



BRAZIL

**STATEMENT BY H. E. LUIZ INÁCIO LULA DA SILVA,
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL,
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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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(check against delivery)

It is my great pleasure to greet the President of the General Assembly, my dear friend Miguel D'Escoto. I wish you full success in your mission.

This Assembly is being held at a particularly serious moment. An oft-foretold economic and financial crisis is now today's harsh reality.

The euphoria of speculators has spawned the anguish of entire peoples, in the wake of successive financial disasters that threaten the world's economy.

Indispensable interventions by state authorities have defied market fundamentalists and shown that this is a time for political decisions.

Only decisive action by governments, especially in countries at the heart of the crisis, will be able to control the disorder that has spread through the world's financial sector, with perverse impacts on the daily lives of millions of people.

A dearth of rules favors adventurers and opportunists, to the detriment of real companies and workers.

The great Brazilian economist Celso Furtado said we must not allow speculators' profits always to be privatized, while their losses are invariably socialized.

We must not allow the burden of the boundless greed of a few to be shouldered by all.

The economy is too serious an undertaking to be left in the hands of speculators. Ethics must also apply to the economy.

A crisis of such magnitude will not be overcome with palliative measures. Mechanisms for both prevention and control are needed to provide total transparency to international finance.

International economic institutions today have neither the authority nor the workable instruments they need to inhibit the anarchy of speculation. We must rebuild them on entirely new foundations.

The global nature of this crisis means that the solutions we adopt must also be global, and decided upon within legitimate, trusted multilateral fora, with no impositions.

The United Nations, as the world's largest multilateral arena, must issue a call for a vigorous response to the weighty threats we all face.

Yet there are other equally serious matters facing the world today.

One of them is the food crisis, which afflicts over a billion human beings.

The energy crisis is also getting worse every day.

As are the risks to world trade – if we fail to achieve an agreement at the Doha Round.

Plus the unrestrained degradation of the environment which lies behind so many natural calamities whose victims are overwhelmingly the poor.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fall of the Berlin Wall was expected to open possibilities for building a world of peace, free from the stigmas of the Cold War.

It is sad, though, to see other walls going up so fast.

Many of those who preach the free circulation of commodities and capital continue to fight the free movement of men and women, using nationalistic and even racist arguments that evoke unpleasant memories and fears, of times we thought were behind us.

A supposed “populist nationalism” that some try to identify and criticize in the South is being unabashedly practiced in developed countries.

The financial, food, energy, environmental and migratory crises – to say nothing of threats to peace in several regions of the world – reveal that the multilateral system must be overhauled to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Gradually, countries are moving beyond old conformist alignments with traditional centers. This new attitude, however, does not imply taking a stance of confrontation.

Simply by using direct dialogue with no intermediation by major powers, developing countries have stepped into new roles in designing a multipolar world, with examples such as the IBSA, the G-20 at the WTO, the summits between South America and Africa and between South America and Arab Countries and the BRIC countries.

A new political, economic and trade geography is being built in today's world.

While navigators in the past would look to the North Star, today we are trying to find our way looking at multiple dimensions of our planet. Now we often find our “North Star” in the South.

In my continent, the UNASUR was created last May, as the first treaty – after 200 years of Independence! – that congregates all South American countries.

This new political union will coordinate the region's countries in terms of infrastructure, energy, social policies, complementarities of production, finance and defense.

Gathered in Santiago, Chile just over a week ago, the Presidents of South America demonstrated the UNASUR's ability to respond quickly and effectively to complex situations, such as the one in our sister nation, Bolivia.

We supported its legitimately-elected government, its democratic institutions and its territorial integrity, and we issued a call for dialog as a path to peace and prosperity for the people of Bolivia.

Next December, in the State of Bahia, Brazil will host the first Summit of all of Latin America and the Caribbean on integration and development. This will be a high-level meeting, with no tutelage, based on Latin America's and the Caribbean's own outlooks.

All these efforts in the multilateral sphere are complemented by my country's solidarity initiatives with poorer nations, particularly in Africa.

I also wish to emphasize our commitment to Haiti, where we command the MINUSTAH troops and are helping reestablish peace. I renew my call for the solidarity of developed countries with Haiti, since implementation has fallen far short of the many promises.

Mr. President,

The strength of values must prevail over the value of strength.

Only legitimate and effective instruments can assure collective security.

The United Nations has spent 15 years discussing the reform of its Security Council. Today's structure has been frozen for six decades and does not relate to the challenges of today's world. Its distorted form of representation stands between us and the multilateral world to which we aspire.

Therefore I am much encouraged by the General Assembly's decision to launch negotiations in the near future on the reform of the Security Council.

It is also multilateralism that must guide us toward solutions to the complex problems of global warming, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Brazil has not shirked its responsibilities. Our energy matrix is increasingly clean.

Today's food and energy crises are deeply interlinked.

The inflation of food prices is affected not only by climatic factors and speculation in agricultural commodities; it is also driven by rising oil prices, which affect the prices of fertilizers and of transportation.

Attempts to tie high food prices to the dissemination of biofuels do not stand up to an objective analysis of reality.

Brazil's experience demonstrates – and this could be the case for countries similar to ours – that sugar-cane ethanol and biodiesel production reduce our dependency on fossil fuels, create jobs, regenerate degraded land and are fully compatible with expanding food production.

We plan to intensify all aspects of this discussion at the World Conference on biofuels we have organized to be held in November, in the city of São Paulo.

My obsession with the hunger problem explains my ongoing efforts, along with other world leaders, to reach a positive conclusion to the Doha Round. We are still pushing for an agreement to reduce scandalous farm subsidies in rich countries.

A successful Doha Round will have a very positive impact on food production, particularly in developing countries.

Mr. President,

Four years ago, along with several world leaders, I launched here in New York the International Action against Hunger and Poverty. Our proposal, then and now, has been to adopt innovative funding mechanisms.

The UNITAID Drug Purchase Facility is one early result of that initiative, helping to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in several African countries.

But it is not enough. We still have a long way to go if we want humanity to actually achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

In December we will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, paying tribute with much more than mere formalities.

That document expresses inalienable commitments that challenge us all. As Governments, we have to go beyond upholding the Declaration with rhetoric. We are called upon to fight for the values proclaimed six decades ago. We have to make them a reality in our own countries and around the world.

Mr. President,

Today's Brazil is very different from what it was in 2003, when I became President of my country and stood for the first time before this General Assembly.

Our Government and society have taken decisive steps to transform the lives of Brazilians, creating nearly 10 million formal jobs, distributing income and wealth, improving public services, lifting 9 million people out of extreme poverty, and bringing another 20 million into the middle class.

All this in an environment of strong growth, economic stability, lower external vulnerability and, above all, stronger democracy with the intense participation of our people.

In the year when we commemorate the hundredth birthday of the great Brazilian Josué de Castro – FAO's first Director General and a pioneer in the studies concerning the problem of hunger in the world – it is worth our time to re-read his warning:

"It is no longer possible to sit back and let a region go hungry, without the entire world suffering the consequences."

I am proud to state that Brazil is overcoming hunger and poverty.

Mr. President,

I reiterate the optimism that I expressed here five years ago.

We are much greater than the crises that threaten us.

We have the heart, the right-mindedness and the will it takes to overcome any adversity.

More than ever, this is the spirit of Brazilians.

Thank you very much.