

Brazil and Tunisia to End Visa Requirements Between Both Nations

Contributed by Isaura Daniel
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The need for greater cultural interaction between Brazil and Tunisia was one of the topics discussed yesterday during the meeting between Brazilian Foreign Relations minister Celso Amorim, and Abdelbaki Hermassi, his Tunisian counterpart, in Tunis.

"Tunisia has great interest in cultural exchange with Brazil," stated Sérgio Barcellos Telles, the Brazilian ambassador in Tunis, who was present at the meeting, by telephone.

The meeting is part of the program of the Brazilian Foreign Minister's visit to ten Arab countries. Today, Amorim will meet the Tunisian president, Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali, to whom he will deliver a letter from president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva inviting him to the Arab and South American Summit, scheduled for May 10 and 11 in Brazilian capital Brasília.

The summit was also one of the subjects discussed by Minister Amorim and the Tunisian Foreign Minister. According to ambassador Telles, Hermassi classified the idea of the summit, a brainchild of Lula's, as an excellent idea.

Cultural themes were included in the minutes of the meeting, as Hermassi was formerly the minister of Culture of Tunisia.

The Tunisians are known for their work in the area of music and cinema and they promote the famous Carthage Film Festival, one of the most important cinema exhibitions in the region.

"It is important for Brazil to find means to participate in the Tunisian classical music, jazz and cinema festivals," stated Telles.

Tunisia was one of the first Arab nations to develop cinema productions, in 1922. Films produced in the country, such as "The Silence of the Palace", by Moufida Tatlil, and "The Season of Men", a co-production with France, have even been on Brazilian television.

Ambassador Telles stated that the end of the demand for visas for trips between both countries, an agreement that has been in place since August last year, should help improve relations between both countries both in the cultural and in the tourism and business areas.

In parallel to the summit activities, there will be an Arab cinema show, in which Tunisian Nadia Attia, the director of the Carthage Film Festival, will be the curator. South American films will also be shown in a show organized by the director of the Brasília Film Festival, Marco Farani.

United Nations

The Tunisian and Brazilian Foreign ministers also discussed themes related to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the reform of the United Nations (UN) Security Council.

They agreed to promote a high level meeting between the governments of both countries to discuss subjects of common interest.

Amorim, who had been in Kuwait on the previous day, was met at the airport in Tunis by the state secretary for Foreign Relations for America and Asia, Saida Chtioui. The Brazilian minister also met the mayor of Tunis, Abbes Mohsen.

Tunisia is the penultimate country to be visited by Amorim on his tour of the Arab countries, which began on the 17th and ends this weekend. From Tunis, the minister will be leaving to Algeria, the country that is going to preside the League of Arab States as from March.

Translated by Mark Ament
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