

# *Central bioceanic railway corridor: a thrust to South American integration*

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A major economic breakthrough is springing to life these days that could change the face of South America. The construction of a Central Bi-oceanic Railway Corridor linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans crossing Brazil, Bolivia and Peru is an initiative that no doubt will give a boost to the relations between the three nations and will consolidate the integration of South America.

During his recent visit to Brazil, Bolivian President Evo Morales, discussed with his Brazilian counterpart, Miss Dilma Rousseff, the specifics of the project, which will mean a significant reduction in transportation costs and time of cargos moved through the rail line, while generating numerous jobs in the three nations.

Both presidents agreed to hold a bi-national meeting later this month, in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, to discuss in detail the technical aspects and social facilities for this important economic project.

The Peruvian Government has already announced a tender to determine which one of two Peruvian ports –Ilo or Matarani-, will host the Pacific terminal, while Brazil has already chosen the Atlantic port of Santos, from where a rail line runs up to the Bolivian city of Puerto Suarez, in the Department of Santa Cruz.

This project also calls for a Bolivian outlet to the Pacific Ocean, a one hundred year old demand of the South American nation, which Bolivia had repeatedly requested before international organizations, thus restituting a maritime outlet closed by Chile after winning a bi-national war in eighteen seventy nine.

The new railway line, a Bolivian initiative, will run for one thousand and seven hundred and fifty kilometers, and will also benefit other South American nations.

In its original version, the project would link the port of Santos, in Brazil, on the Atlantic Ocean, with the port of Ilo, in Peru, on the Pacific, crossing through Bolivian soil.

Bolivian authorities have voiced their conviction that the corridor will not only allow for the integration of the three countries. In fact, experts have been talking about the possibility for the railway to link up with the Uruguay-Parana river corridor, opening a possible direct connection with Paraguay and Uruguay. Then there is a possible connection to Argentina, which would make the project gain in importance and in the benefits it is bound to bring for the region.

The railway corridor has classified as one of the eight prioritized regional integration projects of UNASUR, the Union of South American Nations, while it also favors trade and exchanges of all these nations with the rest of the countries of the world.

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