



Jornada Venezolana

Friday, April 11, 2014

13:00 – 19:00

Auditorium 09-011

CLS-HSG



Universität St.Gallen





The Latin-American-Swiss Center of the University of St.Gallen would like to invite you to the *Jornada Venezolana*

In recent years, Venezuela has made leaps forward in areas such as health and education. It has reduced poverty and met early some of the targets of the eighth Millennium Development Goals. As owner, of one of the world's largest reserves of oil, Venezuela is confronting the paradox of having to solve a myriad of economic, social and security problems. This year's *Jornada* will not be a business forum as usual but put a special emphasis on the socio-political situation and its perspectives. Our purpose is to offer a platform for an exchange of ideas and to facilitate a substantial dialogue among participants based on non-polarizing reflections and policy options.

In comparison with other countries of the region that we have featured in previous editions, Venezuela's economy is facing very serious challenges affecting the daily life of its population. Lately, shortages of basic consumer goods, limitations on imports, shortage of hard currency, a devaluation induced by an overvalued exchange rate, one of the highest rates of inflation in the world (averaging 56.1% in January 2014) and corruption have taken their toll on the country's welfare.

The economy of Venezuela largely depends on the petroleum sector (11% of GDP), which currently accounts for 95% of its exports and 50% of government revenues. Venezuela's agriculture, industry and services focus on the domestic market and have not been internationally competitive for years. The business arena is fraught with uncertainties. The ongoing "Bolivarian reforms" have given the government control of several key economic sectors such as oil, cement, steel, electricity, telecommunications, and some retail trade. As a consequence and due to the overall economic situation, direct foreign investors are reluctant to commit themselves to Venezuela. At this *Jornada* we would like to discuss possible ways to amend the situation.

Under President Hugo Chávez, the country realigned itself politically by moving away from the United States, and closer to China, Russia and Cuba. It even attempted to lead Latin America with a new paradigm. Since current President Nicolás Maduro was elected by a tight majority last April, he has struggled to live up to the legacy of his former mentor and to pursue its policies under the "Bolivarian Revolution". Following "La Salida" on February 12, political turmoil holds the country in its grip, leading to increasingly violent confrontations and the call by President Maduro for a national dialogue.

Please, register by e-mail: cls-hsg@unisg.ch

More information on: www.cls.unisg.ch