

UNESCO is working for quality higher education



UNESCO is the only UN agency whose mandate includes higher education and, as such, has assisted the Peruvian National Commission and Peru's National Assembly of University Presidents (Asamblea Nacional de Rectores) to carry out and promote the National Higher Education Meeting.

The event took place in preparation for the Regional Conference on Higher Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, which was organized by the IESALC (UNESCO's International Institute for Higher Education in America and the Caribbean) and the Colombian Government, and held in the City of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

Ivan Rodriguez Chavez, President of the National Assembly of University Presidents, the UNESCO Representative in Peru, Victor Raul Diaz Chavez, Vice Minister of Education, and Maria Isabel Miyan de Chiabra, from the Peruvian National Commission for UNESCO, joined forces to lead the workshop with Universities throughout Peru.



Inaugurating the National event, held in Lima, Peru, was Victor Raul Diaz Chavez, MoE Vice Minister of Institutional Management and Executive Director of the Peruvian National Commission for UNESCO. During the event, Ivan Rodriguez Chavez, President of Peru's National Assembly of University Presidents, presented the meeting goals and spoke on how important Peruvian representatives' participation in the Regional and World conferences was.



The Peruvian National Commission for UNESCO Secretary General, and coordinator of this event, Maria Isabel Miyan de Chiabra, explained the conference dynamic as participatory in order to reach consensus on proposals to renew and strengthen the higher education system. Attendees were broken up into roundtables where they discussed such topics as the quality of Latin American universities, inequality, inclusion, and equity in higher education, accreditation and evaluation systems, among others.



Over 100 participants from 55 Universities and 26 institutes from throughout the country attended the meeting; 11 facilitators of the highest level, including former ministers of education, renowned researchers, and university deans, lead the discussions.



Luis Piscocoya, a former member of the National Council of Education and an IESALC consultant, helped organize the meeting.



Claudio Rama Vitale gave the master presentation which was very well received by participants. Dr. Rama is a former Director for IESALC and ex-Vice President of the International Program for the Development of Communication (IPDC), and "Doctor Honoris Causa" of San Marcos University of Peru.



International Workshop “21st Century University: New actors and challenges”

The UNESCO Representative in Peru closed the event and manifested UNESCO's support in the quest for sustainable higher education systems through building and strengthening student capacities, teacher training, and aiding in the plans for sustainable development policies.

After the conference, it was the Peruvian National Commission for UNESCO that systematized the main conclusions reached during the meeting as well as all recommendations made by different stakeholders and higher education institutions in the country. The National Commission then sent the report to the UNESCO Director General, through IESALC, to be presented at the Regional Conference.

Just some of the recommendations presented to the Regional Conference by Dean Ivan Rodriguez, on behalf of Peru include: to identify and to promote centers of innovation and creativity in higher education, so-called “future embryos”, for developing excellence in science and technology; to institutionalize a culture of university quality accreditation and certification; to establish a quality regional model framework for university accreditation, undergraduate degrees, and graduate programs; and design public policies on higher education through dialogue and consensus.

Other recommendations include: to promote that national and international higher education institutions form education, scientific, and cultural networks which would make possible student and professional mobility and allow the design and implementation of inter-university science and technology networks; to direct public university research to look into its own institution's governability; to promote measures that make the bond between higher education and the corporate world more flexible and viable; and, to develop better methods of the State's results based budgeting so that efforts are directed to improving graduate level and research efficiency.

The Regional Conference held in Cartagena de Indias was one of the most important conferences that have taken place in the past decade and, accordingly, each country came prepared to contribute to building a joint, comprehensive proposal. The joint proposal will be presented by IESALC at the World Conference on Higher Education in July of 2009.



Victor Raul Diaz Chavez and the UNESCO Representative



Katherine Muller-Marin during her presentation to participants



Participants during group discussions



Ines Castro, UNESCO Peru, assisting with the organization of the event