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Latin American Integration: If One Were to Look Further South



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If Latin American countries looked more to the South and did not think so much about the North, the economic integration of the region would result in a greater benefit for its inhabitants.

Trade would become cheaper among its members, they would not depend so much on transnational corporations that largely extract enormous wealth from the region and if this path is accompanied by adequate social policies, it would reduce the high inequality that prevails in their nations and improve the standard of living of the population.

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A great opportunity to move in that direction is the resurgence of the Community of States Latin American and Caribbean (CELAC) that in recent years has been strengthening in his slow walk.

Truly It has been difficult to move forward because of Washington's constant attacks on to prevent Latin American and Caribbean integration for which it has imposed or Intensified economic and financial blockades against various nations of the region; has promoted coups d'état or parliamentarians to overthrow governments Progressive; has supported with abundant money and extensive propaganda campaigns to the most right-wing forces in various nations.

Against all odds, CELAC was born in December 2011 during the III Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean on Integration and Development and the XXII Rio Group summit, growing up in the region Progressive governments: Lula in Brazil, Chávez in Venezuela, Kirchner and Cristina in Argentina, Evo in Bolivia, Correa in Ecuador and Bachelet in Chile. Cuba was already since 1959 a bastion of independence and sovereignty, and the Sandinismo, which by the hand of Daniel Ortega, had returned to power.

For 2013 it will be held the First Summit in Santiago de Chile which was not very profitable because it was presided over by the neoliberal Sebastián Piñera who bet that it would only be a forum for Talk and not a regional organization.

During the II Summit held in 2014 in Cuba, the The Cuban government and its president Raul Castro insisted on the need to institutionalize CELAC and turn the region into a zone of peace, but another right-wing wave in several countries (Mauricio Macri 2015 in Argentina, parliamentary coup against Dilma Rousseff in Brazil 2016, betrayal in Ecuador of Lenin Moreno 2017 and rise that same year of Donald Trump) stopped the advances of the body.

Anyway but with very little force, the III was carried out. Summit in Costa Rica 2014; the IV in Ecuador 2016; the V in Dominican Republic 2017 and it was not until the VI Summit held in 2021 in the Mexico of Andrés Manuel López Obrador that CELAC took again forces.

Despite the assistance from Colombia (governed by the pro-American Iván Duque) and the withdrawal of Brazil as a member decided by the far-right Jair Bolsonaro, in Mexico, consensus was reached on a variety of issues, such as an order Fairer international, consolidation of democracy, strengthening education and gender equality, the fight against corruption and poverty, respect for human rights.

It also outlined future objectives with a view to to become the main instrument of regional cooperation and integration and a \$15 million fund was created to address climate change, which although small is the only one established so far in Latin America.

During the year of Presidency, before the VII Summit is held in Argentina, the government of that nation developed an outstanding work and above all it was demonstrated, during The COVID-19 pandemic, the relevance of solidarity among the nations of the block and the importance of the CELAC as a mechanism for dialogue and political agreement.

The first triumph of the Summit was the reintegration of Brazil into the group with the presence of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, and in his debates the indispensable call for integration prevailed economic, social and cultural of Latin America and the Caribbean, based on a Deep vocation for independence.

The 33 members of CELAC have a population of 650 million, a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) combined with 7 billion dollars and represents the largest producing area of food in the world and the third largest electricity generator in the world.

But in addition to the threats and destabilizing actions constantly launched from Washington To try to exert their dominance in the region, there are also other large Challenges such as the unjust international economic order and the immense external debt that drowns them.

A recent report of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) indicated that the total debt of the Americas Latin America and the Caribbean increased to \$5.8 trillion. In 2008 it was 3 trillion, while public debt in particular went from representing 58% % in 2019 to 72% in 2020 due to Covid-related tax packages, which led to lower income and symptoms of recession.

Much vision had the Cuban President during his speech at the VII Summit when he warned: "It is imperative Finding just solutions to the problem of external and essential desuda demand the cessation of coercive, unilateral measures and blockades illegal."

For this reason and for many other reasons it is necessary to look further to the South in search of a true and sovereign Latin American and Caribbean integration.

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