

# *ALBA meeting in Managua focuses on politics and economics*

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Managua, November 9 (RHC)-- Foreign ministers of the member countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of America (ALBA) met on Thursday in Managua, Nicaragua for the 17th Ordinary Meeting of the Political Council of the regional organization. Top on the agenda of the one-day meeting were issues related to the political and socio-economic situation.

ALBA was founded in 2004 by Cuba and Venezuela as a progressive alternative to the United States-driven Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). The Bolivarian Alliance includes Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Dominica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Grenada and Suriname.

Nicaraguan Vice President Rosario Murillo told reporters that representatives of ALBA member states discussed issues related to the ALBA Bank (Banalba), a financial integration initiative which encompasses Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Dominica. The ALBA meeting also addressed themes referring to the 'Sucre,' which is a regional currency proposed for international trade among the Alliance members.

The minister and deputy minister of foreign affairs of Venezuela, Jorge Arreaza and Alexander Yañez;

the Deputy Foreign Minister of Cuba, Abelardo Moreno; and the Deputy Foreign Minister of El Salvador, Carlos Castaneda, met in Managua with delegations from Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname.

Nicaragua was represented by Foreign Minister Denis Moncada; Deputy Foreign Minister for the Caribbean, Valdrack Jaentschke; advisory minister of the presidency, Sidhartha Marín; the deputy minister of foreign affairs, Arlette Marengo; and Deputy Minister Ivan Lara.

The general secretary of ALBA, David Choquehuaca, arrived in Nicaragua earlier this week and met prior to the summit with representatives of the executive and legislative bodies of the organization.

On the opening day of the ALBA meeting, the Venezuelan Consortium of Aeronautical Industries and Air Services (Conviasa) inaugurated a new air route between Caracas and Managua.

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