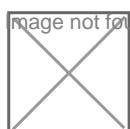


Former Brazilian President Lula da Silva Says Neo-liberalism Will Be Defeated Again



Montevideo, November 17 (RHC)-- Thousands of activists from across Latin America are in Uruguay to protest against neo-liberalism and in defense of democracy. "Temer out!" and "Macri out!" were among the demands chanted by thousands of Latin Americans marching in the name of progress through Uruguay's capital, Montevideo, on Thursday.

The mass mobilization, part of the three-day Continental Conference For Democracy And Against Neo-liberalism, drew thousands to rally "against neo-liberalism" — including free trade agreements — and "in defense of democracy."

Former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva, in a message broadcast to the assembled crowd, said: "In all our countries we have already defeated the neo-liberal project once and I have no doubt that we will be able to defeat it again."

It was da Silva, along with late Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez and late Brazilian president Nestor Kirchner, who 12 years ago defeated the U.S.-initiated Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

Lula noted that Latin American countries fought together "to defeat the military dictatorships of the continent" and "the disastrous neo-liberal governments of the '80s and '90s."

"Union movements, social movements and progressive parties were building the great popular victories of the last decade. The progressive governments of the region, in close harmony with the popular movements, resolved to promote great economic, social and cultural changes conquering an unprecedented dignity for our peoples."

Lula da Silva also noted that the lessons of yesterday are just as relevant today: in particular in Brazil, which experienced "a violent blow to democracy" during last year's right-wing coup.

The conference is set to continue for the next two days, attempting to interlink "struggles against the offensive of conservative and capitalist sectors in the continent," according to the official website.

Last week, former Uruguay President Jose 'Pepe' Mujica called on progressive and revolutionary Latin American organizations to join the meeting in order to share their knowledge of the various struggles on the continent and how best to win them.

The conference's organizing group, comprising dozens of organizations from across the continent, first met in November 2015 in the Cuban capital, Havana. In 2016, the same groups organized actions in a number of countries to mark their reorganization.

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