

## Peru Leader Defends Strong South America in Brazil

Contributed by Yara Aquino  
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In his speech, yesterday, at the opening of the South America - Arab Countries Summit, the President of Peru, Alejandro Toledo, stressed the importance of inserting South America in the world, with its own agenda.

He defended multilateralism and the broad authority of international institutions. "Our desire is to have a strong voice and, in the world, a strong South American community that manages its own interests," he affirmed.

For Toledo, the meeting in Brazil confirms the process of approximation between South Americans and Arabs, united by a set of common interests to achieve the development and welfare of the two groups.

He also considers the Summit a gathering of people who want to understand one another better.

"We recognize that our community represents a complex example of integration and political cooperation, but we have, without a doubt, reached a basic consensus," he said.

Toledo referred to the goals of the Substantive Community Agenda, aimed at improving the South American free trade zone, which foresees the integration of transportation infrastructure, energy, communications, technology, and cooperation in the fields of science and culture.

"The goal is to attain development with justice and face the challenges of globalization," he affirmed.

In his speech the Peruvian President defended the actions of the South American Community of Nations. In his view, the Community reduces disparities among the member countries.

With 12 member countries, including Brazil, the Community represents, in geographical terms, according to Toledo, a space comprising 17 million square kilometers, 361 million inhabitants, a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$ 973 billion, and an annual export volume of US\$ 180 billion.

Founded on December 8, 2004, in Cuzco, Peru, the South American Community of Nations is meeting with the Arabs for the first time.

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