



BRASIL

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the
Federative Republic of Brazil, at the General Debate of the 61st
Session of the United Nations General Assembly.**

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(check against delivery)

Madam President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

When I first took the floor from this rostrum in 2003, I stressed the need for urgent and relentless action to fight the scourge of hunger and poverty in the world.

This is what we are doing in Brazil.

We have combined economic stability with social inclusion policies.

The standard of living of Brazilians has improved. Employment and income have grown.

The purchasing power of the minimum wage has increased.

Our resources are scarce, but even so we have achieved surprising results.

The 'Family Stipend', at the core of our 'Zero Hunger' program, assures a basic income to over 11 million Brazilian families.

Well-fed people can enhance their dignity, their health and their learning capacity.

Putting resources into social programs is not expenditure.

It is investment.

If with so little we have done so much in Brazil, imagine what could have been done on a global scale, if the fight against hunger and poverty were a real priority for the international community.

Where there is hunger there is no hope. There is only desolation and pain.

Hunger nurtures violence and fanaticism.

A world where people starve will never be safe.

The sheer size of the task will not daunt us, especially if we are not alone.

All here know that some 840 million human beings – nearly one out of seven in the planet – do not have enough to eat.

50 billion additional dollars each year are needed to reach the Millennium Development Goals on time.

The international community can afford it.

On the positive side, just think, for instance, of the hundreds of billions of dollars invested to move forward the full integration of Eastern European countries into the European Union.

On the other hand, think of the cost of wars and other conflicts. All here know that that the second Gulf War may also have cost hundreds of billions of dollars to date.

With much less we could change the sad reality of a large share of the world's population.

We could alleviate the plight of these people and lift them out of destitution. We could save millions of lives.

Even strong as they are today, rich countries should have no illusion: nobody is safe in a world of injustices.

War will never bring security.

War can only generate monsters: bitterness, intolerance, fundamentalism, and the damaging denial of current hegemonies.

The poor must be given reasons to live, not to kill or die.

Peoples' greatness lies not in bellicosity, but in humanism.

And there is no true humanism without respect for the other.

There are, actually, those different from us, but not less dignified for this reason, not less precious, not entitled to a lesser right to happiness, creatures as we are from the same creator.

There will only be security in a world where all have the right to economic and social development.

The true path to peace is shared development.

If we do not want war to go global, justice must go global.

This is why, with the serene conviction of a man who has dedicated his life to fight peacefully for the rights of the working people, I say to you: the search for a new world order, fairer and more democratic, it is not only in poor countries' or in emerging nations' interest.

It is also or even more in rich countries' interest, as long as they have eyes to watch and ears to hear, as long as they do not make the mistake of ignoring the hideous cry of the excluded.

Madam President,

We have seen some progress in the last few years. At the Meeting of World Leaders in 2004, we launched the 'Action against Hunger and Poverty'.

Together, we were able to achieve a strong international engagement around this issue. Our collective efforts have begun to bear fruit.

We are putting into practice innovative mechanisms such as a 'solidarity levy on international air tickets.

Hunger and disease walk hand-in-hand.

We have therefore undertaken, together with other Governments, the creation of an International Drug Purchase Facility to combat AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

This initiative will provide new sources of funds and facilitate access to medicine at lower costs. We cannot shirk from our duties.

I salute the leaders of vision engaged in this war. The war against the debasement of human beings and hopelessness.

This is the only war in which final victory will mean a triumph for all of humanity.

Madam President,

The fight against hunger and poverty is also predicated on the creation of a world order that accords priority to social and economic development.

There will only be permanent solutions to destitution when poorer countries are able to advance through their own efforts.

Once International Trade is free and fair, it will be a valuable tool for generating wealth, distributing income and creating jobs.

It is essential that we break the bonds of protectionism.

Subsidies granted by richer countries, particularly in agriculture, are oppressive shackles that hold back progress and doom poor countries to backwardness.

Time and again I must repeat that while trade-distorting support in developed countries amounts to the outrageous sum of 1 billion dollars a day, 900 million people get by on less than a dollar a day in both poor and developing countries.

This situation is politically and morally untenable.

The only thing worse than inaction stemming from ignorance is neglect rooted in accommodation.

The old geography of international trade must be profoundly reshaped.

Together with its partners in the G-20, Brazil is engaged in this task.

The creation of the G-20 has changed the dynamics of negotiations at the World Trade Organization.

Until recently developing countries played only peripheral roles in the most important negotiations.

Eliminating the barriers that keep poor countries from developing is the ethical duty of the international community.

It is also the best way to ensure prosperity and security for all.

For the first time in the history of the GATT/WTO system, the word 'development' appears in the title of a Round of trade negotiations.

But the Doha Development Agenda, which will decide the future of the world trade system, is now in crisis.

If successful, WTO negotiations will help pull many people out of extreme poverty.

Farmers who cannot compete against multi-billion-dollar subsidies will have a chance to prosper at last.

Poor African countries will finally be able to export agricultural products.

If the Round fails, the fallout will go far beyond trade.

The credibility of the WTO system itself will be jeopardized, with negative repercussions in both political and social fields.

Scourges such as organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism will find fertile ground to proliferate.

I have called on world leaders to rise to their responsibility.

The importance attached to this issue at the latest G-8 Summit has not yielded practical results yet.

This generation has a unique opportunity to show the world that selfish interests will not prevail over the common good.

History will not absolve us of our omission.

Madam President,

Fair trade, grounded on a solid consensus and on a transparent WTO, aware of the needs of developing countries, is one of the pillars of the world order we uphold.

In the field of international peace and security, another pillar is the United Nations.

Brazil is a staunch backer of international organizations as fora for cooperation, and dialogue.

There is no more effective way to bring states together, to keep the peace, to protect human rights, to promote sustainable development and to build negotiated solutions to common problems.

Conflicts such as that of the Middle East continue to challenge the authority of the United Nations.

The recent crisis in Lebanon exposed the Organization to a dangerous erosion of credibility.

The effectiveness of the United Nations is being seriously questioned.

Unable to act when needed, the Security Council is accused of being morose.

World public opinion is impatient in the face of such incomprehensible difficulties.

Deaths of innocent civilians, including women and children, are a shock to all of us.

In Brazil, millions of Lebanese and Israelites live in a harmonious and integrated way.

Thus, Brazil's interest in the Middle East arises from a deep and objective social reality in our own country.

Aside from the countries directly involved, Middle Eastern issues have always been dealt with exclusively by the great powers.

They have achieved no solution so far.

One might then ask: is it not time to call a broad, UN-sponsored Conference, with the participation of countries of the region and others that could contribute through their capacity and successful experience, in living peacefully with differences?

Brazil believes in dialogue.

For this reason we held a South America-Arab Countries Summit in 2005.

We also have good relations with Israel, whose birth as a state came about when a Brazilian, Osvaldo Aranha, presided over the General Assembly.

Conflicts among nations are not solved only by money and weapons.

Ideas, values and feelings also have a place, particularly when based on real-life experience.

Madam President,

More than ever, the UN's authority needs to be strengthened.

We have already made significant progress, with the administrative reform process and the creation of both the Human Rights Council and the Peace Building Commission.

But the task will be left irreparably incomplete without changes in the Security Council, the body in charge of overseeing peace issues.

Along with the G-4 countries, Brazil holds that the expansion of the Security Council must envisage the entry of developing countries as permanent members. This would make that body more democratic, legitimate and representative.

The great majority of member-states agrees with this view and recognizes the urgency of this matter.

We cannot deal with new problems using outdated structures.

Sooner or later, Madam President, we must open the way to democratizing international decision-making bodies.

As the Secretary-General has said, we travel around the world preaching democracy to others.

We must now apply democracy to ourselves and show that there is effective representation in the political bodies of the United Nations.

Madam President,

South America is a priority for Brazilian foreign policy.

Our region is our home.

We are expanding the Mercosur and strengthening the South American Community of Nations.

The future of Brazil is linked to that of its neighbors.

A strong and united South America will contribute to the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean.

We also feel connected to the African continent by historical and cultural ties.

As the second largest black population in the world, we are committed to sharing Africa's challenges and destinies.

But regional matters are only part of the global problems we face.

The fight against hunger and poverty, the breakdown of the Doha Round and the stalemate in the Middle East are interconnected issues. The appropriate handling of these affairs requires trust in negotiated solutions at the multilateral level.

At this very moment, this trust has been shaken.

This is extremely serious.

The world order that it is our task to build must be based on criteria of justice and respect for international law.

This is the only way to achieve peace, development and genuine democratic coexistence within the community of nations.

There is no lack of resources.

What is missing is the political will to use them where they can make all the difference. Where they can then turn despair into joy and reason to live.

Thank you.