

# *South African Officials in Venezuela to Discuss Joint Ventures*

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Caracas, June 1 (RHC-teleSUR)-- Authorities from Venezuela have met with a South African delegation in Caracas to discuss possible joint ventures in mining, tourism, education and drug production.

Jorge Arreaza, minister for development of ecological mining, explained that the visit by the South African officials took shape after a series of previous meetings in which agreements were reached "that are being fulfilled thanks to the will of the South African people."

The meeting comes as Venezuela tries to diversify its economy and lessen its dependence on oil, with the goal of creating new sources of income that will help the Bolivarian government continue to fund its social projects, which provide essential services to the country's poor and marginalized communities.

The South American country is actively pursuing international partnerships and has signed commitment letters with businesses in Italy, Canada, the Democratic Republic of Congo and China, among others.

Venezuela is home to the Orinoco Mineral Belt, the world's largest oil reserve which is also considered to be rich in gold, copper, diamonds and other valuable minerals and covers an area of approximately

44,000 square miles, occupying a large part of the southern national territory. The region was nationalized by late President Hugo Chavez in 2007.

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