

# *Foreign Ministers of 20 Latin, Caribbean Nations to Attend First China-CELAC Forum*

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Beijing, January 6 (RHC-Xinhua) -- Twenty foreign ministers from members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) will attend the first ministerial meeting of the China-CELAC forum in Beijing this week, a Chinese foreign ministry official says.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Bank of America and the Development Bank of Latin America will also send representatives to the meeting on Thursday and Friday, Zhu Qingqiao, the director-general for the Department of Latin America and Caribbean Affairs at the Foreign Ministry, said in Beijing Monday.

Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend the opening ceremony of the meeting on Jan 8. Costa Rica President Luis Guillermo Solis, Ecuador President Rafael Correa Delgado, Bahamas Prime Minister Perry Christie and Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro Moros will also be present at the ceremony.

Costa Rica currently holds the CELAC rotating chairmanship and Ecuador will follow. The two countries, together with Cuba and The Bahamas, make up the CELAC Quartet.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Costa Rican counterpart, Manuel Gonzalez Sanz, will co-chair the meeting.

Established in December 2011 in Caracas, Venezuela, CELAC is a block of 33 countries, including all South American countries, some Caribbean states plus Mexico.

During Xi's visit to Latin America in July 2014, he and CELAC leaders announced the establishment of the co-operation forum and agreed to hold its first ministerial at an early date.

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