

UN Agency Says Poverty Reduction Stalls in Most of Latin America

Estrategia Nacional para la igualdad y la erradicación de la pobreza



Santiago de Chile, January 27 (RHC-Xinhua) -- A majority of Latin American countries have stopped making headway in poverty reduction, a United Nations agency said Monday. The Santiago de Chile-based Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) presented a study that shows poverty affected 28 percent of Latin Americans last year, meaning "its decline has stalled at around that level since 2012."

More tellingly, the study, titled "Social Panorama of Latin America 2014," reveals rate of poverty rose from 11.3 percent to 12 percent over the same two-year period. While ECLAC acknowledged that the projections appear "in an overall context of economic deceleration," it also noted a lack of social spending on the part of regional governments.

"In 2012 and 2013 a deceleration of social spending growth was observed, which is mainly due to the global economy's limited dynamism and greater investment in non-social sectors," said ECLAC, calling on the governments "to strengthen social protection policies that reduce vulnerability in the face of economic cycles, " to meet poverty eradication targets established by the UN as part of its post-2015 development

agenda.

Only five of the 12 countries with available data showed declines in poverty, including Paraguay, El Salvador, Colombia, Peru and Chile, according to the study.

In the years prior to this study, that is from 2005 to 2012, the region saw considerable declines in poverty, from 39 percent to 28 percent, on average in 17 countries of the region, said ECLAC, with the biggest drops seen in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Chile and Venezuela.

The UN agency analyzes poverty as measured by income, as well as a "complementary and multidimensional" measurement that covers five areas: housing, basic services, education, employment/social protection, and standard of living.

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