



BRAZIL

**STATEMENT BY H. E. DILMA ROUSSEFF,
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL,
AT THE OPENING OF THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 67TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, 25 September 2012

(check against delivery)

Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President of the General Assembly,

Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Heads of State and Government,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Once again, a woman's voice is opening the debate of the United Nations General Assembly. For many, we women are "half the sky". But we want to be half of the Earth as well. With equal rights and opportunities. Free from all forms of discrimination and violence. Capable of building our own emancipation and, with it, of contributing to the emancipation of all.

Mr. President,

A year after my statement at this same tribune, I observe that many of the problems that already afflicted us in September of 2011 remain. Today I want to return to a few of these issues, which require increasingly urgent solutions.

Mr. President,

The grave economic crisis that began in 2008 has taken on new and worrisome contours. The choice of orthodox fiscal policies has been worsening the recession in the developed economies, with repercussions for the emerging countries.

The main leaders of the developed world have not yet found the path that combines appropriate fiscal adjustments with measures to stimulate investment and demand, which are indispensable to halt the recession and ensure economic growth. Monetary policy cannot be the only response to growing unemployment, the increase in poverty and the dismay that affects the most vulnerable segments of the population throughout the world.

Central banks in developed countries have continued to make use of expansionist monetary policy, which causes imbalances in exchange rates. The ensuing artificial appreciation of the emerging countries' currencies makes them lose market space, which further deepens the global recession.

We cannot accept that legitimate trade defense initiatives by developing countries be unfairly classified as protectionism. We must remember that the use of "legitimate trade defense measures" is in accordance with the rules of the World Trade Organization.

Protectionism and all forms of trade manipulation must be fought, for they create greater competitiveness in a spurious and fraudulent manner.

There will be no effective response to the economic crisis without strengthened coordination efforts between United Nations members and multilateral bodies such as the G20, the IMF and the World Bank.

This coordination must attempt to reconfigure the relationship between fiscal and monetary policy, in order to prevent the deepening of the recession, control the currency

war and once again stimulate global demand.

We know from our own experience that the sovereign debt of States as well as the bank and financial debt will not be dealt with in the framework of a recession. On the contrary, recession only makes these problems more acute.

It is urgent that we build a comprehensive pact for the coordinated resumption of global economic growth, in order to forestall the despair caused by unemployment and the lack of opportunities.

Mr. President,

My country has been doing its part.

Over the past years we have pursued prudent economic policies, accumulated significant foreign exchange reserves, strongly reduced public debt and, with innovative social policies, lifted 40 million people out of poverty, consolidating a large domestic market.

Like all countries, we were affected by the crisis. However, despite the temporary slowing in our growth rate as a result of the current circumstances, we have managed to maintain extremely high employment levels, to continue reducing social inequality, and to significantly increase workers' income.

We have overcome the incorrect view according to which measures to stimulate growth are incompatible with austerity plans. This is a false dilemma. Fiscal responsibility is as necessary as growth measures are indispensable, for fiscal consolidation can only be sustainable in a context of economic recovery.

History reveals that austerity, when exaggerated and isolated from growth, is self-defeating. Brazil has chosen to face both of these challenges simultaneously.

At the same time as we have exerted strict control over public spending, we have increased our investments in infrastructure and education.

At the same time as we have controlled inflation, we have acted vigorously through policies aimed at social inclusion and poverty eradication. Furthermore, at the same time as we are carrying out structural reforms in the financial and welfare areas, we have reduced the tax burden and the cost of energy, and we have invested in knowledge to generate science, technology, and innovation.

There are moments in which we cannot choose between two alternatives. They must be developed in an articulated way.

Mr. President,

As in 2011, the Middle East and Northern Africa continue to be at the center of the attentions of the international community. Important social movements, with different political orientations, have swept away despotic regimes and brought about transition processes whose meaning and direction can still not be clearly discerned.

But it is not difficult to identify in almost all of these movements a cry of protest against poverty, against unemployment, and against the lack of opportunities and of civil rights, imposed by authoritarian governments on large sectors of these societies, especially young people.

Nor is it difficult to find in these events traces of historical grievances caused by decades of colonial or neocolonial policies carried out in the name of a supposedly civilizing agenda. Little by little, the economic interests behind those policies became clear.

Today, we witness with consternation the unfolding of the dire situation in Syria.

Brazil condemns in the strongest terms the violence that continues to claim lives in that country. Syria is witnessing a large-scale humanitarian tragedy in its territory and in that of its neighbors.

The Government in Damascus bears the largest share of responsibility for the cycle of violence that has victimized a large number of civilians, especially women, children, and young people.

However, we are also aware of the responsibilities of armed opposition groups, especially those that increasingly rely on foreign military and logistical support.

As President of a country that is the homeland of millions of people of Syrian descent, I call on the parties to the conflict to lay down their weapons and join the mediation efforts being undertaken by the Joint UN-Arab League Special Envoy.

There is no military solution to the Syrian crisis. Diplomacy and dialogue are not just our best option: they are the only option.

As President of a country where thousands and thousands of Brazilians Muslims live, I declare here today our vehement repudiation of the escalation of Islamophobic prejudice in Western countries. Brazil is one of the protagonists of the generous "Alliance of Civilizations" initiative, originally launched by the Turkish government.

With the same vehemence, we repudiate the terrorist acts that took the lives of American diplomats in Libya.

Mr. President,

With our eyes still set upon the Middle East, where some of the most important challenges to international peace and security lie, I wish to touch upon the Israeli-Palestinian question.

I reiterate my words of 2011, when I expressed the Brazilian government's support for the recognition of the Palestinian State as a full member of the United Nations. I added then – and I repeat today – that only a free and sovereign Palestine will be able to fulfill Israel's legitimate desires for peace with its neighbors, security in its borders and regional political stability.

Mr. President,

The international community has encountered growing difficulty in dealing with the exacerbation of regional conflicts.

This is manifest in the stalemates within the Security Council. It is one of the gravest problems that we face.

The crisis that began in 2008 demonstrated the need for reform of the mechanisms of global economic governance. In point of fact, to this day we have still not fully implemented such reforms.

Increasingly intense regional wars and conflicts, the tragic loss of human lives and the immense material losses for the peoples involved demonstrate the utmost urgency of undertaking the institutional reform of the United Nations, in particular of its Security Council.

We cannot allow this Council to be replaced – as has been happening – by coalitions that are formed without its consent, beyond its control and without due regard for international law.

The use of force without authorization by the Council is illegal, yet it is beginning to be regarded in some quarters as an acceptable option. This is by no means the case.

The ease with which some resort to this kind of action results from the stalemates that paralyze the Council. Because of this, it must urgently be reformed.

Brazil will always fight to ensure that decisions emanating from the UN prevail. Yet we want legitimate actions, founded on international legality. In this spirit, I have defended the need for a “responsibility while protecting” as a necessary complement to the “responsibility to protect”.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Multilateralism is stronger after Rio+20. Together, during those days in June, we held the largest and most participative conference in the history of the United Nations. We were able to take firm steps towards the historic consolidation of a new paradigm: to grow, to include, to protect, and to preserve, that is, “sustainable development”. I thank Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Ambassador Sha Zukang for their efforts and close collaboration with Brazil, before and throughout the Conference.

The outcome document that we approved by consensus in Rio not only preserves the legacy of 1992, but also sets the starting point for a sustainable development agenda for the 21st century, with a focus on the eradication of poverty, on the conscientious use of natural resources and on sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

The United Nations has before it a number of tasks mandated by the Rio Conference. In particular, I would like to make reference to the definition of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Rio+20 shone a powerful light on the future we want. We have an obligation to heed the many warnings being sounded by science and society. We must consider climate change one of the main challenges to present and future generations.

The Brazilian government is firmly committed to the targets for controlling greenhouse gas emissions and to the unrelenting fight against deforestation of the Amazon rainforest.

In 2009, we voluntarily adopted commitments and transformed them into laws. These targets are particularly ambitious for a developing country, which must deal with pressing demands of all types in order to offer well-being to its population. We hope that those countries that bear a greater historical responsibility for climate change and that have greater means with which to face it will fulfill their obligations to the international community.

Another UN initiative we salute is the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. Brazil is engaged in actions to protect lives and reduce road accidents. To this end, our government is developing a wide-ranging awareness-raising campaign together with FIA (Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile).

Mr. President,

In a context of environmental challenges, economic crises and threats to peace in different parts of the world, Brazil continues committed to working with its neighbors to build an environment of democracy, peace, prosperity, and social justice.

We have made great progress in integrating the Latin American and Caribbean region as a priority for our international insertion.

Our region is a good example for the world.

The Rule of Law that we achieved by overcoming authoritarian regimes is being preserved and strengthened.

Democracy is not a heritage immune to attacks.

In order to avoid setbacks, MERCOSUL and UNASUL have been firm when they had to be, because we consider integration and democracy to be inseparable principles.

I also reaffirm our commitment to keeping our region free from weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, I wish to recall the existence of immense arsenals that, in addition to threatening all humankind, aggravate tensions and hamper efforts towards peace.

The world clamors for food instead of weapons, for the billion men, women, and children who suffer from the cruelest punishment inflicted on humanity: hunger.

Finally, I wish to refer to a brother country, beloved by all Latin Americans and Caribbeans: Cuba.

Cuba has progressed in bringing its economic model up to date. To continue on this path, it needs the support of partners both near and far. Cooperation for Cuba's progress is, however, hampered by the economic embargo that has assailed its population for decades. The time has long since passed for us to put an end to this anachronism, which is condemned by the immense majority of members of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

This year, we watched the Olympic and Paralympic Games organized by the United Kingdom. With the closing of the London Olympic Games, Brazil has begun the countdown towards the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games in 2016, which will be preceded by the 2014 World Cup.

Every two years, during the Summer and Winter Games, humanity seems to reawaken to values that should inspire us permanently: tolerance, respect for differences, equality, inclusion, friendship, and understanding. These principles are also the foundation of human rights and of this Organization.

At the opening of this 67th General Assembly, I propose to all the nations here represented that they let the ideals of the Olympic flame shine upon them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Strengthening the United Nations is necessary at this stage when multipolarity opens a historic new perspective. We must work towards this end. We must work to ensure that in the multipolarity that comes to prevail, cooperation predominates over conflict, dialogue overcomes threats, and negotiated solutions are reached before and forestall interventions involving the use of force.

I reiterate that in this necessarily collective effort, which presupposes the quest for consensus, the United Nations has a key role to play, particularly as the Organization and its various bodies become more representative and more legitimate and, therefore, more effective.

Thank you very much.