



BRAZIL

**STATEMENT BY H. E. DILMA ROUSSEFF,
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL,
AT THE OPENING OF THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 69TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, 24 September 2014

(check against delivery)

Ambassador Sam Kutesa, President of the 69th General Assembly of the United Nations,

Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great satisfaction for Brazil - which has the honour and privilege of opening this debate - to have as the President of this Session of the General Assembly a son of Africa. As Brazilians we are united by ties of history, culture and friendship with the African continent. This legacy was and will always be decisive for my country's national identity.

Mr. President,

I open this General Debate on the eve of elections which will determine, in Brazil, the President of the Republic, State governors and a significant portion of Congress. These elections represent the celebration of a democracy we achieved almost thirty years ago after two decades of dictatorial rule. Through democracy we also advanced towards the country's economic stability.

During the last twelve years, in particular, we have consolidated these achievements by building an inclusive society based on equal opportunities.

The Great Transformation to which we are committed has resulted in a modern economy and a more egalitarian society. At the same time it has required strong civic participation, respect for human rights and a sustainable vision of development.

It has also required an engagement on the world stage characterized by multilateralism, respect for international law, the quest for peace and a culture of solidarity.

Mr President,

A few days ago FAO announced that Brazil is no longer in the World Hunger Map.

This transformation was the result of economic policies which generated 21 million jobs and appreciated the minimum wage, increasing its purchasing power by 71% With these policies inequality was reduced.

Thirty six million Brazilians have been lifted out of extreme poverty since 2003; 22 million during my Administration alone. Social policies and income transfer programs consolidated within the "Brazil Without Extreme Poverty" Plan have also contributed to these results.

In the area of health care, we were able to meet the goal of reducing child mortality before the deadline established by the Millennium Development Goals.

Universal access to primary education has become a reality and we are now pursuing the same goal with regard to secondary education. We are equally committed to enhancing the quality of education, by improving curricula and raising the profile of teachers.

Vocational education has made strides with the creation of hundreds of new schools and the professional technical training of 8 million young people over the last four years.

There has been an unprecedented expansion of higher education with the establishment of new publicly funded universities and the granting of scholarships and financial aid that have enabled 3 million students to have access to private universities.

Affirmative action policies have allowed the mass enrollment of poor, indigenous and afro-descendent students into universities.

Finally, the challenges of building a knowledge-based society led to the creation of the "Science Without Borders" Program which has sent over a hundred thousand undergraduate and graduate students to the world's best universities.

By presidential initiative Congress has passed legislation that allocates 75% of the royalties of pre-salt oil exploration to education and 25% to health care. Furthermore, 50% of the social fund generated by pre-salt oil revenues will also go to education.

We will thus transform finite resources - such as oil and gas - into permanent assets: education, science and technology, and innovation. This will be our passport to the future.

Mr. President,

We have not neglected fiscal discipline and monetary stability, and we have striven to shield Brazil from external volatility.

We were thus able to overcome the challenges arising from the major global economic crisis triggered in 2008 by the collapse of Lehman Brothers that subsequently developed into national sovereign debt crises affecting many countries.

We resisted its worst consequences: unemployment, wage depreciation, erosion of social rights and the freezing of investments.

We followed through with income distribution by stimulating growth and employment and maintaining investments in infrastructure.

Brazil jumped from being the 13th to being the 7th largest economy in the world. Per capita income increased by more than threefold and inequality rates fell sharply.

While in 2002, more than half of the Brazilian population was poor or below the poverty line, today 3 out of every 4 Brazilians are a part of the middle class and upper income ranges.

During the crisis, while the world economy left hundreds of millions of workers unemployed, Brazil created 12 million formal jobs.

In addition, we became one of the main destinations of foreign investment.

We resumed investments in infrastructure through strong partnerships with the private sector.

All of these gains have materialized within the context of a sound fiscal environment. We have reduced the net public debt to GDP ratio from approximately 60% to 35%.

The gross external debt in relation to GDP fell from 42% to 14%.

Our international reserves increased tenfold, turning Brazil into an international creditor.

The annual inflation rate has been kept within the ranges determined by the national inflation targets in place.

Mr. President,

Although we have managed to withstand the most harmful consequences of the global crisis we have also been acutely affected by it in recent years.

This is due to the persistence, in all regions of the world, of substantial economic adversities that hinder our growth.

Allow me to reiterate what I said last year at the opening of the General Debate.

It is vital and urgent to restore the dynamism of the global economy, which should work towards fostering investment, international trade and the reduction of inequalities among countries.

Regarding international trade, there must be a unanimous commitment to a work program that leads to the conclusion of the Doha Round.

It is also imperative, Mr. President, to eliminate the disparity between the growing importance of developing countries in the global economy and their insufficient representation and participation in the decision-making processes of international financial institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank. The delay in the expansion of voting rights of developing countries in these institutions is unacceptable.

These institutions are in danger of losing legitimacy and efficiency.

Mr. President,

Brazil had the pleasure of hosting the Sixth Summit of the BRICS countries last July. We welcomed the leaders of China, India, Russia and South Africa in a fraternal and fruitful meeting that pointed to important perspectives for the future.

We have signed agreements on the establishment of the New Development Bank and of the Contingent Reserve Arrangement. The Bank will help meeting the infrastructure financing needs of the BRICS and those of other developing countries. The Contingent Reserve Arrangement will protect countries from financial volatility. Each instrument will have a capital injection of US\$ 100 billion.

Mr. President,

The current generation of world leaders – our generation – is also being called to face significant challenges concerning peace, collective security and the environment.

We have been unable to solve old disputes and to prevent new threats.

The use of force is incapable of eliminating the underlying causes of conflict. This is made clear by the persistence of the Question of Palestine; the systematic massacre of the Syrian people; the tragic national destructuring of Iraq; the serious insecurity in Libya; the conflicts in the Sahel; and the clashes in Ukraine.

Each military intervention leads not to peace, but to the deterioration of these conflicts.

We witness a tragic proliferation in the numbers of civilian victims and humanitarian catastrophes. We cannot allow these barbaric acts to increase, harming our ethical, moral and civilizational values.

Nor can we remain indifferent to the spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa. In this regard, we support the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response.

Mr. President,

The Security Council has been having difficulties in promoting peaceful solutions to those conflicts. A genuine reform of the Security Council is necessary to overcome the current paralysis. This process has been dragging on for too long.

The 70th anniversary of the United Nations, in 2015, must be an auspicious occasion for achieving the progress required. I am certain we all understand the serious risks of paralysis and inaction at the Security Council.

A more representative and more legitimate Security Council would also be a more effective Council.

Let me reiterate that we cannot remain indifferent to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, particularly after the tragic events in Gaza. We condemn the disproportionate use of force that strongly impacts the civilian population, especially women and children.

This conflict must be resolved, not precariously managed, as has been the case. Effective negotiations between the parties must lead to a two-State solution, with Palestine and Israel living side by side, in security and within internationally recognized borders.

Amid so many situations of conflict, Latin America and the Caribbean seek to tackle the main issue that has affected our region for centuries – social inequality.

We have strengthened the roots of democracy and intensified our quest towards a more just, inclusive and sustainable economic development. Regional integration efforts have advanced, with Mercosur, UNASUR and CELAC.

Mr. President,

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our times. To overcome it, we need a sense of urgency, political courage and the understanding that each of us should contribute according to the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities.

Convened at a timely occasion by the Secretary-General, the Climate Summit invigorates the negotiations under the Framework Convention.

The Brazilian Government will strive to ensure that the outcome of negotiations leads to an agreement that is balanced, fair and effective.

Brazil has been doing its part in tackling climate change.

At the Copenhagen Conference, we committed to a voluntary reduction of 36-39% of our projected emissions by 2020.

Between 2010 and 2013, we avoided launching into the atmosphere an average of 650 million tons of carbon dioxide per year.

Throughout those years, we achieved the lowest deforestation rates of our history.

In the last decade, we have reduced deforestation by 79%, without relinquishing economic development and social inclusion.

We have shown that it is possible to grow, to include, to preserve and to protect. Such an achievement stems from the continuous and steadfast efforts of Government, Brazilian civil society, as well as other public and private actors.

We expect that developed countries - who have not only the legal, but also the political obligation to lead by example, will unequivocally and concretely demonstrate their commitment to address this challenge that affects us all.

At Rio+20 we were proud to set the foundations for a new development agenda, based on Sustainable Development Goals applicable to both developing and developed nations.

It will be crucial for us to identify means of implementation that correspond to the magnitude of the challenges we have committed to overcome. We must be ambitious when it comes to financing, cooperation, national capacity building and technology transfer, especially towards least developed countries.

Let me underscore, in this context, the need to establish a mechanism for the development, transfer and dissemination of clean, environmentally sustainable technologies.

Mr. President,

Together with sustainable development and peace, the international order to which we aspire must be founded on fundamental values.

Among those, emphasis should be put on the fight against all kinds of discrimination and exclusion.

We have an unequivocal commitment to the empowerment of women in the labor market, liberal professions, entrepreneurship, political activity, and access to education, among others. My Government tirelessly combats violence against women in all its forms. We consider the 21st century to be the century of women.

By the same token, the promotion of racial equality aims to rescue Brazilians of African descent, who represent more than half of our population, from the consequences of centuries of slavery to which they were subjected.

We owe them our rich and permanent legacy of cultural, religious and human values. To us, racial miscigenation is a matter of pride.

Racism is not only a heinous crime, but also an outrage against which we must not save efforts to punish and eradicate.

Our commitment to the fight against homophobia is as strong as our resolve to combat racism and violence against women. My country's Supreme Court has recognized same-sex civil union, guaranteeing to homosexuals the full range of civil rights that derives from it.

We firmly believe in the dignity of all human beings and in the universality of fundamental rights. Those rights must be protected from double standards and politicization.

Another fundamental value is the respect for public resources and the relentless fight against corruption.

History has shown that there is only one way to correctly and efficiently tackle corruption: by ending impunity through the strengthening of institutions that oversee, investigate and punish acts of corruption, money laundering and other financial crimes.

This is the responsibility of each Government, and it is a responsibility which Brazil has taken on, through institutional strengthening.

We have created on the internet the Government Transparency Portal, which provides citizens near immediate access to information on Government spending.

We have also adopted a Law on Access to Information, which allows all Brazilian citizens the right to access Government data, with the exception of sovereignty-related information.

We have strengthened and given more autonomy to investigation agencies as well as to the Government's auditing institutions.

We have created laws that punish the corrupted as well as the corruptors.

Strong institutions are crucial for the achievement of an open and democratic governance.

Brazil's recent reelection to the Executive Committee of the "Open Government Partnership" will allow us to contribute to promoting more transparent Governments across the globe.

Mr. President,

It is essential that measures be taken to effectively protect human rights, not only offline but also online, as stated by the resolution on privacy in the digital age adopted by this General Assembly last year.

Brazil and Germany promoted an important discussion on this matter in 2013. We intend to deepen it during this session. The report prepared by the High Commissioner for Human Rights will provide the basis for an evaluation of this issue.

One year ago, I proposed the creation of a civil rights framework for the governance and use of the Internet, based on the principles of freedom of expression, privacy, net neutrality and cultural diversity.

I am pleased to note that the international community has engaged, since then, in enhancing the current governance architecture of the Internet.

An important step in this process was the holding, at Brazil's initiative, of the Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance - NETmundial - in São Paulo, this April.

The meeting brought together stakeholders from different regions of the world. Discussions were held on the principles to follow and actions to undertake in order to guarantee that the Internet will continue to develop in an open, democratic, free, multistakeholder and multilateral manner.

Mr. President,

The United Nations and its member States have before them, today, challenges of great magnitude.

Those must be the priorities of this session of the General Assembly.

The year 2015 must be a turning point.

I am convinced that, with courage and lucidity, we will not shy away from our high responsibilities to build an international order founded on the promotion of peace, sustainable development, poverty eradication and the reduction of inequality.

Brazil stands ready and fully determined to contribute to this end.

Thank you very much.