

Nearly 1/3 of Latin Americans Are Living in Poverty



Mexico City, December 22 (RHC)-- At least 220 million people in Latin America — 38 percent of the region's population — live on less than \$10 a day. The annual report on poverty released by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, CEPAL, notes that poverty has increased to the point that it is now affecting almost a third of Latin America.

In 2016, the poverty rate in the region has reached over 30 percent, corresponding to about 186 million people, after a continuing decreasing pattern over the past decade, as found by the report "Social Panorama of Latin America 2017." This included 61 million people in extreme poverty, said CEPAL secretary general Alicia Bárcena during the presentation of the report in Mexico City.

However, this represents fewer people than in 2002, which recorded 45,9 percent of people in poverty. Since the beginning of this century, Latin America lived through an unprecedented boom fueled by a global appetite for its natural resources and crops. But according to Barcena, the recent pattern would be the result of the economic slowdown experienced across the continent, in addition to the current situation in Brazil and Venezuela.

Another UNDP report found this year that the economic slowdown was not alone to blame for the rise in poverty, as the region also has a preponderance of informal and unskilled jobs, and taxes often hit poorer citizens the hardest.

Earlier in February, another report issued by the commission also found that poverty affected more than others women and Afro-Latinos, who both have the lowest-paying jobs, while women work longer hours than men, and Afro-Latinos are more affected by unemployment.

Between 2008 and 2015, income distribution inequality among people in Latin America decreased thanks to countries' prioritization of social development objectives, but the pace of decline slowed between 2012 and 2015, and current levels remain very high.

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