



In this Issue

Cuba's Ranking in the Human Development Index of 2005
Carmelo Mesa-Lago.....1

Haitian Elections Delayed
Carlo Dade.....3

North America: In the Aftermath of Katrina
Olga Abizaid.....4

The Social Conflict in the Ecuadorian Amazon
Andrade, Cisneros and Fontaine.....6

News Briefs

Cuba in Salamanca.....2
Salamanca Summit.....4
Peru.....5

FOCAL Event

The Role of the Private Sector in Rebuilding Haiti.....7

Upcoming Event

IV Summit of the Americas, Mar del Plata, Argentina, November 4-5, 2005

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Cuba's Ranking in the Human Development Index of 2005

Carmelo Mesa-Lago

The Human Development Index (HDI), annually published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), is the most widely used tool in the world to rank about 177 countries in terms of their socioeconomic development. In 1989, at its development peak before the collapse of the socialist camp, the HDI ranked Cuba 61 in the world and 9 in Latin America, but it sank to 89 and 12 place respectively in the midst of the crisis. Starting in 1997 Cuba began to rise again, reaching 56 and 6 place in 1998. The HDI excluded Cuba in the 2001 edition due to "lack of reliable data," but reinserted it in the 2002 edition and placed it back in 6 place regionally. The most recent edition of the HDI (2005) orders Cuba in 52 place in the world and in 5 place in the region (only surpassed by Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Costa Rica), giving it a significantly higher ranking than in 1989 although official statistics show that in 2003 (the year used for data in the 2005 edition) Cuba had not recovered the economic level it had in 1989 and several social indicators were still below said level. How then, such high HDI ranking of Cuba?

The HDI is based on three indicators related to health, education and economic standards: life expectancy at birth; a combination of the adult literacy rate and the joint primary, secondary and tertiary enrollment rate; and the gross domestic product per capita adjusted to inflation and converted to US dollars based on the purchasing parity power exchange rate (GDP p/c PPP US\$). An index is estimated for each of the three indicators and the three indexes are merged into the HDI based on equal weights to each of them.

In 1989 Cuba was among the top three countries in Latin America in the two social indicators, but considerably below concerning the economic indicator. The crisis provoked a 35% fall in GDP and a severe deterioration in most social indicators: university enrollment dropped 58%, maternal mortality jumped 123%, mortality at age 65 and above increased 15%, and the rate of most contagious diseases and child malnourishment rose dramatically; the only exception was infant mortality that continued to decline. Modest economic reforms that started in 1993 generated a gradual recovery beginning in 1995, still GDP per capita in 2003 was below the 1989 level and, although most social indicators had recovered (a few had surpassed) such level, a few like maternal mortality and university enrollment were still below. In the HDI 2005 Cuba's life expectancy in 2003 was only surpassed by two countries in the region, adult literacy by another two, and combined enrollment in the three educational levels by three countries. What about Cuba's GDP?

In several works I have proved that Cuba's GDP p/c PPP US\$ is impossible to calculate for several reasons: (1) GDP statistics are highly unreliable, thus in 2003-2004 the government deviated from the conventional international methodology and added to GDP the value of free social services and subsidies to rationed consumer goods,

resulting in an addition of 2 percentage points to standard GDP (the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean indirectly acknowledged this fact by publishing a 3% GDP rate versus an official rate of 5%); (2) the official adjustment of GDP to inflation is impossible to check because data on the basket of goods and services needed to calculate the cost of living have never been published, furthermore since 2001 the base year used to estimate GDP in constant pesos (correcting inflation) was shifted from 1981 to 1997 and this led to an artificial annual average increase of 56% in the value of GDP in 1989-2000; (3) due to the two distortions explained, I

Cuba in Salamanca

Although Cuban President Fidel Castro did not attend the 15 Ibero-American Summit as expected, the summit held in Salamanca on October 14-15 was a success for Cuban foreign policy. Foreign ministers from Latin America, Spain and Portugal backed Cuba in two of its battles against the United States: calling for an end to the US embargo and the US extradition of Luis Posada Carriles—a terrorist of Cuban origin wanted for a 1976 plane bombing.

The ministers approved a final draft that was then submitted to the Heads of State. The draft called for “an end to the financial, commercial and economic *blockade* which [the US] maintains against Cuba”, for the first time using the term that the Cuban government has always used to refer to the 40 year-old US embargo against the island. A special resolution on terrorism also backs Cuba-Venezuela “moves to obtain the extradition and bring to justice the person responsible for the terrorist attack on a Cubana Airlines plane in October 1976”, a direct reference to Posada Carriles, now being held in a US prison. However, most of the Ibero-American delegations rejected a Cuba-Venezuela proposal to call the armed groups active in Colombia—the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas in particular—“irregular” forces, instead of describing them as “illegal” and “terrorist”. The Heads of State also expressed political support for President Álvaro Uribe’s peace efforts.

At a press conference during the Summit, the Cuban Foreign Affairs Minister, Felipe Pérez Roque, denied allegations that Castro’s absence was a reaction to a suit currently against him in a Spanish court, filed by the Foundation for Human Rights, a Cuban exile organization. The Foundation is asking the Spanish court to indict Fidel Castro on charges of genocide and other offenses, using a Spanish law that allows criminal charges in human rights cases to be laid in Spain even if the offense is alleged to have been committed abroad.

Salamanca was also witness to the deep differences that the Cuban issues provoke. Demonstrations took place against Castro’s government organized by M.A.R. por Cuba, among other exile organizations, at same time that hundreds of Portuguese and Spaniards marched in support of the Cuban government.

have estimated that the official 5% GDP rate of 2004 was actually 1.3%; (4) the conversion of pesos to US dollars is arbitrarily set by the Cuban government (the peso is not traded in the world market), in 2005 Cuba appreciated the “convertible” peso which is now exchanged for US\$1.20 dollars, but most Cuban internal transactions are conducted in regular pesos at the exchange rate of 24 for one US dollar, hence, the exchange of one US dollar is either 0.80 convertible pesos or 0.04 regular pesos; and (5) Cuba is not part of the United Nations International Comparison Project and does not publish the needed statistics to estimate the purchasing parity power (PPP) value of the peso. The HDI of 2005 estimated Cuba’s GDP p/c PPP US\$ as 5,400 in 2003, more than twice its value in 1989 (2,500), although Cuban official data show that the “inflated” GDP per capita in 2003 (2,529 pesos) was 10% below its 1989 level (2,806 pesos). In 2003 the convertible peso and the US dollar were exchanged par but, based on the exchange rate of 26 regular pesos for one US dollar, GDP per capita in dollars would have been 97 instead of 2,529.

The HDI estimates of Cuban GDP p/c PPP US\$ are spurious: the source given in the 1995 edition was the Penn World Tables but Cuba was not included in them; in the 1996-1997 editions the source was shifted to the World Bank Atlas, which did not include Cuba in the table either, but had a footnote that gave a range (the higher figure was four times the lower figure), the HDI selected the higher figure and augmented it by 8%; in the 1998-1999 editions the HDI took responsibility for the estimate without explaining how it was done; the 2001 edition excluded Cuba all together because of lack of reliable data; in the 2002 edition the HDI reinserted Cuba but acknowledged that it did not have a figure available, hence it used a regional weighted average from the Caribbean (neither the countries included nor the weight used to calculate Cuba’s estimate were specified). The 2005 edition of the HDI excludes Cuba’s figure from the master table but a footnote gives a “preliminary estimate” (without explaining how it was done) and says: “In the case of Cuba a technical team of national and international experts has been formed to explore different methodologies for obtaining a better PPP

estimate. The results of this effort will be reflected in future reports" (United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Index 2005*, 216). Actually the HDI 2002 edition had already informed of such "ongoing efforts" that have been unsuccessful for four years but have not precluded the HDI to give a bogus estimate for Cuba.■

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Haitian Elections Delayed

Carlo Dade

To little surprise and less public concern, the Haitian elections scheduled for this November have been postponed. While reports from Port-au-Prince estimate that the delay should only be two to three weeks, no definitive announcement of an alternative date has been made by the government. The postponement of the first round of elections comes shortly after the reordering of the elections. Originally, local elections were to have taken place before national elections to help ensure a higher turnout for the normally lightly contested local elections. The latest turmoil is troubling, but not surprising. The upcoming elections are a critical component of the complex and multifaceted task of rebuilding Haiti and their success or failure will have a definitive impact on longer-term planning.

The current delay and earlier rescheduling were caused almost exclusively by problems within the Haitian Provisional Electoral Council (CEP). There have been persistent and strong warnings by international observers about problems within the CEP, its lack of seriousness and lack of any sense of urgency or focus on crucial logistical issues related to the upcoming elections. Conditions within the CEP have been so difficult that the organization has been unable to organize elections. In effect, the organization charged with overseeing elections in Haiti has been unable to hold its own, internal, elections.

The joint United Nations (UN)–Organization of American States (OAS) technical team that has been assisting the CEP, however, has made extraordinary progress in preparing for the elections in spite of impediments caused by the CEP. Over three million Haitians have been registered to vote. The electronic registration process appears to have gone well and registration stations, including mobile units, have been established within reach of the majority of the population. Voter registration has been linked to the issuing of a new national identity card and this has been a powerful inducement to register in a country where a substantial portion of the population lacks any form of identification. It will be interesting to see whether the ID cards facilitate voting at the polls or voting with one's feet, as possession of a valid, government issued ID will undoubtedly also be of great benefit to those who would like to leave.

There have been other signs of disarray in the electoral process. The Prime Minister, the CEP and government have opposed the candidacy of Haitian-American businessman Dumarsais Simeus. Yet in a move that surprised many, the Haitian Supreme Court ruled that Mr. Simeus could stand for election despite the fact that he holds dual citizenship, which appears to be a clear violation of the Haitian constitution. There also have been conflicting messages about voting by the Diaspora. The Prime Minister has stated that this would not happen, but the Diaspora minister has stated that efforts are underway to try to have limited voting in Montreal, New York and Miami.

If need be, the UN and OAS could carry out elections in Haiti without the CEP but this is not a preferred outcome for any of the international donors, who fear that the results of such an election would be seen as tainted. However, the reality is that whatever the conditions and whatever the outcome, the results of the election will be seen by a significant portion of the Haitian population and outsiders as tainted. If the eventual Lavalas candidate does not win, then the Lavalas factions will cry fraud. If the Lavalas candidate does win, the anti-Lavalas forces will cry fraud. If a non-democratic candidate, such as Guy Philippe, were to win it is hard to imagine the US government continuing to remain engaged in Haiti. However, if the CEP continues to hold an effective veto on if and when the elections are to take place, then all of this may be a moot point. There are no easy answers for the international community and the UN.

There are, however, a series of more troubling outcomes and consequences if the current situation drags on for much longer.

The most worrisome aspect of the potential implosion of the electoral process is the impact it could have on the fragile coalition of forces that compose the UN Mission to Haiti, MINUSTAH. There appears to be scant support for the deployment of troops in Haiti among the population in Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Peru, whose forces make up the bulk of the troops in MINUSTAH. There has been concern in the region that these nations viewed the upcoming elections as their exit strategy for Haiti. Efforts have been underway to convince these nations to maintain a presence in

Haiti after the elections, lest there be a re-enactment of US President Bush's famous "mission accomplished" spectacle in Iraq. These efforts will be harmed, perhaps seriously, if Haiti is unable to hold elections. Rather than reassurance that Haiti is making progress and that a viable exit date is foreseeable, those countries with troops in Haiti could view the cancellation of elections as a signal to abandon the nation-building enterprise in a country that is already viewed as "hopeless" by many in the region. None of these countries have hard interests or geographic proximity encouraging them to keep their troops in Haiti. Progress, any sort of progress, in Haiti makes the job of selling the troop deployments to domestic constituents that much easier for these governments. Conversely, any sign of failure makes selling continued engagement more difficult, and it would not take much to push them to withdraw.

Salamanca Summit

The presidents of Latin America, Portugal and Spain gathered in Salamanca on October 14-15 for what was, by all accounts, a successful 15 Ibero-American Summit. United Nations Secretary General Koffi Annan and Enrique Iglesias, recently appointed Secretary General of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), also attended the meeting. The newly created SEGIB is expected to support future summits, coordinate commitments and increase the international profile of the Ibero-American region. The creation of SEGIB marks the institutionalization of Summits that have taken place annually since 1991.

The final declaration addresses the region's foreign debt, natural disaster relief, governance, immigration and the international role of SEGIB. The success of Salamanca lies partly in the fact that this document includes something for everyone. Cuba obtained a resolution condemning the "US blockade" on the Island (despite insistence by the US that it is a partial embargo). Colombian President Álvaro Uribe welcomed a controversial resolution supporting the demobilization of illegal armed groups that commit terrorist acts in that country. The President of Venezuela Hugo Chávez gained support for the creation of a regional humanitarian fund and pledged to contribute financially to the activities of SEGIB.

For the government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero the Salamanca Summit and the creation of Madrid-based SEGIB form the cornerstone of a reorientation of Spanish foreign policy towards Latin America, considered to have been neglected by his predecessor in favour of closer links with the United States. The strengthening of the Ibero-American Summits process also raises questions about the impact on the Organization of American States (OAS) and the inter-American system. Some fear the OAS could be weakened by a shift of member states' preferences towards the Ibero-American Summits process where the US' overbearing presence or the complexities of Anglo- and Franco- Caribbean States are not an obstacle to negotiations, and where Cuba is included. Such a scenario could potentially undermine Canada's influence in the region as Canadian regional policy is conducted to a large extent through the inter-American system.

There are also serious questions about how long the current, interim government can continue to rule. The current regime has been seen as ineffectual by all factions in Haiti and has lost most of its credibility and legitimacy. It has been the promise of impending elections that has allowed the government to hobble along; without this guarantee, it is an open question as to how long the government can continue to rule.

Reports from Haiti are that the delay in holding elections will be only a few weeks. If that is the case, the worst-case scenarios outlined above may be avoided. But in any event, damage will have been done to rupture of the aura of progress that is needed to maintain the international and regional commitment to rebuilding Haiti. ■

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North America: In the Aftermath of Katrina

Olga Abizaid

Despite over 300 initiatives included under the umbrella of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) announced last June in Ottawa, few people are currently aware of this new stage in the integration of North America. Favouring a pragmatic approach, Canada, Mexico and the United States have identified bilateral and trilateral priorities, established benchmarks and deadlines for deliverables, and will start to work with key stakeholders on the initiatives of the SPP. No grand ideas; no formal transnational institutions. Instead, the SPP is composed of several ad hoc working groups—meeting regularly—devoted to a number of areas including energy, immigration, and border security.

These groups serve the double purpose of dealing with important—and in certain cases potentially sensitive—issues in isolation from politics, and of building trust relationships that will constitute the foundation for further integration in the future. But how can we assess the impact of this strategy, particularly when each of the three countries seems so concentrated on domestic

politics? Nothing better than a crisis to test the waters. This hurricane season has provided us with a peek at the developments that are shaping the future of North America, particularly in the realm of security. But it has also demonstrated the important challenges that remain in the development of a more secure and more prosperous region as expressed in the SPP.

Peru

Controversy and constitutional questions are already part of the electoral landscape six months before the Peruvian Presidential elections scheduled for April 9, 2006. On October 6, former President Alberto Fujimori announced his intention to run for the presidency, though he is banned from holding political office until 2010 and faces prosecution for the misuse of public funds and the death squad killings of 25 suspected members of the Shining Path guerrilla group. Fujimori has argued that Peruvian electoral law does not prevent candidates from registering outside of Peru and therefore that he would conduct his campaign from Japan, where he is currently living. Japan has so far refused to honour Peru's request to extradite Fujimori.

Fujimori is remembered by Peru's poor for building schools and defeating Shining Path, and polls have shown he commands between 15 and 20% support. According to an Apoyo poll conducted on October 10-14, Lourdes Flores Nano, the candidate for the conservative National Unity (UN), currently leads the race with 27% support, Alan García from the Aprista Peruvian Party (APRA) attracts 17% of voters, while Valentin Paniagua from Popular Action (AP) holds 15%. However, the presidential race is still open and many candidates have yet to announce their candidacy. This also means that Fujimori's party, Sí Cumple, could nominate a proxy candidate (Angus Reid 27/10/05).

Concerns over constitutionality in elections have also arisen due to the current lack of oversight of the National Elections Panel (JNE), the body charged with approving legal provisions on elections and registering candidates. At the moment, there is no formal way to appeal decisions made by the JNE, even if they are considered unconstitutional. In 1999, Fujimori was able to run for president for a third term following the approval of his candidacy by the JNE, despite claims of unconstitutionality. Fernando Tuesta, former head of the National Electoral Processes Office, cautioned there could be a repeat of 1999 if no formal process for the review of electoral decisions is created. Tuesta recommended that the JNE declare Fujimori's candidacy inadmissible based on existing congressional and Constitutional Court resolutions, as an interim measure to avoid a similar future scenario.

North America as a region: Drawing an outer border?

Immediately after hurricane Katrina hit the US coast, Prime Minister Paul Martin decided to put the softwood lumber dispute on the backburner temporarily and pledged to provide the US with all of the assistance required to face this natural disaster. "Nothing new", one might think, even though the latest episode of this dispute is currently the most salient irritant in the Canada-US relationship. After all, our ties are deeper than that. The participation of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Navy could thus be seen in the framework of a longstanding history of military cooperation between the two countries, only enhanced after the terrorist attacks of 2001 on the US.

Yet something new did happen. Even in the context of escalating mutual recriminations about border insecurity between the US and Mexico, the latter did not hesitate to offer assistance in the midst of the crisis, and the former to accept it. Mexican Armed Forces and Navy entered US territory, and coordinated their activities with American authorities to assist the victims of the hurricane. Unlike Canada, Mexico does not have a longstanding experience of military cooperation with the US, hence the relevance of this event. At the bilateral level, there are three main factors that made this possible. Firstly, disaster relief operations are under the mandate of the Mexican Armed Forces, and in that sense their participation was not controversial in Mexico. Secondly, US and Mexican security agencies have started to work more closely since 2001; examples include the coordination between the navies of both countries to protect energy critical infrastructure in the Gulf of Mexico, and the establishment in 2003 of working groups between the Department of Homeland Security and Mexico's National Security Centre to discuss other potential areas where critical infrastructure may be at risk, including water, telecommunications and transportation. And lastly, the rationale that US acceptance of Mexico's assistance could serve as a confidence-building experience for potential deeper cooperation on security in the future.

While still bilateral in nature, the responses from Canada and Mexico to the Katrina crisis in the US illustrate the priority given to security on the North American agenda and allow us to see some of the outcomes of the relationships fostered by the SPP working groups. Perhaps, it also shows a nascent conceptualization of North America as a region, where the three countries are engaged, at different levels, in the security of this shared space, even if still structured around the US as hub. Currently, there seems to be a degree of convergence around US' interest in expanding its security space into Canada and Mexico and these countries' interest in reducing US security concerns about their borders in order to ensure access to the US market. However, we are not to see the establishment of a common regional border in the near future, nor greater (or trilateral) cooperation on defence—an area excluded from the SPP. In order to include Mexico in such a scheme, the definition of security would need to be broader than just terrorism and include economic and social dimensions. But exchanges may already be taking place bilaterally...or trilaterally? Last September, Timothy Keating, Chief of the US Northern Command, and Canada's Defence Minister Bill Graham went to Mexico to celebrate Mexico's independence. Coincidence? Perhaps.

Balancing security and prosperity: What to do with the internal borders?

Beyond the aforementioned responses to the immediate security issues caused by Katrina, let us consider longer-term effects on the economic relations of three countries. Aside from the loss of lives, economic damages caused by this natural phenomenon will impact North America, for instance in the area of oil supply, given that Katrina (and Rita after) affected energy and port infrastructure in the Gulf of Mexico. Inflationary pressures and the need to seek additional sources of oil in the region are being felt as the winter draws near. However, by the beginning of next year we may see a boom in construction as the need to rebuild damaged infrastructure and houses in the US increases—a propitious moment to make a case for the dismantling of existing US barriers to the entry of products, such as Canadian softwood lumber and Mexican cement. Clearly a win-win-win situation. That is, if the will to recognize the three countries as the part of same economic space—North America—is there. If it is, then the three countries would need to abide by the rules established by the North American Free Trade Agreement, and more importantly, they would need to reconsider their internal borders. Why? The reason is clear. Currently, while North America advances in the establishment of a shared regional space, borders between Canada, Mexico and the US, instead of fading, are being strengthened, imposing at times unnecessary restrictions on the movement of goods and people.

China perceives North America as a region. Are we ready to perceive it as such as well? ■

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The Social Conflict in the Ecuadorian Amazon

Karen Andrade, Paul Cisneros and
Guillaume Fontaine

In 1973, the year of the oil shocks, Ecuador became a net exporter of oil and ranked as a mid-range producer in Latin America. In 2004, according to the US Energy Information Administration, Ecuador's average production reached 534,800 barrels a day (bbl/d), ranking the country as the 28 largest producer in the world. By way of comparison, Mexico holds 5 place with 3.8 million bbl/d, Venezuela is 9 with 2.6 million bbl/d and Saudi Arabia is the largest world producer with 10.9 million bbl/d.

The development of the oil sector is the source of multiple problems in Ecuador, including the country's significant dependency on foreign technology and capital, its vulnerability to changes in world markets and its relatively high debt: according to the Central Bank of Ecuador, external debt was US\$11 billion in 2004, representing 36.5% of the country's GDP. Moreover, the central role of the state firm Petroecuador in the country's economy and its close links to the executive has made the firm vulnerable to capture by competing political interests, which does not always work in favour of efficient financial and technological management.

On the other hand, the concentration of oil reserves in the Amazon region makes oil extraction activities socially and ecologically sensitive. Though the area of the Ecuadorian territory covered by the Amazon forest only represents 1.7% of the Amazon Basin, it constitutes 45% of the national territory—approximately 120,000 square km. However, according to the national census of 2001, the Amazon population—0.55 million inhabitants spread between the provinces of Sucumbios, Orellana, Napo, Pastaza, Morona Santiago and Zamora Chinchipe—represents 4.5% of total national population. The oil industry is concentrated in the northern provinces of Sucumbios and Orellana, which maintain socio-economic indicators below the national average and suffer the consequences of conflict in

Colombia, particularly the migration and fumigations linked to Plan Colombia.

In August 2005, these two provinces were the scene of a series of protests and actions instigated by mayors, provincial counsellors and figures from civil society gathered at the Biprovincial Assembly. The main goal of these protests was to force the government of Alfredo Palacio, who assumed power in April 2005 after the overthrow of Lucio Gutiérrez, to recognize an agreement signed by Gutiérrez in June of 2004 in which the government consented to important investments in education and road infrastructure in the provinces.

Within days of the fall of Lucio Gutiérrez, protesters had succeeded in blocking access to Petroecuador's main pumping stations, generating a loss of over 109,000 barrels of crude oil and leading the government to declare a state of emergency in the province of Orellana. On August 14, after three months of unsuccessful negotiations with the government, Petroecuador and private firms, protesters declared a "civic strike", occupying main roads and landing strips used by Petroecuador and even sabotaging several dozens of oil wells and the oil pipeline managed by the state firm.

A state of emergency was declared once again, and over 4,000 soldiers were mobilized to ensure the security of oil equipment. Three days later, President Palacio resumed dialogue with protesters until the parties reached an agreement on August 25, promising that a share of the income tax of businesses would be allocated to an infrastructure fund to complete the construction of 200 kilometres of roads between the two provinces. The official cost of these three days of strike was estimated at US\$360 billion, in part due to the losses incurred by the historic fall of national oil production to 63,475 bbl/d (Petroecuador's production only fell from 200,000 to 30,000 bbl/d).

After the return to order and the resignation of Defence Minister Solón Espinosa on August 20, the government began to negotiate with President Chávez for the purchase of Venezuelan crude oil to compensate for the loss in production and to fulfill its commitment to supply international markets. The outcome of those talks was the announcement by Venezuela's state oil company, the PDVSA Group, that it would supply 500,000 to 600,000 barrels of oil derivatives (nafta and diesel) in September. At the beginning of October, parties were still discussing the details of this agreement.

Meanwhile, preoccupations arose regarding the position of the United States vis-à-vis this "energy alliance". Chávez even mentioned the possible deterioration of relations with Ecuador after the IMF, who had just refused a US\$100-million loan to Ecuador, insisted that Congress resume attempts to reform the hydrocarbon law that had been abandoned in May 2005 after two years of debate. Yet, even though the ministers of energy of both countries were in favour of broader agreements, including the construction of infrastructure (among others for the export of liquid gas from Venezuela to Ecuador) and the implementation of programmes for assistance and training, the agreement signed between PDVSA and Petroecuador was in essence technical. In addition, protesters withdrew their demand that following the lapse in their contract the North American company Occidental Petroleum

would handed over its assets to Petroecuador, which satisfied the US embassy in Quito, a fervent defender of American private interests in Ecuador.■

Karen Andrade, Paúl Cisneros and Guillaume Fontaine are researchers at the Socio-Ecological Observatory at FLACSO Ecuador.

FOCAL Event

The Role of the Private Sector in Rebuilding Haiti

On September 9 and 10, FOCAL in partnership with the Inter-American Dialogue convened an extraordinary meeting between outgoing president of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Enrique Iglesias and 19 leaders of the Haitian private sector at Willson House in Meech Lake. "The Role of the Private Sector in Rebuilding Haiti" was conducted with support from the IDB and the Canadian International Development Agency, and chaired by FOCAL board member and former Canadian Prime Minister Joe Clark.

The roundtable discussions focused on the ways in which the international donor community and private sector can work together to support development in Haiti. As evinced by the discussions, the private sector is playing a crucial, though largely unnoticed role in supporting development in Haiti. The report and agenda from the meeting are available on the FOCAL web site www.focal.ca

As a result of the event a delegation from the Haitian private sector was invited to make a presentation of the meetings main recommendations at a recent donors' meeting on Haiti held in Brussels. Other initiatives and recommendations from the meeting are under consideration by other members of the international donor community.■



The heads of state and government from the Hemisphere will gather for the IV Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, Argentina November 4-5, 2005.

FOCAL has dedicated a page on its Website devoted exclusively to the latest highlights and documents related to the Summit. Find this information at http://www.focal.ca/home_e.asp



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