

## **ARGENTINA, VENEZUELA ENHANCE BILATERAL COOPERATION**

Bilateral economic ties between Argentina and Venezuela were enhanced with the signing of important agreements during the visit of Venezuelan President H.E. Hugo Chavez to Buenos Aires on 9 December 2009 to meet with Argentinean President H.E. Cristina Fernandez Kirchner. The two G-15 leaders met with committees and cabinet members from both countries and discussed various topics including tourism, construction, hydroelectric power and also signed various agreements relating to the entry of Argentinean companies into Venezuela and Venezuelan fuel supplies to Argentina. Under one of the agreements, Argentina will provide Venezuela with technology to help the oil rich nation use its energy resources more efficiently. Following the meetings, the two leaders traveled to the Argentine Naval Industrial Complex in Buenos Aires, which constructs oil tankers for Venezuela's state owned Petroleos de Venezuela.

Source: Reuters, 10 December 2009.

## **SRI LANKA'S ECONOMIC LINKS WITH MALAYSIA, INDIA SET TO GROW**

Bilateral trade between Sri Lanka and Malaysia has seen a significant increase in recent years, with exports from Sri Lanka rising from a modest \$8 million in 2002 to \$46 million in 2008. Malaysian exports to Sri Lanka also rose from \$204 million to \$360 million during the same period. This was stated by the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Malaysia at the inauguration of the Malaysian Indian Entrepreneur Forum in Kuala Lumpur on 14 December 2009. According to him, palm oil imports from Malaysia were an important segment of Sri Lanka's export value because Sri Lankan firms reprocessed the palm oil to vanaspati, and later exported it to India, where it is a popular cooking medium.

Meanwhile, India has decided to extend a line of credit of US\$ 425 million to Sri Lanka for three railway track projects in northern Sri Lanka as part of India's assistance to reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in the country. Furthermore, on 17 December 2009, an MOU between the National Physical Laboratory (NPL), a Government of India organization and the Sir Arthur C. Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies in Sri Lanka was signed under which a GPS clock, a Tele-clock transmitter and a Tele-clock receiver would be set up. The installation of the instruments would assist in maintaining accuracy of time for a wide variety of uses such as astronomical observations, space missions, railway networks, airports, public displays, supermarkets, government organizations, television channels and also the general public.

Source: BERNAMA, 14 December 2009 and press releases of the Indian High Commission in Colombo dated 12.12.09 and 17.12.09.

## **IRAN, ALGERIA STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC LINKS**

Algerian and Iranian delegations have finalized a draft action plan for economic cooperation in 2010 during a meeting of the Algerian-Iranian committee in Algiers in December 2009. The committee, co-chaired by Algerian Deputy Minister of the Maghreb and African Affairs Abdelkader Messahel and Iranian Minister of Housing and Urban Development Ali Nikzad, outlined 19 areas of economic cooperation between the two nations, including housing, urbanization, water resources, industry, and transportation. This meeting follows the first session of the committee held in Tehran in 2008, at which the two G-15 countries specified 16 joint projects in various fields including customs, trade laws, and air transport.

Source: Zawya(Dubai), 14 December 2009

## **MEXICO SEEKS FREE-TRADE ACCORD WITH BRAZIL**

Mexico's government aims to sign a free-trade agreement with Brazil by the end of President Felipe Calderon's administration in 2012, according to Rogelio Granguillhome, Head of Economic Relations at Mexico's Foreign Ministry. "A free-trade agreement between Mexico and Brazil is important not only for Mexico and Brazil but for all of Latin America," Mr. Granguillhome said in an interview in Mexico City adding "It will mark policy in Latin America for the next 20 years."

The Mexican government aims to strengthen economic relations with Latin America, Europe and Asia to reduce its dependence on the U.S., the destination for 80 percent of exports. Mexico's economy shrank the most in Latin America in the first three quarters of the year as the U.S. recession dried up demand. Gross domestic product was expected to shrink to about 7 percent in 2009, the highest since the 1930s, according to the Mexican central bank.

Source: [www.bilaterals.org](http://www.bilaterals.org), 22 December 2009

## **BRAZIL, INDIA, ARGENTINA IN NEW SOUTH-SOUTH TRADE INITIATIVE**

Three G-15 countries, namely, Brazil, India and Argentina are part of a new initiative for promoting South-South trade. The initiative was launched in Geneva in the first week of December 2009 on the sidelines of the seventh WTO Ministerial Meeting. According to the Brazilian Foreign Minister, Mr. Celso Amorim, the initiative was a way to ratify South-South cooperation, while global negotiations in the framework of the Doha Round remained stalled. The negotiations involve the four full members of MERCOSUR, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay; India and the African Union countries of South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia.

Source: <http://e.mercopress.com>, 30.11.2009