

# *Ecuador Assumes Leadership of G-77 Plus China*

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United Nations, January 14 (RHC)-- Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa travelled to New York on Friday to assume the chairmanship of the Group of 77 plus China -- the largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries at the United Nations -- the first time in the Andean nation's history.

Correa said that his country's election to chair the group, whose mission is to promote South-South cooperation and enhance joint negotiating capacity within the U.N. system, is a "global recognition" that the development that has taken place under his government's leadership is of interest "to the region and the world."

In remarks to the press before leaving for U.N. headquarters in New York, where Correa formally took over G-77 plus China leadership from Thailand, he highlighted his goal to use Ecuador's mandate to tackle the global problem of international tax havens.

"Tax havens are one of the largest manifestations of savage capitalism," he noted, adding: "We will insist that tax havens be banned to avoid corruption, money laundering, and tax evasion."

"We are going to give it much greater impetus because (tax havens) are one of the great enemies of developing nations," he said. "They mainly harm the poor nations that need these resources. Our oligarchies make that money in our countries, often in a bad way, and send it to those tax havens where

capital has no face.”

Correa is leading the campaign against corporate and individual tax fraud by example, having launched a national referendum in Ecuador where citizens will vote in February on a proposed ban on public servants or elected officials holding money in offshore tax havens.

Correa launched both his national and international campaigns against tax avoidance after the massive Panama Papers leaks which showed hundreds of prominent politicians – including Ecuadorian presidential candidate Guillermo Lasso, and Argentine President Mauricio Macri – were using Panamanian banks to avoid paying legally owed taxes.

He told reporters that Ecuador's other priorities during its term would be protecting the world's oceans, ensuring that transnational corporations respect human rights, and addressing the crushing external debts imposed on countries who have been subject to enforced under-development by international monetary organizations such as the World Bank and IMF.

Correa ended his remarks by noting that he wanted to use Ecuador's one-year term as head of the coalition of 134 nations from the Global South to demonstrate that at the U.N., the General Assembly should “make the most important decisions, and not a group of privileged countries based on the military power they have.”

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