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Latin American & Caribbean Delegates Meet In Costa Rica To Elaborate Joint Position On Economic & Trade Problems

by Deborah Tyroler

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Delegates from 26 Latin American and Caribbean nations initiated a technical-level meeting March 16 in San Jose, Costa Rica, to elaborate a joint position on regional problems. Results of the three-day technical meeting and of a subsequent ministerial level conference will be presented before the general assembly of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), scheduled for Geneva later this year. The meetings in San Jose were coordinated by the Latin American Economic System (SELA). On the first day of the meeting, Costa Rican delegates declared the development of new trade policies was mandatory in order for Latin American primary goods, as well as semi-manufactured and manufactured products to gain access to developed country markets. In addition, mechanisms toward the maintenance of minimum prices for primary products in the world market, and new forms for financing international trade are necessary. According to the Costa Rican delegates and others, economic history demonstrates that a necessary link between trade (access to diverse markets) and development. Moreover, international forums such as UNCTAD should be employed in the solution of trade problems, particularly because socio-economic progress lies the basis for long-term peace. SELA Permanent Secretary Henry Gill told the delegates they were discussing the same topics which brought SELA members together four years ago in Cartagena. Since then, significant improvements in the areas of trade, finance and development have not occurred. These problems, he added, today assume an unprecedented significance. Gill continued by declaring that regional economic, social and financial situation conditions continue deteriorating, while Latin America's position in the world economy is becoming increasingly peripheral. "It is evident," he said, "we are dealing with deeply rooted structural problems that cannot be resolved by a single country or group of countries, but only by means of concerted action on the part of the world community." (Basic data from UPI, 03/17/87)

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