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SOUTH READY, ENDOWED TO TAKE CHARGE OF OWN DESTINY

Summit - destiny

from Donald Baptist

(P) Dr. M - Oversea trips.

CARACAS, Nov 28 (Bernama) -- **The South is willing, ready and endowed to take charge of its own destiny**, Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez **said when inaugurating the second summit of the Group of 15 (G-15) here Wednesday.**

Remarking on the new goals of the southern hemisphere and the needs of its population, he said the world was now facing new challenges and threats due to a new world order.

These were a new hegemony, conflicts arising from ethnic and cultural self-determination, struggle for scarce natural resources, external debt, trade protectionism, abuses of transnational capital, massive migration and the threat to the environment and drug trafficking.

He added: +We are aware of all, that, is at stake. Under perhaps unprecedented circumstances we must commit ourselves to share in the establishment of the world order that is being conceived.+

President. Perez, who will be taking over as chairman of the G-15 from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, also called for East-West confrontation to be substituted with North-South cooperation. -- more

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While the South has made efforts aimed at strengthening national development policies it had not found the necessary reciprocity and appreciation of its effort in the North, he said.

Calling for the inequality in North-South relations to be firmly addressed, he said no new order would be viable if it did not address the legitimate claim of the South for essential dialogue.

+We urge the North to face the challenge of this frank and effective dialogue with imagination to solve the existing problems,+ he said.

The end of East-West confrontation would reveal that the most serious problem was the imbalance in the North-South relations, he added.

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, representing Africa, said the group now had a better grasp of the direction than a year ago when the first summit was held in Kuala Lumpur.

The economic revival of the South would depend largely on its own efforts and full exploitation of its resources, he added. -- more

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He also said that **as** the Cold War faded into **historical** oblivion, the developing countries were **faced with** the daunting task of building a **new and democratic world order in which** states acting individually or in groups should enhance and protect the rights of their citizens, **namely democracy, freedom, development, and clean environment.**

+It is a contradiction of the basic **fundamentals of democracy** if democratic values are to **be observed** at the **national** level while they are being flaunted **at** the international level, + he added.

Developed countries were continually **manipulating international systems** to their benefit **and yet** purporting to be **democratic**, he said.

President Alberto Fujimori of Peru **said** South-South **cooperation** was the only **way** to present a **strong** bloc to the North, based on the individual experience of each country.

He **added** that developing countries must overcome the situation **facing** the South by replacing archaic **dogmas** with **modern and** pragmatic perceptions and ideas.-- more

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This could be **done without** relinquishing the ethical and **human** elements of development and act as a **new paradigm for** North-South dialogue.

He said: +We must **continue** from the inertia with a discourse **which** reiterates the hackneyed **formula of the past.** A new **approach**, emphasizing the need for a **new pact of solidarity to encourage development, is urgent.**

The grand opening ceremony **held** at the Teresa Carreno Cultural **Complex** was attended by nine of the **heads of state/government, at** the meeting.

Four countries -- Brazil, **Egypt**, Jamaica and **Nigeria** -- were **unable** to send their **head of state or government.** Yugoslavia, **which** originally **could not** attend, later turned up.

Wednesday night, President Perez **hosted a dinner for** the **heads of state and government at** the presidential residence +La Casona+ where troupes **from** the steering committee (TROIKA) countries -- Venezuela, **Senegal** and Malaysia

-- staged a cultural performance.

Malaysia was represented by a 26-member group called +Briged Seni Melaka+ which performed Malaysian traditional dances.

The group, led **by** Melaka Deputy State Secretary, Encik Mohamad Saib, is **making a 20-day tour under a** Tourist Development **Corporation promotion** that **will take it to Mexico where it will stage four performances and** Los Angeles. -- Bernama