

DECLARATION OF AREQUIPA

14 -17 July 2015.

The 1st SYMPOSIUM OF GEOPARKS was held from 14 to 17 July 2015 in the city of Arequipa, Peru, organized by the Institute of Geology, Mining and Metallurgy of Peru (INGEMMET). It was attended by numerous delegates from Latin American countries, UNESCO authorities and representatives of the Global Geoparks Network under the auspices of UNESCO.

With the objective of creating materials for collective reflection and in accordance with the Regional Workshop held at the Institute of Geography at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Mexico City, May 2015), the Grutas del Palacio Geopark submitted the document "Towards a Latin American and the Caribbean Geoparks Network; proposal for organization" (Annex I), describing the organization guidelines, structure and membership.

Based on the deliberations, the representatives of global geoparks and aspiring projects under the auspices of UNESCO attending the event, together with the referential experts of UNESCO and the Global Geoparks Network, agree on this "Declaration of Arequipa", setting forth as follows:

1. For more than ten years, Latin America is promoting valorisation and conservation of geological heritage, seeking the involvement of local communities and natives of Latin America for a sustainable development of their territories. Seminars, symposiums, workshops and lectures were held to serve as framework to inform and develop new knowledge on geoparks, sharing the good practices of management concerning geotourism, geoeducation and geoconservation. All this reflects the commitment of the region with the so called "territories of the 21st century" or Geoparks.

2. The present map of global geoparks under the auspices of UNESCO is evidencing that in spite of the potentials and continuous efforts, in Latin America and the Caribbean there are very few geoparks if compared to Europe and Asia-Pacific region, because of the existing 111, only two geoparks are located in this continent: Araripe of Brazil and Grutas del Palacio of Uruguay, while at present the candidature of Imbabura (Ecuador) is under evaluation.

Notwithstanding the above, it is noted that there is great interest on this matter, as reflected in the proposals with different levels of research and development, from countries such as Peru, Mexico, Chile, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Argentina, among others. For these reasons, the initiatives should be strengthened to remove such asymmetries, fostering growth and consolidating the geoparks in Latin America.

3. In view of the above, the undersigned hereby affirm this Declaration of Araripe (2010) to advance for the organization of a **Latin American and the Caribbean Geoparks Network (LACGN)** as a tool to overcome the limitations and challenges presented by the nominated and aspiring geoparks, seeking in furtherance the attainment of the objectives stated in the document mentioned in the second paragraph hereto (Annex I) and generating the necessary context to establish technical cooperation between them.

4. Accordingly, the undersigned hereby state that a charter of the Latin American and the Caribbean Geoparks Network (LACGN) shall be drafted and submitted at the next 2016 Geoparks Workshop, as an advance of the 4th Geoparks Regional Symposium in Arequipa, Peru, to be held in 2017.

5. In consideration of the above, the global geoparks Grutas del Palacio and Araripe, together with the UNESCO Regional Office for Latin American and the Caribbean, assume the (transitory) responsibility to advance for the elaboration of the draft for the LACGN charter and other communication objects with the signing members. Interaction shall be sought with the Global Geoparks Network to design and organize specifically in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the training courses for the existing geoparks and for the aspiring ones in the region.

/signed/ Diego Irazabal – César Goso
Grutas del Palacio Global Geopark
Uruguay

/signed/ Flavia Fernanda de Lima
Araripe Global Geopark
Brazil

/Signed/ James Posso - Bilberto Zavala Carrión
Cañón del Colca and Valle de los Volcanes
Aspiring Geoparks of Andagua, Peru

/signed/ Carlos Merizalde
Imbabura Aspiring Geopark
Ecuador

/Signed/ Manuel Schilling
Kütralkura Aspiring Geopark
Chile

/signed/ José Luis Palacio Prieto
Mixteca Alta Aspiring Geopark
Mexico

/Signed/ Denise Gorfinkiel
UNESCO Regional Office for Sciences
in Latin America and the Caribbean

The following signors express support for the creation of a Latin American and the Caribbean Geoparks Network:

/Signed/ Pablo Rivas Palomo
Member of the Global Geoparks Network

/signed/ Artur Abreu Sá
Arouca Global Geopark
Portugal