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The Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Stephen Lashley (right) told the Organisation of American States (OAS), represented locally by Francis McBarnette (left), that additional monies for the country's restoration efforts are welcomed.

Heritage and its value in focus

5/7/2015

THE Organisation of American States (OAS) has put cultural heritage in the region on the front burner – in a big way.

Yesterday at Hilton (Barbados), during the opening session of the Interim Advisory Council Meeting of the Caribbean Heritage Institute and Network and subsequent two workshops, all under the theme 'Expanding the Socio-Economic Potential of Cultural Heritage in the Caribbean', the focus was placed squarely on enhancing the worth of cultural heritage.

COHERIT Association LLC. (USA) Representative and Technical Co-ordinator working with the OAS Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Culture Section, Neil Silberman, stated, "This is one of the most important Cultural Heritage projects that the OAS has attempted, and it is aimed specifically to address problems of the Caribbean region, where tourism has been, let's say, a mixed blessing; and we hope not only to encourage the protection and promotion of cultural heritage throughout the region, but also to offer the residents of the region a greater chance to participate in the identification of their own heritage and identity."

Silberman further said, "The point of this two-year Project is, it is the OAS' attempt to enhance every kind of value that heritage has, not just as tourist attractions, but as a real resource for the people of the region...

"The idea of this Project is really to expand the usefulness and value of cultural heritage for all the countries of the region, and we are working on five project components, to expand everything from networking, to laws and legislation, to digital national registers, to community heritage tourism, and to heritage education."

Therefore, when the meeting of the first Advisory Council got underway, simultaneously a workshop focusing on Heritage Education was conducted.

Analysing a study of the regional courses, programmes and faculty to find all the skills that are needed in the "21st Century Heritage", in this second workshop, the point was to not only find the gaps in Cultural Heritage education programmes within the region, but also "to attempt to demonstrate how they can be filled with online courses conducted by the University of the West Indies, Open Campus, where the Caribbean Heritage Institute is to be established in Barbados. (KG)





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