

# *Venezuela and Iran Vow to Deepen Ties*

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Caracas, September 17 (teleSUR-RHC) -- Venezuela and Iran launched their eighth Joint Commission on Tuesday, aimed at deepening cooperation between the two countries.

"This is an extraordinary mechanism to solidify different areas of cooperation between our peoples," Venezuelan foreign minister Rafael Ramirez said in Caracas.

The commission will focus on improving links in the areas of culture, sports, education and youth exchanges, industry, science, technology, health, energy, agriculture, housing and bilateral trade.

Venezuela and Iran currently have 265 bilateral agreements, but the foreign minister has stated more cooperation between the two nations is essential.

Ramirez vowed the commission will deliver "far reaching" improvements to bilateral ties, particularly in the oil industry. He stated that with Iran's help, Venezuela aims to "to overcome all the deformations of oil profiteering."

The two countries currently have around 40 joint projects under development in the oil sector. One of the largest joint initiatives over the last decade was a 2010 agreement that both countries would invest US\$760 million in each other's energy sectors. However, in recent years both countries have also

pledged to diversify their relationship beyond just oil.

Since 2010, over 14,000 Venezuelan public housing units have been constructed with Iranian aid, while in 2012 the two countries signed a slew of new deals aimed at improving joint scientific research and agricultural cooperation.

Ramirez said: "The relationship between the two countries is based on cooperation, solidarity and mutual respect."

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