

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

**LAUNCH OF THE COMMODITIES AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2019:  
COMMODITY DEPENDENCE, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE PARIS AGREEMENT**

**11 September 2019, Geneva**

**Desafios e oportunidades do Desenvolvimento Sustentável: a  
perspectiva brasileira**

By

H.E. Ms. Maria Luisa Escorel de Moraes, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent  
Representative, Permanent Mission of Brazil

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**(Statement of HE Maria Luisa Escorel de Moraes)**

**Subtítulo:**

**Desafios e oportunidades do Desenvolvimento Sustentável: a perspectiva brasileira**

1. At the outset I would like to thank the organizers for inviting Brazil to the launching event of the Commodities and Development Report 2019: Commodity Dependence, Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. I take this opportunity to greet the other panelists that are sharing the table today, in particular Ambassador Izata who I have first met in the early years of 2000, when we both served in our respective missions to the U.N in New York. At the time, among other issues, we were preparing the G77 position for the Rio+10 or the Johannesburg UN Conference on Sustainable Development.

2. The concept note for this event, I must say, presents a balanced approach, which recognizes that *commodity sectors may affect the climate but are also vulnerable to it*. Hence the need to take into consideration the challenges and opportunities emanating from climate change and an evolving international context in order to design policies and strategies in commodity sectors. This was the source of inspiration for the chosen topic of my presentation: “Challenges and Opportunities in Sustainable Development: the Brazilian perspective”.

3. In my intervention, as per the guidance from the organizers, I will try to bring some relevant information on Brazil, including about its continuous engagement with sustainable development (*and its three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars*), both in concept and in practice. Having in mind the scope of the Report, I will take the agriculture and livestock sectors in Brazil as an example to feed the debates that will follow.

4. In Brazil, we like to recall the famous quote from Tom Jobim (Brazilian Bossa Nova composer) stating that “*Brazil is not for beginners*”. It is indeed an extremely complex and diversified country. This reference is useful as a background to question the proposed concept of “Commodity Dependent Developing Countries”(CDDC),

that focus mainly on exports, but that actually fails to describe the variety and differences among CDDC economies.

5. Brazil has a large territory (8,5 million squared kilometers – almost twice as much of the European Union, with 4,4 MM km<sup>2</sup>) and also a large population (210 million people – 40% of Latin America and the Caribbean, of aprox. 560 MM people). Our economy is diversified, with well-developed services and industrial sectors. That said, we must acknowledge that commodities, including mining, agriculture and livestock, do play a major role in the economy, and excel as far as exports are concerned. The availability and sustainable management of natural resources come hand in hand with the countries' insertion in international commodity markets.

6. This brings me back to the issue of sustainability. Brazil has traditionally engaged in environmental multilateral negotiations. This was the case in the Rio 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment AND Development, and all the other Conferences held and Conventions adopted thereafter, including the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Since then, and under the guidance of the 1988 Federal Constitution, the Brazilian society has embraced the ideas and goals related to sustainable development. This resulted, among other areas and measures, in the consolidation of bold policies and national institutions directed at the sustainable use and conservation of our national resources.

7. Such was the case of the Revised Forest Code, adopted in Brazil in 2012, that established a minimum of native vegetation to be preserved in rural private areas (up to 80%, in the case of the Amazon region, and not less than 20% in other biomes).

8. Regarding Climate Change, the country remains an active participant in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, as well as in any negotiations and debates on the subject, having achieved 58% reduction in emissions in relation to the 2020 projection. According to UNEP, within the G20, only Brazil, China and Japan are on track towards the fulfilment of their nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

9. As also recalled by the UNCTAD report before us, Brazil pledged to reduce GHG emissions in all sectors by 37 per cent below 2005 levels by 2025 and indicated the intention to reduce it by 43 per cent by 2030.

10. Brazil already qualifies as a low carbon economy. It already has one of the largest and most successful biofuel programs to date, including cogeneration of electricity using biomass. Brazil's energy mix today consists of 45% of renewables, which amounts to three times the world average in renewables, and more than four times the OECD average. Over the years, Brazil has achieved good results in reducing emissions from deforestation, mainly by reducing the deforestation rate in the Brazilian Amazon.

11. Nevertheless, illegal deforestation is still a matter of concern and requires great efforts from the Brazilian authorities at all levels. Fires in forestry are also serious issues that the Brazilian government has been seeking to address with serenity and determination including through the deployment of more men and equipment to combat fires and criminal actions.

12. In this regard, it is important to put into perspective the role of agriculture and cattle raising in global Green House Gas emissions. According to FAO, these two sectors account for only 12% of GHG emissions, which is much less than transportation (14%), industry (21%) and electricity generation (25%).

13. It is never too much to recall that the most significant global challenge remains the need to change the unsustainable patterns of production and consumption based on fossil fuels, in which developed countries have a large share of historic responsibility. It is inappropriate to try to use GHG emissions from agriculture and cattle raising as an excuse, for example, to try to convince developing countries to accept, unilaterally and without any compensation, higher levels of commitments in international environmental regimes or as a means to foster unfounded campaigns that may lead to reputational damage and legitimate unfair competition.

14. Brazil is firmly committed to reconciling agricultural production and environmental preservation. We are an example of how this conciliation is not only desirable, but also possible to achieve. Despite

being one of the largest global players in the production of food, only a third of the Brazilian territory is used for that purpose.

15. Forty years of agriculture technology development has proven its result. The Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) played a key role in increasing national production on 700%, within the limits of 30% of the territory, with reduced pressure on preserved areas.

16. The Brazilian agricultural sector, specifically, is one of the most efficient in the world, with annual productivity increased of 4% since 2000 (the world average in the same period is only 1.84%). That is one of the reasons why Brazil is one of the largest world food producers, even though farming occupies only 7.6% of its territory (in comparison, countries in the European Union use between 45% and 65%; the United States, 18.3%; and China, 17.7%).

17. The remaining two thirds of the territory correspond to areas of legal environment protection and/or lands occupied by traditional peoples. The protected areas are equivalent to the territories of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the UK, altogether.

In our country, almost without exception, the protected areas are inhabitable and rich in biodiversity, while in some countries protected areas includes large desert and mountainous areas.

18. In Brazil, we develop a unique type of tropical agriculture, where productivity gains lead to more capacity to reduce emissions and promote soil conservation.

19. Despite the land availability, we should add other issues in support of the Brazilian competitiveness as a world food supplier. This includes good practices and good weather conditions. The agribusiness depends on a balanced environment, including the regulation of the climate, the rainfall regime and several other essential factors. Hence the continuous commitment of the Brazilian government with the issue, looking forward to future opportunities.

20. The 2030 Agenda (with the 17 SDGs), and the Paris Agreement (through nationally determined contributions) are the landmarks to guide policy developments today and tomorrow.

21. Additional actions, however, would demand large-scale increase of international support and investment flows, as well as technology development, deployment, diffusion and transfer. The differentiated responsibilities and capabilities of developed and developing countries should be recognized in this regard.

22. Commodities will continue to play a key role in Brazilian development in the coming years. This is why sustainable development remains a constant in our national agenda.

23. Research and technology are key aspects to find adequate solutions for a resilient agriculture in the context of climate change and one of the main drivers for Brazil in keeping up with world growing demand for food and livestock. There is also a large potential of generating value from the biodiversity to be considered in this equation.

24. In the last few decades, Brazil has developed its capacity to reconcile rural production and environmental preservation. For the reasons aforementioned, Brazil will continue to do so in the present and in the future to come.

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