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Salvadoran President Announces New Economic Program To Benefit Poor

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Aug. 24, in a speech broadcast on nationwide television and radio, President Alfredo Cristiani announced a new economic program consisting of six different projects for a total investment of \$200 million. Cristiani said the program would be launched next week, and that its major objective is to "construct a homeland that does not have extreme poverty." Cristiani acknowledged that 330,000 Salvadoran families live in absolute poverty, result of "destruction caused by bad economic models" and by the "irrational violence" perpetrated by the guerrillas. The program consists of "integrated projects" in the areas of job creation, housing, nutrition, and community development and rural development in the eastern region of the country. The president said that a temporary labor project at a cost of \$20 million will involve 20,000 month-long work contracts. Most of these jobs will be located in rural areas prior to and after the agricultural harvest. Next, said Cristiani, the government plans construction of 30,000 low-income houses. Priority beneficiaries are families who lost their homes in the 1986 earthquake. A similar program, he added, is planned for rural areas. In the four eastern departments, the government plans to spend \$32 million to establish basic services and to create community development programs directed by municipal authorities. Cristiani also announced that in order to "ameliorate the effects of economic measures," the government has designed a program to import foodstuffs, and beginning next January, to reduce income taxes for low-income persons. (Basic data from Notimex, 08/24/89)

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