



**73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the  
United Nations General Assembly  
General Debate**

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Michel Temer,  
President of the Federative Republic of Brazil  
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*(check against delivery)*

Madam President of this General Assembly, María Fernanda Espinosa,

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

Ladies and gentlemen Heads of State, Government and Delegation,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor for Brazil to open this General Debate.

I am pleased to congratulate the President of the General Assembly, María Fernanda Espinosa – the first Latin American woman to hold this high office. Allow me to reiterate to you my wishes of every success. Be certain that you can count on Brazil.

It is also a particular satisfaction to congratulate the Secretary-General António Guterres in our common language.

Ladies and gentlemen,

How many speakers have already come to this podium to call for the improvement of the international order that we have been building for decades?

There have been many of these speakers. I include myself among them. And I believe we were right. We are still right - the words we spoke remain current.

But if we want to improve our collective order, today we have an additional task: to defend the very integrity of this order. However imperfect, this order has been serving to the greater causes of humanity.

There are numerous challenges to the integrity of the international order. We live in times clouded by isolationist forces. Old intolerances are re-emerging. Unilateral relapses are less and less the exception. But these challenges should not – and cannot – intimidate us.

Isolationism, intolerance, unilateralism: we have to respond to each of these tendencies with the best of ourselves.

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Brazil has been responding to the first of these tendencies - isolationism - with more openness and more integration.

Brazil knows that our common development depends on more international flows of trade and of investment. That it depends on increased contact with new ideas and with new technologies. We will build an effectively shared prosperity by opening ourselves to the others, rather than through introspection and isolation.

This is how Brazil has been acting.

We implement a universalist foreign policy.

We have deepened the integration mechanisms in our geographic neighborhood. With MERCOSUR, we have reaffirmed the group's democratic calling, brought trade barriers down and signed new agreements. We have been pushing for strengthened ties with the countries forming the Pacific Alliance, seeking an even more united Latin America – as determined by our Constitution. We have also revitalized or initiated trade negotiations with partners in all regions – the

European Union, the European Free Trade Association, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia.

Through these and other initiatives, we continue to strengthen our relationships with the Americas as a whole, with Europe, with Asia and with Africa.

Our participation in cooperation fora such as the G20, BRICS, and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries has been especially productive. In these fora, we produce concrete results, with direct impact in the daily life of our societies.

It is with openness and integration that we approach a better future for all. Isolation may provide a false sense of security. Protectionism may sound seductive. But it is with openness and integration that we achieve harmony, growth and progress.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Turning to the challenge posed by intolerance, Brazil has also responded decisively to it with dialogue and solidarity.

Dialogue and solidarity inspire us, at every moment, to honor the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The implementation of this document, which will soon reach its seventh decade, is an imperative that requires permanent attention and action.

In the name of human rights, much has already been done by governments, institutions and individuals of the stature of Sergio Vieira de Mello, a Brazilian national whose memory I want to pay tribute to as we remember the fifteenth anniversary of his tragic death.

It must be nonetheless acknowledged that violations to the international norms protecting the individuals in their dignity persist in all parts of the world. In Latin America, Brazil has been working to uphold democracy and human rights. Together with so many other countries, we will continue to do so, alongside brotherly peoples that have suffered so much.

Dialogue and solidarity are also in the foundation of the recently agreed-upon Global Compact for Migration. There are over 250 million migrants in the world. These are men, women and children who, threatened by protracted crises, are faced with the hard and risky choice of leaving their homelands. It is our duty to protect them, and this is the very purpose of the Global Compact for Migration. It now falls upon us to bring the negotiations of the Global Compact for Refugees to a successful end.

In South America, a migratory wave of great proportions is underway. An estimated one million Venezuelans have left their country searching for more dignified living conditions. Brazil has welcomed all those who arrive in our territory. We have sought to provide all possible assistance to dozens of thousands of migrants. In cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, we have built shelters to protect them as best as we can. We have sought to relocate them throughout the country. We have issued documents that enable them to work in Brazil. We have offered school for the children, vaccination and health services for all. But we know that the solution for this crisis will only come about when Venezuela reenters the path of development.

Brazil has a proud tradition of welcoming foreigners. As a people, we have been forged through diversity. There is a piece of the world in every Brazilian.

Faithful to this tradition, last year we passed a new Migration Law – a modern piece of legislation that not only protects the immigrant’s dignity but also acknowledges the benefits of immigration. We have ensured additional rights and cut bureaucracy for the entry and residence in Brazil.

Dialogue and solidarity are antidotes to intolerance, as well the bases for a lasting peace.

This has been the cornerstone of the Brazilian position regarding the various crises in the Middle East. As it joins the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the creation of Israel, Brazil renews its support of the Two-State solution – Israel and Palestine –, with both sides living side by side in peace and security.

We likewise support international efforts to bring the conflict in Syria to a long overdue end. We have contributed to relieving such suffering. In 2017 alone, Brazil donated around one ton of medicines and vaccines in benefit of the children affected by the conflict. We have also welcomed a considerable number of refugees.

In the Korean Peninsula, the cornerstones of our position are also dialogue and solidarity. We reiterate the call for diplomatic solutions leading to denuclearization and peace.

Dialogue and solidarity, I repeat, are the way to overcome intolerance and build peace. As put by Nelson Mandela, whose centenary we commemorate this year – it is our duty to strive towards "a world of tolerance and respect for difference", and show an unwavering "commitment to peaceful solutions of conflicts and disputes".

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Lastly, the challenge of unilateralism, to which we reply with more diplomacy and more multilateralism. We do so firmly convinced that collective problems demand collectively-articulated solutions. This is highest meaning of the UN: this is by definition a house of mutual understanding.

We must strengthen this Organization. We must make it more legitimate and effective. We need important reforms – among them that of the Security Council, whose current structure reflects a world that no longer exists. We must reinvigorate the values of diplomacy and multilateralism.

We have repeatedly shown what we are capable of together when we guide our actions by these values.

This is how we took a historical step, last year, as we concluded the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I had the honor of being the first Head of State to sign it.

This is also how throughout decades we built a robust multilateral trade system, with ever more encompassing rules and with a credible and effective dispute settlement mechanism. These are shared historical achievements, which we must honor and broaden, eliminating the many distortions in agricultural trade affecting above all developing countries.

Diplomacy and multilateralism provide us with effective solutions well beyond disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and international trade. This holds true in many other areas, such as sustainable development, which is crucial for the future of mankind.

In the last years alone, we have adopted Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement. These are true milestones, which put us in the path of economic development with social justice and respect for the environment.

Brazil’s early commitment to sustainable development remains unwavering. There is no shortage of examples.

We are fully committed to the change towards a low-carbon international economy. Over 40% of the Brazilian energy matrix is clean and renewable - one of the most sustainable in the world.

We have placed great effort into reducing deforestation. Long-term trends are promising. Today, in the Brazilian Amazon, deforestation rates are 75% lower than in 2004.

We have created and expanded conservation units in Brazil, which currently correspond to more than four times the territory of Norway.

The protection of the oceans is another cause that is dear to us. On the occasion of the World Water Forum, which we hosted in Brasilia, we have established protected areas in Brazilian waters that amount to the size of the German and French territories combined.

In two years, we have doubled the protected areas in Brazil.

Diplomacy and multilateralism are also decisive instruments for global security – as demonstrated by UN peacekeeping missions, in which Brazil is proud to play a major role.

And let us not have any illusions, they are also decisive instruments to defeat terrorism and to fight transnational crimes.

Trafficking in persons, arms trafficking, drug trafficking, money laundering, sexual exploitation, these are all crimes that do not know borders. These are scourges that corrode our societies and are only effectively tackled through concerted policies and actions.

This is what we have done in our region. We hosted in Brasília the first Southern Cone Ministerial Meeting on Border Security. Since then, we have stepped up cooperation with our neighbors in combating transnational crime.

We must remain united for the collective task of building a world where peace, development and human rights prevail. We will achieve nothing alone. We will achieve nothing without diplomacy, without multilateralism.

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Ladies and gentlemen, Madam President, Mr. Secretary General,

This is the last occasion on which I have the privilege of representing my country in this General Debate as the President of the Republic.

In two weeks, the Brazilian people will go to the polls. They will choose the political leadership who will govern Brazil from January 2019 onwards, both in the Executive and Legislative branches.

This is what is determined by our Constitution; this is what has been done for almost thirty years and this is how it must be. Because power comes from the people. Because alternation in power is the very essence of democracy. And ours, ladies and gentlemen, is a vibrant democracy, backed by solid institutions.

As I hand over the presidency to my successor, I will have the peace of mind of having fulfilled my duties.

Today, in Brazil, it is possible to look back and realize how much we have accomplished in such a short time of administration.

We rejected populism and we overcame the worst recession in our history – a recession with severe consequences for society, especially for the poorest. We placed managed public finances in a responsible manner and restored economic credibility. We are growing and creating jobs again. Previously threatened by the lack of control in spending, public programs have been rescued and expanded. We brought Brazil back to the track of development.

The country that I will hand over to whomever the Brazilian people elects is better than the one I received. Much remains to be done, but we are back on track.

It is time to move ahead. The incoming Government and the incoming Parliament will find solid bases upon which a more prosperous and fair country can continue to be built.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The members of the General Assembly know that they have, and will always have, in Brazil, a firm ally for cooperation among nations.

A country that, when faced with isolationism, responds with more openness and integration. When faced with intolerance, responds with increased dialogue and solidarity. And, in the face of unilateralism, responds with more diplomacy and multilateralism.

In the words of the late Kofi Annan: "Our mission is to confront ignorance with knowledge, bigotry with tolerance, and isolation with the outstretched hand of generosity".

Thank you very much.