



PRESS RELEASE

**AFRICAN- SOUTH AMERICAN MINISTERS
CONSIDER COOPERATION PLANS**

Abuja, Nigeria: 29 November 2006- The Ministerial meeting of the Africa-South America Summit, which got under way in Abuja yesterday to consider the outcome documents put forward by the experts and senior officials from the two regions, who had been meeting since Sunday has concluded with the adoption of the Outcome Documents.

The ministers' meeting was considering the Draft Declaration of the First Africa- South America Summit and the Draft Plan of Action. The documents provide an appropriate context for strengthening existing linkages and expanding the process of cooperation by building on common ground.

Ambassador Samuel Pinheiro Guimaraes, Secretary General of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission Mr. Patrick Mazimhaka and the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Professor Joy Ogwu addressed the ministers.

The intended cooperation between Africa and South America is expected to be comprehensive. Mr. Mazimhaka said it should embrace cooperation in multi lateral forums, peace and security, democracy, governance and human and people's rights, agriculture and agri-business, rural development, water resources, trade and investment, combating hunger and poverty, infrastructure and development, energy and solid minerals, social and cultural cooperation, tourism, youth, sports, science, technology and ICT, health, education, environment, gender issues, institutional development, information exchange and shared views of appropriate practices. He also emphasized the need for flexibility in the commitments made under the partnership, stressing that programmes and policies should be adjustable as conditions change.

Ambassador Pinheiro Guimaraes spoke about the need for Africa and South America to unite in efforts to defend their interests in international negotiations, which will shape the future of education, health, water, industry, energy, and environment among others. He underlined that there is growing interest in mutual cooperation between Africa and South America and expressed the hope that the intentions in the Plan of Action will be approved. He also expressed his confidence that the cooperation between Africa and South America will succeed.

Professor Ogwu, who called the cooperation an “alliance for progress” said it should, aside from economic cooperation, aim at “forming a formidable bloc capable of narrowing differences and forging consensus on matters of global concern.” She said many nation states are being compelled to form broader platforms such as alliances, coalitions and partnerships of the sort the two regions are embarking upon in order to harness their resources and aggregate political and socio economic interests.

Tomorrow, the Summit of Heads of State and Governments from the two regions will take place to finalise the cooperation arrangements and plans for implementation.

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