



CANADIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
COMMISSION CANADIENNE POUR L'UNESCO

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COMMUNIQUÉ
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The Canadian Commission for UNESCO holds its 47th Annual General Meeting

Ottawa, March 17, 2007 Over 200 persons from across Canada, representing the fields of education, the sciences, culture and communication and information, attended the Canadian Commission for UNESCO's 47th Annual General Meeting, held in Ottawa on March 16-17, 2007.

In attendance were Gilles Laurin, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Canada to UNESCO, and Michel Audet, the newly appointed Representative of the Government of Quebec in the Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO. Also in attendance was Gülser Corat, Chief, Section for Women and Gender Equity, Bureau of Strategic Planning from UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

The theme of this year's meeting was *Linking Networks, Sharing Ideas*, and focused on the growth of both formal and informal networks in advancing and sharing knowledge around the world. Keynote speaker, Ahmed Djoghla, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, discussed links between biodiversity and cultural diversity. Biological diversity, he stated, is the result of millions of years of evolution of life. "Ecosystems provide the essential needs of life, protection from natural disasters and diseases and constitute the very foundation of human culture. Ecosystems and life on earth, including its cultural, spiritual and ethical dimension, are therefore co-substantial." The complete text of Dr. Djoghla's address is available at www.biodiv.org

The meeting also featured presentations on sustainable development, traditional knowledge and the *Convention on the Promotion and Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Expression*. Over two days, participants explored ways in which networks facilitate the sharing of ideas, empower people and contribute to shaping UNESCO's policy orientations and programme activities. The Commission's President, Michèle S. Jean, stated at the close of the meeting, "UNESCO is an essential organization that

tries to reach difficult goals: achieve peace and solidarity; achieve an acceptable consensus on difficult issues; achieve the goals of the millennium; implement normative instruments and develop networks and new ideas. I think that Canada with its cultural diversity and its spirit of tolerance will continue to be a laboratory of creativity and energy as we have seen in the last two days.”

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO operates under the aegis of the Canada Council for the Arts. Its role is to act as a forum for governments and civil society, and to mobilize the participation of Canadian organizations and committed individuals in UNESCO’s mandated areas: education, natural and social sciences, culture and communication and information. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the only member of the United Nations System to have National Commissions performing this role in its Member States.

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