

# *CELAC Sets Out to Eliminate Poverty Following Ecuador's Lead*

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Quito, January 3 (RHC-teleSUR) -- At the most recent CELAC summit in Costa Rica, regional leaders committed to eliminating extreme poverty in five years, as Ecuador, the pro tempore president of CELAC, works to provide the necessary leadership to meet this goal.

In an interview with the Ecuadorean newspaper *El Telegrafo* published on Monday, Cecilia Vaca, the Coordinating Minister for Social Development, stated that the region is living in a different era and it can show the world what its priorities are and how they can be accomplished.

"I am convinced that (elimination of) poverty in a rich region such as ours is a question of political will," said Vaca, adding that in order to end poverty, the member states of CELAC must prioritize investment in health and education, and implement strategies that result in dignified employment.

Vaca also drew a link to the fight against extreme poverty and the decision of CELAC to declare Latin American and the Caribbean a region of peace. "We cannot talk about peace while 68 million Latin Americans and Caribbeans live in extreme poverty, because that is also a type of violence."

Ecuador is apt to lead the region's struggle to eliminate extreme poverty. The country recently declared that extreme poverty had been eliminated in one province in the country, and hopes to eliminate it in the entire country by 2017.

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