
IN THE REGION
THE LEGACY OF THE XX CENTURY

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the University was created before the rest of the education system. During a considerable period of time, it was the only institution to impart post-secondary education. Less than half a century after the Discovery, when the *"smell of gunpowder was still in the air, the weapons were being cleaned and the horses were being shooed"*, according to the chronicler Vasquez, the first University of the New World was set up in 1583 in Santo Domingo. It was followed by the universities of Lima and Mexico, founded in 1551, at a time when the Old World only had 16 universities and not one was to be found in what today is known as United States. When Harvard was founded (1636), Latin America already had 13 universities, a number that rose to 31 after the Independence.

The colonial University was created within the framework of the cultural policy imposed by the Spanish empire. Its mission was to tend to the needs of the Crown, the Church and the upper classes of society. The sons of the chieftains and better known Indian families were admitted as an exception when they were related to the ruling classes, or if they collaborated with them.

With respect to their organization, Salamanca and Alcalá de Henares -the two most famous Spanish universities at that time- were the models and sources of inspiration for the universities of the New World. The one at Alcalá was the most imitated. There were considerable differences between both models and the latter were projected to their affiliates in America. This led to two university schemes that led to the division that still prevails in the Latin American system be-

tween "state-owned" and "private" universities. The academic structure of the colonial University was adapted to very clearly defined purposes and notions. This enabled it to be a unified institution. It was organized as a whole and not a simple aggregate of parts. It had its own vision of the world, men and society.

It is a well-known fact that the emergence of the Republic did not modify the social structures of the colonial regime. The latter remained practically unchanged, except that the Spanish authorities were substituted by the Creole class. Rather than restructuring society, Independence gave a new direction which led to the formation of our current republics. Independence was based on the revolutionary ideology of the French Enlightenment and it opened the doors to the cultural influence of France. The Republic simply substituted the colonial University with an imported scheme, that of the French University. The latter had just undergone significant changes under the rule of Napoleon, to be in tune with the polytechnical education ideals he favoured. Among the key features of this model, mention can be made of the following: the emphasis on professions, the disarticulation of teaching and the substitution of the University by a series of professional schools, as well as the separation from research. In fact, the latter was no longer considered a university task but, rather, that of other institutions (academies and institutes). The University was subject to the control and management of the State. Its efforts were to be aimed at servicing the State. To this end, it trained the professionals required by the public administration and tended to the basic social needs.

The Latin American University that emerged from the Napoleonic influence probably produced the professionals required to satisfy the most demanding social needs, but because of a formation defect, these graduates were simply professionals, undoubtedly skilful in their professional field, but they

were not university graduates in the true sense of the term. The bureaucratization of the University and its subjection to the State also ended the weak autonomy it had enjoyed. Scientific research was not as lucky. In Latin America, the institutes and academies were not set up, or else they did not prosper, as had been the case in France where they assumed the task of promoting the progress of knowledge. The Republican University was also not able to expand the social base of student registration and it was still representative of the ruling classes. As the main structures of society remained unchanged, the elitist nature of the institution prevailed throughout the XIX century.

The first serious questioning of the traditional Latin American University was made in 1918. This year was specially significant for the continent, because, according to some authors it marked the year when Latin America entered the XX century. Clearly reflecting the social structures consolidated by the Independence, the Universities were still "*viceroys*" and they maintained in essence their nature of aristocratic academies.

Until then, the University and society had marched together without contradicting each other. In fact, during the long colonial centuries and the first hundred years of the Republic, the University merely responded to the interests of the ruling classes, who were the owners of the political and economic power and hence of the University. The so-called "*Cordoba Movement*" was the first important confrontation between a society that started to undergo changes in its internal social composition, and a University that was rooted in obsolete schemes.

The emerging middle class was the main actor in the Movement. The purpose was to achieve the opening of the University, which had been controlled until then by the old oligarchy of landowners and by the clergy. The University was

seen by the new class as the instrument that would enable them to rise politically and socially, Hence the movement advocated the collapse of the anachronic walls that made the University an enclosed and reserved territory of the upper classes.

On the basis of the lists of reformist postulates already made by other authors, we could summarize the legacy of the Cordoba Reform in the following terms:

1. University autonomy in the academic, teaching, administrative and economic fields.
2. Election of directive bodies and University authorities by the University Community itself and participation of its constitutive elements, professors, students and graduates in its governing bodies.
3. Competitive examinations for selecting the faculty and the regular courses.
4. Free teaching.
5. Free attendance.
6. Education free of charge.
7. Academic reorganization, creation of new schools and modernization of teaching methods.
8. Social assistance for all the students and democratization of admittance to the universities.
9. University extension. Strengthening of the social function of the University. Projection to the people of a university culture and concern for national problems.
10. Latin American unity, fighting against dictatorships and imperialism.

To this date, the Cordoba Reform is the initiative that has contributed most to the specific profile of the Latin Ameri-

can university for better or worse. As has been said, this reform emerged from the *"very heart of America"*. One of its favourable aspects has been its aspiration to originality and intellectual independence, which have not always been attained. It was the result of very specific historic and social circumstances but it was not able to guarantee the transformation of the University in the degree it demanded. However, it did take some steps in this direction. As the University is concerned, its action was aimed at an aspect that could be described as the legal or formal organization of the University (autonomy and co-government). In turn, less attention was paid to the academic structure itself. In practice, this basically continued to follow the Napoleonic pattern: separate professional faculties, the Chair being the main teaching unit. However, as Germán Arciniegas has said: *"After 1918, the University did not become what it should be, though it ceased to be what it had been; 1918 was an initial step, the prior condition for the destiny of the University in America to be fulfilled."*

It is not our purpose to give an account of the countless and significant reform and modernization processes that our Higher Education institutions underwent after taking up the postulates of Córdoba -specially since the 1950s. There is an extensive bibliography in this respect. We will simply list some of the characteristics prevailing in the current panorama of our Higher Education, beginning with some general indicators of the educational, scientific and technological situation of the region.

- During the past 20 years, the rate of illiteracy has registered a decrease. It went from 20.2% in 1980, to 15.2% in 1990. However, the absolute number of illiterates has remained practically unchanged at around 42 million. Ambitious targets were established in the *"Declaration of Mexico"* (1979) made by the Ministers of Education (*"eradicating illiteracy before the end of the century"*). Like-

wise, undeniable efforts have been made in the field of literacy campaigns in the past few years. Despite this, by the year 2000, Latin America and the Caribbean will have an 11.4% illiteracy rate in the population aged 15 years and older -the lowest among the regions of the developing world, but higher than the rate forecasted in the "Action Plan" of the "World Declaration on Education for All" (half the one existing in 1990, which would be 7.6%). In absolute numbers, it has been estimated that we will enter the new millennium with a burden of 40.4 million illiterates.

- At any rate, in absolute terms, Latin American education has experienced a considerable expansion at all its levels. Primary education increased 4.4 times, middle education increased 11.8 times and higher education, 19.6 times. However, both on account of the crisis and of the high schooling rates attained by several countries in the region, the growth rate in the student registration was somewhat slower. This was the case at all levels, despite the increase in absolute figures.
- School attendance at the primary level went from 60% in 1960, to almost 95% by the mid 1990s. This clearly indicates that Latin America and the Caribbean could be on the road to a universal primary education. However, several million children living in rural areas and belonging to the Indian ethnic groups do not have access to primary school.
- The real school period usually ranges between 100 and 120 days, out of the official 150-170 working days. This can be compared with China 251 days; Japan 253; Germany 210; and United States 180.
- The students attending the schools of the region only attain 50% of the pedagogical objectives. The poorest

schools are below this percentage. "It is common knowledge that 50% of adults (mostly those belonging to the lowest half of the socio-economic distribution) cannot understand what they read. Likewise, they are unable to convey simple messages in writing, or use in their daily lives what they have learnt to repeat by heart." ²

- The repetition rates are high in the case of primary education (30% of those who repeat are in the first six grades; 40% of the first grade students of the region repeat one year). ³ Half the children drop out and leave school without making it to fourth grade, i.e. without attaining a functional literacy. None of the countries in Latin America has more than 60% of the population with a level of education beyond primary school.
- Based on these high drop out and repetition rates, concentrated mostly in the rural and marginal urban areas, it is difficult to think that before the year 2000, the objectives of a universal primary education and the eradication of illiteracy that have mentioned so often will be achieved. The "Declaration of Mexico" set as a target that all school-age children should be incorporated in the educational system before 1999.
- In the case of secondary education, the growth rate started to drop as of 1980. In many countries, female student registration surpassed 50% of the total. Even though trends point to increases in technical training, general secondary education still prevails. In fact, secondary education plays a key role in the educational system and it deserves a special effort aimed at increasing its quality and promoting its diversification.
- The field of higher education shows the most spectacular growth: from 1.6 million students in 1970, it went to 5.9 million in 1984. As we have seen, the growth rate has

dropped in the past few years. Currently, it is estimated that the number of students in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean amounts to 8 million. (By the year 2000, it is estimated that we will have 10 million students in the third level). Our students attend more than 800 universities (almost 60% of which belong to the private sector) and more than 4,000 Higher Education non-university institutions -where the private sector prevails. However, the third-level student population still accounts for a limited percentage of the pertinent age group (17.7%), though their participation in the total student registration in the education system has increased in the past 30 years from 1.7% to 6.2%. On the other hand, developed countries have recorded 20 thousand higher education students out of every 100 thousand inhabitants. In Latin America, this figure barely reaches 2 thousand. The percentage of women in the student population rose considerably and, in several countries of the region, it accounts for 50% of the total. The evolution of student registration by sector indicates that the old relative importance of diploma courses in law and medicine has decreased, while the importance of business administration, trade, economics, education, the different fields of engineering and technology -including computer sciences- has considerably increased. However, and following international trends, half or more of the students are to be found in careers related to the service sector of the economy. Despite the quantitative expansion, we can still not speak of a real democratization of Higher Education in the region. Undoubtedly, this is not satisfied simply as result of access to low quality institutions. The attendance rate to higher levels stands at 17.7% as we have seen, however, the developed countries, this figure surpasses 40%, and in some of them -United States, for instance - is closer to 60%. On the other hand, the

Latin American university system is becoming more discriminatory, establishing clear differences between its graduates with respect to access to the labour market and the granting of *social status*, depending on the quality and the prestige of the institutions. ⁴

- Currently, approximately 700,000 students graduate each year in the post-secondary system, according to CINDA figures. Of these, José J. Brunner estimates that 75% are university graduates. The total number of teachers went up from 25 thousand in 1950 to nearly 1 million in 1992. They mostly lack pedagogical training and they are not prepared to do research. ⁵
- The financial crisis has also generated an obvious deterioration in the quality of education at every level, closely linked to the deterioration of the teacher's salaries which leads to a faster brain drain of the best professors and produces the phenomenon of high mobility, absenteeism, and abandonment of teaching staff, which accentuates empiricism and makes efforts for training and improving professors inefficient. The quality of education is also seriously affected by the deterioration and scarcity of facilities, equipment, laboratories, school libraries and, in general, teaching materials. Because of the education budget cuts, the countries are assigning less funds to education investments. In fact, almost 90% of the budget of this sector is used to pay salaries.
- The "*Declaration of Mexico*" (1979) urged the countries of the region to increase their education budgets to no less than a 7% of the Gross Domestic Product. In 1980, this rate was 4.6%, dropping to 4.1% in 1986. In other words, it was not only below the target set in 1979, but even lower than the world average which stands at around 6%.

- In 1989, the spending per primary student in Latin America was lower than in any other region in the world, except Africa (1/5 of the amount spent in Asian countries per primary student) and less than 1/20 of the spending in the European countries, the USA and Canada. The Asian countries with income levels comparable to those of Latin America spend 20 times more per primary student. These percentages do not apply to the Caribbean subregion, where the amount spent per primary student is similar to that of the Asian nations.
- In the case of secondary education, continental Latin America also spends less per student than the other regions of the world. African countries spend twice as much; Caribbean nations three times more, and the USA and Canada, 19 and 34 times more respectively.
- On Higher Education, the countries of the world spend on average 3,070 dollars per student. In Latin America this amount is lower than elsewhere in the world. Even the nations of sub-Saharan Africa spend three times as much per student vis-à-vis Latin America. Asian countries spend four times more, the USA and Canada, 14 times more. Asian nations with a similar income level spend 50% more per student than Latin America. In our region, the amount spent per student ranges between 33.00 and 7,709 dollars, with an average of 649. However, half the countries in Latin America spend less than 457 dollars per third level student.
- Generally speaking, it could be stated that education in Latin America is underfinanced and this results in low quality products and lack of efficiency in the education system.
- As clearly acknowledged by UNESCO, in general terms, the Latin American countries *"have attained the basic tar-*

get of setting up scientific and technical communities with a minimum critical mass for them to be effective", ... "the main current in the government policies has still not taken into account science and technology. Hence, even though clear efforts have been made to protect and increase investment in this sector, this has not changed the fact that only 10-15% of the universities in the region have a real and effective capacity to do R & D"... "There are more than 2,000 Natural Science and Mathematics Research Units in Latin America and the Caribbean. Out of this total, 57% are in the field of Biology, 15% in Chemistry, 11% in Earth Sciences, 10% in Physics and 7% in Mathematics". ... "Of the total research units in the region, 78% are located in only six countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela) and they maintain a general average distribution per scientific area. This percentage is also consistent with the number of universities and Higher Education Centres that offer post-graduate studies and organized research with a quality that can compete internationally".⁶

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRADITIONAL LATIN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

The classical Latin American University is the result of a lengthy historical process and a socio-historical reality whose outline was finally sketched with the help of Cordoba. Although many of the continent's Universities have evidently surmounted diverse aspects of that profile, roughly speaking it is characterized by its:

- a) *Elitist nature*, determined in many countries by the social organization itself and the characteristics of the previous education levels, which have a tendency to restrict

access to these universities. The roots of true educational democratization are in the preceding levels. Once a student is on the threshold of a University, the system has already alienated the student for non-academic reasons.

- b) *Emphasis on the professions*, which postpones the cultivation of science and research.
- c) *Academic structure* built on a simple federation of faculties or semi-autonomous professional schools.
- d) *Predominance of the university chair* as a fundamental teaching unit.
- e) *Tubular organization of the teaching of the professions*, with few possibilities to switch from one curriculum to another. These curricula tend to be extremely rigid and cause an unnecessary duplication of teaching staff, equipment, libraries, etc.
- f) *Incipient teaching career and professors* who spend little time actually teaching, even when they have full time appointments.
- g) *Absence of an efficient administrative organization* to back up other essential tasks of the University. Little attention paid to "*academic administration*" and the "*administration of science*".
- h) *Autonomy* for decision-making on academic, administrative and financial issues, to an extent that varies from one country to another with a tendency for their economic aspects to be limited or interfered with by government.
- i) *The Universities are governed by the bodies representing the university community*. The principal executive authorities are elected by that community and vary from one country to another.

- j) *Varying degrees of student involvement by graduates and administrative staff in university government, student-political activism, reflecting social discontent; predominance of students with jobs, particularly in the case of public institutions.*
- k) *Teaching methods based mainly on the teaching chair and the simple transmission of knowledge. Practical teaching and active learning methods are deficient due to the limited availability of equipment, libraries and laboratories.⁷*
- l) *Incorporation of cultural dissemination and university extension as normal activities of the University, although these are not very far-reaching due to the scarcity of resources which are mainly earmarked for teaching activities.*
- m) *Concern over national problems, although there are not enough links with the national and local communities or the production sector, largely due to reciprocal distrust between the University and the agencies representing those communities and sectors.*
- n) *Chronic economic crisis, due to insufficient resources which in the case of public and state universities come from the State. Absence of a tradition whereby the private sectors provides financial backing for higher education within the state system, although there are some exceptions in this area.*

A BROAD OUTLINE OF THE INNOVATIVE TRENDS IN LATIN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

At the level of the Universities, we can see a clear tendency towards the reorganization of the academic structures and to make them more flexible, in which the department tri-

umphs as a basic structural unit, displacing the university chair as the fundamental nucleus of teaching and research. The first steps are now being taken to prevent this departmentalization from turning into a rigid compartmentalization, with the subsequent fragmentation and atomization of science, just when the essential unit of knowledge demands an interdisciplinary effort. There are several examples of the resulting tendency to group the departments into broader units of similar sciences. These may be Divisions, Centres or Areas. There are also experiences aimed at promoting an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary attitude, through the organization of studies and research on programs and projects that call for a combination of several disciplines.

A range of parallel institutions to the Universities have appeared (polytechnics, technological institutes, technical colleges), and these have helped to broaden and diversify education opportunities at post-secondary level. These institutions, and even the Universities now, are offering shorter diploma courses that respond to the social demands that are not met by the traditional degree courses which tend to last longer. It must be noted that the Universities are beginning to show more interest in these courses and in a greater diversification of their fields of study. Mechanisms are also being sought to create a link between the short courses and the academic or traditional degree courses, to keep them from becoming blind alleys, without detriment to their own academic status and their final nature, as far as the incorporation of their graduates in the job market is concerned. In some cases transfers from one cycle to another are encouraged, as well as what are known as "*academic catwalks*" and side-stepping.

Faced with the expansion and diversification of education opportunities at post-secondary level, efforts aimed at defining policies that orient its development as a properly coordinated and integrated subsystem can be seen.

The organization of universities as a system rather than as an entity located in one specific place or city, is also beginning to penetrate Latin American university activities, with a series of nuclei or university centres being scattered across a country or region. Thus, regional Universities that are endeavouring to create strong links with the development of a particular part of the country are emerging, as are national Universities with regional sections or centres in the main cities of their respective countries.

The specialization required by the constant growth of knowledge and the fact that it is impossible for universities to reach an acceptable level of excellence in all fields of knowledge, has given rise to universities that are dedicated to one particular area, such as engineering, agricultural science, biological science, pedagogical science, etc.

The initial experiences of the regional and subregional integration of Higher Education in several countries is beginning to bear fruit. This is so mainly in Central America and the Caribbean. There is also a plan to promote integration at a postgraduate level between the parties to the Andrés Bello Agreement.

The first examples of open university systems can now be seen: Universidad Nacional Abierta (UNA) in Venezuela, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) in Costa Rica, Unidad Universitaria del Sur in Colombia, Distance Education System of the Universities of Brasilia, Havana, UNAM of Mexico.

Distance education seeks to achieve a greater potential coverage than is permitted by the conventional systems and, at the same time, to structure new teaching and learning experiences, based on personalized teaching systems and the use of multimedia, to encourage an increased teacher-student interaction.

Continuous education also receives attention through programs geared to graduates wanting to update their knowledge in their respective disciplines. There are several experiences in this field, guided by the key idea of continuous training, which makes the dichotomy between school and post-school education increasingly hazy, favouring an education system that caters for the professional and cultural needs of the present and the future. So the concept of lifelong education is being included in the work of the Latin American Universities, although in a more limited way.

It is also important to mention the regional and subregional associations that have appeared and play an important role in promoting exchange and co-operation: the *Association of Universities Montevideo Group* (AUGM); the *Association of Amazonian Universities* (UNAMAZ); the *Central American Higher University Council* (CSUCA); the *Union of Latin American Universities* (UDUAL); the *Inter-American University Organization* (OUI), which includes U.S. and Canadian Universities; the *Caribbean Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutes* (UNICA). Another modality comprises the regional Universities: *University of the West Indies* (UWI) and *Universidad Andina "Simón Bolívar"*, among others. Likewise, at a national level, there are organizations and associations that co-ordinate Higher Education. (National Councils of Rectors or Universities, which are becoming increasingly important as the bodies that design national Higher Education policies. They also promote activities related to the evaluation and accreditation of Higher Education institutions). Finally we should mention the networks of universities and institutions, such as the regional network of the Universities of the Caribbean: SIAMAZ, REDESLAC, REDEAED, INFLOES, the Network of Innovations in Distance Higher Education, whose central nucleus is at the UNA of Venezuela and which is backed by UNESCO's UNITWIN programme.

One of the phenomena that is now beginning to be seen is the co-existence of macrouniversities with over 100,000 students and microuniversities with only a few hundred. Official universities (national or federal, state or provincial and municipal) also tend to coexist with private catholic, protestant and lay universities. Branches of foreign universities, particularly North American ones, have recently been set up in several countries of the region. These tend to function as real "academic enclaves", totally unrelated to the country's education system.

It is also important to mention the creation of postgraduate studies, linked to research activities, although they do not always have the right level nor respond to a national plan as might be hoped. There is some experience of subregional integration of postgraduate studies, such as the I (PIRESC II), sponsored by CSUCA in Central America; and the subregional postgraduate studies plan promoted by the Montevideo Group.

A study conducted by UDUAL -which comprised 540 Latin American universities- reveals that *"the highest number of postgraduate study courses (Specialities) is to be found in the field of Health Sciences. On the other, there are few of these courses in Agricultural and Maritime Sciences and also in Education Sciences, areas where they are most needed in Latin America. This should be taken into account when planning new postgraduates courses."* It also reveals that Brazil, Chile and Mexico are the only countries with postgraduate courses in all areas and where, generally speaking, the adequately trained postgraduate teaching staff is not enough. *"The minimum requisite is for professors who teach to have a degree in the levels they teach in. But according to the information available to us, this requisite is only fulfilled by 57% of the staff teaching specialities and 40% of the staff teaching master's degrees."*⁸

More active teaching methods are being introduced with emphasis on learning more than on the simple transmission of

knowledge. The “informatics culture” is finding its rightful place in the day-to-day activities of our Higher Education institutions.

General Education

The reaction against the excessive professionalism that predominates in our Universities, has led them to recognize the general training of their graduates as an essential part of their mission. This is why many Universities have now included General Education in their curriculum to promote a more balanced training of the future professional. It is also why the cycles of General Education or Basic Studies, are increasingly frequent in Latin American University teaching. In some cases, their inclusion has led to a total academic reorganization of the University through the creation of Faculties or Central Universities of Sciences and the Arts, in charge of imparting them and organizing the departments of fundamental disciplines which are at the service of the entire University while being responsible for cultivating pure sciences. This process tends to go hand in hand with the adoption of a credit system and the system of semesters or terms; the organization of teacher training courses; and the reappraisal of guidance services and student welfare services, etc.

Study plans

One of the key problems occurring in the Latin American Universities as far as study plans are concerned, is the tendency to identify the curriculum with the study plan, understood simply as a list of subjects that have to be passed to obtain a degree or diploma. Nevertheless, a clear tendency to focus on the all-embracing nature of the curriculum and to improve teaching-learning methods can be seen. Latin Ameri-

can Universities are showing increasing concern over the problems of university teaching, and are creating University Teacher-Training Departments to familiarize their professors with modern curricular design and evaluation techniques, and teaching-learning methods, etc.

University administration

Over a decade ago, Ismael Rodríguez Bou quite rightly said that "*Latin American Universities are governed, have governments, but lack any real administration.*" In reality, that was generally the case until quite recently, and continues to apply to a fair number of universities in this continent. However, in that area too, positive steps have been taken, not only as far as financial administration and staff are concerned, but also in the field of academic administration, which generally tends to be overlooked. It is still necessary to remember that "*university administration, because of its complex nature -as the University is a cultural and scientific entity- requires the application of some rather special standards, which cannot all be found in the rules of business management, for instance.*" In a large number of Latin American Universities, degrees in Management Studies have been created to guarantee quality and to encourage the Universities' administrative employees, as an additional means of upgrading and technifying university management.

University planning

When planning first became a university activity, it was initially limited to the physical aspects connected with the construction of university premises and the compilation of statistical and historic data on the student population and its scope; student-teacher relationship; cost per student; budget formulation, etc. Generally, at this stage the concept of the "*Plan -*

Book” prevails. In more recent years, the function of planning has been better understood and its scope broadened, although this situation only applies to a handful of Universities, where it is included among the normal tasks of university management, with physical, administrative and academic planning covering its field of action. Moreover, according to the concept of the comprehensive planning of education, liaisons are sought with the planning undertaken at other levels and with the objectives of global, economic and social development. It is with this in mind and through national bodies (Council of Rectors, National Associations of Universities, etc.) that efforts have been made to plan the rational development of the entire post-secondary education subsystem. The adoption of a prospective attitude raised the need to examine Higher Education development options, with medium and long term goals. *Strategic planning* is now an integral part of Latin American University management. This process is based on a clear definition of its mission and functions in the society to which it belongs and in which its strengths, weaknesses, risks and opportunities for defining its course and short, medium and long term action are analysed.

Many universities have promoted more constructive and mutually advantageous relationships with the production and business sectors. In some cases too, Foundations or Corporations devoted specifically to these tasks have been created under the auspices of the Higher Education institutions, which may become an additional source of revenue for Higher Education.

HOW UNESCO SEES THE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

UNESCO drafted its Document for the change and development of higher education after a lengthy consultation encompassing all the regions of the world, and in response to a resolution adopted by the Member States of the Twenty-Seventh General Conference. During this Conference, the Director General was requested to *"develop a global policy to enable the Organization to cover the entire field of Higher Education."*

When presenting the Document, the Director General of UNESCO, Professor Federico Mayor, said: *"Our general conclusion is that all the levels of the education system should be reviewed and education should fundamentally be a lifetime endeavour"*. He then added that: *"Development can only be achieved by citizens with a high level of training. Nothing can be expected from a population with no qualifications.".... "Higher education must be accessible to everyone throughout their lifetime. Our goal is to attain the unattainable and include the excluded."... "Universities must be the conscience of society, a place where we can have a broader view of the world."*

UNESCO's Document offers a summary of the main trends in Higher Education in the world and also tries to give UNESCO a clear picture of the key policies for this level of education. But, as the Director General pointed out in his introduction, it in no way aims at *"imposing models or laying down strict regulations. At best, it could serve as an 'intellectual compass' for the Member States and for those in charge of Higher Education, when they design their own policies."* It is a question, then, of UNESCO's contribution to the broad international debate on the role of education in general as we near the end of the century and stand on the threshold of a new millennium, particularly as far as higher education is concerned.

Higher Education Trends

According to the UNESCO Document, there have been three key developments in higher education in the last quarter of the century: *a) its quantitative expansion; b) the differentiation between institutional structures, programmes and forms of study; and c) financial restrictions.* The latter have proved harmful for the general functions of Higher Education, affecting its quality and hampering research activities, mainly in the developing countries, so that at present 80% of the Research & Development (R&D) activities worldwide take place in a few industrialized countries.

What is the reason for that extraordinary quantitative expansion of enrolments seen in Higher Education all over the world? UNESCO has three possible explanations: A) demographic growth, with its resulting increase in the number of students completing the preceding levels of education, and then seeking access to Higher Education; b) widespread awareness of the importance of Higher Education for the country's development; and c) the emergence of newly independent countries that look on Higher Education as a key instrument, not only for their development, but also as a means to shake off the remaining vestiges of colonialism, strengthen their own national identity and create local capacities in the field of Science and Technology.

In absolute terms, the expansion has meant an increase from 13 million students in the higher level in 1960 worldwide, to 65 million in 1991, enrolled in some 30,000 renowned tertiary level institutions. By the year 2000 it is estimated that there will be 80 million students in this level.

Although in absolute terms the expansion is also spectacular in the developing countries, they have not managed to attain equal opportunities of access. The UNESCO Document points out that young people in the underdeveloped countries

have 17 times less opportunities of continuing their higher studies compared with those in the industrially developed countries.

As far as the trend towards a *greater diversification of institutional and academic structures* is concerned, UNESCO attributes this phenomenon to external and internal factors. Among the external ones it mentions the following: "*a) an increase in the social demand for Higher Education and the need to provide for a far more diversified clientele; b) drastic cutbacks in state Higher Education, which forces institutions to design alternative programmes and systems to provide more cost-effective alternatives; and c) the ever-changing needs of the job market which have meant that Higher Education has had to provide training in new professional, technological and management fields and in new contexts resulting from the globalization and regionalization of economies.*"

And as far as internal factors are concerned, UNESCO feels that the following have been important for reorganizing teaching and research activities: "*a) the phenomenal progress in science, arising from the development of academic disciplines and their subsequent diversification; b) the growing awareness of the need to promote interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary methods and approaches regarding teaching, training and research; and c) the rapid development of new information and communication technologies and their growing applicability to the different functions and needs of Higher Education.*"

As a result of all this, a varied typology of institutions can be seen in the panorama of contemporary Higher Education, depending on the length and extent of the studies, their academic profile, forms of teaching, the student body, financing sources, national, regional or local scope served by them, etc. Diversification, as UNESCO says, is one of the best accepted tendencies in Higher Education today, and every available means should be used to support it. However, in supporting

the promotion of diversification, one must take care to guarantee the quality of the institutions and programmes, equity as regards access and preservation of the mission and function of Higher Education, with full respect for academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

As far as restrictions in funds and resources is concerned, UNESCO sustains that the correlation between investment in Higher Education and the level of social, economic and cultural development of a country, has been clearly established. It feels too that it is the tendency to cut back on state contributions, or transfer them to the lower levels of education, which is a cause for concern. However, they do not ignore the difficulties faced by developing countries, particularly those that have found themselves obliged to introduce structural adjustment policies.

So, while UNESCO in no way discourages the search for alternative sources of financing that would call for a greater contribution by the private sector and even by well-off parents, UNESCO does point out that the average expenditure per student in Higher Education, in absolute terms, is ten times less in developing countries than in the industrialized world.

Challenges for Higher Education in a constantly changing world.

World society, and contemporary science and technology, are undergoing fundamental and rapid changes. UNESCO's Document states: *"Despite the immense progress made, today's world is confronting tremendous problems and challenges, dominated by demographic changes due to the rapid growth of the population in some parts of the world, outbursts of conflicts and ethnic infighting, hunger, disease, persistent poverty, housing shortages, prolonged unemployment, ignorance and problems related*

to environmental protection, the consolidation of peace and democracy, the respect for human rights and the preservation of cultural identity."

Current international trends are characterized by a series of concurrent processes not exempt from contradiction. The UNESCO Document mentions the following:

- ***Democratization***, which can be seen in the removal and collapse of many totalitarian regimes and in the steady progress of democratic powers.
- ***Globalization***, reflecting the growing independence worldwide of national and local trade and economies, as well as the need to adopt a global approach to handle the problems deriving from this globalization.
- ***Regionalization***, in which the states form groups to facilitate trade and economic integration, as a means of strengthening their competitiveness.
- ***Polarization***, which is evident in the growing inequalities seen at the global, regional and national level and which widen the gap between rich and poor countries and populations, with all the ensuing economic and social consequences of this process.
- ***Marginalization***, which is the result of the international or local isolation of a great many countries, as well as of certain segments of the population, due to their diverse forms of underdevelopment.
- ***Fragmentation***, which promotes social and cultural discord -and which in its extreme form may lead to "*atomization*", through attempts at splitting up states and local communities according to their ethnic, tribal or religious affinities.

According to UNESCO, the common denominator seen at the World Summits and large international conferences, is

that the State, civil society and the professional and business communities must establish national agreements that are conducive to *sustainable human development*. There is also unanimous agreement that the *sine qua non* condition for the challenges currently facing it to be overcome, is the development of human resources. UNESCO sustains that: *“access to Higher Education and to the broader range of services it can give society, is an essential part of any sustainable development program and requires human expertise and high level professional skills.”*

The challenges stemming from the international economy and from the rapid growth and change in the fields of science and technology, can only find an adequate response through the contribution of Higher Education. UNESCO reports that: *“The impact of technological development, especially in information and communications is such that all countries, regardless of their level of industrial development, have to use internationally accepted standards and equipment. This applies not only to hardware but also to organizational structures and the human factor: ‘humanware.’ This either depends on education or is related to education, particularly at the technical and higher levels.”*

UNESCO’s Document draws the following conclusions from the foregoing analysis:

- Higher Education is one of the keys for implementing the processes required to confront the challenges of the modern world.
- Higher Education and other academic, scientific and professional institutions and organizations, through their teaching, training research and services functions, is a necessary factor in the development and application of development strategies and policies.
- What is needed is a new view of Higher Education that would combine the demands of the universality of higher learning with the necessity for it to be more relevant, in

order to meet the expectations of the society in which it functions.

- This view bolsters the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy and, at the same time, emphasizes the responsibility that higher education level teaching has towards society.

A new view of Higher Education

For UNESCO there are three key aspects that determine the strategic position of Higher Education in contemporary society and its internal workings. These are: *relevance, quality and internationalization.*

What does the relevance of Higher Education consist of? According to UNESCO, "*Relevance is considered mainly in terms of Higher Education's role as a system and in terms of the role of each of its institutions towards society. It is also considered in terms of what society expects of Higher Education. Therefore, issues such as the democratization of access and broader opportunities for participation in Higher Education at different stages of life, links with the working world and Higher Education's responsibilities towards the education system as a whole, must be included.*" No less important is the community's participation in solutions to pressing human problems, such as issues involving the population, the environment, peace, international understanding, democracy and human rights. The relevance of Higher Education is perhaps better expressed through the variety of "*academic services*" it offers to society."

The foregoing leads us to re-examine the relationships between Higher Education and civil society and, particularly, between Higher Education and the working world or the production sector. This re-examination will enable Higher Education to produce more and better answers to the problems fac-

ing mankind and to the needs of economic and cultural life, and would be more relevant within the context of the specific problems of a particular region, country or community.

The relationship with the working world is marked by the changing nature of jobs, which call for constantly changing and evolving knowledge and skills. A university graduate must also be increasingly prepared to work with multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary teams. *"Society is moving towards a lifetime-of-learning model for everyone which is gradually replacing the prevailing model of selective concentrated studies over a limited period."* Only a sufficiently flexible Higher Education system can hope to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing job market. As reported in UNESCO's document, *"To sum up, at a time when the 'degree = job' equation can no longer be applied, it is hoped that Higher Education will produce graduates who not only can be job hunters but also entrepreneurs of success and generators of jobs."*

However, it is not enough for Higher Education to cater for the new needs of the job market. UNESCO's documents adds that *"Higher Education institutions must put emphasis on ethical and moral values in society, and strive to awaken an active, participatory civic spirit among future graduates. In order to prepare for professional life, greater emphasis on the personal development of students is also needed. The demand for graduates and courses of study might prove to be the chance to revitalize the Humanities and the Arts in Higher Education and open up new possibilities for creating co-operation links with different public and economic organizations."*

One of UNESCO's prime concerns is the existence of constructive relations between the State and the University, as a requisite for the process to change Higher Education. These relations must be based on strict respect for academic freedom and institutional autonomy, essential principles that give the

Higher Education institutions their individual character and set them apart from education institutions at other levels. "However," says the Document, "the principles of the university chair and institutional autonomy must not be used to conceal professional negligence and/or organizational incompetence. They must involve greater responsibility in academic work, including their ethical context, and in financing matters, self-evaluation of research and teaching, and constant concern for cost-effectiveness. Furthermore, the evaluation and estimation of quality, in particular in public Higher Education institutions, must not be synonymous with excessive outside regulation or be used as a means for restricting public financing. They must function as mechanisms that enable Higher Education to ensure its self-improvement." "...Higher Education has to show that it can compete with other organized interests that expect financial backing from public funding sources."

UNESCO's Document does not avoid speaking out on a very controversial issue, the payment of fees. UNESCO recommends that this topic be dealt with caution, since it touches on many aspects of justice, social mobility, equity and social and fiscal policies in general. Adequate attention must be paid, in any case, to establishing a fee-paying system that goes hand in hand with appropriate aid for needy students, so that no capable young person is refused Higher Education on economic grounds. This policy would be congruent with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which in sub-paragraph 1 of Article 26 reads: "everyone will have equal access to higher studies, based on individual merit."

Faced with the tendency to cut back on state contributions to Higher Education, UNESCO's Document states: "There is a risk that a radically applied policy to separate the State from Higher Education as far as financing is concerned, influenced by the concept of the 'social value' of one rigidly interpreted level of education, may result in excessive pressure on 'covering costs' and on the demands for 'alternative financing' and 'increased internal efficiency'".

in teaching, research and management. Another risk is the excessive demand to 'market' the activities of Higher Education institutions." "Ultimately, if Universities and other Higher Education institutions are expected to make a significant contribution to change and progress in society, the State and society must look on Higher Education as a long-term national investment, rather than as a burden for the public budget, in order to increase economic competitiveness, cultural development and social cohesion. That is also the framework within which the problem of the responsibilities for distributing costs must be handled. To conclude, state subsidized education continues to be essential to guarantee its educational, social and institutional mission."

A key point in the 'new vision' of Higher Education is the reappraisal of teaching at Universities, which is sometimes rather undervalued compared with research. Without undervaluing research as one of the most important tasks of universities, it is important to make a special effort to renew teaching-learning methods and emphasize the teacher's place in the University activities.

The interdependence between the scientific disciplines that characterize contemporary knowledge today, make it essential to increase the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary content of studies. The introduction of the idea of permanent education is, in turn, a result of the obsolescent nature of contemporary science. This means that universities have to make a greater commitment to the emerging model of lifetime learning. These developments have consequences that translate into the need to promote more varied and flexible academic structures and programmes, academic recognition of working experience and even of simple vital experience, i.e. the experience that comes with age.

"The effectiveness of renewing learning and teaching also depends on how knowledge is transmitted. It is becoming increasingly

evident that due to the combined impact of the development of software and hardware in information technology and communication, avenues have now opened for facilitating new types of educational services. This technology-based learning environment raises the need for innovative teaching practices, as well as the general functions of the vast domain consisting of information services." In short, the 'informatics culture' must become part and parcel of university life.

The Document refers to one of the most interesting innovations recently included in teaching-learning processes: *knowledge modules and modular curricula* as an alternative to traditional programmes. "But this means improving the study guidance system, making the right adjustments to enhance the relevance of the course and the formats structured over periods that are used by many faculties, redesigning support for students and tutoring services (particularly in distance Higher Education), as well as opportunities for study credits and transferring staff in different forms and fields of study."

As far as research is concerned, evidently no Higher Education system can fulfil its mission and be a feasible ally for society in general if part of its teaching team and its organizational entities fails to conduct research according to specific institutional goals, academic potential and material resources. UNESCO feels that: "*Despite the fact that the research departments in Higher Education Institutions are costly, they are an essential source of skills and ideas within the context of the world economy, based on constant know-how and technological change. The best way to make the general public, government bodies and economic organizations aware of the role of research in Higher Education, is by demonstrating the academic quality, economic value, humanistic perspective and cultural relevance of research and study programmes and research-related teaching, through convincing results.*"

Another outstanding aspect of the UNESCO Document is its insistence on emphasizing the fact that any education policy must take on the entire education system. Therefore, the Higher Education reform must bear in mind its close interdependence with the other education levels. This coherence derives from the fact that the quality of Higher Education depends on the results of the work of the preceding levels. This is why UNESCO affirms that: "*Higher Education has to play a leading role in the renewal of the entire education system.*"

It is not enough for Higher Education to be more relevant. It must also have a better *quality*. Relevance and quality must go hand in hand. Concern for quality is the main concern in the current debate and is likely to remain so.

The concept of quality in Higher Education is a *multidimensional* concept. Not only does it cover three classical functions of Ortega y Gasset's championing triptych: teaching, research and extension, which amounts to the quality of its teaching staff, the quality of its programme and the quality of its teaching-learning methods, but it also includes the quality of its students, its infrastructure and its academic surroundings. All these aspects related to quality, plus good management, good government and good administration, determine how the University functions and the "*institutional image*" that it projects to society at large.

Quality calls for ongoing, systematic evaluation. Higher Education must introduce institutional evaluation into its everyday affairs, either through self-assessment procedures, or peer assessment.

Concern over the quality of students starts off with the idea that a country's higher level students are its wealth. They are actually the most valuable assets a society can have, given the roles they are expected to play in that society when they graduate. And so it is in the public interest to guarantee the

quality of students. In the future, Universities are going to be judged or evaluated more on the quality of their students than on the quality of their professors, as a result of the emphasis placed today on learning rather than teaching processes.

UNESCO, committed to the idea of renewing Higher Education in the world at large, deems it essential for all Higher Education systems to determine their own mission and bear in mind this new vision we could call the "dynamic" or "proactive university".

This new vision of the "dynamic university" aspires to convert each Higher Education institution into:

- *"a high quality place of training that prepares its pupils to act efficiently and effectively in a wide range of civic and professional functions and activities, including the most varied, most modern and most specialized."*
- *"a place to which access depends mainly on intellectual merit and on the ability to take an active part in its programs, taking care to ensure an equal society."*
- *"a community that is totally devoted to research, creation and the dissemination of know-how, the progress of science, and one that participates in the development of technological innovations and interventions."*
- *"a place for learning based on quality and knowledge alone, which imbues into its future graduates the commitment to keep on learning and the responsibility to put its training at the service of social development."*
- *"a place that takes graduates in order to update and enhance their knowledge and qualifications in the course of institutional practice and culture."*
- *"a community in which co-operation with industry and services, in favour of the region and the nation's economic progress, is promoted and actively encouraged."*

- *“a place where important local, regional, national and international problems and solutions are discussed and looked into from a critical angle, and in which the active participation of citizens in debates on social, cultural and intellectual progress is promoted.”*
- *“a place where governments and other public institutions can go for viable scientific information that is increasingly necessary for the authorities at all levels and that also promotes participation in the decision-making process.”*
- *“a community whose members are entirely dedicated to problems of academic freedom and are committed to the search for the truth, the defence and promotion of human rights, democracy, social justice and tolerance in their own communities and in the world, and are involved in guidance aimed at genuine citizen involvement and the building of a culture of peace.”*
- *“an institution with a prominent place in the international context, with all the inherent threats and possibilities, and one that is able to keep pace with contemporary life and each country’s different characteristics.”*

UNESCO’s final objective in this entire process of change and development in Higher Education is to anticipate the urgent need for a new *“academic pact”* which puts Higher Education in all the Member States *“in a better position to respond to the present and future needs of sustainable human development.”*

The key question that must be asked after all has been said, and one that has deep ethical roots, is: who must the process to change Higher Education serve? Which sectors must benefit from a relevant and better quality Higher Education? The answer, in countries such as ours, is obvious: all social sectors, with priority on attention to the basic needs of the underprivileged sectors. This is an additional challenge for our institutions. It is not enough to meet the needs of the modern exporting sector or the requirements of the production sector,

or international competitiveness. It is absolutely, and ethically, necessary, to turn our attention first and foremost to those who need to alleviate their difficult situation through the contributions that Higher Education is able to make, guided by a clear awareness of its social function.

"University for what?", asks Professor Federico Mayor, Director General of UNESCO, and answers: "University for the higher level preparation of citizens capable of carrying out their various tasks and activities efficiently and effectively, even the most different, the newest and the most specialized ones; for the permanent and intensive training of all citizens who want that level: to update knowledge; to train trainers; to pinpoint and tackle the nation's key problems; to help focus on and solve the broad issues affecting and concerning the entire planet: to collaborate with industry and service companies in the nations progress; to fashion attitudes of understanding and tolerance; to provide governors with elements based on scientific rigor for decision-making on such important matters as the environment, in this progressive process of the scientification of political decisions. University to disseminate and broadcast knowledge. University for everyone, to create, to promote scientific research, innovation, invention. University where what matters is quality rather than degrees, that are frequently senseless. University that provides guidance and is capable of anticipating change. University for objective criticism, for the search for new horizons. University with new contents for genuine, participator citizens, for the pedagogy of peace. University for reducing unacceptable economic and social asymmetries. University to moderate what is superfluous. In short, University to strengthen freedom, dignity and democracy".

On the eve of a new millennium there is nothing more timely than to promote the process of change in our Higher Education institutions, recalling the advice of José Martí, for whom the University should not be a mere factory for turning out professionals, but a place for training citizens who will one day be at the helm of our nations' destiny. But in order to

do so, our university students, according to Martí, must fully comprehend the particular elements of the peoples of America. *"The world may well be transplanted into our republics, but our republics should be the common trunk."* And, he added: *"The European University must give way to the University of the Americas. Just like someone who takes off one cloak to put on another, the old University must be cast aside and the banner of the new one raised."*

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Results

Final Report of the Conference

We are now faced with the task of ending the deliberations and work of this *Regional Conference on Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean*, hosted by the authorities and the people of Cuba, and the island's higher education organizations. Our words of deep gratitude go to them. Both the infrastructure that offered us the basic material elements and the eager contribution of our Cuban colleagues, and the cordial and affectionate atmosphere which surrounds us, guaranteed the participants the conditions necessary for the successful development of the programme.

This Regional Conference is both a culmination and a starting point. Intelligent contributions made during the past two years -emerging from all the different regions of Latin America and the Caribbean- converged in this endeavour. After the appeal made by UNESCO in the *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education*, issued in Febru-

ary 1995, a process started to take shape. It was rich both in results and in perspectives. From our point of view, it must be said that on very few occasions in recent history has an appeal of this nature had the impact that this Document has had on our region.

We can refer to this conference as a culmination because it closes one cycle and opens the next one. This Conference captures the successive floods of ideas that have emerged from all the sub-regions of Latin America and the Caribbean. Countless personal and collective contributions -derived from seminars, conferences, meetings and workshops held during the preparatory phase- have been combined and mutually enriched. They were the result of the joint efforts of professors and researchers, ministers and congressmen, graduates and students, businessmen, unionists, co-operative leaders -in short, our people. These local, national or regional events were held in the most dissimilar places, ranging from class rooms to meeting rooms of the National Congress of the different countries.

However, the Conference it is also a starting point because it will not only produce agreements or declarations, but also working and action commitments that will perpetuate the consequences of this meeting in the anonymity of everyday activities. Beyond the euphoria of words and statements we feel inclined to make, the challenge now lies in facts that will also urge us to continue deliberating.

The Document on Policies and Strategies brought us to this point, not because it told us what we wanted to hear. On the contrary, it deeply shook us when it showed us images in their crudest expressions. It set the record straight and challenged us to start working on the issue. Here we are now. We are analysing a reality where our lives are at stake, not only as members of an academic community, but simply as citizens of a region. In fact, the latter might well be the first fact we all

agree on. Furthermore, this is a reality that is not only affecting us, but also the generations that will follow, those that are already succeeding us.

As Carlos Tünnermann reminded us in his memorable introductory conference, "Latin America is the region where the distribution of wealth is most unfair". There, 200 million people (46% of the total population) live in poverty, 94 million people (22% of the population) live in absolute poverty, i.e. in extreme misery.

- "we will reach the year 2000 with half the population living in a condition of poverty"
- even more so, "60% of the economically active people in the region currently face work-related problems"
- "during the period from 1982 to 1990, the countries in the region transferred abroad 230 billion dollars, accounting for 200% of the value of their exports"
- it can be said that "in the past few decades, Latin America and the Caribbean -as a region- have become even poorer and more marginal"

He then stated that "the debate that is centred around higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean and, in general terms, in the contemporary world as a whole, is characterized by the emergence of a global school of thought. The latter has even been promoted by certain international funding organizations and it calls the efficacy of higher education into question -especially public education. It also questions its economic efficiency and social profitability. It discusses the priority and amounts of investments destined to this educational level."

However, even though it has been once again put to the test, the old and renewed proposal put forward by the reformist movement is still in effect, untouched. Education at every

level is the prime moving force of contemporary society. It will be even more so in the years to come, in the XXI century that is so near, already appearing over the horizon. Beyond frustrations and shortcomings, history and the present of our higher education enable us to receive those signs with optimism.

Quite enough clarity has emerged from the confrontations of ideas, from the agreements and divergences that have characterized these busy days. This clarity will be able to illuminate the course of the new ideas, orientations and tasks of higher education. There are tangible answers, principles that are up to date, objectives adapted to the realities. All of them are pointing to the times that lie ahead of us, though they also point to the certainty that we all agree on. Only the road of transformation -without taboos and fears- can indissolubly connect promises and realities.

Now that the working sessions of the commissions have ended, we are attempting an individual summary of their exchanges and conclusions. Our purpose is to reflect the plurality of approaches and perspectives that characterized this meeting, that has resulted in a production that I can only describe as very rich and almost without limits. This alone is a measure of the intrinsic potentialities of our higher education.

The first issues -among those addressed during the Conference- that we will analyse are the conclusions reached by **Commission 1**. This Commission was entrusted with the task of examining the *Relevance of higher education*, because the first question that must be answered by the academic institutions of the continent is: what for?

Higher education institutions -especially, universities- have significantly contributed to the great transformations undergone by mankind. Latin America and the Caribbean have been no exception.

Nowadays, we are faced with an unknown set of problems. The globalization phenomenon is leading to a growth of the economy, accompanied by the simultaneous exclusion of growing social sectors and the concentration of economic power. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening to unprecedented levels. The regulating role of the State is being eroded, along with the identity itself of our societies. The horizon has been darkened by the shadows of poverty, unemployment, unequal access to health and education, violence and destruction of the environment, all of which are really endangering social coherence.

Today more than ever, knowledge is becoming a strategic element for Nations. Future scenarios will be pervaded by an accelerated rate of creation and application of knowledge. This clearly highlights the role of higher education, as the latter is really the repository of the biggest scientific capacity of the Latin American and Caribbean region, to reverse the crisis that is hitting the region so hard.

Given the magnitude and urgency of the problems, it is absolutely necessary to promote and strengthen higher education, thus turning it into an key instrument for overcoming this sombre panorama as soon as possible. Likewise, higher education could open spaces for an intelligent and responsible solidarity, develop cultural values, reconstruct the social fabric and the State itself. Hence, it will contribute -together with the remaining social sectors- to gradually increase the quality of life of our citizens.

On their own initiative, higher education institutions must generate the transformations that are required in order to become the points of reference of the changes demanded by societies. These changes must emerge from the consensus of their own communities and should respond to the urgency and magnitude of the challenges. In this commitment, au-

tonomy is an indispensable condition that will enable the basic functions of the university to be carried out as fully as possible.

These mutations imply that a permanent dialogue be held with the remaining sectors of society. They also demand an innovating and flexible behaviour, a vocation service, a true respect for the most important values and a strong commitment with the fate of the nations to serve themselves. The degree of relevance that is achieved is the result of consensus. In order to increase the relevance, there is a clear need to work simultaneously in the internal and the external institutional fields.

A definition of relevance is based on the role played and the position held by higher education vis à vis the needs and demands of the different social sectors. The actions that will be formulated will lack a real social sense if they do not anticipate future scenarios and they do not state their intention to modify reality. Social relevance is a requisite for institutional assessment. Excellent services will be useless if they are not adapted to the environment of the institution.

The Conference analysed the fact that the academic activity in the region is questioned. Hence, it entrusted **Commission 2** with the task of addressing the issue of the *Quality of higher education*, considering *assessment and accreditation* as instruments for improving it, making it grow and guaranteeing it.

The concern for quality in higher education seems to be related to a current set of problems which is really complex. Among the factors that justify a specific reflection, mention can be made of the following:

- 1) The overwhelming expansion experienced by higher education in the Continent. This phenomenon is clearly illustrated by the growth and massive expansion of stu-

dent registration, along with the corresponding expansion of the teaching staff.

- 2) The structural difficulty of the educational systems, demonstrated by the very limited relation between its different levels.
- 3) The alarming decrease in budget resources for those growing needs.
- 4) The difficult situation of the teaching staff. A considerable number of professors receive very low remunerations and are facing a situation of deprofessionalization.
- 5) The need to address innovation processes in the study programmes and improvement of the teaching-learning methods.
- 6) The very rapid progress of knowledge and access to information.

Even though it should not be taken as an absolute category, quality is one of the main concepts inherent to higher education. As an initial approach, it could be defined as the adaptation of the *raison d'être* and activities of higher education to what education is supposed to be.

It is a human activity, the consequence of deliberate actions that are aimed at achieving satisfactory results, that are fully in agreement with predetermined purposes. The problem lies in not imposing on higher education and its pertinent activities a concept of quality that violates the qualities inherent to higher education.

The quality of higher education is a multidimensional concept which includes universal and specific characteristics that are associated with the nature of the institutions and their related knowledge, as well as the problems posed vis à vis the different social contexts within the framework of national, regional and local priorities. Quality is basically linked to social

relevance, to education and to the commitments of both professors and researchers.

The social responsibility inherent in the activities of higher education institutions must be taken specially into account in that initial definition and division. That responsibility emerges most specifically when it renders accounts for its global performance vis-à-vis society.

Hence, quality cannot be conceived separately, but in close reference to other categories related to higher education -among them, relevance and effectiveness. Though they are three different concepts, in practice, they mutually need each other.

Quality is conditioned by the resources allocated to higher education. The prolonged crisis that in this respect affects most of the countries in the area, severely limits the possibility of attaining the objectives and tasks planned by the academic institutions.

In this global world of ours, where the mass communication media restrict national cultural identities, higher education must recover these roots as an uncompromising unity. There lies one of the dimensions of quality, as well as of relevance.

The quality of higher education is also conditioned by the rest of the education system. However, it also interacts with the latter. Higher education institutions have the responsibility to implement modalities to ensure articulation with the remaining subsystems, addressing their problems along with them and collaborating to design and implement solutions.

The quality of teaching is built basically on the conception, design and development of study programmes. In this field, the linear notion will have to be substituted by an integrated education that can produce creative, reflective and poly-

functional professionals. In this teaching-learning process, the student will accentuate his quality of being an active subject, the player in his own process of learning and progress. This will be made possible by virtue of an advanced, continuous, open and critical training system.

There are other measures, namely:

- the creation of a multinational common academic space for the development of regional postgraduate courses and the publishing of joint publications,
- the pedagogical improvement of the teaching staff,
- the assimilation of information science and remote education technologies, as well as putting the merits of teaching activities at the same level as those of research. All these are concrete measures for improving the educational system in the short term.

Assessment and accreditation are permanent instruments for achieving this objective of a rapid improvement. Most specifically, assessment is the counterpart of a responsible autonomy. It reflects the commitment of academic institutions to the aspirations of their surrounding social environment.

It must be built on the pertinent parameters, criteria and indicators, respecting the national identity. It cannot be conceived as an imposed model. On the contrary, it should be adapted to the nature of the object, so as to avoid inconvenient uniformities that go against creativity and self initiative. In the case of internal assessments, the participation of the university community is a factor that can not be avoided. When dealing with the external assessment, autonomy has to be completely protected.

Although it is initially aimed at increasing quality, an assessment also deals with the other values that are inherent to higher education.

Accreditation is a tool that has been devised for defending general interests vis-à-vis the confused diversification of higher education systems. This function must be entrusted to independent academic bodies.

If management is not improved, quality will lack a solid base, therefore the systematic training of specialized human resources should be addressed.

In view of the prolonged crisis brought about by the drop in resources allocated to academic activities in the Continent, the Conference entrusted **Commission 3** with the analysis of the *Management and financing of higher education*. Its conclusions included the following two premises:

- 1) The heterogeneity of the education systems of the region. This heterogeneity extends to the educational modalities of the systems, the institutions and even the academic cultures that exist within the latter. This heterogeneity is largely explained by the global historical, economic, social and cultural conditions of each country.
- 2) The issue of financing must be addressed as a part of the other topics that have been analysed at the Conference, in the different working commissions. Financing is related to relevance, efficiency, quality and international co-operation.

Analysis and formulation of funding proposals and the management of higher education in the region must start out from some principles that are the recognition of the basis of higher education. These include:

- 1) The process of economic development in the current scenario should have a sustainable development as its main objective, in order to achieve a better quality of life for the population.

- 2) Governments must take into account that there is no development without a higher education based on research. The increase in productivity and competitiveness of countries requires a capacity to incorporate science and technology in the production processes. Hence, countries should develop an endogenous research capacity, along with the capacity to produce science and technology. However, this is impossible without consolidated and efficient education systems. Consequently, the role of universities is growing in significance and their leadership is more demanding. Investing in higher education is really investing in development.
- 3) The integral formation of the higher education student in humanistic components and professional training in order to guarantee future generations who will have to assume the tremendous challenges of leading Latin America and the Caribbean to higher levels of development, as soon as possible, having as a reference the new century and millennium. Faced with this unavoidable perspective, the mission of higher education, cannot be defined on the basis of the financial restrictions of the countries.
- 4) Estimating the value of education exclusively in terms of cost/benefit, implies a reductionist vision of development. Besides, it poses serious methodological limitations. It also implies an approach to the significance of higher education that ignores its value in building a nation. It also rules out its social value and its scope as a means for creating a more open, fair and democratic society.

Higher education in the Continent must and wishes to rise to the occasion with no further delays. *Knowledge and the use of new information and communication technologies* can offer

an immediate answer. This was the issue that was entrusted to **Commission 4**.

Knowledge and the use of new information and communication technologies generate an interactive development that modifies the inputs, processes and products of the higher education system as part of culture and of society as a whole. This dynamic interaction has a transforming action on the other components of the system, especially teaching, learning, research, extension and lifelong education.

It is necessary for higher education institutions, with the support of their governments, among others, to give priority to the introduction of these technologies and to provide adequate training for their use, which influences the selection, retrieval and evaluation of information, and contributes to the ethical development that this new revolution requires.

Through the new information and communication technologies, the right to information as a part of an education for all will assert itself, without any exclusion. It will also be necessary to formulate policies that guarantee the fulfilment of this objective as a basis for social, scientific and technological development.

The main feature of the debate of this Commission was the tendency to submit concrete proposals. The action plan contains a summary of those proposals.

Among many other things, this Conference has clearly shown us that the higher education institutions of Latin America and the Caribbean must join efforts in order to overcome the obstacles in their way. Hence, **Commission 5** was set up to formulate a *Reorientation of the international co-operation within the scope of higher education*.

In the framework of the transformation effort being promoted by our universities and higher education institutions, it

is necessary to reformulate international cooperation from the perspective of the new trends of future impact on higher education, science and technology to strengthen and revitalize the intellectual, cultural, scientific, technological, humanitarian and social capabilities of the region.

The current regional Latin American context, and its general problems, demand the analysis of different co-operation versions tried in the past, and especially the more recent experiences that have been developed at a horizontal level.

This new type of horizontal co-operation is aimed at revitalizing the endogenous conditions of development and at establishing operational formulas emerging from the exercise of co-operation itself. These experiences must be multiplied to respond to a period of structural changes which by their very nature require new schemes and the surmounting of traditional models.

Thus a new cooperation paradigm emerges which does not attempt to substitute traditional relationships with the agencies in charge of technical and/or financial assistance, but enriches them, in a policy of peers based on the new conditions of the region. In this context, co-operation must be directed towards overcoming the asymmetries that exist within the framework of collaboration where a rationale of integration and unity to overcome mutual differences is given priority.

It is necessary to work within the priority areas with shared resources and pro-active horizontal structures, and which make it possible to implement innovative programmes of research, teaching and coordination.

The intensification of the exchanges between higher education institutions of the region is underway, which requires coordination institutions. In this respect, the Regional Centre

of UNESCO for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRESALC) seems to be the appropriate organization for implementing those postulates. To do so, its structure would have to be transformed and its functions would have to be updated. This would enable CRESALC to combine its activities with the networks and associations that already exist, and to promote the expansion of regional academic co-operation.

After an exhaustive evaluation of the international and regional context, international co-operation experiences and the conditions affecting the university and higher education, the pertinent commission has unanimously formulated a proposal which is developed in the guide for preparing an action plan.

Declaration about higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean

Ratifying the terms of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which states in article 26, paragraph 1 that “every person has the right to education” ... and that “the access to higher education studies will be equal for all, on the basis of their corresponding merits”. Ratifying, in turn, the contents of the *Convention against discrimination in education* (1960), which states in article IV, that the signatory States commit themselves “to ... offer all people alike higher education on the basis of a real equality and pursuant to the skills of each individual ...”.

Starting out from the trends identified in the *Policy Paper for change and development in higher education*, published by UNESCO in 1995, and on the bases of the studies, debates and reflections on that document that have been made since that date in the region, which have made the recommendation of strengthening equity, quality, relevance and internationalization of higher education.

Taking into account the fact that as we enter the XXI century, and faced with the growth of unemployment, poverty and misery, mankind must actively address the following issues: growth with equity, the protection of the environment and the peace-building process. Furthermore, following the recommendations made by the United Nations, via: (a) the *Agenda for Peace*, that contains principles and suggestions about the preventive measures that will protect peace, as well as effective actions for restoring peace when uncontrollable conflicts emerge, and (b) the *Agenda for Development*, that establishes the conceptual bases for fostering a sustainable and permanent human development.

Highlighting that human development, democracy and peace are inseparable elements -as stated in the medium-term strategy of UNESCO (1996-2001), that orients the higher education programmes of the Organization towards three objectives: to expand access, the permanence in the system and the possibilities of success to higher education with no discrimination whatsoever; improve its management and strengthen the links with the world of work; and to contribute to building peace and promoting development based on justice, equity, solidarity and freedom.

Adopting the Report submitted to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century, in which, in addition to reaffirming the above mentioned options, it establishes that the universities of developing countries have the obligation to carry out research that can help solve the most serious problems those countries are suffering, given that "they are the ones that should propose new approaches to development, so that they can build a better future and do so in a more effective manner."

Acknowledging that economic and social development highly depend on training a highly skilled staff, specifically in

this most special stage in history, characterized by the emergence of a new production paradigm based on the power of knowledge and the adequate handling of information. Acknowledging, also, that it depends on the potential to create a knowledge that satisfies the specific needs and lacks of the region, and that the latter is derived almost solely from higher education institutions -the institutions of knowledge that generate, criticize and disseminate it.

Accepting, on the one hand, that the gap that currently separates the countries of the region from the developed nations, is manifested -among other aspects- in education (rates of third-level schooling), technological research and development (size of the scientific and technical staff, investment in R & D), as well as information and communications, as established in the *Report on Human Development of the United Nations Development Programme*, published in 1996. Likewise, accepting, on the other hand, that the source of R & D in almost all the countries in the region is public and that the highest percentage of research units operates within the framework of universities, as established in the *World Report on Science* published by UNESCO in 1993.

Warning that, without adequate higher education and research institutions, developing countries cannot expect to adopt and apply the most recent development, and even less so, to make their own contributions to development and to reduce the gap which separates these countries from industrialized nations.

Taking due note of the fact that higher education in the region shows the following trends: (a) an outstanding expansion of student registration; (b) a persistence of inequalities and difficulties when attempts are made to democratize knowledge; (c) a relative restriction of public investments in this sector; (d) a rapid multiplication and diversification of institu-

tions that work in the field of third-level education; and, (e) a growing participation of the private sector in the composition of the education supply.

Estimating that efforts have been made by higher education institutions, the governments of some Latin American and Caribbean countries, or, the societies themselves of several countries in the region, aimed at increasing the rates of post secondary education. And further estimating that, despite those efforts, many of these nations are still far from achieving the coverage and quality required by the globalization, regionalization and economic opening processes, as well as from achieving a real democratization of knowledge.

Specifying that these trends, also observed at an international level, coincide with simultaneous, though sometimes contradictory processes of internationalization, regionalization, polarization, democratization, isolation and fragmentation, that have an effect on the development of higher education. And specifying, in turn, that the burden of the foreign debt, the increase in the value of imports of goods and services, the drop in the share of world trade, are elements in the region that lead to a situation of social inequality. Furthermore, specifying that the countries of the area should attempt to confront these problems with regional and sub-regional groups and implementation of different social policies.

Highlighting that, in these times of economic, political or social change -both positive and negative in nature- higher education is called to assume a leading role and to critically study these changes, while at the same time making prospective efforts aimed at predicting and even conducting them via the creation and dissemination of the pertinent knowledge; and to this end, higher education must assume its own transformation with the help of society as a whole, not only that of the education sector alone.

Remembering that in the case of Latin America, the Córdoba Reform (1918) -though responding to the needs of a society that was completely different from our own- was characterized by its clear support to the movement of university democratization, and that it insisted on the need to create solid and diversified links between university activities and the needs of society -a process that is currently re-emerging to guide the process of transformation of higher education that is underway in the region; and that this is seen as a continuous phenomenon aimed at designing an original institutional scheme adapted to satisfy the current and future needs of their countries.

Pointing out that any attempt at improving the quality and relevance of higher education requires a significant transformation of the education system as a whole; that the solution of the financial problems faced by higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean will not stem from redistributing the scarce resources that are allocated to the different levels in this sector, but will be the result of transferring resources from other sectors that are not a real priority, while at the same time improving the distribution of income and diversifying financing sources; and, that this has to be the result of a search undertaken with the participation of the State, civil society, professional and business communities in order to respond -jointly and equitably- to the needs of the different sectors that make up society.

The participants of the Regional Conference of UNESCO on *Policies and strategies for the transformation of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean*, from 24 countries of the region, and assembled in Havana, Cuba, from November 18 to 22, 1996, do hereby declare that

1. Education in general and higher education in particular are essential instruments for fully confronting success

the challenges posed by the modern world and for educating citizens to build a more open and fair society, based on solidarity, respect for human rights and the shared use of knowledge and information. At the same time, higher education is an unavoidable element for social development, production, economic growth, strengthening the cultural identity, maintaining social coherence, continuing the struggle against poverty and the promotion of the culture of peace.

2. Knowledge is a social asset that can only be generated, transmitted, criticized and recreated for the benefit of society, in plural and free institutions that have full autonomy and academic freedom. However, they must also have a clear awareness of their responsibility and an indomitable will to serve in the search for solutions to the demands, needs and wants of society, to which they should be accountable in order to fully exercise their autonomy. Higher education will be able to fulfil this important task only if it demands the highest quality of itself. In this respect, a continuous and permanent assessment is a most valuable instrument.
3. Higher education must strengthen its capacity to perform a critical analysis, to anticipate and to have a prospective vision, in order to prepare alternative development proposals and confront the emerging problems of a reality undergoing a process of continuous and rapid transformation, with a long term vision.
4. Higher education institutions must adopt organizational structures and education strategies that make them highly dynamic and flexible, thus enabling them to respond with both the timeliness and anticipation needed to creatively and efficiently face an uncertain future. They must facilitate an exchange of students between institu-

tions and between different degree courses of the same institution. They will have to assume -without any further delays- the paradigm of permanent education. They will have to become relevant centres for helping professionals to be up to date, retrained and reconverted. Hence, they will have to offer a solid training in the basic disciplines, together with a wide diversification of programmes and studies, intermediate diplomas and links between courses and subjects. Likewise, they must endeavour to ensure that the activities of extension and dissemination are an important element of the academic life.

5. The nature itself of contemporary knowledge -in a process of constant renewal and sudden and dramatic growth - fully agrees with the current concept of permanent education. This must be an indissoluble supplement of studies aimed at obtaining degrees and titles. They must offer graduates the possibility of taking refresher courses and of adapting to changing realities that are very difficult to anticipate. Lifelong education should also enable any person -at whatever stage of his/her life- to go back to the classrooms and to find in them the opportunity to be a part of the academic life once again. In this way, people are allowed to attain new levels of professional training. In fact, the competence acquired has a value in itself that goes beyond the mere credential.
6. Higher education must implement pedagogical methods based on knowledge, in order to train graduates to learn how to learn and how to undertake. In this way, they will be better prepared to generate their own jobs. They might even be able to create production entities that can help combat the scourge of unemployment. There is a clear need for promoting the spirit of inquiry. Hence, the student will have the tools to search for

knowledge in a permanent and systematic way. This implies revising the pedagogical methods that are currently being used and the emphasis now placed on the transmission of knowledge will switch to the process for generating it, so that students will have the instruments they require in order to learn how to learn, how to know, how to live together and how to be.

7. In a changing society, a comprehensive, general and professional education is necessary, that encourages the development of a person as a whole and should favour his/her personal growth, autonomy, socialization and the capacity to turn the assets that perfect it into values.
8. A higher education system will be fulfilling its responsibility and conscientiously carry out its mission -thus turning into a profitable social element- if a part of its teaching staff and institutions also performs activities of intellectual creation (scientific, technical and humanistic), which must be in agreement with the specific objectives of the institution, its teaching capabilities and its material resources.
9. It is absolutely necessary to introduce a solid culture of information in the higher education systems of the region. The adequate combination of information and communication redefines the need to update pedagogical practices at a university level. Its actors also need to participate in the major academic networks and have access to the pertinent exchange with all the related institutions. Likewise, they must increase their degree of opening and their interactions with the international academic community. At the same time, higher education institutions must assume the main task of preserving and strengthening the cultural identity of the region. In this way, the above mentioned opening will not en-

danger the cultural values that are typical of Latin America and the Caribbean.

10. Among the challenges posed by this turn of the century, higher education is now facing the need to participate resolutely in the qualitative improvement of all the levels of the education system. Its most concrete contributions can be made a reality via: training teachers; transforming students into active agents of their training; promoting socio-educational research into problems like early school drop-out and repeating; and ensuring its contribution to the design of State policies in the field of education. Every higher education policy must be comprehensive and must address and take into due account all the components of the education system. Most specifically, it must do so in the context of an "education for all", as set out in the *World Conference on Education for All* (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) -on a world scale- and in the *Major Project in the Field of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean* -at a regional level.
11. Higher education institutions of our region must instil in their graduates the awareness that they really belong to the community of Latin American and Caribbean nations. Hence, they must promote processes aimed at regional integration. Furthermore, cultural and educational integration should be the bases for political and economic integration. Faced with the formation of new economic spaces within the current framework of globalization and regionalization, higher education institutions must address their studies of Latin American integration in the light of their economic, social, cultural, ecological and political aspects, among others. This will be their main task and they should address the problems with an interdisciplinary approach.

12. Founded on the *Regional Convention and on the International Recommendation* on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean, there is a need to encourage academic and professional mobility. The purpose is to benefit the process of economic, educational, political and cultural integration of the region.
13. Both the transfer and the exchange of experiences between higher education institutions -key elements of the UNITWIN programme and the UNESCO Chairs- are indispensable for promoting knowledge and ensuring that the latter is applied to encourage development. Inter-university co-operation can be further facilitated by the constant progress observed in the field of information and communication technologies. At the same time, it can be strengthened by the current economic and political integration processes, as well as by the growing need for a real inter-cultural understanding.
14. The considerable expansion of different types of networks and other instruments and mechanisms for linking up institutions, professors and students is a key issue in the collective search for equity, quality and relevance in higher education. This is specifically the case now, when no institution can hope to master all the areas of knowledge.
15. Public support for higher education is still indispensable. The challenges faced by higher education are also challenges for society as a whole. They include governments, the production sector, the world of work, organized civil society, academic associations, together with regional and international organizations responsible for the training, research, development or financing programmes.

16. In view of all the considerations above, all the actors must combine efforts and start acting to promote the process of the in-depth transformation of higher education. To this end, they must be based on a new “social consensus” that enables higher education institutions to be better positioned and thus able to respond to current and future needs for a sustainable human development. In the immediate future, this aspiration will gradually become more concrete, as the action plan designed in this Conference is implemented.

Guide for preparing an action plan

The main purpose of the Conference was to devise an action plan that would summarize the conclusions and recommendations issued by each of the commissions. However, the meeting turned into a real hotbed of ideas and proposals that grew into a such a strong flow of ideas that it was not possible to prepare the plan during the five working days. In order not to lose any of the excellent contributions that were made, we have chosen to submit them to a period of minimum distillation.

In agreement with the organizers, we offer this compilation entitled "*Guide for preparing an Action Plan*" and CRESALC has been entrusted with the task of preparing a concrete programme that will be implemented in the short term.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS OF COMMISSION 1: RELEVANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

1. To procure the universalisation of advanced education of high quality and permanently subject to revision, in order to increase the spaces for new generations.
2. To integrate higher education institutions with the remaining levels of education, with the object of forming an articulated system in which they should assume a proactive behaviour aimed at identifying failures. Their contribution could be translated through applied research and their participation in the initial training of teachers, and in the improvement and updating of qualified staff, and advising in the design of curricular models.
3. To systematically organize its functions in order to fulfil the principle of permanent education and to attend to the training of workers, graduates and their own teaching staff, by means of formal and non-formal education plans.
4. To guarantee the principle of universal access to higher education and free higher education, in order to improve equity and ensure an adequate quality and effectiveness of studies.
5. To ensure the standardization of quality levels, without taking into account social levels, sex or geographical location, in order to improve equity.
6. To revitalize the reform of the study programmes, introducing flexible mechanisms in order to anticipate the signals from the world of work.

7. To guarantee the incorporation of vital values such as: freedom, human rights, social responsibility, ethics, and solidarity. At the same time, develop the capacity to relate knowledge to its application, knowing with doing, and the enterprising nature that should characterize graduates.
8. To actively participate in the formulation and implementation of national scientific and technical policies.
9. To evaluate the capacity to produce endogenous knowledge that makes possible forms of intelligent and fraternal development, to increase competitiveness, organization capacity and efficiency, to contribute to the reconstruction of the state and society.
10. To make the disciplinary and professional structures more permeable and flexible, recognizing the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to explore and experiment with proposals that must be original to solve our social problems.
11. To promote the University Civil Service via regular services by teachers and students in society, as a way to reinforce the extension function and revitalize the application of knowledge and understanding of reality.
12. To revitalize the capacity to study reality in a proactive way, via a dialogue with the different social sectors, receiving the problems posed, identifying the true nature of the obstacles and opportunities and promoting the necessary research activities required to prepare the proposals internally.
13. To accompany in an active way the regional and sub-regional integration processes with the object of making possible projects aimed at improving the quality of life

and wellbeing of Latin American and Caribbean society. Evaluate with the Bolivar Programme the possibilities of cooperation with the productive sector.

14. To promote the organization of academic networks together with the *Latin American Economic System (SELA)*, to optimize the analysis of development processes and external insertion, and to improve the decision-making process in the public and private sectors.
15. To stimulate, within the university ambience, initiatives which make it possible to determine the degree of relevance attained and its development.
16. To promote through the organization of a regional seminar, with the participation of representative sectors of society, the study, revision and eventual proposals to reform the legal structures that regulate higher education in our countries with the object of guaranteeing its greater relevance in harmony with the Latin American ideal.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS OF COMMISSION 2:

QUALITY, ASSESSMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

1. To promote the consolidation of the regional academic community -multinational, in nature- via the creation of ad-hoc organizations.
2. To stimulate the development of regional postgraduate studies, via the creation of networks.
3. To give pedagogic training to the teachers of the region and, in general, promote their professional, scientific and pedagogic improvement.

4. To make the self examination of higher education a curricular discipline, aimed at all the academic community, so that knowledge and learning nourish higher education's commitment to its improvement.
5. To counteract the danger of endogamic trends, creating a culture of assessment that is based on the objectives and commitments of academic institutions, and which binds them to their obligations.
6. To create multilateral teams to study and identify common values that serve as the structural framework for formulating policies and strategies.
7. To place the above mentioned multilateral teams in strategic higher education study centres and institutes, so that through them, the countries of the continent can confront these challenges jointly.
8. To establish common parameters for external assessment of the postgraduate programmes that are internationally accepted.
9. To incorporate experts from different countries in the external assessment processes.
10. To promote research into higher education, including the creation of UNITWIN Networks and UNESCO Chairs.
11. To integrate students in all these tasks.
12. To develop in-class or distance lifelong education programmes.
13. To support the programmes for training young researchers (master's degrees and PhDs), encouraging the complementary relation between institutions from different countries.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS OF COMMISSION 3: MANAGEMENT AND FINANCING

Financing strategies

1. Governments must guarantee the fulfilment of the right to education. Consequently, they should assume responsibility for financing education, within the framework of the conditions and demands inherent in each educational system, without abandoning any of the levels of the education system, or redefining investment criteria, so that the latter expresses the importance given to education in the political discourse.
2. The public financing policy must go hand in hand with supplementary government initiatives such as: credits and scholarships for the students, as well as the creation of financial funds that increase the resources allocated to the higher education system.
3. Likewise, governments must encourage higher education institutions to make real use of their capacities, and to take into account their potentials for the study and integral solution of problems as well as for the identification and best use of development and integration opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean. At the same time, they must strengthen the capacities of the corresponding national Ministries of Education, so that their function is more organic and efficient with regard to the higher education in each country.
4. It must be understood that the nature and mission of higher education prevails as a criterion for identifying additional financing sources. Bearing this in mind, the institutions must develop strategies for increasing their own resources which also contribute to their financing.

In this line of action, the priorities are: transfer of services, continuous education, co-operation of the university with the production sector, the goods and services sector and society as a whole. The needs of the latter have to be regarded as pressing by all the higher education institutions in the region. They will have to strive to seek or regain the confidence of society in their activities.

5. Acting proactively, the institutions must make changes in the academic, administrative and management fields; a methodological revolution of the working modalities of the institutions is fundamental. These must reformulate the educational model they have and the type of training they wish for their graduates. Integral formation, the rescue of ethical values and the acquisition of a social responsibility by those passing through the institutions is an urgent task to be carried out. In this context the search for financing should never distort the nature of these institutions.
6. The burden of the cost of education should not be transferred to the student, because the issue of equity must be addressed at all the levels of education. The concept of higher education as a public asset implies that its appraisal cannot be restricted to economic quantitative indicators. Its priority should rather be a social appraisal in the perspective of human development. Given that the University fulfils a key social function, the State cannot abandon its financing responsibility. Hence, it must ensure strategies for reallocating public spending, for changing the fiscal legislation, and attempt to progressively redirect taxes. Likewise, it must support institutions in their search for additional financing sources to public financing, provided the procurement of resources of their own is not detrimental to their functions.

7. There is a firm belief that the availability or absence of resources for higher education institutions in our region is not an economic, nor a financial problem. It is rather a strictly political problem that falls within the framework of the domestic and international decisions aimed at ensuring the autonomous development of each country.
8. The funds for financing higher education from multilateral organizations must be granted on the basis of criteria that take into account the interests and needs of the actors of higher education.
9. Measures taken in this field must effectively be aimed at complying with the recommendations made to the countries of the Region in the "*Mexico Declaration*" (1979), in that the countries must increase their budgets allocated to education until the latter is no less than a 7% of the Gross National Product.

Management improvement strategies

10. The management of higher education should help the systems and institutions to fully and clearly identify the changes that have taken place in their environment, as well as the prevailing historical conditions, and to obtain the capacity to adapt themselves to the speeds at which the phenomena occur in the different fields.
11. As regards research into higher education, and the advisability of the researchers themselves assuming the vanguard in promoting and carrying out research in this field was underlined, as well as the need for the institutions to establish and specify explicit policies in this field.
12. The set of proactive policies, strategies and actors identified in a first approach to the management model would include:

- 12.1 The permanent modernization and updating of the legal aspects related to the systems and the institutions.
- 12.2 Prospective direction of the change, via the creation of specialized centres or units that have the support and the participation of public and higher education institutions, among others.
- 12.3 Training high level leaders for higher education and development by means of strategies for setting up special programmes based on inter-institutional co-operation, with the aid of excellence centres, networks and other institutional resources.
- 12.4 Communicational ones, via the strategy of implementing special programmes and the combination of resources coming from teaching, extension and research units and bodies.
- 12.5 Financial ones, via the strategy for setting up the correspondence between relevance and quality, resources required with public funds and new strategies, with the assistance of different actors that are related to financing, both in higher education itself and in its surroundings.
- 12.6 Those dealing with administrative and decision-making optimization, via strategies for modernizing routines, the preparation of decision-making models, equipment for automated processing, based on integral information systems that are reliable, transparent, appropriate and timely.
- 12.7 Coordination that reformulates both strategies and lines of action of those organizations that represent corporate power in the institutions,

with the object of facilitating the consensus that is indispensable for the successful implementation of decisions to achieve the educational projects.

- 12.8 Creation of an information system that makes the internal operating conditions of the institutions more transparent, making research into higher education in the Region possible.

Proposals for restructuring CRESALC

A reform of CRESALC is proposed in an attempt to channel the actions proposed and to implement the action plan of this Conference. This reform will enable CRESALC to effectively co-ordinate the actions that have been proposed, implement those that are within its competence, and strengthen itself as an institution; its lines of action would consist of the following, among others:

13. Carrying out studies, analyses, projects and research activities to support the generation of public policies and other initiatives related to higher education in the region;
14. Being a space for the discussion of issues, temporary problems, long-term challenges and opportunities related to higher education in the region;
15. Having an education programme that helps train and update the top management in higher education and their institutions in the region;
16. Being an information centre that supports the work of the research groups and the academic communities in the field of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the actors of civil society, the State and

the production apparatus of both goods and services, developing exchange and dissemination documentary processes with the pertinent entities.

17. Co-ordinating the UNESCO Chairs in the Region.
18. Strengthening the actions and the presence of UNESCO in the Region.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS OF COMMISSION 4: NEW INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (NICT)

1. Due to the fact that massive access to new information and communication technologies (NICT) is an instrument that can modernize wide sectors of higher education in the region, UNESCO can make a most significant contribution in this respect, by recommending the governments of the Latin American and Caribbean region to adopt programmes aimed at increasing investments in joint information and telecomputing infrastructures, and in this way, obtain the resources required to finance domestic university networks, as well as the future foundation of the Latin American education network. Likewise, they will be advised to develop domestic policies for their connection to global networks, favouring access to INTERNET and promoting INTRANETS.
2. Teachers and professors of the region must be given a training that enables them to integrate the use of NICTs in their teaching programmes, and prepare them to act as multipliers of the use of these technologies. On the other hand, modifying the study programmes of the degree courses related to Information Sciences plays a

key role in the field of training professionals entrusted with the main role of creating and facilitating information, rather than simply systematizing it. Parallel to this, the study programmes of higher education should include, from now onwards and in all degree courses, the use of these technologies as indispensable tools for both learning and exercising their professional practice, in order to promote the creation of a new information culture in this perspective, in which an unavoidable need is the introduction of highly trained staff specialized in telematics.

3. Design and implement campaigns to raise public awareness, aimed at different levels of the higher education institutions, with the purpose of generating a significant and deep change in the perceptions of students, teachers and researchers about the value of information and the wide opportunities offered by these technologies in the field of academic work.
4. To put forward the proposal that UNESCO convenes a World Conference on Information (paradigm of the XXI Century), which should be preceded by Regional Conferences, inviting all the actors who are linked, in one way or another, to the use and production of information and to the new technologies for preserving, accessing and disseminating information.
5. To request UNESCO to promote the creation of a Regional Centre to study the behaviour of decision-makers in relation to the use of information and knowledge.
6. To recommend that UNESCO fosters the organization and creation of committees of thinkers and creators in an attempt to promote the use and application of NICT-based information and knowledge, both nationwide and at a Latin American level.

7. To invite UNESCO to promote the use of financing sources to contract experts from Latin America and the Caribbean for specific developments via virtual media or remote work facilities. In this way, the financing that is available would be better used and bureaucratic spending would be considerably cut back.
8. To urge UNESCO to promote actions -via its education, communication, informatics and information sectors- to promote projects that introduce NICTs in the study programmes of schools at primary and secondary levels.
9. To set up a commission or body to co-ordinate the implementation and evaluation of programmes aimed at generating the development of education based on the use of the NICTs and communication to facilitate the transmission and/or generation of knowledge in the region.
10. To carry out systematic research into the transfer of information and its relation to learning.
11. To strengthen and expand the distance education programmes that use new information and communication technologies.
12. To facilitate the use of NICTs in the distance education programmes, via the creation of the corresponding local capacities, involving the companies that are interested in training their staff by means of these methods to obtain the necessary finance for this purpose, increasing the co-operation between universities and other organizations. To promote the idea that financing for the countries of Latin America should be devoted to distance education via the use of NICTs, maintaining in first place the human component as the key element, supplemented by technologies.

13. To promote the creation of University Centres that produce multimedia for teaching activities, information services and the preservation and dissemination of the Latin American and Caribbean documentary resources.
14. To favour national and international agreements of higher education institutions, aimed at developing multimedia products and carrying out joint academic activities based on the NICTs.
15. To make use of the INFOLAC server so as to have a regional focal WWW location of the higher education institutions.
16. To identify centres of excellence in the NICTs in the region, co-ordinating them as a network and disseminating their experiences.
17. To transform the university libraries into corridors leading to the INTERNET and the INTRANETS.
18. To promote INFOLAC to maintain a permanent forum on knowledge and the use of the NICTs.
19. To propose the creation of at least one UNESCO chair on the NICTs.
20. To foster intercommunication of all the actors in the knowledge and use of the NICTs, as well as implementing models that allow them to be adjusted and generalized.

Conclusions and proposals of Commission 5: Reorienting international co-operation

1. To urge universities to include special budget items for horizontal regional co-operation.

2. To promote the creation of specialized units for managing international co-operation in each university, as well as the central professional associations.
3. To promote a Network of Networks, resulting from the combination of efforts of the different ventures underway in the region, namely: the Montevideo Group (AUGM), UNAMAZ, UNICA, CSUCA, among others.
4. To promote the concept of academic consortia in co-operation initiatives, to make the best use of the existing facilities, laboratories, infrastructure and resources.
5. To consider the following as priorities in the field of international co-operation: the environment and sustainability, the new social actors and the participation of ethnic, linguistic, type and class minorities as spokesmen and main characters involved in the processes of change of higher education.
6. To put forward the proposal that Portuguese should also be an official language in future Latin American and Caribbean meetings of international co-operation.
7. Likewise, as mentioned in the General Report Commission 5 unanimously adopted the following proposal:
 - 7.1 To recommend that UNESCO turn CRESALC into an autonomous institution in charge of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, within the framework, sets of rules and specificities that this international organization maintains.
 - 7.2 To invite all the -regional, sub-regional and national associations of universities and higher education institutions, the representatives of private and public universities and higher education institutions, the networks of institutions

and research and teaching work groups, as well as development organizations and agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations- and those who were not present due to different reasons which participated in this regional conference to adhere to this key recommendation made by Commission No. 5.

- 7.3 To suggest that this new entity:
 - 7.3.1 Compiles the resolutions and action plan that have emerged from this conference, in order to give its tasks a meaning and to frame them within a programme, from the perspective of setting up a centre of evaluation, extension and information, and a data base of the Latin American system of universities and institutions of higher education, science, technology and humanities, as a collegiate body of horizontal co-ordination and co-operation, and a centre for the research, development and training of the new intellectual and cultural capital to revitalize the endogenous and creative capabilities of our countries.
 - 7.3.2 Be supported by a broad representative regional consultative body of organizations, associations, networks and co-operation programmes that will work for the success of its implementation and development.
 - 7.3.3 Promotes and co-ordinates activities and tasks carried out within the framework of the UNITWIN programme and the UNESCO chairs that are underway in the continent, and also to support, promote and co-ordinate research and training activities of other organizations and associations.

- 7.4 It is also recommended that:
- 7.4.1 The Cooperative Network of Higher Education Institutions for the Pedagogic Formation and Improvement of Higher Education (REDES-LAC) be reinforced in order to promote the use and management of new learning technologies and to strengthen the ties and communication media for the purpose of academic co-operation and exchange.
 - 7.4.2 Mechanisms are implemented to assess its work and offer advice in this field, to have a favourable impact on the quality of teaching and research into higher education, and above all to guarantee the permanence, influence and reproduction of our intellectual capacity.
 - 7.4.3 To support and promote the existing sub-regional networks and the creation of new ones, in order to multiply these successful experiences in different regions of the continent.
 - 7.4.4 To work in key areas and priorities for the region that make it possible to construct endogenous and co-operative capacities, above all in nuclei of borderline knowledge, have an impact on the solution of huge social problems, the environment and the sustainability of development, research in higher education institutions and universities, training teachers, professors and high-level staff in institutional leadership, communication and new technologies, human rights and democracy, technology transfer, patents and intellectual property, and the strengthening of an education for all, social wellbeing and the cultural heritage.

- 7.4.5 To promote and undertake concrete actions to support and implement programmes for student and academic mobility, in order to achieve common basic profiles and the recognition of courses and degrees.
- 7.4.6 To formulate an integral development programme to promote a new type and style of international co-operation that makes it possible for the development of mutual South-South and North-South experiences to have a favourable impact on the Latin American and Caribbean region, based on the agreements and objectives proposed in this conference.

——— *The students declaration
of havana*

In this forum, we are a physical minority of that huge mass that makes the very existence of University possible. We are speaking on behalf of those of us who attended this meeting, and of those who were unable to attend, though they have the same need to be heard.

We take the floor on behalf of all those who have a University where they can develop themselves as human beings and professionals, and also for all those whose study centres have had their basic principles and values subjugated by budget cutbacks or, even worse, by the privatization of higher education.

Besides, as young Latin Americans, we fight for the rights of those who even though they wanted it, never had access to higher education, because of the conditions of extreme inequality and social injustice prevailing in our countries.

We know that no pedagogical project can be dissociated from any project of mankind, from a model of society. This has made us think about the University and society we want. And to wonder whether the public University can be considered the only party responsible for the crisis it is experiencing.

The public University is not responsible for its limited budgets, its need for transformations to satisfy the increase in student registration, the reduction of basic and applied research, and the privatization of its services. The governments are also to be blamed because they have not fulfilled their commitments with higher education. Especially since the majority of them decided to implement adjustment policies based on an economic efficiency that ignore the social and ecological costs.

Today, knowledge is the most prized value in any society. Hence, it is also subject to growing attempts at commercialization and privatization by cultural, political and economic elites who know that their control defines the control of society itself. This is why we demand its democratization.

We, Latin American students, also challenge the idea that the present is the only present possible, and we believe in a future full of alternatives. This is why we want to re-think things. Not to do them again, but to do them differently.

Forms can be changed. Each nation will have to find its own road in this process. However, as has been the case to date, young Latin Americans will have their vanguard in the student movement.

We ask ourselves about the role of criticism. Which for us, continues to be necessary as an inherent function of higher education. Criticism as construction, or criticism as a protest, as the context demands.

We still trust in the importance of freedom, which is as necessary as life itself. Freedom exercised with responsibility. Freedom that has the freedom of others as its only limits.

We still believe in the principles of Cordoba, where the social relevance of the Latin American University was reassessed, on the basis of:

autonomy

co-government

the social responsibility of the University

Based on these principles, the Latin American University will be able to confront serious questioning.

We radically oppose the doctrine promoted by the World Bank because we believe that it is irreconcilable with the dearest traditions of the Latin American University. At the same time, we have trust in the tradition and in the evolution of UNESCO as a scenario to promote the universality of higher education within the framework of respect for the cultures of our Latin American nations, permanent education and the culture of peace.

We recognize Cuba -the country that has offered us its hospitality during this Conference- as the paradigm of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Once again, we condemn the irrational blockade that is impacting this country and that is most seriously affecting its education system, and we urge this Conference to make a statement about it.

Finally we believe that the greatest challenge to be faced by universities in the future will be to form human beings who are prepared to transcend the harsh realism of our times, human beings who feel that solidarity is far more profitable than selfishness, that the cost of greed is higher than that of generosity. "People who speak the language of the Colombian fish-

ermen who in their apparent ignorance invented the word FEEL-THINKING to designate a language that speaks the truth". (Eduardo Galeano).

Latin American and Caribbean Continental Organization of Students.

Federation of University Students of Cuba.

Federation of University Students of Uruguay.

Federation of Students of the University of Costa Rica.

University Confederation of Bolivia.

Association of University Students of Guatemala.

Federation of University Students of Central America.

National Students Union of Nicaragua.

Federation of University Centres of Merida, Venezuela.

Closing Speeches

Towards a new higher education

Federico Mayor

*Director General of the United Nations Education,
Science and Culture Organization*

"There is a host of essential truths that fit on the wing of a hummingbird. However, they are the key to public peace, spiritual exaltation and the greatness of our nations... Men have to live enjoying the natural and inevitable gift of freedom, as they enjoy the gifts of air and light... (and) being cultured is the only way to be free".

José Martí ("La América" Magazine, New York, May, 1884.)

These ideas of the Apostle of Cuban independence - José Martí- appear in a beautiful text about teaching, published in New York more than a century ago. Martí's acute intuition as a teacher enabled him to understand the decisive significance of both education and the integral formation of young people to guarantee the future of the new American republics. He referred to this issue on many occasions, but now I would

simply like to recall his words when he praised scientific education, a discipline that was just being incorporated into study plans: "This direct and healthy education; this application of intelligence which inquires into Nature that responds, this serene use of the mind in research (is what) we desire for all the new countries of America

This concern for education and culture -not only in the Island, but also in the wider framework of the Iberoamerican World has been a defining characteristic of a long line of Cuban teachers, which began with Father Félix Varela and includes such illustrious names as José de la Luz y Caballero, Rafael María de Mendive -teacher of Martí- and the philosopher José Varona. This is why I am especially pleased that Havana has welcomed with its traditional hospitality this conference on the *"Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean"*, a preparatory meeting for the World Conference on Higher Education that UNESCO has scheduled for 1998, which can be -and should be- the seed of one of the most in-depth transformations that are urgently required in this symbolic turn of the century and of the millennium, if we really want to offer the generations that follow us a fairer, freer more peaceful and brighter world. Havana is the starting point of the process of mobilization, reflection and commitment that could lead to this essential change. Every voyage depends on the first step, which gives it direction and impetus. This is precisely why this Conference is so relevant.

The quality of the more than one hundred papers presented during this meeting and the depth of the analyses and possible solutions set out in the Final Declaration are a most valuable contribution to this task. The potential of talent and enthusiasm which Latin America possesses is enormous. Despite the countless difficulties it must face, this continent of "what is real and marvellous" maintains unharmed a heritage

of hope, a “memory of the future”, which is the best tool for building free, prosperous and equitable societies.

As you all know, the objectives of Higher Education - that is, basically, university education- can be summarized in a few concepts that comprise a very complex world: forming responsible and committed citizens; providing society with the professionals it needs; developing scientific and technical research; conserving and transmitting culture, enriching it with the creative contribution of each generation; acting as the memory of the past and the sentinel of the future; and constituting a critical and neutral entity, based on rigour and merit, which can be, because of all this, vanguard of “intellectual and moral solidarity” that the constitution of UNESCO offers us as the key formula for this deeply human and important renewal that is now urgent, crucial and which cannot be postponed.

Though they are intimately related to the political, economic and social life, these university tasks have their own profile. They are a set of activities more closely linked to ethics and convictions, than to utilitarianism and immediacy attached to other areas of existence. This is the reason why I like to reiterate that higher education has basically a pre-political content or if you permit the neologism, a pol-ethical one.

This ethical dimension of University work is especially significant in this era of rapid transformations, which affect almost all the spheres of individual and collective life, and which threaten to wipe out all the reference points and to destroy the moral support that is indispensable for building the future. Given the speed and negative nature of some of these trends, the University has to become the bastion of the essential values of the spirit and the prime moving force of an ethical movement aimed at endowing intelligence with a sense of both solidarity and commitment.

Hence, teachers, professors and political leaders have a two-fold responsibility, derived from their wealth of knowledge and their strategic relation with the key sectors of development and socio-economic transformation. However, very high objectives must be set, so that we can know exactly where we are headed at. As a verse in one of the works of Fernando Pessoa reminds us "The moon shines the same on the sea and on small puddles because it is high enough to do so".

But we cannot read the compass in the dark. Nothing can be achieved without a context of peace and justice. Peace is a pre-requisite, a premise. Because of this, the great "ethical conspiracy" that I tirelessly propose is based on an open mobilization against violence and its deep causes: misery, ignorance, injustice and tyranny. Because peace is the vertex of an "interactive triangle". Its other sides are development and democracy -the basic condition for freedom and equality. History has clearly demonstrated, at a very high price in lives and suffering, that freedom and equality have to go hand in hand, they cannot be mutually exclusive. A system based on equality but which had forgotten freedom disappeared in 1989. We are witnessing the failures of the opposite system, one that has forgotten equality. And, it will have to rescue it swiftly. And the *sine qua non* condition for this rescue is a deep, firm and everyday feeling of fraternity, which both systems left behind in their starting point. No. No right can be exercised in the middle of war, no effort of socio-economic transformation will bear fruit in situations of conflict, likewise, it is very difficult to guarantee peace and democratic governance when there is no shared economic, scientific and technological progress. The foundations for building a culture of peace can only be laid when there is an endogenous development that truly respects the environment -a development with a human face. Like freedom and love, peace is not a gift. It is a personal endeavour, that cannot be transferred. The answers do not lie outside. They deep inside each human being.

We are all aware of the “gordian knots” of our times: exclusion and discrimination, based on ethnic, cultural or ideological excuses; urban misery and the decadence of rural zones; massive population outflows; mismanagement and excessive use of the resources of our planet and deterioration of the environment; new pandemics, like AIDS, and a renewed virulence of the old ones, like tuberculosis and malaria, as well as the neurological distresses caused by prions; arms and drugs trafficking and the free flow of “dirty money”; social asymmetries; violence and the violation of human rights. According to the classical legend, Alexander the Great cut with his sword the “gordian knot” that was later to give him dominance over Asia. However, those of our times have to be cut very incisively, though by peaceful means. They must be cut with words, not with the sword! The strength of parliaments lies in words. Let us set up information and co-operation channels with those deliberating organs and this we can guarantee that the representatives of the people will be the defenders of education, university education included.

The complexity of the contemporary world does not allow simple solutions to solve these extraordinarily broad problems. There is no place in a planet that holds six billion inhabitants living in an “unequal interdependence”, for a reductionist analysis, which until very recently was aimed at finding one single cause to all our evils and, once this had been identified, to find the magic cure -some sort of balm of Fierabrás- that would suddenly cure all the afflictions. On the other hand, what we can devise is a set of partial measures and their application would have a most determining effect of this wide range of problems that I have already mentioned. In general terms, those solutions revolve around a common axis, to share better, and they are related to democratic governance; education and science; culture, a lasting development; and the construction of peace. Hence the action of UNESCO -based on

ideals that are more necessary than ever and that are so clearly set out in our Constitution is based on the very axis of the world's problems .

Democratic ideals, not models manufactured far away. Universal principles, incorporated in each culture, in each cultural situation. The recent extension of "turnkey democracies" in countries that had never known governments elected by the will of the people, has emphasized the dangers that threaten the democratic system when applied in haste where there is no justice or security. It does not suffice to proclaim the "rule of Law". Laws must be fair and this is the result of a real freedom of expression. In turn, for fair laws to be enforced diligently there is a clear need for an adequate level of security. Frequently, nations go from total security and the absence of freedom to total freedom and the absence of security. Besides, democratic principles require a strict and all-embracing implementation, along with popular participation. And in order to participate, there is a need to know. As Bolívar said: "education is the key to freedom". Lacking a pertinent educational, cultural and socio-economic development, the participation of citizens in decision-making is either totally absent or simply symbolic. In turn, democratic institutions lose their *raison d'être*. They are simply degraded to the level of formal representation. Hence in order to ensure an authentic democracy, government organs must guarantee an equal freedom for all, together with security and legal protection. Respect for human rights -especially those of minorities- and an efficient administration of justice are the pillars of democratic governance.

The promise made by industrialized countries in 1974, within the framework of the United Nations, stated that they would devote 0.7% of their Gross Domestic Product to contribute to the development of their less developed neighbours. This generated great hopes that the ancient misery of the poorest regions of the planet would be finally overcome. Since then,

inequalities have increased, even in the case of those countries with a higher level of economic growth. The Report of Human Development that was published by the U.N. in 1996 confirms this trend on the basis of abundant macro and microeconomic data. In 70 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, the average income of the population is currently lower than in 1980. By the end of 1996, 85% of the wealth of the planet is in the hands 20% of the world population.

This situation indicates that, among other considerations, we have not fulfilled that promise to help the less developed countries. And this promise was made more than twenty years ago. Instead we have forced on them Draconian measures as a requirement for financing their development. We have also imposed our political, constitutional, educational and cultural schemes on them, without even bearing in mind the specific characteristics of each nation and each culture. It is quite clear that the condition for development cannot be what is really its consequence: democracy; the values and behaviour patterns that promote co-existence, pluralism and civic participation. These characteristics cannot emerge from poverty, frustration, ignorance and solitude.

During the last quarter of this century, developing countries have seen their external support withdraw and the relevance of their regional or world associations really diminish. However, they have learnt a most essential lesson along the way. Their future will depend on themselves and they should not accept requirements or conditions in return for foreign aid, when the former are not in agreement with their own designs of the future.

The asymmetry that is currently in effect is not only a menace for the poorest countries. Interdependence and globalization have unified the world that we live in to such an extent that no conflict, no danger, no injustice can be foreign to

us. In the words of John Donne, there is no sense in asking for whom the bells toll... The bells are tolling for all of us, for each and every one of us. It is unbelievable that in one continent peasants are paid to uproot crops, to avoid production surpluses, while in another continent -not far away- whole nations are starving and suffering from thirst and epidemics. It is unbelievable that the barriers to information and knowledge persist, while "dirty money" freely flows around the world via electronic networks. And this money comes from the trafficking of drugs that kill thousands of youngsters, who are deprived of their souls, who are rendered helpless. Drugs wage a sordid and terrible war that is undermining the global dignity of mankind. The same could be said of the trafficking of weapons that kill and are used to kill indiscriminately, or the traffic in human beings who, die though they are still alive.

An in-depth reform is required in order to solve all these problems. At best, humanitarianism is simply a palliative measure that is unable to eliminate the causes of injustice and inequality. No charitable solutions can be applied to the unacceptable situation of the "children of the streets" who barely survive, inhaling solvents until they finally become victims of a "death squadron", or else of labour or sexual exploitation. Public opinion has witnessed with great relief how the last modalities of racial apartheid were finally overcome. We owe this to a great extent to the clarity of mind and to the determination of Nelson Mandela. However, there is still a social apartheid that endangers our collective future. Indeed, there can be no peace while several million people still live in subhuman conditions. Even in the more advanced countries, reality is starting to confirm the pessimistic statement made by Paul Valéry: "the future is no longer what it was". This is not only a moral issue. We also have the practical certainty -one that can be easily verified- that we are unable to confront effectively many of these threats, if there is not enough popular demand to promote innovating, bold and creative measures.

Today, it is no longer enough to continue analysing the evils of our times, which are only too well known. Treatment in time is the reason of the diagnosis. In many aspects -social, economic and environmental in nature- we are simply reiterating the diagnosis. We are writing one report after the other. And we are doing so, because we do not dare apply the correct measures, the adequate treatments that are more and more pressing as every day goes by. Hence, to our misfortune and shame, because we do not implement the correct diagnosis, we end up knowing the perfect diagnosis: the autopsy. As demonstrated by the cases of Rwanda-Zaire-Burundi, or that of Bosnia-Herzegovina, we have to be prepared to act as soon as possible. At the end of the day, any risk is dangerous without knowledge. However, knowledge with no risks is useless. Basically, we have to get ahead of the negative trends that cast a shadow on the future. The unavoidable task of foresight and prevention that we are heading for is an investment effort. It is an investment in social intangibles, so to speak. It is a quiet determination -almost always invisible- that is aimed at modulating values, practices and beliefs. Indeed, the latter are the only means for creating a freer and more fraternal world, in which the full and harmonious development of human beings and nations can be achieved.

The challenges of contemporary life demand global answers designed to liberate society as a whole (civil, military and religious circles). The asymmetries in the distribution of wealth and knowledge have to be corrected and this also applies to the asymmetries related to women and men. We live in an androcentric world and this discrimination might prove to be even more harmful in the case of the poor countries, because of its consequences in the fields of education and demography. Men hold 95% of the government positions and 90% of the seats in Congress. How can the world fare well if it does not listen to almost half the inhabitants of this planet?

It is clear then that one of the keys for confronting the challenges of the immediate future lies in the participation of all human beings in the decisions that determine the future of society. No one can be a real citizen without actively participating in all the areas of the political life of a country. "I participate, therefore I exist". That should be the Cartesian formula of modern citizenship. If I do not participate, I do not exist as a citizen. I am counted, but I do not count. I am subject to laws and surveys, though I am not subject to duties and rights.

The XXI Century dawns under the dual sign of democracy and complexity. I reiterate that there are no simple solutions to the complex problems of our era. Simplified versions of a complex reality cannot be offered to those who make decisions, even with the best will in the world. In my opinion, globality, complexity and irreversibility are the major guidelines that will help us create the planetary awareness that is currently the only firm basis for building a brighter future *-in the making-* to our children.

The founders of the United Nations Organization foresaw many of the negative trends that are threatening us. Hence, the Constitution of UNESCO warns that the task of ensuring justice, peace and freedom set by the Organization cannot, I quote: "be based exclusively on political and economic agreements among governments". Rather, they demand "the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind". Organizations and institutions, overcoming the day by day, the opinion surveys and the short-term shortsightedness, should broadly outline the path that will lead to a more peaceful, free and fair future. However, as we approach the end of this century and this millennium, they do not seem to have the convictions, the faith and the passion -or compassion- of those who founded the United Nations when the last war finally came to an end, who organized the Marshall Plan and drafted the Universal Decla-

ration of Human Rights. What is the reason for this silence of the leaders and intellectuals? Is it that cultural and political elites are unable to offer inventive proposals to face the current situation the world is undergoing. Is it that they cannot or that they do not wish to do it? Can it be that without even noticing they are ceasing to be responsible individuals and are turning into mere objects of macroeconomics and macropolitics? Or maybe, as I pointed out before, we are looking for answers that we will only find inside ourselves?

Industrialized nations try to buy the raw materials that they need at low costs. These raw materials are frequently produced in far-away countries, in outrageous labour and remunerative conditions. However, those nations want to sell their products at the highest prices possible, while raising protectionist barriers that turn the so-called "free" markets into captive markets. This "iron law that rules the market" generates a spiral of stagnation, impoverishment and illegal trade that ends up undermining both those who enforce it and those who suffer it.

We should be guided by ideals, though not by interests. Fair laws should prevail and not those of the market. The rigour of reasoning is excellent when applied to business transactions, but it cannot be orthodoxy that judges and decides the rest of collective life. Nowadays, international economic orthodoxy only pays attention to macroeconomic indicators, and ignores the daily existence of citizens, worsening social unrest and instigating the dissatisfaction of the people. Indiscriminate privatization -the corollary of the neoliberal boom- does not guarantee by itself a better distribution of wealth. Money does not flow into the State coffers, but into the hands of banks and major multinational corporations. By definition, these sectorial interests do not represent society as a whole. The only ones that can guide development for the benefit of all are the state powers elected democratically by the majority

of the population and supervised by an independent and efficient judiciary.

In 1993, UNESCO set up an independent commission presided over by the former President of the European Commission, Mr. Jacques Delors. This commission was entrusted with the mission of confronting the challenges posed by education in the coming century, while at the same time creating an open, integrating, dynamic and diversified University that is a prime moving force of development.

In its final report, the prestigious team of professors highlighted four pillars that are the foundations of teaching activities: learning to be, learning to know, learning to do and learning to co-exist. I would like to add a task that is highly significant in my opinion: learning to undertake. Indeed, the dynamics of our times demand that university graduates contribute to the generation of employment opportunities and to the wellbeing of mankind. In fact, they are the ones who have had the privilege of receiving the best training in the best institutions of the country. *Sapere aude!* To this Horatian "dare to know", we should now add: know how to dare, dare to undertake, dare to take risks.

The solutions set out in the report -as well as those approved in this Conference- reinforce and supplement the strategy contained in the agreements of Education for All, approved during the Jomtien (1990) and the New Delhi (1993) conferences. They also reinforce and supplement the principles of the Learning without Frontiers programme and the trans-disciplinary initiatives of UNESCO. This is also the case of the project on Education and Information on the Environment and the Population for Development. Among the countless other contributions of the organization to this task, mention can be made of the creation of information networks that facilitate the transfer of data and knowledge; the exchange of professors and students between the North and the South; and, the

promotion of international co-operation in the field of scientific research and teaching.

UNESCO believes that the application of scientific innovations will be specially significant when confronting the challenges of cultural standardization. It will also have to cope with the environmental, social, labour and economic challenges that loom over the horizon of the next century. The communications revolution transforms almost daily the lives of several million people throughout the world. It also contributes to emphasize some of the basic challenges of modern life. The new technologies have an incredible educational potential. No doubt they will enable us to reach those individuals who, on account of their age, their income level or their geographic location, have been forced to remain outside the reach of the traditional teaching systems.

In order to attain all these objectives, the university system has to fulfil some basic requirements. If not, it will not even be possible to conceive such a broad-based transformation as this one. In the first place, the University must be an institution based on merit. This is clearly stated in article 26.1, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone will have access to higher education on the basis of their merits". Academic quality is not achieved with professors that are given a post for life too early in their professional career. The confidence granted by a chair can be a positive factor, provided the aspirant gives proof that he deserves it. The same concept of merit applies to students. The University as a privilege for the privileged, as the elitization of the established elites should give way to an intellectual milieu where all citizens are ensured access to training and updating. This is something that young people have to remember, that you can never enjoy what you have not longed for. Besides, it is worth remembering that we are all passengers in the same boat and heading for the same destination... Leonardo Da Vinci said: "do not look for

your destiny, but for *destiny* alone... Only in this way will you also find your own”.

The University must also be autonomous, but always willing to render accounts to the society it serves; it must also be a sentinel watching over the future, that can anticipate the negative trends and offer solutions to the public powers. Only with this preventive approach will we be able to transform the University into a dynamic centre that contributes to converting the ideal of a longlife education for all into a reality.

Implementing an effective democratization of education is an indispensable requisite for achieving the participation of all the citizens in the political and social life of the nations that I have already referred to. Education on behalf of all and for all, for a lifetime. The business sector is a key ally in higher education.

“Learning to learn” can no longer be applied to the third level of education. Here you come “to learn to undertake”, to generate employment and not to request it from the State. The University is the guarantor of democratic principles of daily life for all citizens. It should not apply the principles of political representation to the academic life, where only quality should prevail. The formula for glucose can not be put to the vote.

In the third place, the University must contribute to preserve the legacy of the generations before us, and to forge the future. This applies to culture and nature, as well as to the intangible manifestations of the legacy -traditions, rituals, festivities and practices. However, as I mentioned at the beginning, it also applies to the genetic legacy and, especially, to the ethical patrimony, which is acquiring greater significance . Indeed, the values that we bestow on future generations will shape the architecture of the world of tomorrow. This demand to maintain the legacy of the past and to increase it is a way of

inventing and reinventing, of building the future on a daily basis.

The “interactive triangle” formed by peace, democracy and development that I have outlined in my presentation, is only effective when education is its axis. Likewise, it has to be promoted by solidarity, prevention and a true feeling of justice. As our global society grows in both size and complexity, the links between the need to share, the possibility of participating and the ability to prevent are more evident. However, these links will only be fruitful if we can forge an open and dynamic University, where education is offered via the only efficient method: the pedagogy of love and of setting an example. There is no other pedagogy. As the words of Jose Martí remind us: “Only love breeds melodies”.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Fidel Castro:

Our gratitude goes to you for hosting this Conference in Cuba. Thank you for coming to preside over the closing ceremony. I sincerely wish that the fruits of this great event reach all the women and men of Latin America and the Caribbean, and, in the first place, the people of Cuba. This is a nation that does not deserve the blockade. People can never deserve a blockade because all the children are our own children. No nation deserves it.

Our world -full of conflicts and yet so rich in resources- now needs more than ever a peaceful and creative rebellion that only parents and teachers can instill in their children and youngsters. We can expect nothing from those who are satisfied, sated and docile. Indocility is an essential aspect of that “ethical conspiracy” that I invite you all to share. The highest hope of America lies in a non-violent rebellion and in the civic rebelliousness of citizens who are aware of their duties and rights.

The challenge posed by the transformation of higher education, now as we enter the new century, is based on personal merit and not on privileges and it demands the co-operation of all of us, with no exceptions. The talent and enthusiasm we devote to this key task will enable us to honestly look our children in their eyes. Indeed, we will have contributed to the building of a fairer and freer world for them. As the poem of Salvador Espriu tells us, we will have lived "to save the words for them", to preserve the dignity and the future of all human beings alike.

The revolution of the consciences

Fidel Castro Ruz

First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the State Council and of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba

This is the first time in my life that something like this has happened to me. Because I respect you, the capacity of all those present here and the work that you have done. I could not just come here to improvise a speech. But someone made a mistake. I do not think it is a plot, right? Well, here I am and I will not make a speech. I will simply tell you how pleased we are with this project, this *Regional Conference on Policies and Strategies for the Transformation of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean*. I believe that is the title of this meeting.

We indeed have a very high opinion of universities. Great efforts have been made throughout these years of struggle based on the idea the education is everything. We have lived these difficult years of the Revolution and of the blockade fighting against ignorance, with an almost 30% illiteracy rate. Two years after the victory of the Revolution we started that lit-

eracy campaign that taught almost one million people and we continued with its subsequent follow-up programmes. There were no schools, teachers had no jobs - 10,000 of them. The rural areas were lacking teachers, even though there were teachers available, because there is a need for a certain willingness to go and teach in the mountains. Besides, when students reached secondary education, there were no professors. We then faced the need to turn students from pedagogical institutes into teachers. What they learnt in the morning, they had to teach in the afternoon. Students were admitted to pedagogy study courses with barely a sixth grade. This was also the case of nursing schools. Girls with their dolls attended these schools. This was a very long period in search for several thousand teachers. Universities had no high-school graduates. In turn, the system tried to send those who had their high-school degree to one or the other study course. Universities had no laboratories, no research centres, no professors. Some of these facts and experiences came to my mind as I was listening to the speech of our very distinguished friend, Federico Mayor.

Efforts have been made in order to achieve what we have today, to preserve what we have attained, to continue improving this task of education and combining it with the efforts of the remaining countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Exchange and co-operation with those countries is continuously growing, along with friendship, brotherhood and union. We have the deep conviction that, without this, there would be no future, no integration. There will not even be independence. Maybe one of the most tragic aspects is that we are behind in the field of research, in a world where the predominance of science and technology is a decisive factor.

Nowadays, we have almost lost count of the universities that we have. Just to quote an example, I will tell you that we have 21 schools of medicine. We had to assume the challenge: they wanted to take our physicians away from us and

they took half of them when we had barely 6,200. Now, we have 62,000 and more of them are earning their degrees.

Now, you can no longer be a sixth grader in order to study pedagogy. And a junior high school degree is not enough to be a middle-level teacher. You have to be a high-school graduate and it is now a university study course. Students are not admitted to nursing schools carrying a doll in their hands. They must have a high-school degree and, nursing is also a university degree course.

Due to the efforts of our teachers, of those who stayed - because a few university professors did stay- we were able to make progress. You already heard what Vecino said, that in the not too distant future, 50% of the professors would have a scientific degree. There have been many, many advances.

How can we not be optimistic when we think about all this? How can we not be glad because of this brilliant idea of holding regional conferences and then the world conference? What a strength! What an incredible strength! Maybe it is difficult to say this with the necessary emphasis because of the significance of assembling universities -first, those of our countries and then all those of the Third World and, finally, all of them.

Federico, who will attend the world conference, everybody or just us? Very well, that is excellent. There our strength will stand out. There we will be able to fight more efficiently. You mentioned some of the problems. I have just arrived from an international conference and some of the things you mentioned here could have been said there.

Conferences like this one have been held on the issue of the environment, in Rio de Janeiro; on the issue of social development, in Copenhagen; on the issue of the communities, in Istanbul; and, now that one on hunger, in Rome. In the case

of the latter, a document was drafted to analyse the war we must wage.

I emphasized the fact that twenty years from now, rather than 800 million, 400 million people will be starving. Four hundred million hungry people in 20 years! How many will die from hunger? Has someone worked it out? I made some basic calculations and the results were that 100 million people were going to die of hunger. As easy as that. This is a world where the military industry is the most important one -with a business turnaround of 800 million dollars- now that the cold war is over. Arms dealing -as mentioned by Mayor- is one of the most thriving activities. It is number one. Drug trafficking ranks second and it amounts to 500 billion dollars. And the world is trying to reduce the number of hungry people from 800 million to 400 million in 20 years. You will realize then the great need to create awareness!

What I say is the truth. In Rio de Janeiro, many politicians were listening for the first time to someone talking about the environment. In Copenhagen, they heard about social development for the first time. In Istanbul they first heard about the terrible problems of the communities and about hunger, in Rome. What happens is that you cannot even imagine what we politicians are. How inefficient and unaware we are. I believe, Mayor, that the universities will have to train politicians, reliable politicians. Indeed, we are the ones who bear on our shoulders the responsibility -or who used to bear it. And we hope that the participation of the people increases, that it is possible to solve the problems of the world that were mentioned here. Some of them are really enormous, like the ones derived from the demographic explosion. Some data are worth mentioning in this respect: 2 million years to reach the first 1 billion inhabitants, just 11 years to reach the last 1 billion.

Well then, where will the men and women emerge from if not from the research centres and the universities? A figure

was mentioned some minutes ago: that 90% of the politicians are men. Maybe things would fare much better if the opposite proportion were true.

It is really impressive that all these difficulties are faced with such limited capacities, with such a lack of background and training.

Where can those capacities and that training come from, if not from the universities?

You really deserve the warmest congratulations for this initiative. I believe that it will be an extraordinary world event. I believe that this document that has been approved is an excellent starting point. I believe that it will be perfected as time goes by.

You mentioned yesterday that plans have been made to hold a conference in Asia, another one in Africa, and the other one...? (Mayor tells him in the Arab countries and in Europe). Four are still to be held. This means then that every six months a conference like this one will be held, and then will come the world conference, in Paris. Will all of you have a place there? Approximately 600 of you have attended this first conference. It will, no doubt, be a huge meeting, an important event. And, what is even more significant is the fruit we expect to derive from these efforts.

You, the people of UNESCO and the representatives of the universities of Latin America and the Caribbean, can count on the modest co-operation of Cuba.

One of the virtues that we have attempted to develop throughout these years of the Revolution is the feeling of solidarity. This was the reason our country had for sending physicians, technicians, engineers as soldiers to fight for the independence of the former colonies, to fight against an apartheid that currently offers us an idea of change.

Today, we feel happy to know that there is no Apartheid -that shame that lasted so many centuries- in South Africa. Now, you all applaud the end of apartheid. However, how many remember that several thousand Cuban soldiers fought there - more than 10,000 miles away- against the soldiers of racism and apartheid. This was the only country that shed its blood.

More than half a million Cubans have fulfilled international missions and the latter have been indeed long in nature. Hence, solidarity was always a seed that was planted and that took root in our people.

We are now in the midst of a major internationalist endeavour, a great effort, a huge struggle. This is the case not because there are physicians, technicians and many students from abroad still here. Indeed, at a certain point in time we had 24,000 foreign students on scholarships in our small island. This was the highest per capita figure of scholarship holders in the world. Today, our basic internationalist mission is that of defending this Revolution, defending the independence of our country and defending the achievements of socialism. This is indeed a most noble cause in a world where selfishness prevails and where neoliberalism has pervaded all areas, along with the formulas it imposes. And this is something that you, professors, know far better than any other sector, as every time a budget has to be cut education and the public health sectors are the first to suffer. The budgets for buying weapons are never reduced. They prefer to cut back the budgets for medicines, physicians, teachers and books.

While in Rome, a lady asked me a question. She said: "You have physicians, but you lack medicines". She told me: "You have professors -because we hold indeed the first place insofar as the *per capita* number of professors is concerned- but you do not have books". She did not mention that there is a blockade. She did not, nor did she state that despite it, we do have medicines. Maybe not all the ones we would like, but we

do have the basic ones. So, I asked her: "How can it be possible that infant mortality has dropped in our country to 8 per 1,000 newborns, a figure which is similar to that of the U.S., lower than that registered in the capital city of that country?" Because there, those who die are not fairly distributed among the population levels. The babies who die are the children of the poor. They are the children of the Hispanics, or the children of the blacks. They are not the children of the rich.

In this tropical climate, never before had such a reduction in infant mortality been achieved and it is an achievement that really requires an extraordinary effort. Our relative humidity is high, our climate is hot, bacteria and plagues are easily spread. We have even had to suffer plagues that were deliberately brought to our country and still our infant mortality stands at 8 per thousand. It is even possible that it will drop further. It is indeed possible! One month is lacking. It is not precisely one of those months that has the highest mortality rate, it is not one of the summer months.

Yes, we do apply modern Medicine -the so-called green medicine- and we use all the procedures. But, mainly, we are based on the dedication of our physicians and our nurses that give their time to ensure the health of our children and of the population as a whole. These are our most important medicines.

If there were no books, how could we have 62,000 physicians? Our Minister of Health has just returned from South Africa, where there are more than 200 Cuban physicians working. And they want us to send more, because of their dedication, their quality, their prestige. Because they are willing to go to remote locations, where no one is willing to work. They are really excellent physicians, very well trained doctors.

Books? There are books. There might be a lower number of newspapers and magazines. We have had to make signifi-

cant reductions. However, we have the paper we need for the books our children use in school, for their notebooks, and we have the wood for their pencils. And the books are handed back by the students when the school year is over. They are used again and a small additional amount is printed.

They do not only have books, they have uniforms. And, they do not only have uniforms, they have shoes, even though they are nothing fancy. They do not walk barefoot. And they have schools. In fact, not one single school has been closed in our country. Despite the special period we are undergoing, not one of them has been closed. Rather, there are education programmes that cover all the children in pre-school ages.

Not one single child who requires special education is abandoned. And, when the children cannot attend school, there are teachers who go to their houses. This country is under a blockade. This country is subject to a cruel economic blockade, it is in the midst of an economic war. Indeed, an economic war is being waged against our people.

Not one single general hospital has been closed. Nothing has been shut down, not one single university, nothing, nothing, nothing! This means that much can be done with just a little. It is only a matter of sharing and distributing, and of doing so with equity. Furthermore, if what we do here with such limited resources were done everywhere, they could have the same or even better results than the ones we have achieved.

However, I will have to say a truth and I do not specially like to says truths everyday. This is only possible with a Revolution.

It may be one just like Federico wants, a peaceful revolution. The result of nonconformism and lack of satisfaction. Without violence, yes. Maybe there can be a miracle. Other miracles have happened, maybe there can be a miracle and via

the power of our awareness we can attain all that and do it without resorting to weapons.

We did it both with weapons and with our awareness. However, there is currently more awareness in the world, though the world is pervaded by selfishness. What I mean is that there are more people that know the problems. They know the truths and they think and ponder on possible solutions. The time might come when politicians have lost too much prestige -as is the case in so many places. People talk about that and they talk about governance and I do not know about how many other things. When they talk about governance, what they mean is that there is no longer a means for governing people. The world is faced with hunger, suffering, exploitation, lack of consideration. People feel that they are not being taken into account and they are growing tired of this. They are losing confidence. Under those circumstance, the awareness grows, it grows so very much.

I do not preach violence, Federico. I preach the revolution. A peaceful revolution, but still a revolution. And maybe men are capable of achieving this.

I have taken too long, against my will. You all know that they had to resort to force to bring me here. However, I thank you for that force, because it gave me the opportunity to tell you, from the bottom of my heart..

Thank you.

List of Abbreviations

Institutions	Abbreviations
American Association for Higher Education	AAHE
Cooperation Programme between European and Latin American HEI - CE	ALFA
National Association of Federal Higher Education Institution Leaders (Brazil)	ANDIFES
National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (Mexico)	ANUIES
Colombian Association of Universities (Colombia)	ASCUN
Association of Universities Montevideo Group	AUGM
Venezuelan Association of University Rectors (Venezuela)	AVERU
World Bank	BM
Caribbean Community Market Secretariat	CARICOM
Study Centre for the Improvement of Higher Education (Cuba)	CEPES
Higher Education Council (Puerto Rico)	CES
Study Centre on University Matters (México)	CESU
Executive Committee of the Bolivian University (Bolivia)	CEUB
National Inter-University Council (Argentina)	CIN
Interuniversity Centre for Development (Chile)	CINDA
Research and Education Services Centre (México)	CISE
Latin American and Caribbean Centre for Cultural Development (Venezuela)	CLACDEC
Venezuelan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO	CNCU
Cooperation Programme between European and Latin American Universities - CRE	COLUMBUS
Association of European Universities	CRE

UNESCO Regional Centre for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean	CRESALC
Council of Rectors of Public Universities (Argentina)	CRUP
Confederation of Central American Universities	CSUCA
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	ECLAC
Central American University Editorial	EDUCA
Education and Information on Environment and Population for Development Transdisciplinary Project - UNESCO	EPD
Higher Education	ES
United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization	FAO
Latin American Social Sciences Faculty	FLACSO
Group of the Three	G3
International Association for Education Assessment	IAEA
International Association of Universities	IAU
International Association of University Presidents	IAUP
Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education	ICFES
International Development Research Centre (Canada)	IDRC
Interamerican Development Bank	IDB
Higher Education Institutions	IES
UNESCO Regional Programme for the Strengthening of Cooperation between Information Networks and Systems for Latin America and the Caribbean	INFOLAC
Southern Common Market	MERCOSUR
Conference of Ministers of Education from Latin America and the Caribbean	MINEDLAC
North American Free Trade Agreement	NAFTA
Non Governmental Organization	NGO
New Information and Communications Technologies	NITC
Organization of American States	OAS
Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development	OECD
UNESCO Chairs and Communication Networks System	ORBICOM
UNESCO Regional Office of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean	OREALC
Inter-American Organization for Higher Education	OUI
UNESCO General Information Programme	PGI
Second Plan for the Central American Higher Education Regional Integration	PIRESC II

Latin American and Caribbean Network for the Pedagogic Formation of Higher Education Teaching Staff	REDESLAC
Latin American Economic System	SELA
Amazonian Information System	SIAMAZ
Union of Latin American Universities	UDUAL
National Open University (Venezuela)	UNA
National Autonomous University of Mexico	UNAM
Association of Amazonian Universities	UNAMAZ
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	UNCTAD
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
United Nations Fund for Population Activities	UNFPA
Association of Caribbean University and Research Institutes	UNICA
International plan for action for inter-university cooperation (UNESCO)	UNITWIN
United Nations University	UNU
Libertador Experimental Pedagogic University (Venezuela)	UPEL
University of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay	UROU
World Health Organization	WHO
World University Service	WUS