



*Conservation and Management of:
The Cultural, Urban
and Environmental
Heritage*

Latin America and the Caribbean

OBJECTIVES MET AND SURPASSED





REGIONAL PROJECT FOR CULTURAL,
URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL HERITAGE
UNDP/UNESCO

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Dear Colleague:

**SUBJECT: Termination of the UNDP/UNESCO Regional Project RLA/91/029:
Cultural, Urban and Environmental Heritage**

This is to inform you that the UNDP/UNESCO Regional Project in Latin America and the Caribbean will terminate its activities corresponding to the present UNDP cycle on **February 28, 1995** having concluded its previous phases successfully, ratified by an External Evaluation Mission.

I had the privilege and pleasure to conduct this Regional Project from its conception-inception in the second half of the 70's, for practically four consecutive Programme Cycles of UNDP; a time span of 19 years.

At this point of time, we can say: **OBJECTIVES MET AND SURPASSED**

As Project Manager and Chief Technical Advisor, I did my best to see that this Project expanded in scope and contents. As time went on, we met changing needs and circumstances. We were able to give the Project a sense of "continuity and change", a contemporaneousness, as if it were, at all times. We established a permanent commitment of all those concerned in a **melting pot** where **donors** and **recipients** simply became joint beneficiaries of a **common learning process**.

Geo-culturally, we expanded from the Andean Region of the 70's to the totality of Latin America and the Caribbean with cross-fertilizing exchange programmes with other regions, particularly Africa- South of the Sahara, North Africa and the Middle East.

Over the years, we had a **record-high performance** in activities and outputs. We have been instrumental in providing **rational, pragmatic, cost effective and accountable support and services in Capacity and Institution Building**.

Training has been one of our major functions which led to positive results with almost **4,000** trained personnel now in **technical and decision making positions in the region**.

We knew, right from the beginning, that Cultural Heritage was not a high priority in the development agendas of the UN System as a whole. It was evident that there would be scarce resources available for this subject matter. It was also evident that we had to enhance the whole concept as such. Three challenges faced us. What did we do?

Firstly, we scanned the subject of **Heritage - Conservation - Management** in the widest sense of the term. We made sure, together with our partners, that the concept of Cultural Heritage **had to go beyond culture per se**. It is in this context that we collaborated in developing concepts, policies and programmes addressing the issues of **sustainable human development** and the **environment and linking them to cultural and urban heritage**. We insisted on the close relationship between **culture and development** and collaborated in designing projects to that effect. We promoted the concept that cultural heritage could not be dealt with in isolation of contemporary social economic and environmental issues affecting the human and natural condition of this Planet.

Secondly, in terms of financing, we took the challenge of proving that **"funding and availability of sources"** is **directly proportional to the positive and effective outputs with substantive visibility**.

Thirdly, we strived for "quality delivery" in all project activities.

These three equations gave us, and the Governments in the region, the credibility to mobilize and obtain extrabudgetary sources. This has not been an easy task. It demanded persistence, continuity, omnipresence, knowledge and experience of development work, vision and executive accountability.

At this point, we are pleased to note that 17 national conservation centres, each with specific regional vocation, are now in place in the region. The networking between themselves is proving to be satisfactory and promising for the future.

Over the years, we sought innovative ways and means to manage the project in a sustainable, decentralized and dynamic fashion multiplying the core basic UNDP-IPF budgets significantly with extra budgetary resources. Substantial inputs, in cash and in kind, were provided through participating Governments, UNESCO as the executive agency, the World Heritage Fund, UN Agencies, IGOs, NGOs, national and international private foundations. We devised third-party cost sharing arrangements and we set-up special Trust Funds and made use of existing ones to support project activities. The international banking community followed some of our pre-investment projects with loans and grants particularly the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Furthermore, we have also been instrumental in facilitating the conception-inception of 16 national UNDP/UNESCO projects in the Latin America and the Caribbean region and other regions. We have managed and supervised these projects jointly with Governments, consultants, UNDP field offices and UNESCO as a whole. The same goes true with subregional projects such as the one on Heritage and Museum Management in the Caribbean region jointly with UNDP, CARICOM and UNESCO.

Our publication programme has been rich and varied. Almost 300 publications, in the form of books and reports as well as leaflets and posters, were prepared by the project. A number of international journals and UNDP/UNESCO bulletins and magazines published articles on the project. We also produced a series of educational aids and promotional videos and films most recently with UNDP'S Azimuth programme in Geneva.

Monitoring and evaluation methodologies put in place by the project were also used in reference to World Heritage Sites in LAC and Mozambique. These methodologies opened new avenues. Our approach to have constant built-in evaluation and monitoring gave our counterparts and ourselves the possibility to develop project activities on the basis of lessons learnt and continuous objective assessments and appraisals.

We undertook monitoring in a dynamic-forward looking fashion by:

- Involving a wide range of national/regional participants in monitoring in a decentralized context.
- Emphasizing on shared commitment and accountability.
- Focusing on results being achieved and not merely on inputs and outputs.
- Considering the whole process of monitoring as a continuous-systematic activity.

The work we have started in reference to bottom up programming of sustainable human development in the Maya region is in progress. We hope it will continue successfully in the future. The living heritage is there and many other parts of the globe with entire populations who constitute a living patrimony.....

The assessment of the effects of our partnership in the participating countries is showing that the UNDP/UNESCO Regional Project can now be considered dispensable having attained a solid base of Human Resource Capacity and Institutional Excellence at all levels.

We trust that the already ongoing networking process in the region will continue with self-reliance and occasional inputs through TCDC arrangements and when necessary, bilateral and international assistance from organizations such as Iccrom, Icomos, The Getty Conservation Institute, Icom, Unesco and the UN System, the Banking Community and the Private Sector.

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The work achieved by the project has been the result of a joint commitment and action between our counterparts, consultants, trainees, students, associate experts, UN Volunteers, JPOs and the excellent group of secretarial-programme support personnel I have had as collaborators in our project office.

Needless to say, that UNDP and UNESCO offices in the region as well as our colleagues at Headquarters have been of great support to see that our endeavours become realities.

My thanks and appreciation go to all of them and all of those who worked with us over the years.

With the **termination** of the project, my services as Chief Technical Advisor and Project Manager, will, obviously, come to an end. So will my association with the UN System with which I had a permanent **contractual arrangement** over the last 26 years.

I shall continue to work as an **international consultant in matters in which I can share my knowledge and experience in International Development work** and I hope that we will keep in touch after I am relinquished from my present post, as we move along.

I enclose a **PERSONAL CARD** with my **ADDRESSES** for easy reference.

I hope, as my life proceeds (health and life permitting) to continue on an ascending-learning curve to apply the lessons I have learned to the fullest in any future endeavour related to heritage-management and development cooperation as such.

I am now setting my sights on a continuous and successful development of the concept and practice of heritage conservation management and economics. But above all, we need further innovative and pragmatic approaches to development work responding to the social economic cultural, environmental realities of our Planet as we approach the 50th Anniversary of UN and the year 2000.

The international community, the UN System are headed for change. The world is seeking, for example, the best ways and means of translating Agenda 21 into practical, executive and result oriented programmes aimed at/beneficiaries. It is our common responsibility to oversee and to monitor with all parts concerned its implementation.

Development cooperation needs a boost in these difficult times and conditions of the globe. We all have to ensure that projects put in place are economically, socially, ecologically and culturally sustainable and accountable. This is our last chance of the century to narrow the gap between "the have's and the have not's" in all possible senses imaginable of the causes and implications of the expression "to have or not to have".

Let me take this opportunity on behalf of all of us at the Regional Project and myself to renew our thanks and appreciation for our cooperation over the years wishing you all the best for the rest of the 90s and beyond.

Sylvio Mutal
Chief Technical Advisor
and Regional Coordinator