

Suriname-Brazil Declaration on Cooperation on Defense Matters

The Minister of Defense of Suriname, Lamuré Latour, and the Minister of Defense of Brazil, Celso Amorim, held a meeting in Paramaribo on September 12th, 2012. The Defense Minister of Brazil also paid a courtesy call to His Excellency President Désiré Delano Bouterse.

During the meeting, the Ministers had a wide-ranging, frank and friendly dialogue and reiterated their commitment towards deepening the strong bilateral ties between both countries in issues pertaining to cooperation in defense matters.

Both Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to preserving and strengthening the peaceful relationship among neighbors in South America and in the Caribbean region. In that regard, they agreed on the importance of transparency, confidence building, constant dialogue and coordination with neighboring countries.

The Ministers welcomed the entry into force of the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement in Defense Matters signed on April 22nd, 2008. They also welcomed the appointment of Suriname's Defense Attaché to Brazil.

The Ministers approved to implement the following initiatives:

1. Brazil and Suriname agreed to establish a **Bilateral Defense Working Group**. The group shall oversee and coordinate the defense cooperation activities between both countries at the level of Joint Chiefs of Staff. It shall include subgroups dedicated to issues related to the Army, Navy and Air Force. The group shall meet annually, alternating between Suriname and Brazil.
2. The Ministers recalled the invaluable role of UNASUR and emphasized the central role of the South American Defense Council in contributing to peace, security and stability in the region. Brazil welcomed the participation of officers from Suriname in the Advanced Defense Course, currently being held at the "Escola Superior de Guerra" (ESG), in Rio de Janeiro, under the auspices of the South American Defense Council. The Ministers agreed to cooperate closely in preparation for Suriname's Pro Tempore Presidency of UNASUR in 2013 and Presidency of the Defense Council.

3. With regards to procurement assistance and equipment maintenance, the Brazilian Defense Minister announced the decision to provide refurbishment and modernization of part of Suriname's armored vehicles fleet. The project is due to be completed by mid 2013. Discussions will continue concerning Army, Navy and Air Force procurement programs.

4. Brazil and Suriname agreed to strengthen cooperation between their respective Air Forces. In this respect, Brazil's Defense Minister announced a working visit to Suriname by a Delegation headed by the Commander of Brazil's First Air Regional Command, based in Belém.

5. Brazil and Suriname agreed to initiate cooperation in geo-technology. This will allow capacity building in Suriname for satellite imagery analysis and the mapping of its territory. This activity will commence by the training of Surinamese officials in Brazil's Amazon Surveillance Protection Facilities (SIPAM), in Manaus.

6. With regards to the International Maritime Organization's Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) system, Brazil extended an invitation for Surinamese officials to visit Brazil's Regional Data Center.

7. The Ministers agreed to continue and to strengthen education and training programs with a view to providing training opportunities for the Surinamese Army, Navy and Air Force. These courses may include, among others, general military training, jungle operations, humanitarian assistance, social and emergency response, disaster relief and peace keeping operations. This cooperation will also include the continuation of Brazilian support regarding the conception and structuring of a military (Special Forces training centre) in Suriname.

8. Both Ministers concurred on the importance of assistance provided by the Armed Forces to remote communities, in addition to their main responsibilities. In this regard, Brazil invited Surinamese officials to integrate one of its Armed Forces' missions dedicated to civic and social support.

Minister Celso Amorim, in the name of the Brazilian Delegation, expressed his gratitude to Minister Latour for the attention and hospitality received during his visit to Suriname.