Venezuela: Non-traditional Exports Down In 1991

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In statements to reporters on April 28, Gabriela Febres Cordero, president of the government's Foreign Trade Institute (ICE), said that non-traditional exports dropped by $250 to $196 million per month thus far in 1991 compared to 1990. If the trend continues, she said, non-traditional exports for the year will be $3 billion less than government projections. The major causes of the decline, said Febres Cordero, are an overvalued currency; cutbacks in the government's export incentive bond program; and, delays in implementing rebates on import tariffs paid on components of re-exported products, restructuring services (such as the telephone system and port facilities), and customs service reforms. On April 26, the bolivar closed at 54.97 per US dollar. Febres Cordero criticized Trade and Industry Development Minister Imelda Cisneros by asserting that Venezuela's current industrial policy is incoherent, characterized by "an excessive neo-liberal emphasize which relies exclusively on tariff reduction to create competitiveness." Under current conditions, said Febres Cordero, non-traditional exports will not surpass $2.6 billion in 1991. (Basic data from AFP, 04/28/91)

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