The ALBA-TCP Alliance to Analyze the Economy After the Pandemic

By: Telesur
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"If something has become clear, it is the need for a new economy and society that respects the peoples' lives, conditions, and traditions," Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro said.

The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - Peoples' Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP) countries Wednesday hold a conference to discuss policy options to foster their economic development after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Convened by Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro, this high-level virtual meeting will be attended by the heads of state and government of Cuba, Nicaragua, Dominica, Antigua & Barbuda, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Granada, and Saint Kitts & Nevis.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Secretary Alicia Barcena, the historian Ignacio Ramonet, and the Tricontinental Institute for Social Research Director Vijay Prashad were also invited to join the discussion.

At the beginning of the conference, Maduro reaffirmed the need to build a new economy based on international cooperation to overcome the consequences of the pandemic.

"If something has become clear, it is the need for a new economy and a new society that respects the peoples' lives, conditions, and traditions," he said and recalled that the Bolivarian Alliance was born as an alternative to neoliberalism.

On the struggles against racism around the world, the Bolivarian leader pointed out that the U.S. citizens' rallies talk about the changes that history will register in the months to come.

"Some people have argued that protests against racism and police brutality are the world's first post-pandemic political expression," he said, adding that contemporary challenges require greater cooperation and integration among peoples.

"The ALBA-TCP has to put itself at the forefront of the ideological struggle to create that new world and to battle for life, for health, and for the future."

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The ECLAC Secretary Barcena began her intervention by reviewing the panorama of economic and social inequalities that Latin America is about to experience as a result of the worst recession in its history.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the region's structural gaps," she said, explaining that to overcome them, the international community is required to "react" to the heavy external debt that Latin American peoples are bearing.

"Getting out of the pandemic will take a long time," Barcena mentioned and lamented that multilateralism is being weakened.

"We have been very divided in the region. We are very fragmented and we cannot allow that," the ECLAC secretary warned.

"We salute the long life of ALBA-TCP... and strongly reject the sanctions imposed on two of its countries," she added referring to the U.S. financial, economic, and trade blockade against Cuba and Venezuela.

Barcena also emphasized the need to universalize health and social protection services. A first step in that direction would be to set up an "emergency basic income", which the Latin American governments should provide to their citizens to prevent them from falling into poverty in the next six months.

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After listening to the ECLAC policies, Venezuela's President proposed the creation of an ALBA-TCP Economic-Political Council to immediately debate these options.

"I propose that an ALBA-TCP joint council, which brings together foreign affairs ministers and economy ministers, be held as soon as the end of June to channel all the emerging proposals," Maduro said.

Since its creation on Dec. 2004, the ALBA-TCP has been an integration platform that emphasizes solidarity, complementarity, justice, and cooperation.

Its historical purpose is to unite the countries' capacities and strengths to produce the structural transformations and the relationships necessary to achieve the comprehensive development required by nations wishing to remain sovereign and just.

It is also a political, economic, and social alliance in defense of independence, self-determination, and the identity of the peoples that comprise it.