

United Nations
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL

Nations Unies
CONSEIL
ECONOMIQUE
ET SOCIAL

UNRESTRICTED

E/CN.12/96*
29 May 1949
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HONORABLE
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA,
AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE
SECOND SESSION, HELD AT THE
NATIONAL CAPITOL

Mister President of the Economic Commission for Latin
America.

Delegates:

The session which I now have the honor to open
has a task of such great historical responsibility that
in every part of this Continent the august figures of the
past who founded our great Latin American countries are
looking down upon it with expectation. For, by achieving
the economic liberation of each and all of these
countries, your work will consecrate the right of their
sons to live with that minimum of wellbeing which is
the justification of the titanic struggle of those who
made us free.

Those volcanoes of Energy and self-denial -
Simon Bolivar, Jose de San Martin, Padre Hidalgo,
Jose Marti - did not rise up in order to see us worship their
names at altars of poverty and disease. All the great
men of America dreamed of one day seeing our people

* This document has been reproduced in New York from the
original issued at Havana.

/healthy

healthy and civilized; and there is no health nor civilization nor dignity where hunger reigns.

You are here to banish the ghost of hunger from American soil. Never was a joint task more welcome; never was there a more sincere welcome to Cuba, where every man and woman knows that freedom, the dearest and most precious, benefit that a creature of God may have, is without sense if it does not serve to guarantee daily bread, the essentials of health, and a civilization which enlightens and dignifies.

Your task, however, does not end at the boundaries of our Continent. From the very moment when America first entered the field of Western culture, frontiers were broken down, frontiers which have since widened beyond measure. And from within those frontiers still emanate the hopes of mankind. We are still the hope of the world. In the remotest corners of the earth, hundreds of people are hoping and trusting that the future may hold in store for their children the legendary wealth which we are able to produce.

To keep faith with their trust, we possess two important essentials: the land and the men. Our people have proved their vast capacity to reach a high standard of industrial development. Little more than a hundred years ago, when all the countries belonging to Western culture were already rich, prosperous and civilized, we were as yet nothing but poor colonies plowing our fields or working the land or the mines

/with rudimentary

with rudimentary methods and in most cases forced on by the whip of the overseer. Nowadays, we can proudly show to others our marvelous cities, our highly developed industries maintained by capable workers, good technicians in every branch of human knowledge, exemplary school systems and research centres which are an honor to our race. And in each field, we can set an example by our daily perseverance in the pursuit of happiness through freedom marked by social justice.

But even the land, the technicians and the will to progress are not enough to satisfy our own needs and the hopes of the world. In a few short years humanity has seen how immense are the possibilities of industrial production. But perhaps to make the proof more dramatic, there came a war which has ruined a great part of mankind and left unaccomplished the possibilities of efficient organization in countries which have not yet attained their full development. Such is our case. The era of greatest need in history comes at a time when the people are most conscious of how much they can achieve and when events that we did not provoke have slowed down the rhythm of our progress. Therefore, the world must know that if we are to make its hopes come true, the need which brought about such events must be recognized, and duly and fully satisfied.

This Second Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America meets to see what these needs are and

/the due time

the due time and means of fulfilling them. Let it, delegates, speak with the clarity which comes from the knowledge of their own worth and with the precision of statistics; let them speak with the energy and force that the times require, for, though the hour may seem dark, it can be illumined by persistent and productive work on their part, work to bridge the gap between the few who enjoy abundance and the many who know it not.

Gentlemen:

You are here to make history, the best, the noblest history that shall fulfill and justify our struggles, that shall give raison d'être to those who founded our countries. The Cuban people and their Government know this is so. Therefore, we shall follow with keen attention and with faith the work in which you are to be engaged. With attention and faith because we are sure that each one of you senses, hovering over you, the august presence of those who, with all authority, claim as a right that the heroic task which they started when they set us free, be crowned with welfare for the generations after them.

Gentlemen:

Cuba opens its arms to you, and is honoured to receive you. For in welcoming you, it is welcoming a future America better for all.
