

Venezuela unveils 14-dollar mobile phone

March 5 2009

Venezuela is to start selling in May a mobile phone it is billing as one of the world's cheapest: a 14-dollar handset that includes an MP3 player, radio and camera.

President Hugo Chavez unveiled the phone -- named "El Vergatario" -- on Thursday, saying it would be produced by a joint Venezuelan-Chinese firm and marketed across Latin America and the Caribbean.

The firm, Vetelca, is 85-percent controlled by Chavez's government, with the remainder owned by ZTE of China.

Vetelca plans to make four million of the units per year in association with another Chinese company, Huawei.

Other cheap handsets are being developed around the world aimed at the huge market of poorer consumers unable to afford the iPhones and Nokias favored in wealthier countries.

India already has a device it calls the "people's phone" sold at around the same price as El Vergatario.

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Citation: Venezuela unveils 14-dollar mobile phone (2009, March 5) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-03-venezuela-unveils-dollar-mobile.html>

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