

Brazil's Lula in Algeria Means Business

Contributed by Alexandre Rocha
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The trip by the Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to Algeria on February 08 and 09 is not going to cover just politics, but it will also include business meetings.

A delegation of executives of Brazilian companies is going to accompany the presidential visit to Africa, which will also include visits to Benin, Botswana and South Africa.

"This will be an important trip to open new trade opportunities, as we have a growing deficit in trade with Algeria," stated the secretary general of the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce, Michel Alaby, who is also travelling with the delegation.

Last year Brazil exported the equivalent to US\$ 384.3 million to Algeria, whereas imports totalled US\$ 2.8 billion. Algeria is one of the main Brazilian suppliers of oil.

In January, Brazilian shipments to the Arab country generated US\$ 11 million and purchases from Algeria totalled US\$ 222.7 million. The figures were supplied by the federal government Foreign Trade Secretariat (Secex).

"I am going to Algeria, to Benin, to Botswana and to South Africa. We are accomplishing an international engagement to generate better relations between Brazil and these countries so that we may increase our trade with some of them and further improve our relations with Africa," stated Lula on his weekly radio program *Café com o Presidente* (Breakfast with the President), aired by state-owned communications network Radiobras.

This will be the fifth trip that Lula takes to the African continent since the beginning of his term in office, in January 2003.

According to preliminary information supplied by the Itamaraty, the mission to Africa should also include the participation of representatives of companies like Petrobras, in the oil sector, Embraer, the Brazilian aircraft maker, Condor, a maker of machinery for the handling of bulk solids, Randon, a maker of trailers and semi-trailers and Atech, a company that develops systems and software for the aeronautical sector. Construction company Andrade Gutierrez will be represented by the company institutional relations director, Flávio Machado Filho.

Some of these companies already do business in Algeria, as is the case with Andrade Gutierrez, which has just won a tender for the construction of a dam in the country, and Randon, which has a trailer assembly line in the country in a joint venture with a local businessman.

The business meetings scheduled for the 08th should include various companies, like state-owned oil company Sonatrach, airline Air Algerie, the national commercial vehicle factory SNVI, and the Algerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACI), among others.

Agreements

During the visit agreements will be signed between Lula and the Algerian president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika. The treaties are still being negotiated, but, according to preliminary information supplied by the Brazilian Foreign Office (Itamaraty), they should be about technical cooperation in the agricultural area, trade, sea transport and about the establishment of a group to take resolutions about veterinary matters.

"A sanitary agreement would serve to increase Brazilian exports of cattle beef and permit the exports of poultry," stated Alaby. Apart from that he stated that both governments should also negotiate a treaty to eliminate the need for visas for executives on business trips.

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