

# *Paraguay's president-elect pledges to help Bolivia become full member of Mercosur*

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La Paz, July 12 (RHC)—Paraguay's president-elect, Mario Abdo Benitez, says he will do his best to help Bolivia become a full member of the Mercosur trade bloc.

Benitez made the pledge in La Paz during a joint declaration with Bolivian President Evo Morales, after a closed-door meeting in the Palace of Government in La Paz, according to Spanish news agency EFE.

The president-elect recalled that the Paraguayan Congress has already approved Bolivia's entry into Mercosur, with the goal of advancing "the integration of our peoples."

"I committed myself to carry out the necessary procedures so that Bolivia may soon become a full member of Mercosur, in order to strengthen the potential of this trade alliance," Benitez said.

The agreement to welcome Bolivia as a full member of Mercosur has already been ratified by Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, although Brazil's Congress must yet approve the measure.

Morales thanked Benitez, as Paraguay "has always supported Bolivia's aim of becoming a full member of Mercosur," and called on Latin American nations to strengthen their integration mechanisms.

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