



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Message from Francesco Bandarin, UNESCO Assistant Director-General to the Medellin Conference on "Borders: landscapes on the alert"

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Dear participants to the Medellin Conference on "Borders: landscapes on the alert", dear colleagues from Latin America, and dear friends of IFLA

Allow me, first of all, to congratulate the organisers for promoting this initiative and all of you for the important results of this meeting: it truly marks a new beginning for heritage conservation in the continent and it is a source of inspiration for all those, throughout the world, that share our vision and our commitment for the preservation of landscapes.

LALI is a regional initiative, but its meaning goes much beyond the limits of the Latin America region: it signals the mobilisation of civil society for the safeguarding of important collective values, the ones that are represented by the conservation of beauty, of biodiversity, of traditional knowledge, of heritage in all its forms.

Landscapes are all this, and much more. They are the places of history, of collective memory, but also the places where we can build our future, where sustainable development can take place in forms that are at the same time respectful of traditions in their inspiration and innovative in their practice and management.

As you all know, landscapes as a heritage category have been recognised by the World Heritage Convention, and we have been able in the past 20 years to inscribe about 70 Cultural Landscapes in the World Heritage List. They are extraordinary examples of the complexity, beauty and depth of the relationship between Humanity and Nature, in all regions of the world and in all historical periods.

This is very good, but certainly insufficient to provide guidelines for the conservation of the great variety of cultural, natural, urban and rural landscapes that we find in all countries.

In one region, Europe, a Convention has been adopted in the year 2000, and this has certainly opened important avenues for the adoption of national legislations, local regulations and plans, and for the study and experimentation of innovative tools and mechanisms to analyze and manage landscapes.

This is good, but not sufficient. We need to extend to all regions of the world the idea that Landscape preservation is the key for environmental sustainability, and the key to enhance and value traditional knowledge and the local communities' identity and social economic development.

Unesco praises the work that you have done during this meeting, and wholeheartedly supports the LALI initiative as a basis for an enhanced regional and international action that will lead to the development of more effective and universal policies, in collaboration with all the main United Nations Agencies, the international NGOs and national and local Governments of all the regions of the world.

Thanks! We look forward to an even greater global engagement for the preservation of Landscapes!

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