Indian Council of World Affairs
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Press Release

on

Sapru House Lecture
by
H.E. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla
Foreign Minister of Cuba

on
"Cuba, CELAC and India"

"Relations with India are a priority for CELAC and Cuba due to our shared objectives and values. We want to work with India for common opportunities", H.E. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Foreign Minister of Cuba stated while delivering the Sapru House Lecture at the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi on 27 May 2013. The event was chaired by Ambassador Rajiv K Bhatia, Director General of ICWA and was organised to contribute to the process of sustained dialogue with the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC).

H.E. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Foreign Minister of Cuba delivering his lecture

The DG, in his opening address, welcomed the Foreign Minister and the wide cross section of the audience comprising former ambassadors, academics, media personnel and research scholars. He highlighted the traditional friendship between India and Cuba while stressing that India was aware of the changes occurring in the Latin America and Caribbean region. He stated that the Foreign Minister's visit provided an opportunity to carry forward the public debate on the topic, which is of great importance to both the strategic and diplomatic community.

Foreign Minister Parrilla said, "We live in a world full of risks and dangers to

international peace. The global financial crisis is an added disadvantage and we also suffer from a lack of democracy." Latin America and the Caribbean is an area of peace with no military conflicts, it is a nuclear free zone and disputes are resolved through bilateral talks with respect given to international law.

He stated that, CELAC was the first Latin American and Caribbean regional organisation composed of all the countries of the region, without any extra regional power as its member. He went on to state that the organisation was not oriented against any country but symbolised a cooperative endeavour of working together by ideologically divergent countries such as Chile and Venezuela. CELAC was a space for regional consensus, based on close unity of thoughts and common values and cultures, while preserving the diversity of the region.

Reminiscing about the cordial relationship that Cuba shares with India, he recalled the special bond between Cuba and India with respect to the Non Aligned Movement. He stated that "Cuba recognised India's contribution to international peace." He stressed that India was a powerful country and the two countries should collaborate to build a democratic and balanced world. Cooperation between the two countries in the international economic arena would build a modern world, where technology would be harnessed to benefit people, where democracy would denote peoples participation, the validity of international law and respect of the UN Charter was desirable. He informed the audience that there was a huge market for Indian business and academic research organisations in the region. Commending India's leadership in the IT and IT enabled sector, he stated that Cuba would benefit greatly from partnership in this sector, while the two countries could also collaborate in biotechnology and pharmaceutical sectors. He stressed that the region was open to trade with India. Espousing the region's attraction as an investment destination, he said that the region was conflict free and abundant in natural and energy resources.

Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia, DG, ICWA welcoming H.E. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Foreign Minister of Cuba

The Foreign Minister concluded by stating that Cuba had changed in the past five decades. It was currently in the process of transforming its economy to achieve better productivity and growth. He called on India to unite with the Latin America and Caribbean region to build a world of peace and prosperity.

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