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Peru: Prime Minister On New Government's Emergency Assistance Program

by Barbara Khol

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On Aug. 5, Prime Minister Juan Hurtado Miller told reporters that he would announce details of the new government's economic stabilization program on Aug. 8. Major objectives of the program, he said, will be maintenance of workers' real wages, establishing realistic fees for public services, reducing inflation, and economic recovery. According to Hurtado, the program's negative impact on the poor will be reduced via a \$500 million social welfare emergency program. The delay in introducing the new austerity plan was necessary in order to refine emergency measures, he said. Hurtado pointed out that nearly 75% of workers in the labor force lack a steady income. The emergency program will provide foodstuffs to 7.5 million persons, reinforcing an existing program which distributes milk to 4 million children, increase to 1.1 million persons obtaining meals on a daily basis at community soup kitchens, and expanding the government's school lunch program to 3 million. In addition, said Hurtado, nine health programs will be funded, emphasizing the prevention of tuberculosis and other contagious diseases. Next, the prime minister stated that the government will dedicate no less than 3% of GDP to the emergency assistance program during a three-year period. He said the new administration had thus far obtained \$100 million in donations from foreign governments, and hope to receive another \$100 million by year-end with the aid of UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar. (Basic data from AFP, 08/05/90)

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