

GROWTH AND NEW BUSINESS ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF DEFENCE & CIVIL AVIATION SHOW IN RIO DE JANEIRO

Latin America Aero & Defence (LAAD) and Aviation Expo Latin America 2007, which opened at Riocentro in Rio de Janeiro on April 17 and closed on April 20, proved yet again to be an outstanding showcase for new products and services in the civil aviation and defence markets, as well as reaffirming their importance as a place to do excellent business. Visiting delegates held over 1,500 meetings with the more than 300 exhibitors. "The exhibition has grown with every edition, reflecting constant market expansion," said show manager Sérgio Figueiredo Jardim. "For example, several bilateral meetings took place between the Brazilian Defence Ministry and representatives of France, Poland, China and India." Some 14,000 people attended the sixth edition of the most important trade show for the armed forces and defence industry of Latin America, including journalists from at least 14 countries.

Defence Minister Waldir Pires, who was present at meetings with foreign delegations, toured the exhibition and gave the official opening address, as well as a news conference, stressed LAAD's importance as an opportunity to display defence-related products and services. "The show was undoubtedly invaluable for Brazil and for its armed forces," he said. "One of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's objectives is to review and promote armed forces reequipment and modernisation. In today's world a country like Brazil must be prepared to defend national sovereignty."

Milton Zuanazzi, director-general of the National Civil Aviation Agency (ANAC), also attended the show and spoke about integration of air transport in Latin America. His presentation addressed one of the hottest issues of the moment, concerning the problems unleashed in the civil aviation sector by the accident that brought down Gol flight 1907 on September 29, 2006.

On day three of LAAD 2007, Empresa Brasileira de Aeronáutica (Embraer) held a conference to present its new military transport aircraft, the C-390. The airlifter will be the heaviest plane ever made by the company, with a carrying capacity of 19 tonnes. Another announcement during the show was the protocol of intentions signed by Imbel, the state-owned enterprise that is Brazil's largest arms and munitions manufacturer, and South Africa's Rippel Effect to produce grenade launchers in Brazil.

On the last day members of the Brazilian Union of Trade Show Organisers (UBRAFE) visited the stands in the exhibition and took the opportunity to inspect the new Riocentro facilities, which have been refurbished and will offer more comfort for the next edition of LAAD (April 14-17, 2009).

Another novelty at this edition of LAAD was the Defence Seminar on topics such as “Brazilian Armed Forces: Needs & Prospects”, “Air Space Protection” and “Homeland Security”, among others. The 3rd International Symposium on Military Logistics, also held concurrently with LAAD, discussed such topics as military transport for NATO countries and quality assurance for defence products.

At the Seminar on Civil Aviation held as part of Aviation Expo, experts and industry professionals spent four days discussing the prospects and challenges for the sector in Brazil and the rest of Latin America.

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