

Fidel Castro Meets Latin American Presidents

HAVANA, Cuba, Jan 30 (acn) Cuban Revolution leader Fidel Castro met with several Latin American Presidents who attended the 2nd Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

In his home, the Cuban leader shared views with Ecuador's Rafael Correa, Bolivia's Evo Morales and Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega, as well as with Uruguay's Jose Mujica and Mexico's Enrique Peña Nieto in different meetings.

A major point during the conversations was the need to lower extreme poverty, hunger, illiteracy and inequality in the nations of this region, which are considered goals that can be reached with the implementation of economic and social development programs.

The visiting leaders expressed their gratefulness for the hospitality, organization of the summit and its results, as well as for Cuba's permanent support.

The need for peace, the wellbeing of the people and the survival of humanity was at the center of a conversation with Uruguay's Jose Mujica, who visited Fidel on Thursday afternoon.

Later the Revolution leader also met with Mexico's Enrique Peña Nieto particularly on international issues, such as the need to reach nuclear disarmament and to consolidate Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

The historic friendly ties between Cuba and Mexico were also at the center of the conversation between the Mexican President and the Cuban leader.

Raul Castro Meets Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto

HAVANA, Cuba, Jan 30 (acn) Cuban President Raul Castro met with Mexican head of state Enrique Peña Nieto on Thursday afternoon.

The two presidents corroborated the good state of bilateral relations between their countries and they reiterated their will to keep increasing bilateral exchange, particularly in trade and cooperation. They also stressed the strengthening of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States as a regional integration and coordination mechanism.

The meeting was attended by Mexico's foreign minister Jose Antonio Meade; the undersecretary for Latin America and the Caribbean, Vanesa Rubio, and Mexican ambassador to Havana Juan Jose Bremer.

On the Cuban side was first vice-president Miguel Diaz Canel; foreign minister Bruno Rodriguez and Foreign Trade and Investment minister Rodrigo Malmierca.

The Cuban President also met with Costa Rica's President Laura Chinchilla, who assumed the temporary chair of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States during the last session of the summit on Thursday.

The two presidents addressed bilateral cooperation between their countries and the prospects of such links.

President Chinchilla was accompanied by Costa Rican foreign minister Jose Enrique Castillo.

Correa Calls Speaking with Fidel Castro a Privilege

Quito, Jan. 30 (Prensa Latina) Speaking with a living legend such as Fidel Castro is always a privilege, said Ecuador's president Rafael Correa today, after meeting yesterday in Havana with the historical leader of the Cuban Revolution.

In a press conference offered this Thursday in Quito, just a few hours after returning from the 2nd Summit for the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in the Cuban capital, Correa said that he found Fidel Castro very lucid.

We spoke of the attacks that Cuba has suffered all these years, and he told us how the United States had been trying to annex Cuba ever since the days of U.S. president John Quincy Adams, who held that under the "ripe fruit" principle, Cuba ought to fall readily into U.S. hands, said the Ecuadorian leader.

Correa, who has been leading a Citizens Revolution in Ecuador since 2007, to build 21st century socialism, added that in his meeting with the historical Cuban leader, 87, the two also spoke about history, and about CELAC.

"When you speak with Fidel, you get the sense that you are speaking with a wise man and it makes me think of those elderly Jesuits, retired after a life filled with service," said Correa.

Peña Nieto Reaffirms Mexico-Cuba Friendship to Fidel Castro

Mexico, Jan 30 (Prensa Latina) President Enrique Peña Nieto reaffirmed the friendly relations between his country and Cuba to the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro, the Mexican president stated today after returning from Havana.

According to the head of this federal State, he expressed to Fildel Castro in the meeting they held last night his interest in achieving unity among the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

In the conversation, both parts tackled past experiences of the Cuba revolutionary leader in Mexico and the first official visit by Peña Nieto to the Caribbean island, the president referred.

To me, it was the first time to be in Havana and the opportunity to meet a character of the history of Latin America and humanity in recent years, said Peña Nieto in the early morning at the presidential hangar.

According to the Mexican president, who traveled to Cuba on Monday to participate in the 2nd Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and pay a State visit, the objective of the meeting was reaffirming the historic fraternity between both countries.

About the CELAC summit, he highlighted that the integrationist authority can be an instrument with a lot to offer and Mexico would play its role to continue building a clearer identity.

2nd CELAC Summit Winds Up in Havana

HAVANA, Cuba, Jan 30 (acn) The 2nd Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was brought to a close on Wednesday in this capital by Army General Raul Castro, President of the Cuban councils of State and Ministers.

During his speech, Raúl passed on to the heads of state and other personalities attending the important forum the gratitude of the Cuban government and people for their participation these days in wide and profound debates on the issues of greatest concern for countries of the region.

He asserted that the meeting, carried out at Havana's Pabexpo showground, has reiterated that the prevailing world economic order has to be changed in order to eradicate poverty, and has underlined the significance of the permanent sovereignty of States over their natural resources.

The Cuban head of state pointed out that important agreements around momentous topics were

reached in this framework, among which the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Peace Zone, and those referred to intra and extra regional cooperation, excelled.

After his speech, Raúl handed over the pro-tempore chairmanship the CELAC to the Costa Rican head of state, Laura Chinchilla, to whom he wished success in this endeavor.

In her speech, the dignitary expressed the pride and responsibility the assumption of that chairmanship entails, a task the Costa Rican government and people will receive with great enthusiasm.

For a year, we should be a catalytic agent of the efforts shared by our peoples she stated, while assuring that the CELAC is a task of all of its members.

Prior to the closing ceremony, the heads of state and government, as well as the delegations attending the meeting, established their stances around important challenges of the 33 nations making up the bloc.

Costa Rica Assumes Pro Tempore Chairmanship of the CELAC

HAVANA, Cuba, Jan 30 (acn) Laura Chinchilla, the first woman that won the top legislature of Costa Rica, assumed on Wednesday the pro tempore chairmanship of the Community of Latin-American and Caribbean States (CEDLAC), handed over to her by Cuban President Raul Castro.

During the final session of the meeting, Chinchilla highlighted that her country has the responsibility of working in favor of the interests of member nations, with actions that can generate cooperation, solidarity, understanding and confidence.

She underlined that the CELAC does not exist to make enemies, but to promote sustainable

development, peace, equality and social justice, with the help of other established organizations that have power for decision making, organizing projects and assessing results.

We will strive to be on a par with the presidents that preceded us, she stated, with the greatest willingness of open dialogue.

Chinchilla is in the final stage of her term of office in her country, so she symbolically said good-bye to the forum, and emphasized that her successor will carry on with what has been achieved in CELAC, in line with the objectives of integration devised since its creation.

Also before closing the important meeting, the heads of state and governmental authorities of the 33 member nations approved the final documents of the CELAC, after two intense days of exchanges.

The texts include the Declaration of Havana, among other special documents, and the Plan of Action for 2014, which will be put into practice by Costa Rica starting from Wednesday and until the end of its administration in 2015, when Ecuador will assume the pro tempore chairmanship of the CELAC.

Cuban President Raul Castro highlighted the declaration of the region as a Peace Zone, with absolute respect to the precepts of the UN Charter, among the achievements of the Summit.

He pointed out that Cuba will continue working arduously in the organization and as a member of the quartet that guides the steps of the regional organization.

Declaration of Havana Reaffirms CELAC as a Regional Coordination Mechanism

HAVANA, Cuba, Jan 30 (acn) The Declaration of Havana, adopted on Thursday, by the summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, reaffirmed the role of the bloc as a

regional space for dialog and political coordination.

The document stresses the determination to jointly work for the wellbeing of the people of regional countries and expresses the need to advance regional integration.

The 83-paragraph document also includes the main tasks to undertake the bloc and the problems facing the region in all areas.

The declaration reiterates the CELAC member states position that unity and integration must progressively be achieved, with flexibility, respect to diversity and to the right of each state to choose its own political and economic system.

Comprehensive and inclusive development is a priority expressed in the document, in order to guarantee sustainable and productive progress, in harmony with the environment.

The heads of state also expressed in the declaration their determination to jointly work in order to face the challenges posed by the current world situation and to boost economic growth that favor social inclusion and equality.

Emphasis is put on the need to work for food security, literacy, education the development of agriculture and the achievement of universal public health services.

The Latin American and Caribbean nature of Puerto Rico was reiterated in the document as well as the commitment to work so that Latin America and the Caribbean be a territory free of colonialism.

The document rejects unilateral certification of states related to terrorism, drug trafficking, and other categories, including the US blacklisting of Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism. The text also backs the Argentinean claim over the Malvinas islands.

Also included is the rejection of the over-50-year US economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba.

The summit was attended by 29 presidents, president-elect of Chile, Michelle Bachelet and other representatives. During two days, the sessions addressed a large array of issues relevant to the problems facing our region, particularly the fight on hunger, poverty and inequalities.

Venezuela Advocates to Change from Thought to Actions in CELAC

Havana, Jan 29 (Prensa Latina) The President of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, proposed today to establish a permanent working method and a presidential agenda so that the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) operates with more efficiency and dynamism.

It is time to boost the revitalization and strengthening of the CELAC, he remarked in the plenary of the 2nd Summit of this organization which gathers 33 nations of the region in this capital.

We have accumulated an essential and common heritage, now it is time to change from the idea to the action, stated the president.

He also added that it was time to turn the CELAC into a new model "with political effectiveness " of integration, union and action.

Maduro reiterated his gratitude to the government and people of Cuba for so much solidarity and thanked all the members of the CELAC for the acknowledgements made to the leader of the Venezuelan Revolution, Hugo Chávez, for his contribution to the unity and integration of Latin America.

The 2nd Summit of the CELAC concludes today in Havana, with the presence of almost Heads of State and government of the region.

Bolivian President Calls for Alliance Against U.S. Pressure

Havana, Jan 29 (Prensa Latina) The president of Bolivia, Evo Morales, urged here today the governments of member countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to join in order to put an end to the history of U.S. pressure on the region.

Speaking at the Second Summit of CELAC which ends today in this capital, the president reflected the interference of the United States and other powers as obstacles to the development of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Morales stressed the preference of the mighty for keeping humiliated the countries in the area countries, rather than seen them develop, that is why described the unity as needed.

Latin America and the Caribbean can not be governed by provisions of the empire.

Mujica: We Have Taken a Fantastic Step by Creating CELAC

HAVANA, Cuba, Jan 29 (acn) Jose Mujica, President of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, said in Havana that the creation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) is a great step towards integration.

Speaking at the round of Heads of State and Government, corresponding to the II Summit of CELAC, the president said that the entity will allow them to face together the globalization of the economy and the evils associated with this.

He asserted that it is a priority for the people of the region the permanent elevation of the cultural level of its citizens, especially the younger generation.

Mujica recalled that phenomena such as climate change, desertification and drought affect all humanity, so we all need to join forces to mitigate its effects.

The Uruguayan president called on Latin American and Caribbean governments to preserve natural resources, which are used in an unbalanced way in many nations.

He took the opportunity to also encourage them to multiply initiatives in favor of preserving the human species.

In his words he recognized the efforts of Cuba aimed at achieving the integration of all nations within the bloc.