

New Costa Rican President Takes Oath of Office



San José, May 8 (RHC) – Costa Rican President Luis Guillermo Solís, whose landslide victory as a third-party candidate crushed Costa Rica's traditional two-party system, was inaugurated on Thursday in San José.

The 56-year-old has vowed wide-reaching political and social reform as he takes over a country with severe infrastructure problems, debt totaling 60 percent of GDP, growing social inequality and border tensions with neighboring Nicaragua.

Six presidents – mostly from Central America – attended the official ceremonies in San José.

Representatives from 80 countries and international organizations were also present at the ceremonies, which were held at the National Stadium in La Sabana Park, west of San José.

The president's guests included Juan Orlando Hernández of Honduras, Rafael Correa of Ecuador, Danilo Medina of the Dominican Republic, Otto Pérez Molina of Guatemala, (president-elect) Salvador Sánchez Cerén of El Salvador and Evo Morales of Bolivia. Ricardo Martinelli of Panama had planned on attending, but canceled at the last minute on Wednesday.

The governments of Nicaragua, Venezuela, Cuba and Argentina were represented by their vice presidents.

Other top-level guests included Spain's Prince Felipe de Borbón, Secretary General of the Organization of American States, José Miguel Insulza, and the president of the Chamber of Representatives of Morocco. Some 22,000 people also attended the ceremony.

Solis, an academic and historian, came out of nowhere in the polls to win the first round of balloting on February 2nd, staggering the political establishment in the Central American country of five million.

With a record of more than 1.3 million votes, or 78 percent of the ballots cast in the run-off election, he became the first third-party candidate in more than half a century to win the top post.

He takes over from Laura Chinchilla of the social democratic National Liberation Party (PLN), Costa Rica's first female head of state.

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