

PRESS COMMUNIQUÉ

ARAB AND SOUTH AMERICAN MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MEET AT THE SIDELINES OF THE 64th UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UN General Assembly, 23 September 2009

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Arab and South American countries convened, on 23 September 2009, at the sidelines of the 64th United Nations General Assembly. On the occasion:

They welcomed the establishment of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Summit of South American and Arab Countries (ASPA) and the choice of the UN General Assembly as the venue for its inaugural meeting, highlighting the imperative of political dialogue and coordination among Arab and South American countries.

They evaluated the development of ASPA since its inception (Brasilia, 10-11 May 2005), particularly after the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government (Doha, 31 March 2009), and agreed that the Mechanism's structure is now functional and that a set of relevant and varied cooperation initiatives has been approved, making its implementation the Forum's main challenge henceforth.

In this regard, they welcomed the successful holding of the Second Meeting of ASPA Ministers of Culture (Rio de Janeiro, 20-21 May 2009), which detailed areas of cooperation for the establishment of the "ASPA Cultural Plan of Action", to be discussed by the Committee on Cultural Cooperation at the sidelines of the 35th General Conference of UNESCO (Paris, 14 October 2009).

They welcomed the reports of the Regional Coordinators (Brazil and the League of Arab States) about the follow-up calendar of the ASPA Sectorial Committees on Economic Cooperation, Cultural Cooperation, Environmental Cooperation, Social Cooperation, and Science and Technology. Accordingly, they decided to submit the calendar and all Plans of Action developed to date for the appreciation of the Sixth High Officials Meeting.

They welcomed the kind offer of the Republic of Peru to host the Third ASPA Summit, in 2011, and called for the ASPA High Officials to discuss means of supporting the preparation of the meeting, including the accession of Peru to the ASPA Executive Coordination Group, so as to facilitate its interaction with other member-States and the ASPA Coordinators.

With a view to achieving concerted action, the Ministers debated relevant current international issues, such as the Middle East peace process, reform of the United Nations, the international financial crisis, non-proliferation and disarmament, and global warming.

Recalling the decisions adopted at the Doha Summit (31/03/2009) concerning the situation in the Middle East, the Ministers underlined the need to freeze the building of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Occupied Territories.