

Brazilian and Colombian President Talk Business and Politics

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Following lunch with Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the president elect of Bolivia, Evo Morales, will hold a press conference at 2:30 pm today at the Palácio do Itamaraty.

He is expected to discuss his plans for his future government and relations with Brazil in the areas of politics, economy and trade.

Morales is the first ever president of Bolivia to be descended from the country's indigenous population. He is a member of the Aymara ethnic group.

In Bolivia, 30% of the population is Quechua (another indigenous ethnic group), 30% is mestizo (mixed Indian and white), 25% is Aymara, and 15% is white.

Quechua and Aymara cultures are actually closely related, although the former is much bigger. The Aymara group has a population of around 1.6 million which is concentrated in an area near Lake Titicaca in Bolivia.

The Quechua language, once the official language of the Inca Empire, is now spoken by some 13 million people in a large area stretching from southern Colombia, through Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia to northern Chile and Argentina.

President Lula has announced that he intends to attend Morales' inauguration on January 22.

Lula had a meeting earlier today at the Palácio do Planalto (the Brazilian White House) with the president elect of Bolivia.

According to the Foreign Ministry, the two presidents discussed issues that tie the two nations together, such as Bolivia's role in the South American Community of Nations and the Brazil-Bolivia partnership in the natural gas sector.

Following the meeting, Lula and Morales had lunch at the Palácio do Itamaraty, Brazil's Foreign Ministry.

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