
Lula Wants a Brazil-Nigeria Balanced Trade

Contributed by Mylena Fiori
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Brazil is determined to balance its trade with Nigeria. In a speech this morning in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva recalled that Nigeria is already an important partner. Trade between the two countries totaled US\$ 4 billion in 2004.

The Brazilian deficit, however, amounted to US\$ 2.99 billion. "Trade is a two-way street, where you buy and sell. There must be balance in this relationship," Lula remarked.

Lula singled out services, science and technology, and agricultural implements as potential areas for the expansion of Brazilian exports.

"It is up to us to challenge entrepreneurs to visit Nigeria to discover what kind of partnership they can establish with the Nigerians, what types of products we might buy, besides petroleum, and what types of products we might sell, besides what we already sell."

Lula and the President of Nigeria, Olosegum Obasanjo, also discussed the matter of Nigeria's debt to Brazil of around US\$ 160 million and expressed a political desire to resolve this issue. Obasanjo guaranteed that he will send representatives to Brazil to discuss the matter.

President Lula thanked Nigeria for having backed the initiative by Brazil, France, Chile, and the United Nations to discuss financial proposals for the elimination of hunger and poverty around the world.

The encounter took place last September, in New York, on the eve of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly.

"Last year, together with other world leaders and the UN Secretary-General, I launched the Action to Combat Hunger and Poverty. We held an historical meeting attended by more than 50 heads of State and government.

"I want to thank you publicly, President Obasanjo, for supporting this initiative. We shall continue to work intensely for the initiative to bear fruit," Lula said.

The Brazilian President also asked Nigeria to participate in a joint effort to obtain from the international community the necessary commitment to fulfill the Goals of the Millenium according to the timetable that was established.

Lula in Ghana

Lula arrived today in Accra, the capital of Ghana. He was received by the Ghanaian president, John Agyekum Kufuor, and priests from the Ga and La clans who performed songs and dances to wish Lula a pleasant stay.

For the afternoon, parallel meetings were scheduled between Lula and the Ghanaian president and between the delegations from the two countries, to be followed by a ceremony for the signing of official acts in the Presidential Palace.

The President's agenda today also includes a visit to the Brazilian Embassy, where he will be honored by the Tabom community, composed of families descended from Brazilian slaves of Ghanaian origin who returned to Africa.

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