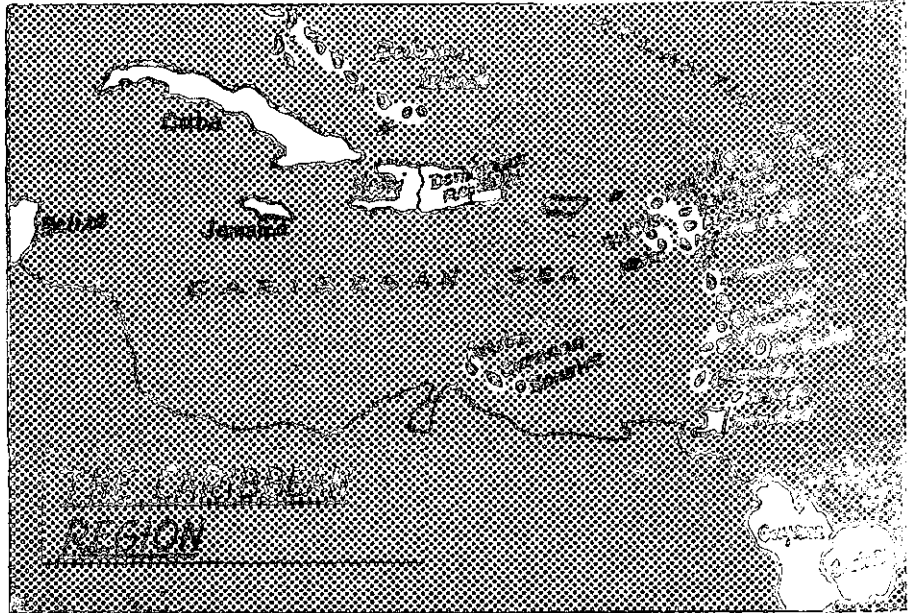


CARIBBEAN
DEVELOPMENT
AND
CO-OPERATION
COMMITTEE



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SECTION 1: A PROJECT FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE REGION, MODERNIZATION OF ARCHIVES BY THE USE OF MODERN METHODS OF RESTORATION AND MICROFILMING OF WRITTEN DOCUMENTS. EXCHANGE OF CULTURAL RESOURCES.

REGIONAL CENTRE/WORKSHOP FOR THE RESTORATION AND MICROFILMING OF DOCUMENTS FOR THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA.

(CENTROMIDCA)

Submitted by the Dominican Republic Delegation to the Second Session of the CDCC, Santo Domingo, 16 - 22 March, 1977

SECTION 2: NOTE BY CDCC SECRETARIAT ON THE PROPOSAL

10 JUN 1978



UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA Office for the Caribbean

SECTION 1

PRESERVATION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE REGION, MODERNIZATION OF ARCHIVES BY THE USE OF MODERN METHODS OF RESTORATION AND MICROFILMING OF WRITTEN DOCUMENTS. EXCHANGE OF CULTURAL RESOURCES.

REGIONAL CENTRE/WORKSHOP FOR THE RESTORATION AND MICROFILMING OF DOCUMENTS FOR THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA (CENTROMIDCA)

Introduction

The cultural heritage, mainly in the form of documents, of most of the countries of the Caribbean suffers from almost total neglect. This alarming state of affairs which threatens to destroy our archives and libraries has been dramatically underlined by the distinguished professor Aurelio Tanodi of the Multinational Centre of Archivists of the University of Cordoba, Argentina, at a number of international meetings. While excellent work is being done on restoring our historical monuments, the documentary resources testifying to the authenticity of those remains and furnishing a wealth of information on our culture, history and development, are completely overlooked and continue to suffer from an extraordinary disregard.

In the past, mankind preserved the records of its history in parchments which continue to defy time and destruction; but in modern times man has not been capable of producing a paper of similar quality and great durability.

A scientific study must be made to determine the pathology of modern paper and the proper remedies in tropical zones, to disseminate the application of modern techniques of microfilming and restoration of documents, and to solve all the problems connected with a better preservation, classification, use and operation of the documentary resources of our archives and libraries, whether public or private.

No occasion could be more auspicious than this meeting of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee to stress this urgent need and seek the necessary support and measures to solve this serious regional problem.

Background

The Regional Centre/Workshop for the Restoration and Microfilming of Documents for the Caribbean and Central America, CENTROMIDCA, was set up in our country jointly by the Organization of American States and the Dominican Government with the primary objective of preserving the cultural heritage of the member States of the OAS through the restoration and preservation of hand-written and printed documents belonging to the documentary and historical patrimony of tropical zones, particularly of this region.

Besides these functions, CENTROMIDCA also carries out the following tasks: teaching, research, technical assistance, transfer of technology and all activities directly linked with the cultural field in which it carries out its work.

Documentation

In ancient times, the problems of the preservation of documents were less pressing than today because the support of the documentation - paper - was of much better quality. In addition, ecological conditions were much more favourable. Nevertheless, the first steps were already being taken then to preserve written documents, mainly in the form of protection from the ravages of insects.

Today, more than at any other time in the history of mankind, an extraordinary amount of graphic documentation is produced, the support of which, as in past centuries, is paper in all its varieties. Paper could be said to be the depository of this heritage which it is our duty to transmit to future generations.

Paper has only been preserved by means of conservation and restoration, methods which our forebears began to use some 30,000 years ago, thus consciously or unwittingly transmitting their knowledge to posterity, although in a limited form. It may be said that in our country, in the Caribbean and Central American region and in many other countries of the hemisphere and indeed of the world, the documentary resources of our history, culture and development are currently being progressively and seriously destroyed. The only way to avoid this is the proper use of modern techniques of preservation and restoration of documents.

Preservation of graphic documents

The task of preserving documents should be carried out or supervised by archivists or librarians who, with their knowledge of the causes of the deterioration of the materials in our archives and libraries, whether physical, mechanical, chemical or biological, can establish in each case the standards which guarantee the originality and cultural value of the document and the scientific treatment which should be applied to obtain perfect results in restoration and proper preservation.

The restoration of documents is a complex process which varies for each written document: each piece must be studied meticulously from all stand-points. An essential element of preservation is that it should be a constant battle, which implies the use of techniques to check the effectiveness of each treatment. It is likewise essential to check for a large number of parasites which are contained in the documents; and when they are detected, it is necessary to know which chemical products are capable of destroying them.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to discover which of all the organic and mineral elements are the most effective in combating the destructive agents. Deterioration must be averted, but without risk that the same organic components may subsequently damage the treated documents.

There are two types of action to preserve documents:

1. Curative treatment.
2. Preventive treatment.

The first case involves taking samples of moistened paper which are subjected to fungicidal treatment in order to observe the action of the fungicides. In the second case, the paper is directly treated with disinfectants and then exposed to attack.

The difference between the two treatments is considerable, since curative treatments are applied through active, penetrating and very volatile products such as formol, thymol, ethyl oxide, etc.).

On the other hand, preventive treatments are used on healthy documents which must be treated only to preserve them against fungi and bacteria which might proliferate later.

Fungicidal products are used above all to protect the document against subsequent attack, and it treated with gentle products such as borax (methyl bromide, paridichloripbenzene, etc.).

There are a great variety of causes which destroy documents or render them useless. Changes are often produced by a single cause and vice versa. It is therefore important to be able to detect, identify and take the necessary steps to eliminate all of these factors. In any event, preventive steps are more important than curative ones, given the constant emergence of new products and materials which are suitable for preservation. Chemistry, physics, and biology research laboratories should continuously examine these new products to decide on their usefulness and suitable dosages. On the preventive side, in addition to the above, account must be taken of the materials used in the construction of archives and libraries, and of factors such as hygroscopicity, disintegration, acidity, installations, fire-extinguishing system, dust extractors, air-changing system, etc.

Detergents, solvents, whiteners, neutralizers, lubricants, insecticides, etc., must be analysed for possible usefulness in curative restoration.

The preservation of graphic documentation is the main task of CENTROMIDCA, and in view of the importance for research of the document stores in the archives and libraries of our region - importance in all fields of knowledge, and for the development of our peoples - in the effort to preserve this documentation vital importance has been given to the organization and modernization of the archives and libraries of the countries of the Caribbean and Central American region.

Restoration of graphic documents

The restoration of documents is a complex process in which research cannot be divorced from practice. There must be a perfect balance between research tests and laboratory work of restoration.

Restoration work is divided into a number of specific stages which make up a whole. The first is photography, a process which offers suitable documentation for beginning the restorative work and provides safety measures in the case of any error or confusion.

Disinfectation, elimination of insects, sterilization

The microbiological factors which damage documents are sometimes unforeseeable and can cause irreparable loss. They are essentially related to environmental factors such as high temperature, darkness, silence, immobility, lack of ventilation, dirtiness and lack of checks. To combat these elements the following preventive measures come into play: fungicides, insecticides, fumigation. Specific gases, sublimation or vaporization of products are used in fumigation. It is important to follow a dosage recommended by experts and to use due precaution against all risks.

Cleaning

The document is first dry-cleaned to eliminate all traces of dust, stains, smoke, insects, staples, paper clips, etc., taking care that this work does not affect the text or written document.

Fixing of soluble substances

Before undertaking any wet treatment, the solubility of the inks and pigments must be checked. A careful test of this kind ensures that the restorer does not act imprudently, with unforeseeable results.

Humidification - Pressing

On occasion the document must be given a humidifying or drying treatment, if it has suffered from extremes and one of these two parameters is needed. When the document leaves the chemistry, physics and biology laboratory it carries a diagnosis and an indication of the specific treatment for each case or document. The washing process is carried out to whiten, remove stains and acidity and neutralize.

All these baths are given with the necessary substances for each case, according to a series of rules which rigorously control acidity and alkalinity.

Acidity is one of the most pernicious agents from the standpoint of the conservation of documents. Its action breaks the molecular chains of cellulose, damages the physical properties of the paper and weakens the nature of the document.

To counter acidity, the document must be neutralized, but without running the risk of erring on the side of alkalinity which is likewise highly dangerous.

Repriming, consolidation, repair of missing parts
(grafts) repair of tears

If the paper has been weakened by the washing treatment, it is strengthened by means of a repriming process which gives it consistency and strength.

In making up missing parts (grafts), it is necessary to choose the right material in each case, ensuring that the specific characteristics of the paper to be grafted are the same as those of the original document, although its aspect need not necessarily be the same. The difference between the grafted parts and the original must be marked, either in the structure or in colour, to avoid plagiarism.

The same procedure is followed in the repair of cuts and tears, using either manual or mechanical methods.

Lamination

Once the document has been restored, the question arises of whether it needs to be laminated. This is the process in which the document is given consistency, by coating either one or both sides of it as thinly and transparently as possible.

Lamination is not a curative but a preservative treatment. It is never used without first treating the document with the preventive and corrective measures against internal causes of deterioration. Nor is it used indiscriminately, since it is only advisable in cases where other treatments are impossible or useless.

The restoration of documents ranges from the fixing of soluble substances of lamination and framing, using: microscopes, PH measurement, thermostatic trays, hydraulic presses, gas extraction chambers, humidifying chambers, drying, accelerated aging chambers, etc.

This work involves an enormous amount of responsibility and professional conscience. The restorer is responsible for the loss or deterioration of the historical heritage of our peoples.

Restoration laboratories are "convalescence wards" where the document or work of art is restored to health and given a new lease of life. Restorers are anonymous workers, who bear the responsibility for the success or failure of this operation. Their accumulated experience forms a chain whose links are the steps of progress in this science-technique-art which restores the historical and artistic heritage of mankind, thus perpetuating his works and immortalizing him.

Microfilming

As was stated above, today a vast mountain of documentation is produced in all the activities and branches of knowledge. It is every day more difficult to control the conservation and the premises used to organize this documentation. The only means of continuing to control this phenomenon is the use of microfilming.

Microfilming is the process by which a graphic document is miniaturized in a transparent, flexible material as a photographic reproduction. This procedure consists in printing the image of the document in a strip or roll of cellulose acetate, coated with a photosensitive emulsion. The smallest size usually used is 16 mm, and it has the advantage of lasting almost indefinitely.

Microfilms offer a saving of space in archives of up to 98 per cent, which enormously increases the space available in the premises. A single roll of 35 mm film can record and file away up to 10,000 letters. This procedure reduces the cost of storing documents to a minimum, does away with the shelves, bookcases, etc., which are essential for any kind of documentation. It also saves time in finding the information, and it offers security in that with a master microfilm as many copies as necessary may be obtained.

Furthermore, the microfilm obviates the handling of important documents, which can remain untouched once microfilms have been made of them, and this offers another series of advantages which need not be enumerated.

Microfilming is the ideal solution for the organization of static archives. That is why it is used in the modernization of the archives of banks, schools, universities, libraries, museums, public safety institutions, government agencies, hospitals, manufacturing companies, engineering companies, credit agencies, transport companies and other organizations which need rapid and accurate access to stored information.

Microfilming is the documentary support of the future, and it is foreseeable that as progress is made in this important technique, archives and libraries will become "Filmotheques".

In microfilming, CENTROMIDCA has the most suitable means for modernizing the archives of the Caribbean and Central American area.

In view of the importance for research of the documents stores in them, CENTROMIDCA has paid special attention to the organization and modernization of the archives in our countries, in addition to its work in restoration, since it feels there is a pressing need in the modern world, both for present use and as a legacy for posterity, and for the dissemination of the culture of our peoples.

Whenever we are asked to modernize archives, the Department of Control, Archives and Libraries of CENTROMIDCA organizes a system of classification and organization according to the documentation contained in them based on the universal rules established by the International Council on Archives (ICA), the American Library Association (ALA) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

CENTROMIDCA has already received request from various institutions in the Dominican Republic asking for assistance in the organization of their archives. These institutions include: the Dirección General del Catastro; the Instituto Nacional de Recursos Hidráulicos, INDRHL; the Shell Company; the Archbishopric de La Vega; the Ayuntamiento de Baní; the Secretary of State for foreign Affairs; the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo; The Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña; etc;

Cultural exchange

The cultural wealth which is the product of man's creativity should not enrich only the countries and peoples which created it but should at the same time belong to the cultural heritage of all mankind if for any reason cultural products are not in their country of origin, the means should be found to return them to their point of departure.

These objectives can be met by means of cultural exchange. Cultural exchange also facilitates the international circulation of graphic material of an educational and cultural nature, averts the illicit traffic of cultural products and encourages the good faith that should reign in an organized exchange.

A regional project

CENTROMIDCA is a project of the member States of the Organization of American States, i.e. of the entire region.

Our country was accepted as headquarters for this project in Ecuador, in May 1974, and on 14 May 1974 the Basic Agreement setting up CENTROMIDCA was signed in the Dominican Republic.

The Agreement states that the objectives of the Centre are as follows:

- (1) to train technical experts in the preservation, conservation and restoration of documents by means of interamerican, regional and national courses;
- (2) to provide technical assistance to the governments and public or private bodies of the member States of the OAS in the region;
- (3) to carry out research or studies on new methods and techniques;
- (4) to organize registers and archives in the fields in which it is specialized;
- (5) to publish the material resulting from the above activities.

As stated earlier, the central objective is precisely to preserve the region's cultural heritage by the use of the modern methods described above.

CENTROMIDCA and the Caribbean Development
and Co-operation Committee

The educational and cultural objectives pursued by the two regional entities have some points in common.

In annex 3 of the Programme of Work of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee, under the sub-title 'spheres of Action', section F, Education and Culture, it is stated that to attain these objectives the collaboration of academic centres of the Caribbean and of the international organizations would be sought in order to strengthen and preserve the cultures of the region. To that end, there should be systematic collaboration among the universities and research institutions of the area, which would be important components of education and cultural policies.

An exchange project

A regional cultural exchange project squarely aimed at the preservation of the cultural and historical wealth of our countries, with a view to a broad dissemination based on suitable, scientifically preserved and classified documentation, would be an ideal means of strengthening the development of our countries in the social, economic and cultural fields.

Joint action by the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee and CENTROMIDCA in this direction could have good short-term results, as an essential contribution to the more effective implementation of the general plans contained in the different sections of the Project.

The pathology of paper in tropical regions

The research programme of CENTROMIDCA includes a project for an international symposium to determine the diseases of paper in tropical regions. In this connexion, periodical meetings are being held involving over 28 local and foreign scientists connected with the country's 5 universities and various important institutions.

The project for the implementation of this study, which will be submitted as a Dominican proposal at the symposium, is almost ready for presentation.

Paper deteriorates slowly or rapidly over time according to its initial composition and the conditions in which it is kept. The development of education and the cultural progress of the population increase the demand for paper, and thus a faster paper-making process becomes necessary, which leads to a drop in quality and other increasingly negative factors which affect the deterioration of paper.

CENTROMIDCA has suggested that it should carry out a careful study of the causes and effects at the proposed symposium, and UNESCO has been asked to sponsor it.

This research study would cover the whole Caribbean and Central American zone, gathering information on the conditions of the graphic documentation in the archives of the countries of the area.

A study will be made of the chemical and biochemical deterioration of the paper of documents of different periods, something which has never been done in our region.

The symposium could be held before the end of 1977, and it is hoped that internationally famous scientists will take part in it.

Through this programme CENTROMIDCA is working in an important field and offering its help and collaboration in a matter of extreme importance, i.e., the provision of suitable means for the preservation and conservation of our written cultural heritage.

Conclusions

1. Within the United Nations system, - and on the basis of the policy of joint efforts with the OAS - it is felt that there is a need for a cultural exchange project aimed at the preservation and better utilization of the cultural heritage of the countries of the sub-region.
2. The central points of this project could be:
 - (a) A symposium on the pathology of paper in tropical zones
 - (b) Cultural exchange agreements among the countries of the region covering mutual technical assistance, documentation and information and transfer of technology.
 - (c) Use of existing projects, such as CENTROMIDCA, designed for the benefit of the countries involved, in the plans for the region.

SECTION 2

NOTE BY CDCC SECRETARIAT

The proposal is for a Project of Cultural Exchange directed to the preservation of the Cultural and Historical Heritage of the sub-region and to its better utilization.

The project proposal has three components:

- a) Symposium for the investigation of the pathology of paper in tropical zones;
- b) Agreements of Cultural Exchange among countries of the region which contemplate the use of reciprocal technical assistance, documentation and information and transfer of technology;
- c) Utilization of existing projects - such as CENTROMIDCA - designed for the use and benefit of the countries involved in the plans of the region.

The proposal envisages that the project would be a joint action of the CDCC and CENTROMIDCA (Regional Workshop Centre for the Restoration and Microfilming of Documents for the Caribbean and Central America).

CENTROMIDCA, according to the proposal document, is a project of the Member States of the O.A.S., of this whole region, established in May 1974 with the main object of conserving the Cultural Heritage of the Member States of the O.A.S. by means of the restoration and preservation of manuscript and printed documentation pertaining to the Documental and Historical Legacy of the tropical zones, especially of this region, and with the express projections of:

- i) creating techniques of preservation, conservation and restoration of documents, through inter-american, regional and national courses;
- ii) offering technical assistance services to the Governments and public and private enterprises of Member States of the O.A.S. (in the region);

- iii) undertaking research or studies on new methods and techniques;
- iv) organizing records and archives on the subjects of its speciality;
- v) publishing material resulting from activities developed.

However, it would appear from the proposal document that the services of CENTROMIDCA have not to date extended beyond the Dominican Republic.

The first component of the project proposal falls directly within the context of a joint action between the CDCC and CENTROMIDCA.

A symposium at international level for the determining of paper diseases in tropical zones has in fact been planned by CENTROMIDCA within its research programme, is scheduled to be held at the end of 1977, and the sponsorship of UNESCO has been formally requested.

The inclusion of the symposium in the project proposal can therefore be viewed as an effort to directly involve the CDCC in a specific programmed activity of CENTROMIDCA.

The second component may be described as the main aspect of the project proposal and relates to the exchange of cultural resources.

Cultural exchange, directed to the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage of the countries of the sub-region, will have the aim of exchange of extensive and sustained information on adequate, proper documentation, scientifically preserved and classified.

The organization and modernization of the region's archives and libraries through the application of modern techniques, including restoration and microfilming of graphic documents, the better preservation, regulation, utilization and operation of the documental sources of the sub-region's archives and libraries, will be the objectives.

In addition, as the proposal document states, cultural exchange will facilitate the international circulation of graphic material of educational and cultural nature, avoid the illicit traffic of cultural possessions and contribute to the good faith which should mediate in an organized exchange.

The third component is in effect a re-statement of the proposal document's underlying theme of joint action between the CDCC and CENTROMIDCA. In any event, the utilization of relevant existing projects would seem to be covered by the aims and objectives of the second component.

Related Activities Of The CDCC

There are two activities of the CDCC that are in some way related to the project proposal, viz. the already established Caribbean Documentation Centre, and the proposed Caribbean System for Life-Long Education with its two components, Caribbean Enterprise for Production and Distribution of Printed and Audio-Visual Materials, and Centres for Cultural Retrieval and Animation.

The Caribbean Documentation Centre seeks to provide the essential information infrastructure that is a prerequisite to meeting the objectives of the CDCC of sub-regional co-ordination and development, of intra-Caribbean technical co-operation and collaboration. Its main functions are dissemination and referral services, rather than a centralized gathering of documents and data.

The Caribbean Documentation Centre is therefore on the one hand concerned more with documentation pertaining to economic, social and scientific - technological development rather than cultural and historical development, and on the other, is more a reference bank than an archive or library.

The proposed Caribbean System for Life-Long Education seeks to complete the formal educational systems by stimulating the cultural identification of the Caribbean people, their mutual knowledge and the development of their creativity.

Its first component, the Caribbean Enterprise for Production and Distribution of Printed and Audio-Visual Materials, will seek to stimulate and co-ordinate local production of material to be distributed to the member countries, elaborate specific materials either of general interest to all the countries or requested by an individual country, and establish a system for distribution of material by rotating them among countries.

Its second component, the Centre for Cultural Retrieval and Animation, will be responsible for, inter alia, the handling of the exchanges from other similar centres, the creation of collections or small museums which retrieve aspects of the daily life of the sub-region, and the development of the awareness of the populations for the preservation of the environment, the natural resources and the cultural heritage.

The proposed Caribbean System for Life-Long Education is therefore much more closely related to the present project proposal, particularly in its aspects of creation, collection and dissemination of documentation on the sub-region's cultural resources.

Other Related Activities Within The Sub-Region

On the country level, Cuba and Jamaica are reported to be well advanced in the organization of archives and preservation of documents. Guyana established in 1975 a National Commission for the Acquisition, Preservation and Republication of Research Materials on Guyana, with assistance from Cuba. Barbados has recently established a national committee for the preservation of cultural materials. Trinidad and Tobago has requested O.A.S. assistance in the development and expansion of its national archives, including restoration and preservation of archival material.

On the regional level, the ISER project, Development-Output Evaluation and Research Service (DOERS) has as its main aim the collection and dissemination of documentation and hard data on contemporary social, economic and political happenings in the English-speaking Caribbean, primarily to contribute meaningfully to the development process in the region. In the short-run and intermediate stages, the project seeks to determine what exists and where it is located and to devise procedures for collection, location, storage and dissemination of information so that the most complex and technical data could be reproduced and communicated to individuals and groups concerned with the problems of social development in the Caribbean. Although in some way related to the present project proposal, the DOERS project, like the Caribbean Documentation Centre, is more concerned with documentation pertaining to economic, social (and political) development than to culture per se.

Again on the regional level, ACURIL (Association of Caribbean University and Research Institute Libraries), a non-governmental voluntary body, is concerned with assisting Caribbean countries in the development and improvement of their archives and libraries, in all their various aspects.

ACURIL's Microfilming Committee has been concerned with preparing proposals to the O.A.S. for funds to enable several countries in the Caribbean to initiate or to further develop microfilming of important archives in their countries.

ACURIL IX, the ninth annual meeting of ACURIL, will be held in Curacao in October this year and its theme will be "Caribbean Resources - Sharing, Conservation and Photo-duplication". The theme will be discussed exhaustively and presentations at the meeting will include papers on "The physical protection of library material", "Problems of physical preservation in the Caribbean", "Photo-duplication in the service of libraries with particular reference to preservation" and "Regional microfilming programmes". There will also be a workshop presentation of various preservation methods and techniques. Proposals for specific projects will be presented at the meeting.

The theme and presentations of ACURIL IX, as they relate to cultural and historical documental resources, will have a direct bearing on the activities and proposed Symposium on Paper of CENTROMIDCA. Indeed, the ongoing activities of ACURIL itself, e.g. its Microfilming Committee, involve aspects closely related to the present project proposal.

Consideration Of The Project Proposal

As regards joint action of the CDCC and CENTROMIDCA, it should be noted that CENTROMIDCA, as an O.A.S.-Dominican Republic project for the Caribbean and Central America, would on the one hand cover a larger number of countries than the CDCC, but would on the other hand exclude CDCC member countries and associate members which are not also members of the O.A.S., such as Belize, Cuba and Guyana.

It might therefore be advisable to conceive of the project as a specifically CDCC project, and to regard CENTROMIDCA as one of other existing projects in the sub-region that can and should be utilized in the course of implementation of the proposed Project of cultural Exchange.

As regards the first component of the project proposal, the symposium for the investigation of the pathology of paper in tropical zones, it would be noted, in the first place, that the symposium is in fact part of the research programme of CENTROMIDCA and is already being organized to take place at the end of the year and in the second place, that the ninth annual meeting of ACURIL (ACURIL IX) in Curacao in October 1977 was scheduled to consider essentially the same topic.

It might therefore be more advisable, in all the circumstances, to exclude this component from the project proposal and at the same time to try to initiate or investigate the possibility of some kind of collaboration between ACURIL IX and CENTROMIDCA in their respective endeavours.

As regards the third component of the project proposal, the utilization of existing projects designed for the use and benefit of the countries of the sub-region, as has been previously noted, the utilization of relevant existing projects in the sub-region, in the course of implementation of the Project of Cultural Exchange, is inherent in the second component of the project proposal and therefore need not be separately stated or considered.

This leaves the second component for consideration and elaboration.

Elaboration Of The Project Proposal

The Project of Cultural Exchange, directed to the preservation of the Cultural and Historical Heritage of the countries of the sub-region and to its better utilization, should take the form of Agreements of Cultural Exchange between the CDCC member countries and associate members, with the aim of facilitating the use of reciprocal technical assistance, documentation and information and transfer of technology.

Agreements of Cultural Exchange are normally bilateral. Such Agreements are said to exist between many Latin American countries, as well as between Cuba and Guyana and possibly Cuba and Jamaica. However, the Agreements of Cultural Exchange within the Project of Cultural Exchange should take the form of a multi-lateral Agreement of Cultural Exchange, embracing all CDCC member countries and associate members, embodying all the aspirations and plans of the CDCC in respect of the preservation of the documental sources of the sub-region's culture, and to which all members will be signatory.

To ensure that the multi-lateral agreement does not remain a mere document, in other words to operationalize the agreement, a permanent co-ordinating body should be set up within the framework of the Project (and of the Agreement), with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the Agreement, drawing up plans and programmes for the realization of the Project, and effecting co-ordination and collaboration in all aspects.

Co-ordination and collaboration are most important if the duplication of effort and absence of co-ordination so prevalent in the sub-region are to be overcome.

The permanent co-ordinating body would have the responsibility for example, of co-ordinating the Project's activities with those of the proposed Caribbean System for Life-Long Education as they relate to the documental sources of education and culture, and might indeed be invited to assist in the task suggested in the Joint ECLA/UNESCO Regional Programme Document in respect of the said proposed Caribbean System for Life-Long Education, namely that of undertaking an inventory of existing (documental and other) mechanisms for cultural dissemination and their evaluation in relation to the CDCC objectives.

