

Lula Wants Spain to Join Brazil in Helping Poor Nations

Contributed by Stênio Ribeiro
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The Prince of Astúrias, Don Filipe de Borbón y Grecia, and his wife, Princess Letizia Ortiz, were received today, February 23, in the Planalto Palace, in Brasília, by Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

The prince's visit has a diplomatic purpose, to strengthen partnerships between Brazil and Spain. Spain is currently the world's second largest investor in Brazil, with around US\$ 26 billion, second only to the United States.

On his trip to Brazil, before leaving for Uruguay, where he will attend the inauguration of the new President, Tabaré Vasquez, on March 1st, the prince visited, in Brasília, Brazil's capital, the presidents of the Senate, Renan Calheiros (PMDB-AL), the Chamber of Deputies, Severino Cavalcanti (PP-PE), and the Supreme Court (STF), Minister Nelson Jobim.

During a luncheon offered to the prince in the Ministry of Foreign Relations, President Lula affirmed that Spanish investments in South American countries should give priority to infrastructure projects.

"Entrepreneurs should turn their attentions to moves towards integration, most of all, the infrastructure of South American countries."

According to Lula, the Hispano-Brazilian Entrepreneurial Investment and Cooperation Forum - which gets underway tomorrow, February 24, in São Paulo - will provide an opportunity to specify projects between the two countries.

Lula also recalled that 2005 is international microcredit year. Consequently, the President argued, "Brazil and Spain have to explore options to turn microcredit into an instrument to stimulate prosperity among small and medium-sized Brazilian entrepreneurs."

The President once again declared that the Brazilian economy is living "a good moment" and that it has begun a new cycle of sustainable growth.

"Brazil expanded its foreign trade and substantially reduced its external vulnerability. And what is most important: a strong growth in employment and the salary mass."

In his speech, Lula commended the Spanish government's decision to join the international initiative to combat hunger and poverty.

The President said that, together, Brazil and Spain will discover new ways to help the cause of economic and social development among poor nations.

Tomorrow in São Paulo, Don Filipe and Princess Letizia will meet with entrepreneurs from various sectors.

Translation: David Silberstein
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