



Indian Council of World Affairs
Sapru House, Barakhamba Road
New Delhi

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Press Release

on

**“Recent developments in the Latin American
and Caribbean Region”**

The Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) hosted a Seminar to welcome the Troika of the newly-formed pan-regional Community of Latin American and Caribbean States - CELAC - on 8 August at Sapru House, New Delhi. The Troika of CELAC comprises Chile, the pro tempore President; the previous President, Venezuela, which hosted the first CELAC Summit in December 2011; and Cuba, which will assume the CELAC Presidency in 2013.

The Foreign Minister of the Republic of Chile, H.E. Mr Alfredo Moreno, representing the Presidency, which has sought a dialogue with India, held meetings with the Ministry of External Affairs, along with the Foreign Minister of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, H.E. Mr Nicolas Maduro, and the Vice Foreign Minister of the Republic of Cuba, H.E. Mr Rogelio Sierra Diaz, on 7 August. The Foreign Minister of Chile addressed the audience of foreign and Indian diplomats, Indian government officials, academicians, researchers, representatives of Indian business and the media, at the ICWA alongwith the Venezuelan and Cuban representatives.

Foreign Minister Moreno explained the genesis of CELAC and the process of political and economic integration in the region. He called upon the Indian official establishment and the business community to look closer at Latin America and the Caribbean to fully exploit the untapped potential. The Coordinator of Venezuela Mr. Ernesto Serrano expressed the view that CELAC has fulfilled a long-felt need for a Latin American and Caribbean identity. The Ambassador of Cuba maintained that CELAC is the crystallisation of a dream. All three dignitaries sought closer collaboration with India, which has been identified by CELAC as a priority in terms of international outreach of the organization.

Shri M. Ganapathi, Secretary (West) Ministry of External Affairs, expressed satisfaction on the part of the Government of India over the commencement of dialogue with CELAC, and conveyed that this first step would lead to a more formal, structured cooperation.

The Seminar, with the theme 'Recent Developments in the Latin American and Caribbean Region', was opened by Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia, Director General ICWA. He outlined the political and economic progress made by the countries of the region, as well as the incremental nature of their relations with India. He emphasised the need for greater academic and cultural contacts between India and the Latin America and the Caribbean. He informed the audience that ICWA has recently launched a research program on Latin America and the Caribbean to refine Indian research in this area.

The statements by the dignitaries were followed by an interactive session, with questions and interventions by the distinguished audience, which revealed the extent of interest generated by the visit of the CELAC Troika to India and the increasing awareness of Latin America and the Caribbean in India.
