

Former Uruguayan President Jose Mujica Says University Education Should Be Accessible to All



Brasilia, November 27 (RHC)-- Former Uruguayan President Jose "Pepe" Mujica, during a visit to Brazil, came out in defense of "a world in which higher education is accessible to all social classes and not just a few." The Uruguayan leader made the comments on the same day the World Bank suggested that the Brazilian government implement cuts to its free federal university programs.

Mujica's remarks came during a solemn event where he received the first honorary doctorate degree awarded by the Federal University of Pampa, Unipampa, in the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, according to Rede Brasil Atual. "To be a university student is to have a greater responsibility toward society," one that requires "solidarity," Mujica said. He went on to say that he believes that the "masses of workers will perform their duties with greater efficiency" once they've graduated.

Unipamp's dean, Marco Antonio Fontoura Hansen, described Mujica as "a man who's dedicated himself, in his humble way of living and worldwide popularity, to peace and harmony between peoples."

In recent days, the World Bank released a report entitled, “A Just Adjustment – Analysis of Efficiency and Equity of Public Spending in Brazil.” It suggested, among a series of other measures, that in order for Brazil to cut spending without harming the most poor, the federal government should restructure its federal university program, which provides education free of cost to students.

The idea is for the government to continue to fund the federal university system for 40 percent of students comprising the poorest student body, while the rest would have to pay for their studies after graduation.

The World Bank's suggestion comes amid a plethora of austerity measures, as well as debilitating labor reform and pension reform proposals made by de-facto Brazilian President Michel Temer.

As of August, his administration had announced that 57 public companies and airport terminals will be privatized, including Petrobras, Brazil's state-run oil company, and Electrobras, the country's state-owned electrical company and the largest in Latin America.

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