

Posted on Fri, Nov. 03, 2006

## 6<sup>TH</sup> IBEROAMERICAN SUMMIT

# Economic migration is seen as key topic at Iberoamerican Summit

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Associated Press

**MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay** - The plight of millions of migrants trying to cross new fencing on the U.S. border, flee the Andes to Spain or get work in Argentine textile mills is the pressing issue for participants at the 16<sup>th</sup> Iberoamerican summit.

Spain's King Juan Carlos and presidents or their envoys from Portugal, Andorra and 22 Latin American nations today will open the three-day summit, which will examine migration and economic development.

They also will be debating a host of economic, social and cultural issues affecting their Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking communities against the backdrop of cross-border feuds and disputes that threaten to overshadow the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the trans-Atlantic bloc.

In Montevideo, thousands of police are expected to ring the summit site, dissuading groups ranging from anti-free trade protesters to activists following the construction of controversial wood pulp plants in Uruguay that have provoked Argentine protests.

Some groups want summit partners to back redoubled government efforts to safeguard the human rights of migrants and refugees crossing common borders.

As many as 25 million Latin American migrants were working or living in countries other than their homeland in 2005, up from 21 million in 2000, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

While the United States is the top destination for migrants from the region, less prosperous nations such as Argentina, despite its 2002 economic meltdown, have seen an influx of poor migrants from neighboring Bolivia and Paraguay.

Spain is coping both with North Africans reaching its shores and Andean migrants.

"We are talking about people, not criminals," said Enrique Iglesias, in charge of the Iberoamerican summit's general secretariat. "These immigrants are people, men, women and children who are seeking better horizons."