

# *UNASUR International Summit Joins Leaders*

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Guayaquil, December 5 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Leaders and delegations from across the region came to Guayaquil for the UNASUR International Seminar on Integration and Convergence in Latin America, held December 3rd and 4th. At the Eloy Alfaro Civic Center, leaders discussed strategies for deepening political, economic, cultural and social integration in the region.

"Convergence of citizens, convergence of similarities, and convergence of solidarity are the proposals of this effort to bring us closer together," said Secretary-General of UNASUR Ernesto Samper at the opening ceremony.

Proposals supported by UNASUR, such as the Bank of the South and a regional school of defense, seek to ensure and further the sovereignty of the 12 member states as global actors.

Distinguished guest, former president of Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, told participants, "Today, our main challenge is to deepen the construction of strategic thought of Latin America and the Caribbean. We can construct an integration project that is more daring, that takes advantage of the formation of our rich history, goods and cultures."

Strengthening South-South Cooperation, social inclusion and diminishing economic inequality were topics discussed in seminars, as well as plans for greater exchange with other regional bodies.

In the afternoon, the pro-tempore presidency of the UNASUR body was transferred from Suriname to Uruguay. Following the transfer, president of Uruguay, Jose Mujica, spoke of the importance of strengthening integration between member states.

Other presidents in Guayaquil included Chile's Michelle Bachelet, and Ecuador's Rafael Correa, Cristina Fernandez of Argentina, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, and Peruvian President Ollanta Humala. Speaking to attendees, President Correa paid homage to Mujica and emphasized the need for continued regional cooperation.

During the seminars, representatives and delegations from the member states of UNASUR examined their common history and shared future of regional integration in the days preceding the inauguration of the UNASUR headquarters near the Middle of the World monument outside of Quito, which took place on Friday.

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