

Opportunities for investment in the Ibero-American tourist sector under debate at the Ibero-American Business Forum

The Brazilian Minister for Tourism, Walfrido dos Mares, the Argentinian Secretary of State for Tourism, Enrique Meyer, the Executive Vice-Chairman of Exceltur, José Luis Zoreda and the Managing Director of Institutional Relations of Sol Meliá, Jaime Puig de la Bellacasa today discussed the opportunities for investment in the Ibero-American tourist sector.

In the course of the Ibero-American Business Forum breakfasts organised by Recoletos and Instituto de Crédito Oficial, ICO, with the academic collaboration of Instituto de Empresa, both guests spoke of their belief that tourism is an opportunity for creating employment, wealth and income.

Meyer highlighted the plans agreed between Argentina and Brazil and also referred to the strategic plan for 2016, which includes synergies with the Ministry of Planning comprising investments of \$3,500million in infrastructures and public works. The Argentinian secretary insisted that this is good news that is welcome not only from the point of view of tourism but also of production. He also commented that they will present the new image of the national brand at the end of March. During his talk, he emphasised the opportunities for foreign investors in Argentina.

The Brazilian Minister for Tourism also highlighted the friendship that unites Brazil and Argentina and told us of some of the lines of the National Plan for Tourism for 2007, which includes the creation of 1.2 million jobs, an expected 9 million foreign tourists and the development of at least three quality tourist products that will lead to employment, income and profits. Besides commenting on the surplus of the Brazilian balances of trade and payments, thanks to the policies of recent years, which have enabled consolidated control of external accounts, dos Mares also spoke of the recent international marketing plan and of the change in the tourists that visit Brazil. "Now they have greater purchasing power", the Minister explained.

The vice-chairman of Exceltur pointed to the economic impact tourism has on development and to the fact that Spain is looking for a stable framework for investment. Jaime Puig de la Bellacasa confirmed the support and assistance being provided for the tourist sector by banks, as well as the outstanding presence of Sol Meliá in Brazil and Argentina. "In Brazil in particular, we have 24 hotels offering 6000 rooms thanks to Brazilian investment," Puig de la Bellacasa stated during his talk at the Ibero-American Business Forum.