



BRAZIL

GENERAL DEBATE

Statement by
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at the General Debate of the 59th Session
of the General Assembly of the United Nations

(check against delivery)

Through Foreign Minister Jean Ping, of Gabon, I greet the representatives of all peoples gathered here today.

I fraternally salute Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who has been guiding the work of the United Nations with wisdom and devotion.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For the second time I address this universal assembly on behalf of Brazil.

I have a life-long commitment to those silenced by inequality, hunger and hopelessness.

To them, in the powerful words of Franz Fanon, the colonial past has bestowed a common legacy:

"If you so desire, take it: the freedom to starve to death".

Today, we are 191 Nation-States.

In the past, 125 of us were subjected to the oppression of a few powers, which originally occupied less than 2% of the globe.

The end of colonialism confirmed, in the political arena, the right of peoples to self-determination.

This Assembly is the highest expression of an international order based on the independence of nations.

Political transformation, however, has not been transposed to the economic and social fields. And history shows this will not happen spontaneously.

In 1820, the per capita income of the richest nation in the world was five times greater than that of the poorest one. Today, this disparity reaches 80 to 1.

The former subjects have become perpetual debtors in the international economic system.

Protectionist barriers and other obstacles to balanced trade, aggravated by the concentration of investments, knowledge and technology, have followed colonial domination.

A powerful and all-encompassing invisible cogwheel runs the system from afar. It often revokes democratic decisions, shrivels the sovereignty of States, and imposes itself to elected governments. It demands that legitimate national development projects be renounced.

The perverse logic of draining the needy to irrigate the bountiful still stands.

In the past decades, an ill-inclusive and asymmetric globalization has deepened the devastating legacy of poverty and social regression, which now bursts into the agenda of the 21st Century.

Today, in 54 countries the per capita income is lower than what it was ten years ago.

In 34 countries, life expectancy has decreased.

In 14, a greater number of children starve to death.

In Africa, where colonialism resisted until the twilight of the twentieth century, 200 million people are caught in an existence marked by hunger, disease and neglect, to which the world has become oblivious, numbed by the routine of the distant suffering of others.

Lack of basic sanitation has killed more children in the past decade than all military conflicts since the end of World War II.

Love cannot spring from cruelty. Peace will never rise from poverty and hunger.

The hatred and senselessness that spread throughout the world feed on despair, on the absolute lack of hope for many peoples.

This year alone, more than 1,700 people have died as a consequence of terrorist attacks around the world; in Madrid, Baghdad, Jakarta...

Those are tragedies that must be added to so many others: in India, in the Middle East, in the United States, and, more recently, the barbaric slaughter of children in Beslan.

Mankind is losing the fight for peace.

Only the enlightened values of Humanism, applied with clarity of mind and determination, will be able to counter barbarism.

The situation imposes on peoples and leaders of the world, a new sense of collective and individual responsibility.

If peace is our goal, it is our task to build it.

If we wish to eliminate violence, we must address its deep-rooted origins with the same resolve employed against the agents of hatred.

The path to lasting peace must encompass a new political and economic international order; one that extends to all countries real opportunities for economic and social development.

It therefore requires a reform of the global development model, as well as international institutions that are effectively democratic, based on multilateralism and on the acknowledgment of the rights and aspirations of all peoples.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The tortured look in the eyes of the outcast should do more to stir our conscience than the no less dramatic statistics on social inequality.

Their gaze calls upon us for a future of hope.

Just as our destinies are now intertwined, every conflict gives rise to global effects.

As the sky is shown to us from within iron bars, let us not mistake the cage for freedom.

We have the scientific knowledge and the productive scale necessary for resolving the global economic and social challenges.

Today, nature and progress can be reconciled by means of development models that are ethically and environmentally sustainable.

Nature is not a museum of untouchable relics; but neither should it be further degraded by human and environmental exploitation in search for wealth at any price.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

A generation is remembered not only for what it accomplished, but also for what it failed to accomplish.

If resources are so much greater than our achievements, how can we explain to the generations to come why we did so little, when so much was within our reach?

A neglectful civilization is condemned to wither like a body without a soul.

The exhortations from the great "New Deal" leader Franklin Delano Roosevelt still resonate with inescapable pertinence.

What is needed today is "bold, persistent experimentation".

"The only thing we need to fear is fear itself".

Such boldness does not stem from instinct, but rather from political courage. Not from irresponsible willfulness, but rather from daring ability to reform.

What sets civilization apart from barbarism is the political architecture that promotes peaceful change and advances social and economic life by means of democratic consensus.

If we fail against hunger and poverty, what else could bring us together?

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I believe the time has come to clearly state that for just and sustainable development to return, there is need for an important shift in the financial flows from international multilateral organisms.

Such organisms were created to provide for solutions, but, by adopting excessive rigor, sometimes they themselves become part of the problem.

The issue is to adjust their focus to development, thus restoring their original objective.

The International Monetary Fund should be able to provide the guarantee and the liquidity which are necessary for productive investments - especially in infrastructure, housing and sanitation - and which can also restore the poor countries' capacity to pay.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Brazilian foreign policy, in all its dimensions, seeks to join other nations in efforts aimed at the establishment of a world of justice and peace.

Yesterday, in a historic meeting, more than 60 world leaders gathered to give new impetus to international action against hunger and poverty.

I firmly believe that the process launched will heighten the level of the fight against world poverty. As we advance in this new alliance, we shall have better means to attain the Millennium Development Goals, especially with regard to the eradication of hunger.

It was in this same spirit of contributing to the reduction of poverty that Brazil, India and South Africa established, last year, the IBSA Fund for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation. Our first project will be implemented in Guinea Bissau.

HIV/AIDS and its nefarious connection to hunger and poverty, is also a priority. Our International Cooperation Program with other developing countries in combating HIV/AIDS is now operational in six countries, and will soon be extended to another three.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am fully aware of the serious security problems that pose a threat to international stability.

There seems to be no perspective for improvement in the critical situation in the Middle East.

In this and in other conflicts, the international community cannot allow violence – whether sponsored by States or other actors – to prevail over democratic dialogue.

The Palestinian people are still far from achieving the self-determination they are entitled to.

The profound causes of our insecurity are complex. The necessary fight against terrorism cannot be conceived strictly in military terms.

We must develop strategies that encompass both solidarity and firmness, while strictly respecting international law.

On this basis, Brazil and other Latin-American countries have responded to the call of the United Nations and engaged in the stabilization efforts in Haiti. If we seek new paradigms in international relations, we cannot shirk from addressing the concrete situations that emerge.

The promotion of equitable development is crucial to addressing the centuries-old causes of Haitian instability.

In spite of its grave social and economic problems, a culture of peace prevails in our region. Our continent is undergoing a period of democratic coming of age, with increasing involvement of a vibrant civil society.

We have learned that development and social justice must be sought with determination and openness to dialogue.

Instability bouts in our region have been dealt with in strict respect of institutions.

Whenever requested, and within its means and capabilities, Brazil has given its contribution to help friendly countries overcome crises that have threatened their constitutional order and stability.

We do not stand for interference in domestic affairs, but neither can we condone omission and indifference in face of situations that affect our neighbors.

Brazil is committed to the establishment of a politically stable, prosperous and united South

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Brazil is committed to the success of the International Climate Change Regime. We are developing renewable sources of energy. That is why we shall continue to actively strive for the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol.

South America contains around 50% of world biodiversity. We stand for combating biopiracy as well as for the negotiation of an international regime for sharing the benefits derived from the utilization of genetic resources and traditional knowledge.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I reiterate what I stated from this very rostrum last year: only an international order based on multilateralism can promote peace and the sustainable development of nations.

It must be based on a constructive dialogue among different cultures and world visions.

No organ is better suited than the UN for ensuring the world's convergence towards common goals.

The Security Council is the only source of legitimate action in the field of international peace and security.

But its composition must reflect today's reality – not perpetuate the post-World War II era.

Reform proposals that simply dress the current structure in new clothes and do not provide for an increase in the number of permanent members are manifestly insufficient.

The difficulties inherent to any reform process must not make us lose sight of its urgency.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There will be neither security nor stability in the world until a more just and democratic order is established.

The community of nations must give a clear and urgent response to this challenge.

We can find such a response in the wise words of the Prophet Isaiah:

"The fruit of righteousness will be peace".

Thank you