

Message Text

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ACTION IO-15

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ASUNCION FOR DAS BUSHNELL

EO 12065: NA
TAGS: ECLA
SUBJECT: 18TH ECLA PLENARY: INAUGURAL SESSION

1. (L) SUMMARY: THE FIRST DAY OF THE CONFERENCE
PROCEEDED SMOOTHLY, WITH ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA,
APPOINTMENT OF THE BOARD, DESIGNATION OF WORKING
COMMITTEES AND SELECTION OF THEIR BOARDS, OPENING SPEECHES
BY ECLA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ENRIQUE INGLESIAS, AND BY
BOLIVIA'S PLANNING MINISTER GARY PRADO SALMON. AN
OTHERWISE HARMONIOUS OPENING DAY WAS MARRED ONLY BY
REMARKS IN PRADO'S STATEMENT CONCERNING LOSS OF ITS
COASTAL LAND AND THE DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS WHICH STEM
FROM THAT LOSS, AND HIS ACCUSING THE US OF "ECONOMIC
AGRESSION" DIRECTED TOWARDS BOLIVIA THROUGH SALES OF TIN
FROM OUR STRATEGIC STOCKPILE.

2. (U) THE FIRST TWO AGENDA ITEMS CONCERNED ELECTION
OF OFFICERS, AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF
WORK OF THE 18TH SESSION. WITHOUT OBJECTION THE MAKE-UP
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OF THE BOARD WAS ESTABLISHED AS FOLLOWS: CHAIRMAN-GARY
PRADO (BOLIVIA); 1ST VICE CHAIRMAN-VICTOR BARRELO (MEXICO);
2ND VICE CHAIRMAN-LUDWING ZUIVERLOON (SURINAME);
RAPPORTEUR-WILBURG CASTRO (COSTA RICA). THE PROVISIONAL
AGENDA, ISSUED MARCH 6, WAS ADOPTED WITH A MODIFICATION
CALLING FOR A SEPARATE COMMITTEE TO BE FORMED TO DEAL WITH
WATER-RELATED ACTIVITIES. ACCORDINGLY, THREE COMMITTEES

WERE ESTABLISHED. COMMITTEE I WILL ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS; III AND IV, CONVENING RESPECTIVELY, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF LATIN AMERICA, AND COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND REGIONS. COMMITTEE II WILL DEAL WITH AGENDA ITEM FIVE, ACTIVITIES OF THE ECLA SYSTEM SINCE THE 17TH SESSION AND PROGRAM OF WORK FOR THE PERIOD 1979-81. COMMITTEE III, AS STATED, WILL CONSIDER REGIONAL COORDINATION IN ACTIONS RELATED TO WATER. BOARDS WERE SELECTED FOR ALL COMMITTEES BUT COMMITTEE III WHERE IT WAS AGREED COMMITTEE MEMBERS WOULD SELECT THEIR

OWN OFFICERS. COMMITTEE I OFFICERS WERE SELECTED AS FOLLOWS: CHAIRMAN-ECUADOR, 1ST VICE CHAIRMAN-CUBA, 2ND VICE CHAIRMAN-ARGENTINA, RAPPORTEUR-VENEUZELA. COMMITTEE II OFFICERS ARE: CHAIRMAN-PERU, 1ST VICE CHAIRMAN-JAMAICA, 2ND VICE CHAIRMAN-URUGUAY, RAPPORTEUR-BRAZIL.

3. (U) IGLESIAS' BRIEF OPENING REMARKS CALLED FOR A STRONG ECLA ROLE IN GALVANIZING A UNIFIED LATIN AMERICAN VIEW OF THE APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AS THE THIRD DEVELOPMENT DECADE APPROACHES. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION IS FRAUGHT WITH UNCERTAINTIES, AND THAT ENHANCED COOPERATION AMONG THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WOULD MODERATE SOME OF THOSE PROBLEMS. HE URGED PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO AGENDA ITEM FOUR, WHICH HE HOPED WOULD RESULT IN A STRONG FOLLOW-ON TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUENOS AIRES PLAN OF ACTION FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (TCDC), ESTABLISHED IN SEPTEMBER, 1978.

4. (L) AS HOST TO THE SESSION, BOLIVIA'S PLANNING MINISTER PRADO GAVE THE KEY-NOTE ADDRESS WHICH BEGAN WITH A LITANY ON THE STAGES OF BOLIVIAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SINCE THE COUNTRY'S INDEPENDENCE. HE CLAIMED THAT BOLIVIA'S STATUS AS ONE OF THE REGION'S POOREST COUNTRIES WOULD BE DIFFERENT HAD WHAT HE SAID WAS ITS RICHEST LAND AND ACCESS TO THE SEA NOT BEEN PLUNDERED (BY CHILE IN THE 1879 WAR OF THE PACIFIC). PROBABLY FOREWARNED OF PRADO'S REMARKS, THE CHILEAN DELEGATION DID NOT ATTEND THE INAUGURAL SESSION. PRADO NOTED THAT BOLIVIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH RATE DID NOT BEGIN TO EQUAL THOSE OF ITS NEIGHBORS UNTIL THE 1960'S AND 70'S, ALTHOUGH HE DECRIED THE FACT THAT THE BENEFITS OF THAT GROWTH WERE UNEQUALLY DISTRIBUTED. THE TASK OF BOLIVIA, AND THE REST OF LATIN AMERICA, IN THE NEXT DECADE, HE SAID, WAS TO EMPHASIZE EQUITY, A CONSIDERATION OVERLOOKED IN THE PAST TWO DECADES WHEN THE PURSUIT OF GROWTH DOMINATED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY. THE OBLIGATION TO MOVE

AWAY FROM THE STRATEGY WHICH ENCOURAGED THE MISUSE OF SCARCE CAPITAL, AND LUXURY CONSUMPTION, TO ONE ENCOURAGING MASS EMPLOYMENT AND WIDENING OF CONSUMPTION THROUGHOUT THE POPULATION, IS ONE WHICH RESTS PRIMARILY WITH INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENTS, PRADO AVERRED. BUT HE ALSO MENTIONED THE ROLE WHICH EXTERNAL CAPITAL AND THE TNC'S HAVE TO PLAY IN EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT. HE FELT TNC'S HAD NOT ALWAYS OPERATED IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES; CLAIMING THAT THE REGION'S MINERAL RESOURCES WERE UNDEREXPLORED, HE BLAMED THAT ON TNC'S WHICH TRADITIONALLY CONTROLLED INVESTMENTS IN THE EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES. IN ORDER TO REALIZE LATIN AMERICA'S MINERAL POTENTIAL, PRADO PROPOSED THE CREATION OF A REGIONAL FUND TO FINANCE INVESTMENTS IN THE MINERALS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SECTOR, AND URGED ECLA TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF SUCH A FUND, AND HOW IT MIGHT COORDINATE ITS ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. (COMMENT: WE EXPECT THE BOLIVIAN DELEGATION TO INTRODUCE A RESOLUTION TO THIS EFFECT IN COMMITTEE I. END COMMENT.) IN THE CONTEXT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MINERALS TO BOLIVIA'S ECONOMY, PRADO CASTIGATED THE US FOR WHAT HE TERMED ECONOMIC AGGRESSION IN MANIPULATING THE WORLD PRICES OF COMMODITIES, ALLUDING TO AN EXPECTED SALE FROM US TIN STOCKS. SINCE BOLIVIA IS MOVING TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS AND IS TRYING TO IMPROVE THE WELFARE OF ITS POOR, PRADO WONDERED OUT LOUD HOW US ACTIONS ON TIN CAN BE RECONCILED WITH AVOWED US ESPOUSAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY. BOEKER

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