

# *Relations Between Cuba and Brazil Reach New Heights*

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The relations between Cuba and Brazil are in dynamic evolution. Both countries are working together in several fields and are building model links that realize the intent of both economies. Today Brazil is the second most important commercial partner of Cuba. Mutual exchanges run into the hundreds of millions of dollars with prospects for further collaboration.

The latest development has been the inauguration of the first phase of the Cuban megaport of Mariel by the Brazilian president, Dilma Rousseff, during her recent visit to Havana when she attended the Second Summit of the Latin American and Caribbean Community, CELAC.

The megaport of Mariel is an essential part of economic changes in Cuba that are aimed at increasing the overall wellbeing of the population.

At the launch of the Mariel megaport, Cubans heard President Rousseff state on TV that "Brazil believes in and supports the human and economic potential of Cuba", and she went on to praise the work being done by thousands of Cuban physicians in remote Brazilian areas through the Mais Medicos— "More doctors" program.

The former Brazilian President Luis Inacio Lula Da Silva followed the visit of Preident Rousseff. During his mandate Lula da Silva fostered the relations between Brazil and Cuba. During his three-day visit to Cuba,

Lula discussed with his hosts foreign investment, mutual agricultural development and industrial progress. Later in March, a Brazilian group of industrial and agricultural investors is scheduled to visit Cuba in order to identify the potential areas of cooperation.

The delegation will include managers and specialists from biotechnological and pharmaceutical industries, as well as economists from agribusiness and the food industries.

Lula confirmed the prior observations of President Vilma Rouseff that 2013 was beneficial for bilateral links and 2014 could prove even better. Both countries, working together, can aspire to desirable outcomes for their respective peoples that will also have positive impact on the rest of Latin American and on the Caribbean.

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