

# *Cuba's foreign minister says CELAC moves forward on the road to integration*

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Buenos Aires, October 28 (RHC) --The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) is moving forward today on a path of integration and analysis of the main challenges facing the region, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said in Argentina.

Speaking to Prensa Latina, Rodriguez described as productive the XXIII Meeting of Foreign Ministers of that organization, held on Wednesday in this capital.

He pointed out that the meeting took place in an atmosphere of overcoming differences that affected the life of CELAC in recent years and was focused on the fundamental issues that have to do with Latin America, without attempts at politicization.

He also highlighted the approval of a joint declaration, in which the member countries rejected the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba and demanded the exclusion of the island from a list of alleged sponsors of terrorism.

The minister described this list as spurious and arbitrary and stressed the importance of Celac resuming the denunciation of aggressions of this type.

On the other hand, he indicated that the VII Summit of this bloc will take place next January, which is expected to be a moment of encounter.

Celac needs to overcome a period in which attempts of political manipulation against some nations prevailed. The previous event of heads of state, held in Mexico, was very positive, as was the pro tempore presidency of that country. Argentina's leadership also bore fruit, he said.

I am convinced that the summit will mark a favorable stage and establish a road map for the coming years as part of the project of integration and unity in diversity that is so important for Cuba and Our America, he added.

The day before, the Foreign Minister participated in a meeting with Cuban residents, members of the Argentine Solidarity Movement, graduates in the island and members of political, social and trade union organizations of this South American country.

During the exchange, he indicated that CELAC is going through a moment of renewal after a turbulent stage, in which right-wing governments, at the service of the United States, tried to divide it, were accomplices of the coup d'état against Evo Morales in Bolivia, tried to isolate Venezuela and Nicaragua, and prevented the holding of meetings.

However, he assured that today there is a new, optimistic and cooperative atmosphere.

During the recent meeting of foreign ministers, much mention was made of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, a true political manifesto and one of the most advanced documents in regional history, he said.

He also expressed the hope that the January meeting would be a progressive event, where the true interests of the peoples would be defended and that it would contribute to the objective of building a Great, independent, fraternal, integrated Homeland, which exercises sovereignty, raises its voice in international forums to speak the truth and claims its place in the world.

We hope it will be very different from the failed Summit of the Americas, held this year in Los Angeles, United States, where there was a shocking absence of leaders from the region in protest for the exclusions and manipulation of the event, he said.

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