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CELAC to Discuss 2020 Agenda, Integration at UN Summit

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The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) released a statement saying that on the sidelines of the 70th United Nations General Assembly the members of the regional bloc would meet to discuss strengthening their integration.

The CELAC representatives of the 33 member-countries will analyze the advances of the 2020 Agenda, a document that sets the groundwork for the functioning of CELAC during the next five years.

Their main focus is on continuing to reduce poverty and hunger, to improve the region's education, science, technology, environment. The agenda also covers objectives in respects to climate change, infrastructure and connectivity.

The bloc has also agreed to intensify ties with countries outside the CELAC, including China, a country that has massively increased their influence and assistance in Latin America.

The regional organization also has plans to establish a mechanism of political dialogue and cooperation with Russia and India, as well as advancing in the relations with Turkey and South Korea.

The Ecuadorean Deputy foreign Minister Leonardo Arizaga on Thursday called on the national coordinators of the CELAC to speed up the efforts stipulated in the 2020 Agenda.

Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa currently holds the pro tempore presidency of the CELAC.

“Our objective must be that our member countries will have approved the 2020 Agenda so that it can be considered for a worldwide debate as a proposal brought forward by Latin America and the Caribbean,” he added.

Arizaga said that in spite of the progress achieved to date, challenges remain to be faced with “absolute courage.”

The 2020 Agenda is still being discussed behind closed doors at the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) headquarters in Quito, capital of Ecuador and, therefore, it is yet to be approved by the 33 CELAC countries when they meet for a summit in 2016.

“There will not be greater satisfaction than to sit down five years from now and look back at the progress we have made in order to bring out of poverty 70 million Latin Americans and people from the Caribbean,” Arizaga said.

President Correa has called on the CELAC countries to continue working hard toward the regional integration, which “is irreversible.”

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