

Brazil independence day

Playing a key role on world stage



Celso Amorim
MINISTER OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Seven years ago, many reacted with skepticism when talks emerged about the need to make changes in the world economic geography and that Brazil and other countries were ready to play a more significant role in the World Trade Organization (WTO) or gain permanent seats on the U.N. Security Council.

Both the world and Brazil have changed quite rapidly. Some long-held past assumptions have now yielded to factual evidence. In comparison with the developed world, developing countries have presented higher economic growth, thus becoming central actors in the world economy.

Greater South-South coordination — at the WTO, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations and new coalitions, such as the BRIC Group (Brazil, Russia, India, China) — has raised the voices of countries that were once relegated to a secondary position. The more the developing countries discuss and cooperate among themselves, the more their voices will be heard by the rich countries. The recent financial crisis made it even clearer that the world can no longer be governed by a club made up of just a few.

Brazil has decisively sought to play its role in this new framework. Seven and a half years into President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's administration, the perception of Brazil abroad is quite different. It is undeniable that, today, Brazil — as well as a new group of countries — has increasingly earned influence in the discussions about some of the main topics in the international agenda, from climate change to trade, from finance to peace and security.

These countries bring about new perspectives to global problems and have contributed toward a new international balance.

In the case of Brazil, this transformation in perception was due primarily to changes

that took place in our economic, social and political realities. Progress achieved on many fronts — from macroeconomic stability to redeeming our social debt — has made Brazil more stable and less unfair. President Lula's personal attributes, as well as his direct involvement in international issues, have helped take Brazil's contributions to major debates in the international agenda.

It was in this context that Brazil developed its comprehensive and proactive foreign policy. We sought to build coalitions that have gone beyond traditional alliances and relations — which we strove to maintain and enhance, such as in the establishment of a Strategic Partnership with the European Union and a Global Partnership Dialogue with the United States.

Significant growth in our exports to other developing countries and the creation of mechanisms for dialogue and coordination, such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUL aka UNASUR), the G-20 within the WTO, the IBSA Dialogue Forum (India, Brazil and South Africa), and BRIC reflect this trend toward a global foreign policy that excludes narrow notions of what the international role of countries with the characteristics of Brazil

could and should be.

The basis for this new foreign policy was the increased integration of South America. One of the great assets Brazil has on the international arena is its harmonious relations with its neighbors, starting with our intense relationship with Argentina. From day one, President Lula's administration has undertaken efforts toward integrating the South American continent through trade, infrastructure and political dialogue.

In practice, the Mercosul (Mercosur)-Andean Community agreement established a free-trade zone encompassing the whole of South America. The physical integration of the continent has seen remarkable progress, linking the Atlantic and the Pacific. Our efforts to create a South-American community resulted in the creation of a new entity, UNASUL (UNASUR).

Building on a more integrated South America, Brazil engaged in creating mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation with countries in other regions, based on the perception that international reality could no longer afford the alienation of the developing world. The creation of the G-20 within the WTO, at the Cancun Ministerial Meeting in 2003, marked the coming of age of countries from the South, transforming once and for all the decision-making process in trade negotiations.

The IBSA, in its turn, fulfilled the aspirations for coordination among three major multiethnic and multicultural democracies, which have



Unfurled: A large flag of Brazil is displayed in Brasilia, the capital and fourth-largest city, underscoring the convergence of national ideals in the heart of the country. EMBASSY OF BRAZIL

much to say to the world about upholding tolerance and reconciling development with democracy. In addition to political coordination and cooperation among the three countries, the IBSA has become a model for projects benefiting poorer nations, thus demonstrating in practice that solidarity is not an attribute of the rich.

We have also held summits between South American and African countries (ASA) as well as with Arab countries (ASPA). Taking into account their specific complementary natures, we have designed policies and built bridges connecting regions that were far apart. This political move re-

sulted in remarkable progress in economic relations. Brazilian trade with Arab countries grew four-fold in seven years. Trade with Africa increased five-fold, to more than \$26 billion, surpassing trade with traditional partners such as Germany and Japan.

These new coalitions are helping to change the world. In the economic arena, the replacement of the G-7 with the G-20 as the main international body setting the course of production and international finance constitutes evidence that decisions regarding the world economy lack legitimacy and effectiveness in the absence of emerging countries. Moreover, in the field of in-

ternational peace and security, Brazil and Turkey were able to persuade Iran to take on the commitments provided for in the Tehran Declaration. This makes clear that new perspectives and approaches are necessary to tackle issues previously dealt with by the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council exclusively. Despite initial resistance to an initiative nurtured outside the restricted circle of nuclear powers, we are certain that the course of the dialogue indicated therein will serve as the basis for future negotiations and a final solution for that issue.

Good foreign policy requires prudence. But it also requires boldness. It should not be shy or demonstrate an inferiority complex. It is usual to hear that countries should act in accordance with their means, which is almost too obvious, but the greatest mistake one could make is to underestimate their possibilities.

For almost eight years now, Brazil has acted with boldness and, like other developing countries, has changed its place in the world. Today, such countries are regarded, even by occasional critics, as actors bearing increasing responsibilities, entitled to play a role that is ever more central to the decisions that affect the destiny of the planet.



Lush greenery: The Amazon Rain Forest, large parts of which remain completely unexplored, is one of the most biodiverse regions in the world. EMBASSY OF BRAZIL

A year that holds special meaning

Luiz Augusto de Castro Neves
AMBASSADOR OF BRAZIL

On Sept. 7, Brazil commemorates the 188th anniversary of our independence, in a year that holds a very special meaning for us Brazilians.



In the coming month of October, the Brazilian citizens will, once again, freely exercise their political rights. In these general elections, the Brazilian people will cast their votes for a new president, as well as governors of all states and parliamentarians for the National Congress and state assemblies.

For more than two decades now, Brazilian elections have been carried out peacefully and under the rule of law. Since 1996, the employment of safe electronic ballots has been successfully implemented in all parts of our territory, from the modern financial districts of Sao Paulo up to the most remote regions deep into the Amazon rain forest.

In a country that holds democratic principles in the highest regard, the general elections represent a huge celebration in which more than 130

million voters take part. All segments of our society will be intensively mobilized until we know, shortly after the end of balloting, the names of the men and women that will govern for the next four years.

Whoever is declared the winner will have the huge responsibility of leading the world's eighth-largest economy, with a steadily growing gross domestic product (GDP) of around \$2 trillion, which has accepted the challenge of hosting two of the world's biggest events still to come in the present decade: the 2014 FIFA World Cup soccer tournament and the 2016 Olympic Games.

In what represents one of our most important recent achievements, Brazilians can be assured that all candidates are firmly committed to the continuation of a process of development that is founded on the three pillars of macroeconomic stability, social justice and environmental sustainability.

Regarding our bilateral relations with Japan, this is also a special year, since 2010 has marked the 20th anniversary of the Brazilian community in Japan.

In 1990, the government of Japan revised its Immigration Control and Refugee Rec-

ognition Act, allowing Brazilians of our society will be intensively mobilized until we know, shortly after the end of balloting, the names of the men and women that will govern for the next four years.

Rather than a simple search for job opportunities, in a moment when Brazil had been facing a severe recession, those Brazilians came to Japan in a quest for something much less tangible, yet so meaningful for them: an understanding of their past.

The Brazilians in Japan are the new face of the human bonds that have closely linked together our two nations since the early 20th century, when the Japanese started migrating to Brazil. They incorporate the strong ties of friendship and mutual understanding that have been allowed to grow by the intercultural crossings between our geographically antipodal countries.

Among other major events in the last months to celebrate this very representative year of the history of Brazilians in Japan, I would emphasize the signing of the Agreement on Social Security, in July. It has been a major gain for the Bra-



Tribute: "Os Candangos," one of the most famous sculptures in Brazil by Bruno Giorgi, serves to praise the workers who built the capital Brasilia 50 years ago. EMBASSY OF BRAZIL

zilians living in Japan and the Japanese living in Brazil.

Let us now realize all the potential that our relationship reserves for the future. We are eager to strengthen our cooperation with Japan, in both

traditional and innovative fields. I am confident that a more audacious attitude toward each other shall reveal a whole array of new opportunities for our mutually beneficial collaboration.

Congratulations

We Express Our Sincere Congratulations to the People of Brazil on the Occasion of the 188th Anniversary of Their Independence




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