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## **Latin American Economic System (sela) Approves Resolution Condemning U.S. Protectionism**

*by John Neagle*

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On Sept. 19, cabinet ministers from 25 Latin American and Caribbean nations approved by unanimous vote a resolution calling on the international community to demonstrate political solidarity with the Central American peace plan, and to provide preferential economic aid to the five countries. The resolution came at the end of the Latin American Economic System's (SELA) XIII ministerial conference in Caracas, Venezuela, and was introduced in a joint effort by El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras and Guatemala. SELA delegates also unanimously approved a resolution condemning US protectionist tendencies, and their impact on Latin America and the Caribbean. Grenada was the only SELA member nation which did not send a delegate to the conference in Caracas. The conference communique reiterates support for the peace plan signed Aug. 7 by the five Central American presidents, and articulates an "urgent" request to the international community for political solidarity and economic aid. Preferential assistance is requested for Central America in terms of economic, financial and technical cooperation that would help consolidate the peace accord through social and economic development. The communique stressed that Central American countries can realize a lasting peace only through economic growth that may eventually compensate for the destruction wrought during more than five years of warfare. In the resolution on protectionism, SELA warns that legislation under consideration by the US Congress will make access to the US market by Latin American products even more difficult at a time when countries in the region must increase export revenues toward obtaining resources for development. If the US Congress approves the protectionist legislation, the resolution stipulates that Latin American and Caribbean nations will act in defense of their legitimate interests and to safeguard their right to development by means of "adopting compensatory measures in appropriate forums." The assembly also adopted a resolution expressing support for Panama on the 10th anniversary of a treaty with the US under which Panama will receive control over the Canal in the year 2000. Finally, the assembled ministers passed a resolution condemning the US economic blockade against Nicaragua. SELA was established 17 years ago with the objective of creating a forum for analysis and debate of economic problems affecting the region. (Basic data from AP, 09/20/87)

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