

# *Venezuela's Maduro Hails China-CELAC Forum as 'Historic'*

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Caracas, January 8 (RHC-teleSUR) -- President Nicolas Maduro delivered a speech welcoming Chinese investment in Latin America and the Caribbean in Beijing Thursday.

"I would like to repeat what (former) President (Hugo) Chavez said, that the reality is that China is showing the world the possibility of a country without pretensions of imperialism or pretensions of seeking hegemony as it grows stronger," Maduro stated during the opening ceremony of the first ministerial forum between China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

He continued by stating, "This is a vital point. I told President Xi Jinping over dinner last night: there is unique opportunity in this moment in history we're living through."

The Venezuelan president contrasted Beijing's involvement in Latin America to U.S. imperialism, pointing to Washington's recent decision to impose new sanctions on Venezuela.

"We reject the economic sanctions as mechanisms of domination, that is the world of the past," he said, referring to U.S. Sanctions passed in December 2014 that target officials from his government

China is expected to enter into new deals with CELAC member states worth billions of dollars by the end of the summit in Beijing.

Shortly before Maduro spoke, the Chinese president opened the China-CELAC Forum by pledging US\$250 billion in new investment in Latin America over the next decade. Representatives will also agree on a four year road map to deepen trade and other economic and political ties.

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