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Central America: Regional Democracy & Development Forum Holds Third Meeting

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Oct. 15, in San Salvador, Foreign Minister Manuel Pacas inaugurated the third plenary session of the Central American Association for Democracy and Development (Asociación para la Democracia y el Desarrollo, ADD). The two-day meeting was attended by representatives from over 20 countries and from several international organizations, including foreign ministers from Panama, Honduras and Costa Rica, and economy ministers from Nicaragua and Guatemala. Extra-regional countries which sent delegates to the meeting included: Spain, France, Britain, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Austria, Canada, the US, Greece, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, Turkey and Denmark. Representatives from the World Bank, the Central American Economic Integration Bank (BCIE), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA), United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) were also present. In comments to reporters, Pacas said during the meeting, Central American countries would present a series of regional economic and social development project proposals. He added that proposals from Central America seeking international assistance were much more likely to receive support if they focused on some aspect of strengthening regional integration. Pacas said ADD currently has two working groups. The democracy group is currently co-chaired by El Salvador and Canada, while the economic development group is currently co-chaired by Honduras and Japan. ADD was founded in April 1991 during a meeting held in Costa Rica attended by representatives from 35 countries and 19 international organizations. ADD's mission is to facilitate support for regional peace and development initiatives. ADD's second plenary session was held in January 1992 in Ottawa (Canada). During that session, participants identified the following areas as priorities: administration of justice, human rights, electoral organizations, legislative institutions, reincorporation of sectors of the population affected by armed conflicts, and removal of land mines from former conflict zones. (Sources: Agencia Centroamericana de Noticias-Spanish news service EFE, 10/14/92, 10/15/92)

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