

Brazil's Rouseff deepens ties with MIT, Harvard

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Brazil's President Dilma Rouseff on Tuesday launched an initiative to deepen ties with the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University.

After meeting Monday at the White House with President Barack Obama, Rouseff continued her short visit to the United States with meetings in the Boston area, home to both MIT and Harvard.

"For Brazil it's very important what we are doing here," she said in an appearance with MIT president Susan Hockfield ahead of the signing of two agreements on expanding technology cooperation and increasing the number of Brazilian exchange students.

"I want to express our enormous enthusiasm for the doors we are opening today for a new era," added Hockfield.

As part of the link, MIT's School of Engineering and the Instituto Tecnológico de Aeronáutica (ITA) in Sao Paulo have agreed to explore a potential future collaboration.

The two institutions will look into the possible exchange of students, professors and researchers, as well as the joint research and development of new educational programs.

"A strategic partnership would help ITA through a period of anticipated growth, including the conception, design and creation of a planned

Innovation Center," according to the agreement signed Tuesday.

Rousseff's campaign in the United States is part of her government's "Science without Borders" program, aimed at advancing Brazilian technology and innovation by promoting exchanges between Brazilian and foreign institutions.

The program aims to hand out 75,000 government scholarships in four years to try to give a turbo-powered jumpstart to Brazil's technology and innovation sectors.

The Brazilian leader also spoke at nearby Harvard University and held a meeting with Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick.

In her remarks at Harvard, Rousseff -- Brazil's first woman president and a moderate leftist -- acknowledged that her country, the world's sixth-largest economy, has a "serious education deficit" to address.

Yet "Brazil is one of the few countries in the world in which, inequality -- instead of growing actually has shrunk," the president said.

"We have not solved the problem of inequality but we are working on it," she added, noting that under her popular predecessor Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, 40 million Brazilians joined the middle class.

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