

**Statement by the President of the Republic of Brazil at the opening of the
General Debate of the 77th UNGA**

New York City, September 20, 2022

Mr. Csaba Korösi, President of the Seventy-seventh General Assembly of the United Nations,

Mr, António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, whom I have the renewed pleasure of addressing in our common language,

Heads of State, Government and Delegations,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Csaba Korösi, on your election as president of this General Assembly. You can be sure to count on the support of Brazil.

The theme chosen for this General Debate revolves around a concept that perfectly applies to the moment we live: a watershed.

Mr. President,

Our collective responsibility, at this General Meeting, is to understand the scope of the challenges that make up this watershed moment. And, from there, build responses that pull their strength from the objectives that are common to all of us.

The task is not simple. But as things are presented, we have no alternative.

This effort must begin within each of our countries. First of all, it is what we do at the domestic level that gives the measure of the authority with which we act internationally.

Allow me speak from my country's perspective.

When Brazil expresses its positions on the public health agenda, we do so with the authority of a government that, during the Covid-19 pandemic, made all the efforts to save lives and preserve jobs. Like many other countries, we drove our attention, from the very onset, to ensuring emergency financial assistance to those most in need. Our goal was to protect families' income so that they could face the economic hardships resulting from the pandemic. We benefited more than 68 million people, equivalent to 1/3 of our population.

In tandem, we launched a broad vaccination program, including domestic production of vaccines. Our nation has more than 210 million people and we already have more than 80% of the population vaccinated against Covid-19. All were vaccinated voluntarily, respecting individual freedom.

Likewise, as far as the economy is concerned, Brazil has the power of a country that, for the sake of sustainable and inclusive growth, has been implementing reforms to attract investment and improve the livelihood of its population.

In my administration, we uprooted the systemic corruption that existed in the country. Between 2003 and 2015, period in which the left wing was in the presidency of Brazil, the indebtedness of Petrobras because of poor management, politically-driven appointments and favors and diversion of funds reached up to US\$170 billion dollars.

The person who was responsible for all of that was convicted. Whistleblowers have returned US\$1 billion and we have paid to the US stock market another US\$ 1 billion due to losses incurred by shareholders.

This is Brazil of the past.

We have upgraded public services by reducing costs and investing in science and technology. Nowadays, for instance, Brazil is the 7th most digitally advanced country in the world: 135 million people access 4,900 services provided by my administration. Brazil was a pioneer in the deployment of 5G in Latin America.

We have implemented a comprehensive agenda of privatizations and concessions, with an emphasis on infrastructure. We have concluded the São Francisco River transposition project, bringing water to the Brazilian Northeast. We have adopted new regulatory frameworks, such as in basic sanitation, railroads and natural gas. Moreover, we have improved the business environment, with the economic freedom law and the start-up law. As a result, we have created opportunities for young people to be entrepreneurs and have quality jobs.

Crowning all this effort to modernize the Brazilian economy, we are making great strides towards Brazil's entry as a full member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the OECD.

Despite international pressures, Brazil is getting to the end of 2022 with an economy in full recovery. We have high employment and low inflation rates. The economy is back on the path of growth. Poverty has increased across the world under the impact of the pandemic. In Brazil, it began to fall sharply.

The figures speak for themselves. It is estimated that, by the end of 2022, 4% of Brazilian families will be living on less than US\$ 1.90 a day. In 2019, it was 5.1%. This represents a drop of more than 20%. *Auxílio Brasil* (Brazil Aid), the minimum income program established by my administration during the pandemic, pays an amount of almost US\$ 4 a day to the poorest families in our country.

Unemployment fell by 5 percentage points, reaching 9.1%, a rate not seen for 7 years. We have reduced inflation, with an estimate of less than 7% annually in 2022. I am pleased to announce that we had unprecedented deflation in Brazil in the months of July and August. Since June, the price of gasoline has dropped by more than 30%. Today, a liter of gasoline in Brazil costs about US\$ 0.90. The price of electricity also fell by more than 15%. Let me stress that the cost of energy has not dropped because of price fixing or some other type of state intervention. It was the result of a tax rationalization policy formulated and implemented with the support of the National Congress.

In 2021, Brazil was the 4th largest destination for foreign direct investment in the world. Our foreign trade reached the historic milestone of 39% of GDP, even after reducing taxes on thousands of products. Domestically, we are also record-breakers in three areas: tax collection, state-owned company profits and the public debt-to-GDP ratio. In fact, in 2021 we had a surplus in the consolidated result of national accounts. Brazilian GDP increased by 1.2% in the second quarter. The forecast for 2022 is to grow 3%.

We have the peace of mind of those who are on the right path. The path to shared prosperity. Shared *among* Brazilians and, beyond that, shared *with* our neighbors and other partners around the world.

This is what we see, for example, in food production. Four decades ago, Brazil used to import food. Today, we are one of the world's largest exporters. This was only possible thanks to heavy investments in science and innovation, with a view to productivity and sustainability. Here I honor Alysson Paolinelli, Brazilian candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, for his role in expanding the Brazilian agricultural frontier with the use of new technologies. This year, the country has already started the largest grain harvest in our history. We estimate it to be at least 270 million tons. In a few years, Brazil will also make the transition from importer to exporter of wheat.

For the period 2022/2023, the forecast is that total production will exceed 300 million tons. As the Director-General of the World Trade Organization stated on a recent visit she paid to Brazil, if it weren't for Brazilian agribusiness, the planet would go hungry, as we feed over 1 billion people worldwide.

Mr. President,

I also wish to recall that in the area of sustainable development, Brazil's achievements are a source of credibility for our country's international action. With regard to the environment and sustainable development, Brazil is part of the solution and a reference to the world.

Two thirds of the Brazilian territory remain covered by native vegetation, which is found exactly as it was when Brazil was discovered in 1500. In the Brazilian Amazon, an area equivalent to Western Europe, more than 80% of the forest remains untouched, contrary to what is reported by the mainstream national and international media.

It is essential that, when taking care of the environment, we do not overlook people: the Amazon region is home to more than 20 million

inhabitants, including indigenous and riverside dwellers, whose livelihood depends on some economic use of the forest. We have brought internet connection to more than 11,000 rural schools and to more than 500 indigenous communities.

Brazil began its energy transition almost half a century ago, in reaction to the oil crises at that time. Today, we have a modern and sustainable biofuel industry. This Industry contributes to the cleanest energy mix among the G20 countries.

About 84% of our electricity matrix is currently renewable, and this is a goal that many developed countries hope to achieve only after 2040 or 2050.

Last year, Brazil was announced by the United Nations as the “global champion for energy transition”. We have the potential to become a major global exporter of clean energy. We have a surplus, already under construction, that can reach more than 100 Gigawatts between biomass, onshore wind and solar, in addition to the unexplored opportunity of 700 Gigawatt offshore wind farms, with one of the lowest production costs in the world. These sources will produce green hydrogen for export.

Part of this 100% clean energy opens the possibility for us to become suppliers of highly competitive industrial products, especially in the Brazilian Northeast, with one of the smallest carbon footprints in the world.

The sustainable development agenda is impacted in many ways by threats to international peace and security. We built the United Nations from the ruins of the Second World War. What motivated us back then was the determination to avoid repeating the cycle of destruction that marked the first half of the 20th century. To some extent, we can say that we were successful.

But today, the conflict in Ukraine serves as a warning. A reform of the UN is essential if we are to find world peace. In the specific case of the Security Council, after 25 years of debates, it is clear that we need to look for innovative solutions. Brazil delves into this topic based on an experience that goes back to the beginnings of the UN.

This is the eleventh time that we have held a non-permanent seat at the Council. We have tried to do our best to achieve peaceful and negotiated solutions to international conflicts, always led by the UN Charter and International Law.

Brazil also has an extensive history of participation in UN peacekeeping operations. From Suez to Angola, from Haiti to Lebanon, we have always supported the maintenance of peace.

We have also contributed to peace by opening our borders to those seeking a chance to restart their lives in our country. Since 2018, over six million Venezuelan brothers have been forced to leave their country. Many of them came to Brazil. Our response to this challenge was “Operation Welcome”, which has become an international benchmark. More than 350,000 Venezuelans have found in Brazilian territory, emergency assistance, protection, documentation and the possibility of a fresh start. All of them have access to the labor market, to public services and social benefits. In recent months, around 600 Venezuelans have arrived in Brazil every day on foot, the vast majority of whom are women and children weighing on average 15 kilos less than before, and who are running away from violence and hunger. .

The Brazilian humanitarian reception policy goes beyond Venezuela. We have also received Haitians, Syrians, Afghans and Ukrainians.

Mr. President,

It has been seven months since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine. It is a source of great concern not only in Europe, but throughout the world.

First of all, I would like to reiterate Brazil's gratitude to the countries that helped with the evacuation of Brazilian citizens who were in Ukraine when the conflict started. I refer especially to Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Czech Republic. The operation was successful. We left no one behind, not even their pets.

With regard to the conflict itself, Brazil has been guided by the principles of International Law and the UN Charter. These principles that are also enshrined in our Constitution. We defend an immediate ceasefire, the protection of civilians and noncombatants, the preservation of critical infrastructure to assist the population and the maintenance of all channels of dialogue between the parties in conflict. These are the first steps towards achieving a solution that is long-lasting and sustainable.

We have been working in this sense. At the United Nations and elsewhere, we have tried to avoid the hampering of dialogue channels caused by the polarization around the conflict. In this regard, we are against diplomatic and economic isolation.

The fallout of the conflict can already be felt in world prices of foodstuffs, fuel and other raw materials. This situation drives us all away from the Sustainable Development Goals. Countries that once presented themselves as leaders of the low carbon economy have now turned to dirty sources of energy. This is a serious setback for the environment.

We support all efforts to reduce the economic impacts of this crisis. But we do not believe that the best way is to adopt unilateral and selective sanctions, that are inconsistent with International Law. These measures have harmed the economic recovery and threatened human rights of vulnerable populations, including in European countries.

The solution to the conflict in Ukraine will only be achieved through negotiation and dialogue.

I make a plea to the parties, as well as to the entire international community: do not miss any opportunity to end the conflict and ensure peace. The stability, security and prosperity of humankind are at serious risk if the conflict continues or spreads.

Mr. President,

I have been an unconditional supporter of freedom of speech. Moreover, under my administration, Brazil has made an effort to bring the right to freedom of religion to the core of the international human rights agenda. It is essential to ensure that everyone has the right to freely worship and practice their religious orientation, without discrimination. I would like to inform here that Brazil is ready to welcome the Catholic priests and nuns who have suffered cruel persecution by the dictatorial regime in Nicaragua, Brazil repudiates religious persecution wherever it occurs in the world.

Other fundamental values for Brazilian society, with implications to the human rights agenda, are the defense of the family, the right to life since conception, the right to self-defense and the repudiation of gender ideology.

I would also like to stress the priority we have attached to women's rights. Our effort to sanction over 70 legal norms on the subject since the beginning of my administration, in 2019, is proof of this commitment.

We fight violence against women very strictly. This is part of our broader priority of ensuring public security for all Brazilians

The results appear in our government: a 7.7% drop in the number of femicides and a decrease in the general number of deaths by homicide. In 2017, there were 30 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. Now there are 19.

Violence in rural areas has also plummeted at the same time as land tenure by the most in need has increased. In my administration, we delivered 400,000 rural property deeds, 80% of which were given to women.

We work in Brazil so that we have strong and independent women, so they can get where they want to be. First Lady Michelle Bolsonaro has brought new meaning to volunteer work since 2019, with special attention to people with disabilities and rare diseases.

Mr President, Mr Secretary-General, Heads of State and Government, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This September 7th, Brazil completed 200 years of history as an independent nation. Millions of Brazilians took to the streets, wearing the colors of their flag.

It was the largest civic demonstration in the history of our country, a people that believes in God, the Nation, the family and freedom.

Thank you very much.