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Brazilian president wants to strengthen ties

PRESIDENT Fernando Collor de Mello of Brazil arrives in Harare tomorrow as part of a four-African nation tour covering Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

In an interview with Agencia Brasil, the Brazilian Foreign Minister, Mr Francisco Rezek, said the African visit was part of his government's objective of improving relations with developing countries. He noted that recently Brazil's trade with African countries had decreased significantly, citing Nigeria as an example.

"Trade with Nigeria at one point reached \$2 billion but now it has dropped to only 10 percent of that figure," he said.

Mr Rezek said trade between his country and Zimbabwe was below potential levels.

"Bilateral trade between Zimbabwe and Brazil stands at only US\$15 million a year, even though Zimbabwe is Africa's second largest industrial base," the foreign minister said.

Mr Rezek said during President Collor de Mello's two day visit to Zimbabwe, he is expected to sign a number of co-operation agreements with Zimbabwean Government officials covering technical and scientific areas.

There was growing interest among a number of Brazilian firms in taking part in the construction of a new airport in Harare as well as in other projects.

The Brazilian foreign minister praised changes taking place in Angola and Mozambique. He said the full reinstatement of "pluralism and the democratic princi-

ple" as well as the peace treaty signed between the Angolan government and Unita were commendable developments.

"This development heralds a great political phase, one which will lead to the future that the majority of Angolans choose through the ballot," he said.

He also noted that a similar development was taking place in Mozambique and that during his visit to Mozambique, President Collor would express his wish to see a conclusion of that process. Brazil is the world's largest Portuguese-speaking country.

Turning to world politics, Mr Rezek said his country and other Latin American countries would support an African candidate for the post of UN secretary-general when the incumbent, Dr Javier

Perez de Cuellar of Peru, steps down at the end of this year.

He said an African candidate would be ideal "in order to observe the principle of rotation at the helm of the UN" but noted that Latin American countries had not yet settled on any one candidate for the post, although the Senior Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Dr Bernard Chidzero's name had been advanced by some countries.

On trade with Angola, the Brazilian foreign minister said it had increased.

"We want to buy more oil and have an enormous variety of things to offer in several areas and technical co-operation is one area of development," he said.

Brazil was interested in taking part in

the project for developing the Moatize coal reserves in Mozambique.

Turning to Namibia, where President Collor de Mello will make a six-hour stop-over on Friday, Mr Rezek said that the visit signals Brazil's satisfaction with Namibian independence.

"Namibia is an important partner in the context of the South Atlantic Peace and Co-operation Zone," said Mr Rezek. He added that the two countries are likely to create a joint commission in order to enhance bilateral co-operation.

The two countries would also develop a joint project for irrigation and rural extension courses in the Cunene River Valley on the border with Angola. — Agencia Brasil.