

# *Venezuela and Colombia Agree to Address Border Closure Dispute*

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Quito, September 22 (RHC)-- The presidents of Venezuela and Colombia met on Monday in host country Ecuador and have agreed to normalize border relations.

Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa read a statement including a 7-point agreement following a mediated closed-door meeting between Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his Colombian counterpart, Juan Manuel Santos in Quito, the capital of Ecuador.

Correa affirmed the importance of bilateral dialogue and international respect in resolving tensions and disputes. "There can be differences (between the two countries), but the love, affection ... allow any difficulty to be overcome," President Correa said.

Reading from the 7-point statement, the Ecuadorean leader said that Venezuela and Colombia would reinstate their ambassadors, carefully investigate the border situation, while working to progressively normalize the border. The two countries will also continue talks supported by Uruguay and Ecuador, with a follow up meeting of ministers scheduled for September 23rd.

"I've told our peoples, there is no room for hatred, for intolerance or for revenge," said President Maduro, adding that peace always triumphs in the end in an effort to promote brotherhood between the two countries.

Correa also added that the two countries will examine how to cooperate despite their different economic models.

"We have two very different models of country development models," President Santos said. "But we can work toward common goals agreed to by our two peoples."

The meeting between the two leaders was facilitated by Correa and Uruguayan President Tabare Vazquez and held under the auspices of Unasur and Celac Latin American regional blocs.

The joint press conference comes after weeks of tensions between the two countries following Venezuela's decision to close its border with its neighbor and announce a state of exception in some of its border regions.

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