



Raúl and Dilma inaugurate the first phase of Mariel Terminal

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January 27, 2014

Cubadebate

“On behalf of all Cubans, I convey to President Dilma Rousseff our thanks and profound recognition for her solidarity contribution to a major project for the national economy,” Cuban President Raúl Castro said during the inauguration of the first phase of the Container Terminal, located at the heart of Mariel Special Development Zone (ZEDM).

President Dilma Rousseff also participated in the ceremony, which was attended by the heads of Venezuela (Nicolás Maduro), Bolivia (Evo Morales), Haiti (Michel Martelly), Guyana (Donald Ramotar) and Jamaica (Prime Minister Portia Simpson-Miller), among other dignitaries of the countries of the region.

“This container terminal and the powerful infrastructure that accompanies it are a concrete example of the optimism and confidence with which Cubans look to the future of socialism and prosperity of the country ...”, said Raul, whose speech we publish entirely in Cubadebate.

Dilma Rousseff assured in her speech that she comes to Cuba with great joy, for the second time, as President of Brazil. “Deep ties unite our societies”, she said. “Brazil is proud to be associated with Cuba”, she added.

“We are organizing a special mission for Cuba. Brazil intends to be an economic ally for Cuba. The possibilities of joint industrial development are huge”, she said.

Dilma thanked the government and the people of Cuba for the collaboration of the island in the program “More doctors”, “proof of the relationship and cooperation between our two countries.” And she concluded: “Only with Cuba will Latin America be complete.”

The expansion of port facilities in Mariel, a municipality located 45 minutes west of Havana, is an emblematic work of the collaboration between Cuba and Brazil and has the most modern container terminal in the Caribbean, built by Brazilian construction company Odebrecht.

The terminal has a financing of 682 million US dollars from the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES), which is the highest share of a total investment estimated at 957 million US dollars.

The megaport, which will have the capacity to accommodate freight ships of the "post-panamax" generation, is part of Mariel Special Development Zone (ZEDM), the first of its kind in the island; it will house high-tech industrial parks and logistics, commercial and service activities, including an oil base.

Last November 1st came into force the legislation governing this project that aims to become one of the economic engines of the island to generate exports, new sources of employment and attract foreign investment.

This Zone results from the agreements adopted by the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba that, in its Guideline 103, promotes "the creation of Special Development Zones that allow the increase exports, the effective substitution of imports, high technology and local development projects; as well as contributing to generate new sources of employment".

The regulatory framework of Mariel Special Development Zone, made up of a Decree-Law, its Regulations and seven complementary resolutions, will be published in the next few days in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Cuba and came into force on November 1st.

The Zone has an area of approximately 465 square kilometers and covers several municipalities in the province of Artemisa. For its conception similar experiences were studied in different nations of the world, assured Cuban authorities.



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