

For Brazil, New-Found Understanding Among G-20 Members Brings Hope and Optimism

Contributed by Mylena Fiori
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Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has returned to Brazil satisfied with the summit of heads of state of the financial G-20, which brought together heads of state and government from 19 large developed and emerging economies last Saturday, November 15, in Washington.

To Lula, the simple fact that so many nations have sat around the same table to discuss the world economy is historical.

The leaders set March 31 as the deadline for elaboration of proposals turned to regulation of financial markets. A new summit is scheduled for April 30. Proposals will be created by workgroups comprised of government officials, technicians and businessmen.

Activities will be coordinated by the triumvirate of the G-20 - Brazil, which currently presides over the group, the United Kingdom, which will be the next presiding country, and South Korea, which should head the G-20 in 2010.

"I, who have been the president of Brazil for six years and already attended 300 meetings, in which I had individual debates with all of the leaders, can only say that today is a historical day for world politics," said Lula, shortly before heading back to Brazil.

According to him, six or eight months ago, it would be impossible to imagine that the G-20 was going to meet and make the unanimous decisions that it has made so as to take better care of the international financial system, of the Doha Round, and to collectively define "what must be defined in the world economy."

The G-20 has also advised its ministers to meet by late December, in an attempt to reach a conclusion of the Doha Round, which has been going on for seven years already. To Lula, the G8 - an exclusive group comprised of the world's most industrialized countries, plus Russia, which meets once a year to set the guidelines of the world economy - is not over, but has become a "group of friends" that will go on meeting with each other.

"The fact is, given the political strength, the representation of the countries in the G-20, I believe that there is no logic whatsoever anymore in making decisions regarding economy and politics without taking this forum into consideration. I am pleased," he stated.

According to the president, all of the leaders agree that there is a need for better managing the financial world and decisions must be made collectively.

"I sensed a maturity that I had not seen in a long time. I have always witnessed lots of reluctance, people not willing to talk to each other, people being somewhat distrustful. After this crisis, we realize that everyone has become really humble," he asserted.

According to Lula, the message of this meeting is that from now on, the leaders of wealthy and emerging countries that answer to 85% of the world's GDP are going to act in a more cohesive, coordinated manner. "This brings hope and a large dose of optimism to the world in this moment of crisis."

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