

Excellency the Governor of The Netherlands Antilles; The Minister of Education and Culture; (Lieutenant – Governor); Dr. Paula and ms. Römer;

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, ms van der Hoeven, who recently watched the first part of the production Slavery in a school for primary education and the Deputy Minister of Culture, ms van der Laan, we are very grateful for your invitation to attend as a Dutch delegation this international conference, in the framework of the UNESCO programme on the fight against slavery.

Three years ago a mayor chance in Dutch policy on the history of slavery came gradually into force, inspired by the results of the Durban conference 2001 and an official visit to the Republic Surinam by the former Minister Van Boxtel.

The importance of the transatlantic slave trade triangle: Africa, the Caribbean and Europe and especially the role of the former rulers was highlighted. After an intensive exploration during a mission at Curacao October 2000 by international experts and scientists, amongst them people from Surinam, Ghana and the Caribbean, a report, titled "Connected by freedom" was presented to the Dutch Government. The report underlined the importance of better understanding between parents and youth originated from Africa, Europe and the Caribbean. The Dutch Government decided to have the report executed. The result: a multi – media production for education.

Next to that the participating organizations: The Independent Dutch Body on the history of slavery; the public educational broadcast corporation and the National institute for History and Heritage of slavery (NiNsee), got the assignment to design this multi - media program with the new, complete historical message which could be clearly understood by Surinam, Dutch, Ghanese, Antillian and Aruban pupils and teachers.

In co – operation with local organizations in Surinam, The Netherlands, The Antilles and Aruba, for instance one of the organizing institutes of this conference: The National Archive of The Netherlands Antilles, we hope the implementation of the program will take place in the next months. We expect a structural incorporation of the program in the curriculum.

The first experiences the Dutch delegation had last week in Surinam were overwhelming. Over 450 people attended the official presentation of the film, including the President of the Republic Surinam, ministers, the Dutch Ambassador, members of the National Assemblée and many others. Over 10.000 pupils watched the film in the cinema's Thalia and Towers, as you know school television is not available in Surinam. The first discussions on the street were there. Our conclusion: the implementation process is in full progress.

