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Meeting of Higher Education Partners

Paris, 23-25 June 2003

**Reforms and innovations
in higher education in some
Latin American and Caribbean countries
1998-2003**

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Note of the Secretariat

Five years after the World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 1998), UNESCO has once again reunited actors in higher education from across the world, represented by the focal points responsible for the follow-up of the World Conference and certain notable figures, for a meeting of partners in higher education (UNESCO, Paris, 23-25 June 2003).

The goal of the meeting is to evaluate progress in the implementation of the World Declaration over the last five years, to measure the impact that the Conference has had on the development of higher education at the world level, and to define orientations for future action at the level of Member States and institutions to ensure that higher education is able to better respond to rising needs and challenges.

The principal working documents made available to the participants to facilitate their deliberations and to allow them to reach their objectives were prepared on the basis of information collected by Member States and our principal partners in the follow-up of the World Conference, as well as our colleagues responsible for carrying out the higher education programme at the regional level.

The Division of Higher Education would like to express its sincere gratitude to all the actors who contributed to the organisation of the partners' meeting.

Komlavi Seddoh
Director
Division of Higher Education

Foreword

The objective of this paper is to contribute to the knowledge of changes, reforms, innovations, projects, and development programs of higher education, from the year 1998 to 2003, five years after the World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 1998). The paper is a result of diagnostic studies conducted by IESALC in Latin American and Caribbean countries, on the evolution, present situation, and prospects of higher education. This project will progressively cover all countries in the region. Here have been reproduced sections of reports that we have received up to date from several countries. The document is divided into three sections: in the first section a definition of the term reform is given, as we used in the context of the paper, and the main features of each the three reforms are described and discussed; second, we present the main changes and innovations in higher education during the above mentioned period in some countries of the region; and finally, we draw some conclusions on the general evolution of higher education in the region and some particular conclusions related to the four main topics of the WCHE+5 Conference. It can be generally concluded that during the five years elapsed from 1998 to date, some relatively important changes have been produced in Latin American higher education, oriented towards modernization and with regard to its transformation, and a growing awareness and sensibilization by the academic community, governments, business enterprises, and other organizations with respect to the role that must be played by higher education in the transformation of Latin American and Caribbean societies. The nature and scope of these changes reveal a consonance with the principles, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Conference on Higher Education. Although it would be necessary to wait for some time to see the fructification of these undertaken reforms, and to capitalize UNESCO actions in all regions of the world, oriented towards a transforming mobilization of higher education.

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Executive summary

The objective of this paper is to contribute to the knowledge of changes, reforms, innovations, projects, and development programs of higher education, from the year 1998 to 2003, five years after the World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 1998). The paper is a result of diagnostic studies conducted by IESALC in Latin American and Caribbean countries, on the evolution, present situation, and prospects of higher education. This project will progressively cover all countries in the region.

The term *reform* is used to characterize the evolution of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean during the 20th Century, and the time elapsed of the 21st Century. We will define *reform* as a period in the history of higher education characterized by a series of features, changes, and innovations, which give a particular identity to that period. We will distinguish three reforms, each one with its specificities in the recent history of Latin American and Caribbean higher education. The *First Reform* started in 1918, known as *Cordoba's Reform*, having as cradle the University of Cordoba in Argentina, which was and continues to be a reference for many university students and academics in general. The *Second Reform* begins to develop in the 60's and 70's, due to the exhaustion of the industrialization models in the region. It had its expansion among the 60's and 70's, varying in intensity and outset in the various countries. By the end of the 90's, is brought about the exhaustion of this *Second Reform*. This series of factors led to the initiation of the present phase of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, defined as the *Third Reform*, which was initiated approximately during the decade of the 90's. These factors associated to the Third Reform are the ones presently influencing higher education development in a significant manner in Latin America and the Caribbean.

It can be generally concluded that during the five years elapsed from 1998 to date, some relatively important changes have been produced in Latin American higher education, oriented towards modernization and with regard to its transformation, and a growing awareness and sensibilization by the academic community, governments, business enterprises, and other organizations with respect to the role that must be played by higher education in the transformation of Latin American and Caribbean societies. The main aspects in which changes have been significant are the development of national systems of evaluation and accreditation of higher education; the increasing number and diversity of university networks and associations as instruments for cooperation; development of new models of higher education; the increasing interest in using the new information and communication technologies in teaching, learning and research activities, and development of projects in this area; the internationalisation of higher education; the increasing interest to develop cooperation projects between higher education

institutions and enterprises and other organisations. It can be said that the nature and scope of these changes reveal a consonance with the principles, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Conference on Higher Education. Although it would be necessary to wait for some time to see the fructification of these undertaken reforms, and to capitalize UNESCO actions in all regions of the world, oriented towards a transforming mobilization of higher education.

Introduction

The objective of this work is to contribute to the comprehension of changes, reforms, innovations, projects, and development programs of higher education, occurred from year 1998 to year 2003, approximately five years after the implementation of the World Conference on Higher Education, held in Paris on November 1998. The articles presented derive from the diagnostic studies performed by IESALC in Latin American and Caribbean countries, on the evolution, present situation, and perspectives of higher education. This project, which was initiated at the end of year 2001, will progressively cover all countries in the region, in some cases by means of national coverage, and in others by means of sub-regional coverage. Here have been reproduced sections of reports that we have received up to date from several countries. Regrettably, not all of them are finished, but we consider that this progress can be useful to the academic community interested in knowing the evolution of higher education in some countries of the region during the aforesaid period. As we receive more national reports, we will enrich this document, and later we will be able to offer to the academic community a more complete and systematic report on the subject, as we rely on the totality of the studies initiated, which we hope to obtain by the end of year 2003.

The third university reform in Latin America and the Caribbean

The term *reform* will be useful to us to characterize the evolution stages of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean during the 20th Century, and the time that has elapsed of the 21st Century. We will interpret *reform* as a period in the history of higher education characterized by a series of features, indicators, changes, and innovations, which give a certain particular identity to that period. We will distinguish three reforms, each one with its specificities in recent history of Latin American and Caribbean higher education, which we will briefly describe following on, to situate this work within a more defined context. The ample and more profound reforms will be the subject matter of another document being prepared by IESALC.

The *First Reform* started in 1918, known as *Cordoba's Reform*, having as cradle the University of Cordoba in Argentina, which was and continues to be a

reference for many university students and academics in general. This reform was characterized by the following distinctive elements:

- Development of university autonomy and co-government.
- Turnover from education for elites to mass education through the expansion of coverage to middle classes.
- Expansion of a model of public, free, and monopolistic higher education.
- Homogeneous level of quality through internal mechanisms to the institutions.
- Few professions and high-hierarchy teaching.

The *Second Reform* begins to develop within the frame of university manifestations in the 60's and 70's and due to the exhaustion of the industrialization models in the region. It had its expansion among the 60's and 70's, varying in intensity and outset in the various countries. Said stage was differentiated by:

- It is produced within the frame of a strong crisis of free-public education due to financial restrictions and political conflicts, associated to the exhaustion of industrialization models by importation substitutions, and international insertion schemes.
- It allowed the birth and expansion of private higher education, and the conformation of dual models with high heterogeneity in terms of quality, access, and funding.
- Overcrowding of enrollment, heterogeneity of quality levels, diversification of educational options, and regionalization of institutions.
- It led to a reduction in the regulatory roll of the state and the market expansion as an assigner agent.
- Multiplication and differentiation of institutions, expansion of teaching staff, increase of the quantity and variety of graduates.
- Establishment of enrollment restrictions in macrouniversities.

By the end of the 90's, is brought about the exhaustion of this *Second Reform*, basically due to the following factors:

- The diversification created a structural upsetting with vagueness of functions and delimitations, giving a vision of a chaotic, disjointed, and repetitive system.
- Restrictions to cover the new students' demands in the public sector.
- Traditional teaching systems that have not incorporated new information and communication technologies (NTIC), and increasingly separated from research in a context of teaching overcrowding with falling levels of training.
- Lack of mechanism to secure quality and deterioration of certifications.

- Lack of modern management systems and increasing lack of justness in free-public funding institutions.

This series of factors led to the initiation of the present phase of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, which we conceptualize as the *Third Reform*, which was initiated approximately during the decade of the 90's, and its distinctive features are the following:

- It occurs in a context of expansion of international education, and a growing conformation of a tripartite model (public, local private, and international private).
- Birth of virtual education and appearance of new hybrid pedagogical modes.
- New role of the State through the establishment of national quality assurance systems.
- Reduction of the expansion of local private institutions, and the beginning of a stage of contraction by determining market or quality factors.
- Institutional and management heterogeneousness methods in a global scenario.
- Growing expansion of fourth-level education by means of systems for enrollment collection.
- Establishment of nets and international alliances in teaching and research areas.
- Innovative flexibility of academic and administrative structures.

It can be said that changes, innovations, programs, and development projects that were initiated at the moment when Higher Education World Conference was taking place in 1998, part of which are described in this document, are registered and are the product of the Third Reform movement that we characterized above. In a more specific manner, that Reform has a *local context* and a *global context*, the consideration of which is relevant to better specify its scope.

Regarding the *local context*, it is characterized by the following elements:

- Financial restrictions of public universities, and establishment of access-restrictive systems.
- New regulation forms through Council of Rectors as a result of the institutional differentiation, and the prevalence of private institutions.
- High feminization of students' enrollment.
- Growing unemployment and emigration of professionals and technicians.
- New demands for skills and dexterities in labour markets.

Respecting the *global context*, its characteristics are:

- Internalization of education, and establishment of alliances and global nets.
- Non-presence virtual education.
- Digital convergence of cultural industries and educational services.
- Economic globalization.
- Strong development of scientific knowledge, and naissance of nets economics.

These factors associated to the Third Reform are the ones presently influencing higher education development in a significant manner in Latin America and the Caribbean, of which we are going to describe experiences in reforms, innovations, and changes in some countries of the region.

Recent and ongoing experiences in some countries

Argentina

The main modifications that occurred in higher education during the decade of the 90's, were the following:

1. The main reform has been the sanctioning in 1995 of the Higher Education Act, which made it possible to have a common legislation for the entire level, and the generation of proposals and higher education changes in policies and management, especially regarding its coordination.
2. The organization and operation of Universities Council and CPRES, the institutionalization of CIN (National Interuniversity Council) (public) and CRUP (Private Universities Rectors Council), have constituted an important advancement.
3. Regarding the *evaluation and accreditation of higher education quality*, the Higher Education Act created the Evaluation and Accreditation National Commission (CONEAU), which assumed a multiplicity of functions: accreditation of degree careers, postgraduate degrees, official and private university institutions, and private agencies for evaluation and accreditation, institutional evaluation of university institutions, and the regulation of private university system. Regarding the quality promotion, it must be indicated that the organization and operation of the University Quality Improvement Fund (FOMECE), which made it possible for national universities to perform institutional improvement projects, study and programs plans, and scientific

and bibliographic furnishing, and postgraduate training in the country and abroad for their teachers and researchers.

4. Among the *new types of institutions* created or consolidated during this period, the creation of new national and private universities can be emphasized. The number of the private universities doubled during the last decade. It can also be mentioned that the creation of new institutions, among which the majority of national ones corresponds to armed forces and security institutions. A growing number of non-university institutions were confirmed, and university colleges and technological institutions have developed for short-term careers.
5. Development of *new tertiary offers for degree and postgraduate studies* is another of the recent developments in the country. Within the development framework of tertiary offers, one must emphasize the tendency registered regarding the offering of *careers for the new demands of the services sector* (informatics, tourism, design, hostelries, etc.), which, in general, are not offered in universities as short-term careers.
6. Regarding the degree careers, the creation of multiple offers has occurred with large diversification in some professional areas, or practically none in others. Many universities started to offer intermediate or short-term careers with technological-type orientation, especially in private and national universities created during the decade of the 90's.
7. Several new national (public) universities were created in Buenos Aires urban area, for the purpose of regionalizing enrollment and to reduce the demand pressure on the University of Buenos Aires (UBA).
8. The explosion registered during the last years on postgraduate studies is the one that has offered greater offering of diversity with respect to areas and specializations, since it has more than doubled in five years.
9. The *mode of distance education*, which has also grown significantly in a short time, has not shown greater innovations with regard to careers been offered, since, in general, they tend to repeat the ones taught with actual presence. In this aspects, the creation of a specific institution stands out, Quilmes Virtual University.
10. Another relatively innovating aspect is the introduction of *academic structures*, and *greater flexibility in the programs of study of several institutions* with the incorporation of optional subjects, tutoring regimes, and adoption of the credits system.
11. On the subject of *research promotion and technological innovation*, the sanction of the Promotion and Encouragement of Technological Innovation Act, and the organization and operation of Technological Liaison Programs among universities and business enterprises, constitute a normative and institutional advancement, which seems not to have been accompanied by a

significant improvement in the relationship university – technological innovation – business enterprises.

12. With respect to *regional integration*, several significant advances have been registered in relation to agreements established in MERCOSUR, on the subject of recognition for academic purposes. An Experimental Mechanism of Accreditation of Degree Careers has been designed, organized, and started, which is being initiated with the careers of Agronomy, Engineering, and Medicine.
13. Progress in the field of *university management* include: departmental organization instead of by faculties; development of postgraduate programs in higher education and in university management; FOMECS support in institutional strengthening of faculties, departments, and institutes of national universities with technical cooperation; development of a reforms program in national university higher education, with funding from the World Bank and the National Treasury, which has included FOMECS, CONEAU, and improvement of the Universities Policies Secretariat (SPU); the realization of diverse works, studies, and researches in SPU'S scope; the University Information System Improvement Program (SIU) has contributed to introduce several improvements in academic, administrative, and budgetary management of national universities and in the Universities Policies Secretariat itself; the introduction of the process of elaboration of university budget with new allocation and distribution criteria for financial resources, based on priorities and on funds obtainable through competitions; the organization of the University Interconnection Net (RIU), as a telematics net that integrates national universities.

Brazil

Important transformations have taken place in Brazil, relevant to reforms and changes, which can be summarized as follows:

1. The expansion of higher-level enrollment, resulting from a growth of middle education, as with the growth of customers formed by adults already integrated to the employment market, searching to improve their professional opportunities by means of obtaining a higher title.
2. Updating legislation on higher education as a reflex of the creation of the Educational National Council and its Higher Education Board.
3. Establishment and improvement of the evaluation system of higher education, by means of creating a national courses examination and evaluation of institutional offering conditions, added to the already traditional postgraduate studies evaluation, which allowed for a more effective measurement of the system's efficiency and productivity. The POROBAO will offer at the end a greater credibility within and outside the higher education system.

4. The institutional diversification process created new professional perspectives for the students, not only in terms of the nature and administrative dependencies, but also regarding the organizational profiles and academic vocations.
5. The consolidation of the postgraduate national system, *stricto sensu*, with a strong inherence on the part of CAPES.
6. Research, especially in federal higher-education institutions, encouraged by promotional organizations, by granting training and research scholarships. As a result of this process, scientific production experienced a great advancement, providing a valuable contribution to human resources qualification.
7. Strengthening of the national Science and Technology complex, by creating Sectorial Funds, toward financing the sector's activities, as well as the introduction of two data collection and dissemination systems related to scientific and technological production.
8. Increase of the international insertion of Brazilian researchers. Postgraduate courses scholarships, professional on-the-job training, and academic interchanges, granted by development bodies (CAPES and CNPq) created favourable conditions for research and for Brazilian researchers to be more recognized, integrating them to world researchers nets, and increasing international cooperation.
9. The CAPES' Periodical Site widened and democratized access to scientific information for students, teachers, and researchers.
10. The expansion of the number of institutions that offer distance courses, extended access to higher education to a considerable number of persons from all regions of the country. By year 2000, it already reached 80,000 students, who were enrolled in distance courses. Brazil has been the country that most quickly approved regulation norms for virtual education, which establish similar criteria with regard to education with attending students, and establishes the obligatory nature of evaluation in attendance education.
11. The increase and diversification of extension activities of public and private institutions opened new opportunities for socialization of research results made in higher education.
12. The ample and rapid connection to INTERNET by higher education institutions by means of a National Inquiry Net (RNP), made feasible the incorporation of information technologies to the development of its scientific and administrative activities.
13. Finally, during the latest years, expansion of private higher education continued, and, in the public scope, the universities managed by the municipalities developed, even though in a reduced scale.

Caribbean (English-speaking)

The reform initiatives and important development programmes since 1998 must also include some that were initiated before that date but which achieved notable maturity after that date. The initiatives will be organized under the following six heads:

- Networking
- Institutional collaboration
- Expansion of the sector
- Concern for quality assurance procedures
- Expansion of the use of Information & Communications Technologies, and
- Outreach.

Networking

The *Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions (ACTI)* was founded in 1988 and formally established in November 1990. In the post 1998 period, the most significant development has been the creation of the *Association of Caribbean Higher Education Administrators (ACHEA)*. ACHEA (established in July 2001). The organization aims at enhancing the skills of its members through the provision of training and professional development programmes and by providing opportunities for networking among them. ACHEA shows strong potential for positively affecting the practice of administration in higher and tertiary education in the region. The creation of ACHEA complements the existence of ACTI and offers to the Caribbean region a two-tiered networking structure that can contribute to a seamless tertiary system in the region.

The development of the *Caribbean Universities Network (CUN)* is intended to promote higher education in the Caribbean through regional collaboration and integration. CUN identified the standardization of credits in the Caribbean and the accreditation of emerging educational institutions as two of its areas of interest. The Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes (UNICA), which was founded as long ago as 1967, must be also mentioned among the networking institutions.

Institutional collaboration

We can report major advances in the articulation of programmes among regional institutions, the consolidation of a system of franchising university programmes, work towards a common regional structure for associate degrees, experiments with the offer of joint degrees, as well as collaboration between institutions in the delivery of other degree programmes.

In 1996, the University of the West Indies established a special department to undertake the development of its relationships with national colleges, community colleges and other tertiary level institutions in the countries that contribute to the university. The *Tertiary Level Institutions Unit (TLIU)*, as it is called, has a prime

responsibility for streamlining access to the university by working towards the articulation of programmes in other tertiary level institutions with those of the UWI. A second major initiative of the TLIU has been the development and operation of a *system of franchising university programmes* to other institutions. The franchise arrangement increases the number of students in higher education significantly. In fact, in the academic year 1998/99, the first year after WCHE, most of the increase in numbers of university students was in franchised programmes in such tertiary level institutions.

Another development is a *common regional structure for associate degrees*. They are favoured by many of the region's community colleges and national colleges as a qualification that opens the way to higher education. The Education Reform Unit of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States initiated a process of developing a common core for associate degrees as a means of stabilizing the quality of these qualifications.

Expansion of the sector

Since the WCHE in 1998, *two new universities* have been created in the English speaking Caribbean – the University of Belize (UB) in the year 2000 and the Northern Caribbean University in 2001.

Since 1998, two other Caribbean states have created national colleges by amalgamating their technical institutes, their teachers' colleges, their nursing colleges and the sixth forms of their secondary schools. By this procedure, Dominica and St. Vincent have now joined the list of countries in the Eastern Caribbean with national colleges. Montserrat has recently had a study conducted to determine how it can undertake a parallel development. Barbados has recently made the decision to fuse the Barbados Community College, Erdiston Teachers' College and the Samuel Jackson Prescod Polytechnic to create the University College of Barbados, which will become a degree granting institution. In Trinidad & Tobago, two new colleges were created in the year 2000. They are the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad & Tobago (COSTAATT) and the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology (TTIT). As we heard yesterday, the Government of Trinidad & Tobago is considering the creation of a university of Trinidad & Tobago on the basis of COSTAATT and TTIT. In Antigua, a similar development took place in 2001 with the establishment of the Antigua & Barbuda International Institute of Technology. We can also note under this heading the merging of the Bahamas Hotel Training College into the College of the Bahamas as recently as this year. Just next door in Jamaica, the Mico College, the oldest teacher education institution in Jamaica, has applied to become affiliated to the University of the West Indies.

Another new development is the *influx of foreign tertiary education providers*. There are over 60 of them and depending on how you count them, the numbers could rise. Obviously, not all of them entered the market since WCHE but there is no doubt that their penetration of the region has become more of an issue since the Conference.

The impact of the foreign tertiary level institutions on tertiary education in this region will not be measured so much in the effect on numbers of applicants to the regional and indigenous institutions as in the effect on the standard attained by students preparing themselves to enter higher education. The foreign tertiary level providers, and especially the commercial institutions among them, require different and in many cases less rigorous entry qualifications than the UWI.

A significant development in higher education in the region is the formal decision of the UWI to *favour research in specific areas* rather than to foster the individual choices of its academics. The areas on which the UWI will focus attention are the following – biotechnology; cultural studies; education, health and wellness; information technology; natural resources; environmental studies and management; social, economic and governance issues; tourism. Interdisciplinary research will also be favoured.

Concern for quality assurance procedures

The pressure for institutional accountability has spawned a much more rigorous approach to quality assurance. The University of the West Indies has taken the matter very seriously. It needs to do so because the British institutions with which it has traditionally been linked are themselves undergoing extremely rigorous scrutiny in the United Kingdom's quality assurance procedures.

Starting in 1996, the UWI began working towards the establishment of quality assurance units under the portfolio of the Board for Undergraduate Studies. From 2001, there has been a unit at each of the university's three campuses and the processes of self-assessment and quality review involving both external and internal assessors are becoming a regular part of faculty life. Appraisal of staff performance in all categories has been increasingly formalized and is acquiring greater weight in the institution. In addition, Instructional Development Units have been created to assist faculty members in improving their teaching prowess and their programme delivery skills.

The University of Guyana has re-introduced its external examining procedures as part of its attempt to improve its quality assurance procedures.

Expansion of the use of ICTs

The UWI Distance Education thrust is about to take a new shape. It will shortly be oriented towards asynchronous delivery and will use a management structure that will make it significantly more self-contained than it is at present. The current management structure links the distance offerings very clumsily to the faculty programmes. The disadvantages of the faculty driven model have been onerous and the institution has now made the decisions that would give to its Distance Education Centre the autonomy to follow pathways that are more appropriate to open systems of education and to the delivery possibilities of contemporary virtual education.

Outreach

In this area the programme for scholars and artists in residence in non-campus countries of the UWI system must be mentioned. There is another initiative that deserves mention and it is the convocation by the School of Continuing Studies of the UWI of what are called Country Conferences. A Country Conference is a multidisciplinary conference whose theme is the country in which it is held. Since May 2000, Country Conferences have been held in St. Kitts-Nevis, Dominica, Belize and Grenada. In one week, Montserrat will be the venue for a similar conference. The idea underlying these conferences is to encourage scholarship in and on the countries that have been less studied in the Caribbean region. The success of the venture has been high and the appearance of the published papers will consolidate the initiative. The most recent outreach initiative is the launching of a radio station by the Mona Campus (Jamaica) of the UWI. Radio Mona is a 24-hour seven days per week FM station that can cover all of Jamaica. It features educational programming, news and entertainment. The potential is enormous and the University is already considering similar developments at its other campuses.

Colombia

The main reform to Colombian higher education in the last decade was made through 1992's Act 30, which in turn reformed 1980's Act 80, and was sanctioned a year after the present Political Constitution of 1991. The principal actions and adjustments, more than reforms, to Act 30, could be grouped in three stages, same as the presidential terms of office that covered the decade. In a first stage, the law is issued and sanctioned, and the academic media is socialized. In the second stage, proliferate academic programs, given the lack of regulation of the Law and the university autonomy, and a third, in which a quality policy is consolidated for higher education, and the National Accreditation Systems is fortified.

By ICEFS' initiative, Social Mobilization for Higher Education, which updates the main worries of the sector (1999-2000), and in the last phase of this period (2000-2002) are issued concrete norms to heighten quality parameters, and to perform effective monitoring and supervision.

The following activities are prominent:

1. *Mobilization of the society with regard to its Higher Education.* As a consequence of said mobilization, during 1999 took place the First National Congress for Higher Education. In there was reopened the gathering of professors, students, researchers, private institutions, and state-owned entities, around the critical topics for the system. Two years later, in 2001, took place a Second Congress. Such a framework prepared the way so that, from ICFES, were impelled works with diverse IES's associations and professional trade unions, searching consensus on the measures that have been adopted with respect to quality evaluation.

2. *Quality policies:* thus can be identified the set of actions that, from the Ministry of Education by means of Decrees and CESU'S resolutions, have been specifically directed to verify the quality of programs and institutions, by means of evaluating actions and the creation of measurement and management indicators. Evaluation has covered an ample spectrum of the system: admission tests for higher education, the notification process of programs for their operation, minimal conditions for institutions, and for undergraduate and postgraduate programs, and, in some areas, evaluation of forthcoming graduates of the undergraduate system.
3. *System's structure:* To ensure the system's operation under ongoing conditions, and the organization of processes for regimentation, policy, and operating capacity, the Higher Education System has been suffering architectural modifications, of which, the following can be emphasized as advances in the last four years: *the creation of the Higher Education Directorate in the National Ministry of Education; ICFES' reforms (Decrees 262 and 2663 in year 1999)* for the purpose of giving a better service to the system. It was organized with regard to its three objective tasks: Evaluation and Quality, Encouragement and Development of Higher Education, and Monitoring and Supervision, of the *Advisory Commission for Higher Education Institutions*.

Finally, the permanent deliberation with regard to the *proposal for reforms of the Act 30* cannot be omitted in this list of significant actions for the system. As with every initiative opened for public discussion, all kinds of requests have been presented, from maintaining the Act as it is, to the ones that request the revision of university autonomy, of the system's architecture, of the system's flexibility, to the university capacity to manage itself, the unskillfulness, the transfer of resources, and even, as it has been mentioned, the possibility to fusion state-owned institutions. Much has also been discussed with regard to the need of a legal framework for higher education that represents a fundamental normative not subjected to frequent changes, and to be the system's basic foundation. The topics to be revised are been clarified, but so far, a tendency of opinion prevails, according to which instead of a reform of the Act, the real challenge is in the interpretation of its spirit, in the regimentation of its decisions, and the observance of its norms.

Costa Rica

From 1980 on, an expansion of private universities and private parauniversity institutions has been brought about. From 1998 on, this expansion continued, and the number of private institutions rose from 43 to 54. Likewise, the number of higher education careers experienced an increase of approximately 1,150 to 1,400 during the same period. As a result of this evolution, the diversification of higher education grew, and presently constitutes a combination of state-owned institutions, state-owned parauniversity institutions, private university institutions, private parauniversity institutions, and international university institutions.

This complexity has become a diversity of higher-education national coordination bodies, as it has also occurred in other countries of the region. On one hand are the four state-owned universities, which are autonomous and coordinate their activities in CONARE (National Council of Rectors). OPES (Higher Education Planning Office) is its executive secretariat. On the other hand the fifty private universities are regulated through CONESUP (National Council of Private Higher Education University), which has representatives of the Ministry of Education, private universities, professional schools, and CONARE.

Another of the characteristics of this period is that enrollment in higher education exhibited a considerable growth. This brought on, as an answer, an increase in coverage by creating new universities and other higher-education institutions. At the same time, grew the rate of enrollment in higher education of the age groups from 15 to 19 years of age (from 22% to 30%), and from 20 to 24 years of age (from 32% to 38%). Nevertheless, the number of scholarship-holder students has progressively decreased from 1980 to current year.

In general lines, during the period under consideration, a growth of the number of graduates from private higher education institutions has been noticed, which presently outnumbers the graduates from state-owned institutions, and the graduates of Social Sciences and Education, who showed the most noticeable growth in comparison to other specialties.

The number of researchers participating in research projects increased considerably, going from 849 in 1998 to 1,318 in 2001. Even though the relative majority of researches belong to Basic Sciences (27%), its distribution is more or less uniform in other areas of knowledge.

Another important development corresponds to the emergence of evaluation and accreditation instruments. SINAES (National Accreditation System for Higher Education) originated from a CONARE agreement, and said Council and several private universities impelled its commencement. On April 2002, the Legislative Assembly approved the SINAES Act, declaring it of national interest and gives it official nature. It is administratively assigned to CONARE.

In the field of higher education funding, the Special Fund for Higher Education Funding (FEES) already existed by year 1976, which foresees an automatic funding readjustment mechanism, which by means of a formula sought FEES' consolidation in real terms. From year 1998, a third funding agreement was accomplished.

Cuba

The changes that took place in Cuba can be enumerated as follows:

1. *Implementation of changes in the philosophy of higher education institutions (IES)*. As part of the improvement of university management, a new management approach was applied in almost all IES's, taking into account as

basis the fundamental principles that sustain strategic planning and management by objectives.

2. *Design and start-up of new plans and study programs (Engineers, Bachelors, etc.)* The essential feature that characterizes these new plans is the improvement of educational aspects; that is to say, those related to merit creation in students.
3. *Design and application of integral approach for the educational task in Higher Education Institutions.*
4. *Expansion and consolidation of the national net of Educational Units and Base Labour Entities.* This way, during the educational process, students throughout all years of studies, are systematically linked with the performance of the profession for which they are been educated, be it in a systematic manner, simultaneously with academic education.
5. *Creation of the Faculties of Mountain Agronomy,* which answer the need to pay more attention to the country's mountainous zones, and with the objective to promote its economic and social development.
6. *Design and application of the Evaluation and Accreditation System for Masterships (SEA-M),* as part of a continuous quality improvement program.
7. *Creation of new regulations and advisory bodies in Postgraduate Education.*
8. *Reforms to the processes of obtaining scientific degrees.* It was established that the topics proposed for Masters' theses must be analyzed and endorsed by the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment, which oversees that they are in correlation with the National Science and Technical Plan, and with other present priorities and prospects.
9. *Development of Research Branch Programs on Higher Education.*
10. *Use of performance indicators relative to IES' scientific potential* This indicators are grouped in five areas: a) of relevance, b) science, c) technology, d) impact, e) pertinence.
11. *Strengthening of multiple and inter disciplinary groups, as well as the creation of studies centers.*
12. *Creation of interface entities.* From a rigorous study of the world practice and from self-experience, a consensus has been reached on the process that mediates among the generation of new knowledge, technologies, and technological innovation, is not lineal, therefore, it is necessary to furnish the IESs with linking structures that are know as interfaces.
13. *Design and implementation of Development Programs of New Information Technologies and Communication in the IESs.* As part of international tendency, during the decade of the 90's, in Cuban higher education is developed a

superior rhythm of the usage of New Information and Communication Technologies (NTIC) in different university processes, due to government support, that allocated growing financial funds for these purposes.

Chile

Although the higher education model defined in Chile in 1981 continues fully in effect, some adjustments that have been made since 1987 present interesting aspects to be studied with some care, and their effects should be evaluated. Without asserting to be exhaustive in our journey through these innovations, we will stop only in those that appear to us that have, or could have, a major impact on the system. Those are the *development of accreditation* and the *increase in indirect fiscal contribution*, previously restricted to universities created before the reform – that is to say, those that participate in the Council of Rectors, usually called “traditional” universities – to all higher education institutions, the introduction of direct fiscal contribution of a variable component, the distribution of which among traditional universities obeys to performance indicators, the measures to promote alliances among universities and business enterprises.

With respect to *accreditation*, the new universities and professional institutions that were created under the protection of the new 1981 legislation were under a supervisory system consisting in the submission for approval from an examining university of the programs of studies of their new careers. This system collapsed with the proliferation of new universities by the end of the 80's. As a consequence, by the end of the 80's, prevailed the conviction that the regulation mechanisms in force had been insufficient to channel the system diversification and safekeeping its development according to quality requirements and congruent stability with public interest.

In 1990 was established a new supervisory mechanism for new private institutions, based on accreditation developed by the autonomous Higher Council for Education (CSE). CSE is the entity commissioned to administer the supervisory system foreseen in the accreditation system. The accreditation, a system of integral supervision of higher education private institutions, that is performed by means of several periodical performance evaluation mechanisms that cover the most meaningful variables of the entity's development, such as the ones relating to educational, didactic, physical, economic, and financial resources. CSE'S accreditation is not voluntary, it has a duration limited by law to a maximum of 11 years, which is conducted by a state-owned entity through the evaluation of academic peers and the Council itself, has as main objectives to protect public faith deposited in higher education institutions, assure minimum quality levels, safeguard users, and includes external evaluation as a central element.

Besides institutional accreditation, there is also the accreditation of programs. The National Commission of Undergraduate Accreditation (CNAP) was created in March 1999 for the purpose of conducting experimental accreditation processes for programs or careers, and to design and propose a national accreditation system. CNAP has formed work teams to define evaluation criteria,

and to constitute registries of evaluating peers in several areas. These teams are called Technical Committees.

The *Indirect Fiscal Contribution* (AFI) was created in 1981, and began to be applied in 1982. AFI'S actual distribution mechanism has been in force since 1989; year in which the private higher education institutions (universities, professional institutes, and technical educational centers) were incorporated to it, and the number of students that could be generators of such contribution was set in 27,500 students. AFI'S allocation considers the 27,500 students that obtained the best scores in the Academic Aptitude Test (PAA).

Another change consists in having increased considerably the resources for *credits and student scholarships* during the last decade.

These three projects, a new admission test to higher education, quality assurance system, and credit for all students and not only for the traditional universities' students, embody the commitment of democratic governments, in power since year 1990, to provide a more equitable system of higher education and of better quality.

Dominican Republic

During the last decade, there have been two relevant moments for the conformation of the National Higher Education System. The first consist in the elaboration and approval of the Higher Education National Council Norms (CONES). The second moment is represented by the elaboration, approval, and distribution of the General Higher Education, Science, and Technology Act.

Nevertheless, it is import to emphasize that the primordial reforms and innovations are constituted by the creation of the Higher Education, Science, and Technology State Secretariat, and with it the entailment of Higher Education with Science, and Technology; also the creation of mechanisms that insure quality, and the pertinence of services rendered by institutions that comprise the National Higher Education, Science, and Technology System, among which are: introduction to Diagnosis Test to access to IESs, institutionalization of certification and accreditation by IES and programs, by propitiating transparency and accountability of institutions, the creation of the Nation Information System for Higher Education, Science, and Technology, and, lastly, the determination to implement an Academic Career System.

In another sense, the creation of official funds to finance through scholarships and educational credits the promotion of scientific research in the scope of higher education, the integration of higher education students, professors, and employees' representatives to CONESCYT, the creation of Higher Education, Science, and Technology Rectors and Directors' Assembly, the control on the part of State institutions for the revalidation of titles obtained abroad, the incorporation of the category of Higher Studies Specialized Institutes, and the incorporation of

institutions for the transference of knowledge and technology are also new contributions.

The most outstanding tendency in the curricular scope is constituted by the determination to propitiate a minimum of coincidence and homogeneity among professional profiles of similar careers, the advance of professional-like or specialized careers at Degree level.

Among the innovations during the latest years are the permanent follow-up to higher education institutions and the evaluations performed by SEESCYT, as well as the implementation by SEESCYT of the first scientific journal of the whole system, "Science and Higher Education", of the project "Glossary of Higher Education, Science, and Technology", and the national training program for professors, promoted by SEESCYT, especially through covenants signed with Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Guatemala

The responsibility for higher education in Guatemala, by Constitutional mandate, is shared by the University of San Carlos, exclusively in charge of stated-owned higher and professional university education, and private universities, which are independent institutions to which correspond the organization and development of the nation's private higher education. The first is an autonomous institution, with legal status, which gives itself its own regulations and governing bodies, while the latter depend, with respect to authorization and academic level control, on the Council of Private Higher Education.

Independently of its own responsibility in management, organization, and development of state-owned higher and professional university education, the University of San Carlos, has tackled the problems of higher education and its challenges with private universities, mainly, the University Rafael Landivar, University del Valle, and University Mariano Galvez, within an activity permanently denominated INTERUNIVERSITY FORUM, mainly with reference to scientific and technological development, which has allowed an interchange of efforts and strategies tending to qualitative improvement of higher education in the research field.

In the face of focused problems, solution measures have been found and implemented, which are the following:

1. Creation of the Placement and Levelling System of first-time enrollment students in the generalization process for the whole University, which tends to evaluate students readiness and capabilities, and, in its case, to place the student in the career according to his capabilities and aptitudes, or to provide him with the instruments that make available to him a levelling of his capabilities and academic education to be able to initiate a particular career.

2. Covenants with the Ministry of Education oriented to support the University towards training programs for the teaching sector, in the primary level as well as in the secondary, with the eagerness to minimize the students' lacks.
3. Inducement and support to Academic Units and Faculties for the establishment of training programs and updating of university professors.
4. Creating activity for new careers according to labour market requirements, as well as the revision and change of programs and program of study of the ones already existing.
5. Encouragement and creation of diverse postgraduate studies units that include specializations, master and doctors degrees, which have increased their ascendant and demand in several faculties.
6. Implementation of relations and covenants with private and business sector to establish dialogues seeking determination of requirements and creation of cooperation nets.
7. Creation of the Cooperation General Coordinator for the purpose of planning and taking advantage of international cooperation, visualized as an important source of technical or external funding support, to make functional the interchange of teachers, researchers, students, and technological options.
8. Promote pure and applied research, by means of the Research Promoter Coordinator Council, integrated by representatives of the Academic Units and General Research Directorate.
9. Within the frame of Central American Higher University Council (CSUCA), the creation of the Central American Accreditation Council, using as instruments the internal self-evaluation and external evaluation as instruments by higher education peers.

Paraguay

The two main features of the historic course of Paraguayan higher education, which took a new path from 1989 with the political democratization, were: *on one side* the citizens enthusiasm to establish a democratic ordinance, and to assure the validity of fundamental human and civic rights, and *on the other side* the conviction that education was the main support to consolidate such conquests.

A decisive fact that occurred during the start-up of the educational reform process, presently recognized as the sole scope for State reform, materialized during the transition, was that the traditional division between university higher education and the rest of the educational system (basic and secondary levels) remained intact. In one case, the Asuncion National University, to which corresponded a hegemonic position in that educational level, answered exclusively to the control of authorities elected by the university *demos*, while the block

integrated by the basic and secondary levels continued functioning under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

Right at the start of the educational reform, two large and contrasting tendencies were outlined: a tendency focused in basic and middle education, impregnated with strong impulses for changes, a high social and political participation, and a ponderable concentration of human resources and economical means, and another tendency, limited to the university scenario, characterized by the predominance of conservative forces, isolationist and indifferent to profound changes that were happening in the national scope, in the educational system non-tertiary, and even within the own university limits.

The accelerated expansion of private higher education constitutes a phenomenon that has contributed to significantly modify the Paraguayan higher education panorama. In less than a decade, were created eighteen new universities, presently representing two thirds of the total university students.

Apparently, the growth of university enrollment was an important advance in terms of reflecting the more accessible enrollment conditions, and, consequently, of greater educational fairness. Nevertheless, the worsening of the economic crisis that the country has been suffering for several years, the wimp financial base of private institutions, and the predominance of certain inconsequential tendency on the part of the students, are eroding the quality levels with which they started, which already were ostentatiously insufficient compared to the current university development in Latin America.

The Asuncion National University (UNA) must be considered as the key institution from which a transformation process of Paraguayan higher education could extend; since that no much could be advanced if the transformation process is concentrated in other institutional instances (private universities and national universities in the interior of the country).

In a short term, the quality improvement strategy for higher education will depend in a large measure to public universities, and mainly on UNA, due to two main reasons: The exigencies that could be imposed by the State due to the fact of receiving public funds for their functioning, and, due to the limitations presented by private universities to augment their threshold of exigencies, since their incomes depend in an absolute manner on their enrollment volume.

Peru

The main change that occurred in Peruvian higher education is the elaboration, on part of the National Assembly of Rectors, of a Modernization and Integral Accreditation Plan for Peruvian Universities, which comprises the following areas or fields of action:

- Diagnosis
- Decentralization

- University accreditation
- Stages for accreditation for universities in the process of implementation
- Self-evaluation and evaluation for academic modernization.
- Peruvian norms and academic procedures, type ISO-9000
- Essential chronogram for the development of Peruvian academic norms, type ISO-9000
- Training and Updating for scientific and technological education
- Adaptation, updating, and modernization of curriculum.
- Development of institutional infrastructures
- Human infrastructures
- Logistic, strategic, and tactical infrastructures
- Physical infrastructures
- Instrumental infrastructures
- Material and supporting infrastructures to teachers with updated educational material
- Editorial system
- Promotion of scientific and technological research
- Encouragements to teaching function, production, and university academic quality
- University legislation and regulations
- Internal legislation: University Statute
- Sole Text of Administrative Disciplinary Procedures
- Database, archives, and university registries
- University identity documents and security measures regarding degrees and titles
- Intra and inter-institutional coordination, collaboration, and cooperation
- Support to university-business activity relationship
- University Forums
- Cultural activities
- Funding sources
- Fund for university development
- Restructuring of National Assembly of Rectors

Venezuela

In Venezuela, during the latest decades, in the frame of the crisis initiated in the 80's, have occurred many innovations, but punctual and of little national significance. It is true, however, that almost all higher education institutions can present a list of innovative realizations, but they cannot modify the general situation. In this sense, we can list some of the *innovations*:

1. Modernization of public administration, including the one referring to higher education, by incorporating concepts and innovations that improve the operation of the institutions.
2. Diversification of careers or study opportunities.
3. Regionalization of education, as an extension process of higher education to all main cities of the country.
4. The beginning of a slow process of coming together between academic and business communities.
5. Promotion and growth of private education.
6. Creation since the 70's and 80's of several novel universities with experimental nature, and the integration, in 1983, of the five public pedagogical institutes into a large experimental pedagogical university, UPEL, and the creation of numerous colleges and technological institutes with new professional careers, especially short-term.
7. Creation between years 1988 and 1999 of diverse salary compensations programs for university teaching staff. These programs were the Researcher Promotion Program (PPI) and CONABA.
8. Creation of REACCIUN, telematic state-owned net to guarantee access to Internet by scientific and academic institutions and members, research centers, and other non-profit organizations, state-owned or non-governmental.
9. Consolidation and development of postgraduate studies, which, in quality and volume, represent the highest and most dynamic academic level.
10. Creation of university companies of the most varied nature in main universities.
11. Increasing use of national and international interchange and cooperation mechanisms.
12. Implementation of cooperation, development, and community service programs.
13. Reduction of bachelorship in some few universities to four years, as in most advanced countries, and eliminating the so-called mentions or options (which are studied at undergraduate level in many institutions), thus strengthening postgraduate studies.

14. Creation of technological parks in some universities, like incubators or nurseries with technological basis to promote the creation of public or private companies to produce goods or services.
15. Creation of distance and virtual programs in few universities.
16. Creation of cooperative research and postgraduate studies; that is to say, executed with participation of several institutions of the country, and, in few cases, with foreign institutions.
17. Appearance and growth of individualized studies, especially in doctors' and masters' degrees.
18. Creation of programs that intend to procure enrollment to higher education by low-income students.
19. Initiation of institutional self-evaluation programs in some universities.

Conclusions

From the information registered in some countries, can be generally concluded that during the 5 years elapsed from 1998 to date, no significant changes have been produced in Latin American higher education, nor integrals and total reforms, but noticeable advances oriented toward modernization and with regard to its transformation are registered, and, what is very important, a growing awareness and sensibility by the academic community, governments, business enterprises, and other organizations with respect to the roll that must be played by higher education in the transformation of Latin American and Caribbean societies. Undoubtedly, changes in educational systems experiment a slow maturation process, due to the deeply rooting of an institution in society, such as education, which strongly tends to maintain its traditions. Nevertheless, it can be said that the World Conference on Higher Education, even though it is not explicitly mentioned in many countries as a basis or inspiration source for the reforms and changes that were undertaken, the nature and scope of these changes reveal a consonance with principles, conclusions, and recommendations from that Conference, derived from its World Declaration, and its Frame of World Action. It would be necessary to wait for some time to see the fructification of these undertaken reforms, and to capitalize UNESCO actions in all regions of the world, oriented towards a transforming mobilization of higher education.

Regarding changes observed in specific areas of WCHE+5 Follow-up Conference, it could be summarized in the following manner:

New developments in higher education

Among new developments in higher education, there are changes motivated in different activities of higher education by the influence of new digital information and communication technologies: education, apprenticeship, research, and administration. Although the generalization of these technologies is still incipient, and have not generalized sufficiently, there is a strong movement towards their development, that their future use will likely increment, generalize and diversity. At the same time, although slowly, these technologies are contributing to a growing awareness by professors, students, researchers, administrators, planners, and authorities of the need for a change of the paradigms of academic work in several terms of reference of higher education. These changes will be facilitated if these technologies are adopted and used in a rational and realistic manner.

Contribution of higher education to development

A greater tendency has been noted, greater than in other times, to bond higher education institutions with their environment, and cooperation with diverse organizations of the economic, social, and cultural sectors. Higher education institutions have become aware of the fact that they cannot continue functioning in a relatively isolated manner, and that they can project themselves towards the outside world, and can cooperate with several institutions without losing their identities and their academic aims, especially in a globalized world, where barriers tend to become more diffused, and relations among development performers are more fluid.

Evolution of higher education structures and systems

Educational structures and systems tend to become more flexible, and to gradually adopt more dynamic and adapted requirements for enrollment to and transit through the system to different student populations, which are consistently more diverse. Regarding curricular matter, the tendency towards flexibility has led to the development of programs, consistently more opened, and with multiple options that offer the student a greater diversity of study alternatives.

Internationalization of higher education

Internationalization of higher education is a consequence of the so vexed phenomenon of society and economy globalization that has disseminated in the academic world. In Latin America and the Caribbean, internationalization is barely commencing, but same as the confirmed tendencies in other development areas, it is possible that it will increase in the future, as long as is assured not only the unidirectional North-South flow of academic programs, but also in the opposite direction, as well as a South-South cooperation.

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