

Brazil Doesn't Know the Arabs and Vice-Versa

Contributed by Danielle Gurgel
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The South American - Arab Countries Summit, which gets underway tomorrow, May 10, will give Brazil a chance to become acquainted with countries whose culture is practically unknown here. The author of this observation is Argemiro Procópio, professor in the International Relations Department of the University of Brasília (UnB).

"We have a familiarity with the United States and the European Union, but we are unknown in the Arab world, and it is unknown here. And the weak turnout of these countries at the event is a precise reflection of this lack of familiarity," he said in an interview for National Radio's Brazil Magazine program.

In his opinion, the alliance between Latin American countries and the Arab world is also very important, and not just for the trade in petroleum.

"South America is a continent that possesses petroleum, too. What is important is to approximate the cultures of these two groups of countries and stimulate trade in products such as water, which is scarce there and exists here in abundance."

Professor Procópio believes that there will be no opposition on the part of the United States and the European countries to Arab-Latin American cooperation.

"The world is so globalized, and there are multinational corporations that operate in various countries. This is a meeting within the context of globalization, an initiative that should have been taken over 20 years ago."

The South America - Arab Countries Summit is the first international encounter in recent history to promote closer relations between two entire regions of the developing world, both of them of continental dimensions, outside the regular work program of the United Nations.

The 22 Arab countries and 12 Latin American countries will be represented. The Summit will also be attended by 830 entrepreneurs: 200 Arabs, 400 Brazilians, and 200 from the rest of Latin America.

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