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Notes On Latin American & Caribbean Sugar Industry

by Barbara Khol

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Recent statistics published by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Sugar Exporting Countries (GEPLACEA) on the region's sugar output and related figures are summarized below. The organization's annual congress took place in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, on Oct. 1-4. * About 30% of global sugar output is produced by Latin America and Caribbean nations, and over half the world's sugarcane. An estimated 45% of world sugar exports derive from the region, and over 60% of sugarcane exports. * Sugar ranks as the region's third most important export revenue earner, after petroleum and coffee. * The sugar industry accounts for the direct employment of over 2.5 million persons. * Regional per capita sugar consumption is 42 kg. per year, more than double the global average. * The region's sugar mills number about 650, producing between 26 and 28 million tons of sugar worth \$9 billion. * Some 8 million ha. of land are dedicated to the production of an estimated 400 million tons of sugarcane. * The region produces 15 billion liters of fuel alcohol per year, and 100 million tons of bagasse (waste pulp), equivalent to 136 million barrels of oil. In a communique released Sept. 23, GEPLACEA stated that member-nations' exportable surplus is declining, result of output cutbacks and an increase in domestic consumption. GEPLACEA member-nations include Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela. (Basic data from EFE, 09/23/90; AFP, 10/04/90)

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