



BRAZIL

**STATEMENT BY H. E. MR. MICHEL TEMER,
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL**

**OPENING OF THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 72ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, 19 September 2017.

(check against delivery)
Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations,

Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of State, Government, and Delegations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election. You can count on the support of the Brazilian delegation.

I am also pleased to greet the Secretary-General in our common language. Mr. Secretary-General, I once again wish you enduring success during your tenure.

Mr. President,

The challenges faced by the United Nations since its creation have been manifold. And we all know that the aspirations of its founders have not been fully realized.

But the truth is that, along these more than seventy years of existence, the UN has always represented and continues to represent hope. The truth is that the UN has always represented and continues to represent the possibility of a fairer world. A world of peace and prosperity. A world in which no one should face discrimination, oppression and misery. A world in which production and consumption patterns are compatible with the well-being of the present and future generations.

The UN has established itself as a privileged arena to build this world to which we aspire. And to build this world we need method and realism, without ever losing sight of our ideals.

At this time in history, with such distinct features of uncertainty and instability, there is a clear need for more diplomacy and more negotiation – never less. We need more multilateralism and dialogue – never less. We certainly need more of the United Nations – and a United Nations that is increasingly legitimate and effective.

It is for this very reason that we uphold, along with many other countries, the imperative of reforming the United Nations. It is particularly necessary to enlarge the Security Council to adapt it to the realities of the 21st century. It is urgent to listen to the will of the overwhelming majority of this Assembly.

Mr. President,

One should not assume that ideas that have proved themselves wrong in the past may now yield good results.

We reject exacerbated nationalism. We do not believe in protectionism as a solution for economic challenges – challenges that require effective responses to the root causes of social exclusion.

The pursuit of development, in all its dimensions, should guide our collective action.

Brazil's commitment to sustainable development is a deep-rooted one. It permeates our public policies and our actions abroad. During our chairmanship of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, for instance, we placed the Agenda 2030 as the axis of our activities. In all fronts, Brazil tries to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Combating climate change is a necessary part of this contribution. We stand committed to supporting the Paris Agreement. Last year, here in New York, I deposited the Brazilian instrument of ratification of the Agreement. In this area, there is no possibility to postpone action. We must act now.

My country – and I say it proudly – is leading the way towards a low-carbon economy. Clean and renewable energy sources correspond to more than 40% of the Brazilian energy matrix, three times more than the global average. We are leaders in hydroelectricity and bioenergy.

Brazil is proud to have the world's highest tropical forest cover. Deforestation is a matter of concern, especially in the Amazon. We have been drawing attention and resources to this issue. And the good news is that last year's first available data point to a reduction of more than 20% in deforestation in that region. We are back on the right track and on this track we shall remain.

Another key factor of development is trade. We are committed to an open and rules-based international trade system, with the WTO and its Dispute Settlement Mechanism at its center.

At the Ministerial Conference to be held in Buenos Aires, in December, we will face, once again, longstanding issues, that harm developing countries above all. We should make progress in market access to agricultural products and towards the elimination of agricultural subsidies that distort trade. We believe that, together, we will succeed in achieving concrete results.

All these efforts contribute to the accomplishment of our main objective: to ensure opportunities for all, everywhere.

Mr. President,

Tomorrow I will have the honor of signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Brazil was among the drafters of the Treaty. It will be a historical moment.

We reiterate our call for the nuclear powers to undertake additional disarmament commitments.

Brazil expresses itself with the authority of a country that, while mastering nuclear technology, willingly gave up possessing nuclear weapons. Brazil pronounces itself with the authority of a country whose own Constitution prohibits the use of nuclear technology for non-peaceful purposes. A country that was at the origin of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which, half a century ago, established the denuclearization of Latin America and the Caribbean. A country that, along with its South American and African neighbors, also turned the South

Atlantic into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Lastly, a country that – along with Argentina – created a binational mechanism of nuclear safeguards that became a reference for the world.

While welcoming the achievement represented by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we must acknowledge that there are still issues in the agenda of peace and security that give rise to serious apprehension.

The recent nuclear and missile tests on the Korean Peninsula constitute a serious threat to which none of us can be indifferent. Brazil condemns these acts with the utmost vehemence. It is urgent to seek a peaceful resolution to a situation whose consequences are unimaginable.

In the Middle East, talks between Israel and Palestine remain at a standstill. As a friend of Palestinians and Israelis, Brazil continues to support the solution of two States living side by side in peace and security, within internationally recognized and mutually agreed borders.

In Syria, despite the de-escalation of recent months, the conflict still engenders dramatic humanitarian consequences. The solution we must pursue is essentially political – and can no longer be postponed.

Other wars cause intolerable suffering that goes beyond borders, such as in Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Mali and the Central African Republic.

Let us visit the camps for refugees and displaced persons in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Kenya. Let us listen to the stories of those who have lost fathers, mothers, sons and daughters. These families have been engulfed by the irrationality of disputes that seem to know no limits. Disputes that result in violations of humanitarian law with an unacceptable frequency.

Our Secretary-General is right: we should reinvigorate the mechanisms of conflict prevention. Prevention is about diplomacy. It is about development.

It is crucial to recognize the nexus between security and development. This recognition has guided Brazil's participation in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. As MINUSTAH concludes its mandate, the international community must maintain its commitment to the Haitian people. Brazil certainly will.

In South America, Colombia is ending a more than fifty-year-long conflict. Brazil will continue to be a resolute partner in this effort.

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

From Barcelona to Kabul, from Alexandria to Manchester, repeated demonstrations of cowardly violence do not let us forget the evil of terrorism. This evil feeds on fundamentalism and exclusion, and no country is immune to it.

Unity is crucial, particularly in view of the capacity of terrorism to adapt to new times and grounds. We will not be frightened by terror nor will we allow it to weaken our belief in freedom and tolerance.

In many of our countries, transnational crime also undermines the security and tranquility of individuals and families. Only through coordination and collaboration will we effectively combat trafficking in persons, arms and drugs, as well as money laundering.

It was in this spirit that Brazil organized last November a ministerial meeting of South American countries on border security. And it is in this spirit that we will continue cooperating with countries around the world to tackle organized crime.

Mr. President,

Regrettably, human rights violations remain frequent throughout the world - of civil and political rights, as well as of economic, social and cultural rights. We must ensure that every individual anywhere can live with dignity, according to his or her convictions and choices.

Brazil is a country of deep-rooted liberties, which has been built on a foundation of diversity. Diversity of ethnicity, culture, creed, and thought. More than anything, it is from this diversity that we draw our strength as a nation. We reject racism, xenophobia and all other forms of discrimination.

We are party to the main international human rights treaties and members of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the International Criminal Court. We have extended a standing invitation to UN special rapporteurs.

Today we have one of the most modern refugee laws in the world. We have just updated our immigration law, guided by the principle of humanitarian reception. We have granted humanitarian visas to Haitian and Syrian citizens. And we have welcomed thousands of migrants and refugees from Venezuela.

The human rights situation in Venezuela continues to deteriorate. We are on the side of the Venezuelan people, with whom we share a fraternal bond. In South America, there is no longer room for alternatives to democracy. This is what we have stated in Mercosur, and this is what we will continue to uphold.

Mr. President,

Brazil is going through a moment of decisive transformation.

With structural reforms, we are overcoming an unprecedented economic crisis. We are recovering our fiscal balance. And with it, the credibility of our economy. We are once again creating jobs. We are recovering the State's capacity to implement social policies indispensable to a country like ours.

We have learned and are applying this elementary rule in practice: without fiscal responsibility, social responsibility is nothing more than empty words.

The new Brazil that is emerging from these reforms is a country more open to the world.

This is the attitude of openness that we bring to the UN and that we take to Mercosur, to the G20, to BRICS, to IBSA and to all fora in which we participate. This is the openness we embrace with each of our partners - in our region and beyond.

South America is our immediate neighborhood. We strive for a prosperous and democratic South America. We are pursuing a growing convergence of integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean. A significant example is the rapprochement between Mercosur and the Pacific Alliance. Together, the countries of the two groups form a market of almost 470 million people and account for over 90% of Latin America's GDP.

Africa is a continent to which we have strong historical and cultural ties, with which we want increasingly more cooperation initiatives and partnerships for development.

With Europe, where we cultivate old friendships, we intend to increase trade and investment flows.

And in Asia Pacific - the most dynamic hub of the global economy - we are intensifying our relationships with traditional partners and opening new fronts of exchange.

This is our foreign policy: a truly universalist one.

And, Mr. President, the most universal of the forums we have is this General Assembly.

Here we benefit from the most plural set of perspectives. Here we find the parameters and norms for respectful coexistence. And here we must become more united nations - for the development of our peoples, for the dignity of our citizens, and for the security of our planet.

Thank you very much.