

Palestine Wants to Learn More from Brazil on Energy and Soccer

Contributed by Marina Sarruf
Wednesday, 29 October 2008

Palestinian National Authority's new ambassador to Brazil, Ibrahim Alzeben, who was inaugurated in July, wants to take the Brazilian experience in the areas of alternative energy, sports and urban administration to his country.

"Brazil has great experience in several fields," said the ambassador while visiting the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce offices in São Paulo, in southeastern Brazil.

According to the diplomat, up to the end of the year, Palestinian ministers in the areas of Mines and Energy, Culture and Sports should come to Brazil.

"We are greatly interested in learning about alternative energies from Brazil," said Alzeben. Another topic that the Arab country is interested in learning from Brazil is football. "Someone from the ministry of Sports should come to see if he can take a Brazilian trainer there," said the ambassador.

According to him, Brazilian soccer is greatly appreciated by the Palestinians. "It is common to see boys wearing Brazilian team shirts. They know the names of all the players," said the ambassador, who recalled the boy Ali Khaled Abu Taha, a Palestinian refugee who now plays for the Brazsat Football Club, in Brasília.

Tourism and international policies are also among the topics that the ambassador considers important for talks between the governments of both countries, so much so that this month, two authorities from Palestine have already been in Brazil to discuss the matter.

The minister of Tourism and Antiques, Khoulood Deibes, who participated in the Brazilian Congress of Travel Agencies, and the minister of Foreign Business, Riyad Al-Malki, who met president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the minister of Foreign Relations, Celso Amorim.

"They were very important visits," said the ambassador. The Palestinian minister, who came accompanied by the ambassador of Brazil to Palestine, Lygia Scherer, discussed with Brazilian authorities the peace talks between Palestine and Israel and the guidelines established during the Peace Conference promoted in Annapolis, in the United States, in November last year.

"In December, a delegation from the Brazilian government should travel to Palestine to define areas to receive the funds (US\$ 10 million) that Brazil donated to Palestine," said Alzeben.

At the time of the visit to Brazil, the Palestinian minister also visited the refugees from his country, who are in Santa Maria, in Rio Grande do Sul. "I would like to thank the government of Brazil for having accepted Palestinian refugees. It was a humanitarian gesture for us," added the ambassador.

The ambassador, who speaks Portuguese, has already headed the Palestinian embassies in Cuba, Peru, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Colombia and Venezuela. "Brazil is a friendly country, and we cannot complain. We have friends all over Brazil and also great support from the whole Arab community, which is fundamental," he added.

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