
With 240 Million Speakers Portuguese Wishes to Become a Global Language

Contributed by Newsroom
Sunday, 03 August 2008

Gathered in Lisbon, capital of Portugal, on July 25, the heads of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) agreed to share policies and create common programs for the "globalization" of the Portuguese language, through the promotion of its cultural and economic value.

In a statement about the Portuguese language, approved at the 7th summit of the countries in the CPLP, the heads of state and of government of the CPLP pointed out the importance of supporting the introduction of Portuguese into international and regional forums and specialized agencies, making it into a "global language".

The objective also includes common programs for the teaching of Portuguese as a foreign language, which will be boosted through the creation of "a network of certified teachers in the CPLP member countries".

The Portuguese-speaking leaders also agreed to "coordinate programs that prove, in the international scenery, the cultural and economic value of Portuguese, through common projects supported by information and communications technologies".

Apart from Portuguese teaching policies, with the training of specialized teachers, the heads of state and government also plan to bet on the training of translators and interpreters.

The governors of the CPLP have also engaged in developing programs "allowing the permanent connection of the Diasporas with the cultures of their countries of origin as well as integration in the countries that receive them," due to the fact that "Portuguese is a factor that unites them".

Considering the future enactment of the spelling agreement, which has already been ratified by some countries - Brazil, Cape Verde, Portugal and São Tomé e Príncipe -, the Portuguese-speaking countries plan to share experiences and cooperate for practical application of the agreement.

The heads of state and of government of the CPLP also stated their faith in the International Portuguese Language Institute (IILP), which has not worked over the 12 years in which the Portuguese-speaking community has been in existence due to the lack of funds.

In the statement, the heads forecasted a "growing affirmation of Portuguese in international dialogue", having in mind its "multiple geopolitical matrices" as it is spoken in countries on four continents, also showing the part played by languages "in the creation of markets and business opportunities and in social and economic integration."

The promotion and spreading of Portuguese is a priority of Portugal as the head of the CPLP. The country has just taken on the presidency of the " for a term of two years.

Last week, the government of Portugal approved a new policy for the language and the creation of a fund for projects in the area, with an initial capital of 30 million euros (US\$ 47 million), but open to the contribution of other countries.

There are around 240 million Portuguese speakers around the world. According to forecasts based on the demographic evolution of the eight countries that have Portuguese as their official language, the number of speakers may reach 335 million by 2050.

Lusa