

SRI LANKAN, IRANIAN TIES CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of the Islamic Republic of Iran met with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mr. Ratnasiri Wickramanayake on the sidelines of the 64th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2009 and discussed ways of increasing cooperation between the two G-15 countries. The Iranian president expressed satisfaction with Sri Lanka taking over the chairmanship of the Group of 15 and expressed hope that the Summit meeting of the Group would be held in Tehran soon. The Sri Lankan PM, for his part, called for strengthening ties between the two countries in economic, political and cultural fields.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan government sources announced that Iran had extended an interest-free credit facility to Sri Lanka for one more year in order to enable it to purchase Iranian crude oil. The two countries signed the agreement on 3 September 2009 in Tehran.

Source: www.president.ir/en and Tehran Times, 22 September 2009

BANK OF THE SOUTH FORMALIZED

The Presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela signed the document formalizing the establishment of a new financial institution on 27 September 2009, on the sidelines of the Africa-South America Summit in Margarita Island, Venezuela, after almost four years of attempts to form a regional financial institution.

According to Venezuelan Finance Minister Ali Rodriguez, The Bank of the South, a project-finance bank of South American countries, will start with \$7 billion in capital that will grow to \$20 billion. The bank will get \$4 billion each from Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina and the remainder will come from other member countries. All members will have equal voting rights. The bank's objective will be to finance development projects in agriculture, energy and health care for member nations and boost trade. The bank will have its headquarters in Caracas, Venezuela with smaller branches in La Paz, Bolivia, and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The Bank of the South was first proposed by Venezuelan President H. E. Hugo Chavez, during the G-15 Summit in Caracas in 2004.

Source: www.bicusa.org and Xinhua, 27 September 2009

KENYA, VENEZUELA SIGN OIL EXPLORATION DEAL

Kenya and Venezuela have signed an agreement for cooperation in oil exploration and supply. An official statement from Kenya said that the agreement also calls for the exchange of technical expertise on energy matters, including exploitation of renewable sources of energy. The agreement was signed by Venezuelan Vice President and Minister for Energy and Petroleum

Rafael Ramirez and Kenyan Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka on the sidelines of the Africa-South America summit held in Venezuela during the last week of September 2009.

During the signing ceremony, Mr Ramirez said that because the distance between Venezuela and Kenya was long, Venezuela was considering supplying affordable oil to Kenya from partners close to East Africa. Mr. Musyoka stated that the signing of the agreement affords Kenya the opportunity to access critical expertise in its quest to strike oil of its own as well as the possibility of getting access to cheaper oil supply.

Source: Xinhua, 29 September 2009

MEXICAN CEMENT FIRMS TO INVEST IN NIGERIA

Cement producers in Mexico, motivated by the abundant availability of raw materials in Nigeria, have completed arrangements to invest in the country's economy. This was announced by the Nigerian Ambassador to Mexico, Chief Lawrence Nwuruku in September 2009.

The Ambassador clarified that no individual state had been given preferential treatment in the arrangement, explaining that "the investors would be guided by information on the availability of raw materials before deciding on where to invest." He further added that the Mexican President, H. E. Felipe Calderon, had recently expressed his willingness to strengthen the pending Nigerian/Mexican Bilateral Economic Commission, which had been initiated by the former Presidents of Nigeria and Mexico in 2005.

Source: The Vanguard, 15 September 2009

VENEZUELA STRENGTHENS ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH ALGERIA, IRAN

The Venezuelan President H. E. Hugo Chavez, travelled to a number of developing countries in North Africa, the Middle East and eastern Europe in September 2009, with the aim of strengthening political and economic ties. In Algeria, Mr. Chavez and Algerian President H. E. Abdelaziz Bouteflika drew up what they called a "work map" for bilateral cooperation. Mr. Chavez invited Algeria, which is a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries along with Venezuela, to form a mixed enterprise with the Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA, to exploit Venezuela's vast Orinoco Oil Belt.

The Venezuelan President also made a two-day trip to Iran, where he announced that Venezuela has agreed to export 20,000 barrels of petrol daily to Iran from October in a deal worth \$800 million. He added "This amount will be deposited in a fund established in Iran and will be used to finance purchase of machinery and technology from Iran." During his visit to Iran, Mr Chavez also met Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Source: www.venezuelanalysis.com, 5 September 2009 and BBC News, 9 September 2009

ZIMBABWE, ALGERIA SIGN SEVERAL DEALS

The third Algeria-Zimbabwe Joint Commission of Cooperation concluded in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 15 September 2009, with the finalization of several cooperation agreements in areas such as energy, science and technology.

In the field of Energy and Mines, officials from the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe, will soon visit Algeria to conclude a deal for the supply of petroleum and natural gas products. A business delegation will also explore possible areas of cooperation in the energy sector. Zimbabwe and Algeria's bilateral relations have continued to grow and the two G-15 countries further agreed to expedite negotiations concerning other draft agreements, particularly in the areas of trade, small and medium enterprises, and mutual protection of investments.

The two countries also agreed to focus on diplomatic consultations between foreign ministries, cooperation in science and technology, sports, as well as cooperation between the Algerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce.

Source: Africa News, 16 September 2009