

Brazil's Exports of Granite and Ornamental Stones Grow 56%

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The Brazilian Association for Dimension Stones Industry (Abirochas) is going to participate in the Big 5 Show, the largest construction material fair in the Middle East, for the third time. The fair is going to take place between November 16 and 20 in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates.

"It is a promising market that likes Brazilian granite very much," stated the president of the organization, Sérgio Azeredo.

According to him, the Arab countries only represent a small share of the foreign sales of Brazilian stones. "They are not even 5% of exports, but it is a promising market with high buying power," stated Azeredo.

He believes that sales to the Arabs may increase, especially exports of granites. "We want to grow in the Arab countries. They have potential to buy our products," he added.

"The advantage of the Arab countries is that they buy semi-finished or complete products, like sinks in granite, for example," stated Azeredo. "They are products with greater added value," he finished off.

According to him, hotels in Dubai have already closed deals with granite companies from Rio Grande dos Sul to supply all their sinks.

"The use of stone in civil construction is very strong in the Arab countries. They are used to it. They prefer stones to ceramics, for example," stated Azeredo. This causes advantages to Brazil, as the country has very diverse stone production and capacity to supply varied demands all around the world.

According to Azeredo, what makes exports to the Arab countries more difficult is the fact that they like having local representatives. "But we already export to Qatar, Kuwait and Dubai," he said.

The presence of Abirochas in Big 5 will be institutional. The stand organized by the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce will cover an area of 80 square meters, to be shared by six companies and the association.

Increase of Exports

In the first half of this year, foreign sales of ornamental stones totalled US\$ 347.7 million, which represents a growth of 55.7% when compared to the same period last year.

One million tons of stone have already been exported, 46.6% more than in the first six months of 2004. For this year, the forecast is to reach US\$ 800 million in exports, against US\$ 600 million last year.

The country's main markets are the United States, Italy, Germany and England. To consolidate markets and start selling to new destinations, this year Abirochas has participated in 17 fairs. In total, the association represents over 4,000 companies.

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