



BRAZIL

**STATEMENT OF H. E. LUIZ INÁCIO LULA DA SILVA,
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL,
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 62ND SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, 25 September 2007.

(check against delivery)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Heads of State and Government,
Mr. Srgjam Kerim, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations,
Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations,
Delegates,

I congratulate you, Mr. Secretary-General, on having been chosen for such high office within the international system.

I welcome your decision to encourage high-level debates on the extremely grave issue of climate change. It is most appropriate that this discussion take place here at the United Nations.

Let us not delude ourselves: if the groundwork of global development is not rebuilt, the risks of unprecedented environmental and human catastrophe will grow.

We must overcome the apparently pragmatic and sophisticated notion, which is actually anachronistic, predatory and senseless, that profits and wealth can grow forever, at any cost.

There are prices that humanity cannot afford to pay, at the risk of destroying the material and spiritual foundations of our collective existence. At the risk of self-destruction.

The preservation of life must prevail over mindless greed.

The world will not correct its irresponsible relationship with nature, however, until we change the way development relates to social justice.

If we want to salvage our common heritage, a new and more balanced distribution of wealth is needed, both internationally and within each country.

Social equity is our best weapon against the planet's degradation.

Each one of us must do our part.

It is unacceptable that the cost of the irresponsibility of a privileged few be shouldered by the dispossessed of the earth.

Highly industrialized countries can and must set the example. Full compliance with their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol is indispensable.

This is not enough, however. We need to set more ambitious goals for 2012 onwards. And we should take strong action to ensure universal accession to the Protocol.

Developing countries must also help in combating climate change. We need clear national strategies to hold governments accountable to their peoples.

Brazil will soon launch its National Plan to Combat Climate Change.

The Amazon forest is one of the areas most vulnerable to global warming. But the threats cover all continents. They range from greater desertification to the outright disappearance of territories or even of entire countries, lost to rising sea levels.

Brazil has undertaken major efforts to minimize the impact of climate change. Suffice it to say that over the last three years we have cut in half the rate of deforestation in the Amazon region.

Results like that come as no surprise. Brazil will under no circumstance abdicate either its sovereignty or its responsibilities in the Amazon. These recent achievements derive from an increasing presence of the Brazilian state in the region, fostering sustainable development with economic, social, educational and cultural benefits for its more than 20 million inhabitants.

I am convinced that our experience can enrich similar endeavours in other countries. In Nairobi, Brazil proposed the adoption of economic and financial incentives to reduce deforestation on a global scale.

We must also increase South-South cooperation, while promoting innovative modalities of joint action with developed countries. This is how we can materialize the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities.

It is very important to adopt an integrated political approach to the environmental agenda as a whole. Brazil hosted the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the "Rio-92". We need to review what has been achieved since then, and set a new course of action. I propose that we hold a new Conference, in 2012, to be hosted by Brazil, the Rio +20 Conference.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We will not overcome the terrible impacts of climate change until humanity changes its patterns of energy production and consumption.

The world urgently needs to develop a new energy matrix, in which bio-fuels will play a vital role.

Bio-fuels significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. With its increased and more efficient use of ethanol, over the past thirty years Brazil has kept 644 million tons of CO₂ from being emitted into the atmosphere.

Bio-fuels can be much more than a clean-energy alternative.

They can open up excellent opportunities for over a hundred poor and developing countries in Latin America, Asia and, especially, Africa.

They can enhance energy autonomy, without costly investments. They can create jobs and income and promote family farming. They can help balance trade deficits, by reducing imports and generating surplus exportable crops.

Brazil's experience over three decades has shown that bio-fuel production does not affect food security.

Sugarcane crops cover just 1% of the country's arable land, and yields continue to rise.

People do not go hungry around the world for lack of food, but rather for lack of income, which afflicts almost a billion men, women and children.

It is entirely possible to combine bio-fuels with environmental protection and food production.

We will ensure that bio-fuel production will comply with all social and environmental guarantees.

Our Government has decided to implement a complete agro-ecological zoning of the country, in order to identify farmland best suited to produce bio-fuels.

Brazilian bio-fuels will reach the world market with a seal of assurance for their social, labor and environmental quality.

In 2008, Brazil is set to host an international conference on bio-fuels that will lay the foundations for wide-ranging global cooperation. I invite all countries to participate.

Sustainable development is not just an environmental issue; it is also a social challenge.

We are making Brazil less unequal and more dynamic. The country is growing again, creating jobs and distributing income. This time, opportunities are being created for all. We are paying off a centuries-old social debt, while at the same time investing heavily in quality education, science and technology. We have honoured our commitment to Zero Hunger, by sweeping away this scourge from the lives of over 45 million people. We achieved the first Millennium Development Goal ten years ahead of schedule, as we cut extreme poverty by over a half. In the past two years, over 5 million Brazilians have been freed from extreme poverty.

Fighting hunger and poverty should be the concern of all peoples. A global society held back by growing income disparities is simply not viable. There will be no lasting peace if we do not progressively reduce inequality.

In 2004, we launched the Global Action Against Hunger and Poverty. Early results are encouraging, particularly the creation of the International Drug Purchase Facility. UNITAID has already achieved 45% price cuts in drugs used against AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, for the poorest countries of Africa. Time has come for us to give it a new push. We cannot allow ideas that so mobilized our countries to fade because of bureaucratic inertia.

The final defeat of poverty, however, demands more than international solidarity. It depends above all on new economic relations that no longer penalize poor countries. The WTO Doha Round should promote a true pact for development, by adopting fair and balanced rules for international trade.

Farm subsidies that make the rich richer and the poor poorer are no longer acceptable. We cannot accept agricultural protectionism that perpetuates dependency and underdevelopment.

Brazil will spare no effort for a successful conclusion of those negotiations, which must above all benefit the poorest countries.

Mr. President,

Building a new international order is no rhetorical turn of phrase; it is a matter of common sense. Brazil is proud of its contribution to South American integration, particularly through Mercosur. We are working to bring together peoples and regions. We seek to enhance political dialogue and economic links with the Arab World, Africa and Asia. And we do so without sacrificing our traditional partners.

Brazil has set up an innovative cooperation mechanism with India and South Africa - IBSA. Together we are working on specific projects to help least developed countries, such as Haiti and Guinea-Bissau.

We all agree on the need for increased participation of developing countries in the major international decision-making bodies, the UN Security Council, in particular. Time has come to move from words to action.

We appreciate recent proposals by President Sarkozy, to reform the Security Council with the inclusion of developing nations.

Review of decision-making processes within international financial institutions is also required.

Mr. President,

The United Nations is our best tool to deal with today's international challenges. It is through multilateral diplomacy that we find the way to foster peace and development.

Brazil's role, alongside other Latin America and Caribbean nations, in the MINUSTAH Stabilization Mission in Haiti highlights our efforts to strengthen multilateral institutions.

In Haiti, we are showing that peace and stability are built with democracy and social development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Walking into this building, UN delegates can admire a work of art that Brazil presented to the United Nations 50 years ago. I am referring to the murals that portray "War" and "Peace", painted by a great artist, Cândido Portinari.

The suffering so expressively portrayed in the mural on war brings to mind the UN's crucial responsibility in containing the risk of armed conflict.

The second mural reminds us that peace is much more than the absence of war. It implies well-being, health and respect for nature. It calls for social justice, freedom and overcoming the scourges of hunger and poverty.

It is not by mere chance that those who enter the building face the mural portraying "War" while those who leave see the mural depicting "Peace". The artist's message is simple, but powerful: transforming suffering into hope and war into peace is the essence of the United Nation's mission.

Brazil will continue to work to materialize these high expectations.

Thank you very much.