

ARGENTINA, VENEZUELA CEMENT ECONOMIC TIES

Venezuelan President H. E. Hugo Chavez and Argentine President H. E. Cristina Fernandez signed 25 cooperation agreements in agriculture, science and technology, electricity production and other areas in Caracas on 20 April 2010 following the Argentinian leader's participation in Venezuela's bicentenary independence celebrations.

Under the agreements, Venezuela's state-run oil company PDVSA and Argentina's T.A. Gas Technology, Inc. will form a joint venture for the installation of systems for the use of Natural Gas (CNG) and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) for vehicular use; Another Argentine company, GNC Galileo, will form a joint venture with PDVSA to manufacture liquid natural gas compressors for Venezuelan service stations. A joint project between Venezuela's state-owned electricity company, Corpoelec, and Argentina's Impsa, to build a wind power generation park in the area of the Guajira, Zulia state, with a 25.2 MW capacity was also agreed upon. Venezuela's Agriculture Ministry and the Argentine company, Almefin, also agreed to build food processing plants in the Venezuelan state of Sucre to boost food production in the country, which imports an estimated 70 percent of its food. An accord for Argentine technical assistance on wine production in Zulia state was also signed. The accord will provide Venezuela with training and technical assistance in integral viticulture, agronomic crop management, and harvesting.

Source: Venezuelanalysis.com, 21 April 2010

INDIA, BRAZIL DEEPEN ALL-ROUND COOPERATION

Bilateral relations between India and Brazil were greatly strengthened by the visit of Indian Prime Minister, H. E. Dr. Manmohan Singh to Brazil on 15 April 2010 where he held bilateral meetings with his counterpart President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. While noting that bilateral trade in recent years had reached US\$ 5.6 billion in 2009, the need for increased efforts to achieve the bilateral trade target of US\$ 10 billion by 2010 was stressed. Both G-15 leaders noted that bilateral investments were growing in diverse areas and called on business and industry in both countries to utilize the opportunities available in the areas of energy, agriculture, mining, pharmaceuticals, infrastructure and construction, among others, to further expand bilateral investments.

Both Heads of State welcomed the appointment of Defence Attachés in their respective Diplomatic Missions in Brazil and in India and noted the increasing contacts between the Brazilian firm, EMBRAER, and the Indian Defence Research and Development Organization towards the joint development of high-technology military aircraft. The Brazilian side welcomed India's decision to open a cultural center in São Paulo, the first of its kind in the Americas. The Indian delegation commended the Brazilians on the successful organization of the "Brazilian Cultural Week" in India in 2008.

Source: Ministry of External Relations, Brazil, 15 April 2010

VENEZUELA, BRAZIL SIGN 22 AGREEMENTS

Venezuelan President H. E. Hugo Chávez met with Brazilian President H. E. Lula da Silva in Brasilia on 29 April 2010, where they signed 22 agreements in the areas of energy, housing, agriculture, culture, tourism and more. Among the agreements was one under which the Venezuelan state-oil company, PDVSA agreed to increase its supply of gasoline to the Brazilian petrochemical company, Braskem, up to 750,000 barrels a month. Venezuela's Housing and Public Works Ministry also signed an agreement with the Brazilian company, Norberto Odebrecht, for the construction of public housing in Venezuela's poor barrios; Other accords included one for the construction of a Brazilian ship-building factory in Venezuela for which Brazil's National Economic and Social Development Bank (BNDES) plans to provide \$1 billion of financial assistance.

The two G-15 leaders also signed an agreement to establish Bi-national Assistance Centers for women migrants on the Brazilian-Venezuelan Border. These Centers will support women migrants in situations of violence. Trade relations between Venezuela and Brazil grew to \$4.2 billion in 2009, of which \$3.6 billion came from Brazilian exports.

Source: Venezuelanalysis, 29 April 2010

IRAN, ZIMBABWE STRENGTHEN TIES

Economic and political relations between Iran and Zimbabwe received a boost during a 2-day visit of the Iranian President H. E. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Zimbabwe on 22-23 April 2010. The two G-15 leaders signed 11 cooperation agreements and issued a joint statement of solidarity. The agreements envisage bilateral cooperation in the fields of tourism, science, technology, youth affairs, transportation, aviation and education as well as easing political and service category visas. Furthermore, Iran's Export Guarantee Fund and Zimbabwe's Finance Ministry signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the formation of mutual investment companies.

The Iranian President also inaugurated a trade fair in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city.

Source: BBC News, 23 April 2010

INDONESIA, MALAYSIA BROADEN FINANCIAL COOPERATION

Indonesia and Malaysia have signed a memorandum of understanding on transnational banking monitoring involving a heightened exchange of information on international bank transfers. According to a press release of Bank Indonesia dated 20 April 2010, the

agreement was signed by acting Bank Indonesia Governor Darmin Nasution, and Malaysian State Bank Governor, Zeti Akhtar, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

In another development, the two G-15 countries are likely to back their bilateral trade with currency swaps to ease currency volatility against the dollar. According to Indonesia's central bank, with bilateral currency swaps in support of trade, both countries can avoid the use of a third currency such as the dollar.

Source: VIV News, 20 April 2010 and Commodity Online, 21 April 2010

ARGENTINA, CHILE IN DEFENSE PRODUCTION COOPERATION

Chile and Argentina will pool resources to jointly produce defense equipment. An agreement signed between officials of the two G-15 countries on 23 April 2010 would cover Chile for shipbuilding contracts it is struggling to complete because of extensive damage to its shipyards in the Feb. 27 earthquake that had wrecked Chilean shipyards and other infrastructure. Under the agreement, Chile's National Aeronautics Enterprise and Argentina National Airplanes Factory will also explore the possibility of manufacturing a training aircraft that could be deployed in both air forces, officials said.

Source: UPI, 26 April 2010

IRAN TO INCREASE TEA IMPORTS FROM SRI LANKA

According to Sri Lankan government sources, Iran plans nearly to double its purchase of Sri Lankan tea, the island's main export commodity. A statement issued on 14 April 2010 said that Iran wants to buy 50 million kgs of tea in 2010, up from 28 million kgs in 2009. Sri Lanka earned an estimated 1.3 billion US dollars from exporting 289 million kilos of tea in 2009, with Iran accounting for nearly 10 percent of Sri Lanka's tea sales. Sri Lanka's tea promotion board said it expected the Iranian move to further strengthen prices, which have risen by 29.47 percent in the first three months of this year compared with the same period last year.

Source: AFP, 14 April 2010