

***Speech by Brazilian Minister of External Relations
Celso Amorim in the International Conference in
support of the Palestinian economy for the
reconstruction of Gaza - Sharm el-Sheikh***

MARCH 2 2009

Mr. President, Madam President,

This Conference is, above all, a demonstration of solidarity with the Palestinian people by the international community and compassion with your suffering. I sincerely hope that it is perceived and understood by all involved.

But this Conference must also renew our resolution to establish a viable Palestinian State, in an initial stage, living side by side in peace with Israel.

The lack of confidence gives power to radicals and removes those who have opted for moderation and support of their own people.

I agree with those who said that it is important to support the Palestinian Authority. Myself I have been in the West Bank three times. I am witness to the material progress achieved in the region.

But I would also like to echo the words of Mr. Bernard Kouchner, who said that it is mainly in the hands of Israel to ensure that the Palestinian Authority can fulfill the promises of the peace process.

It is essential to bring about improvements in the day-to-day life of ordinary people in Palestine and, for both, material conditions and the moral dignity as it is just as important.

It is time for peace, and not for peace process.

Mr. President, Madam President,

It is essential that resolution 1860 is fully implemented. Humanitarian aid, normal trade and legitimacy must move freely in Gaza. Pre-conditions for the fulfillment of a decision of the Security Council are not acceptable.

Brazil welcomes the willingness of Palestinian political forces to form a government of reconciliation. We recognize the role of Egypt in achieving this development.

We urge the new Israeli Government to engage-entirely in the peace process.

The serious obstacles to the solution of coexistence of two states must be stopped immediately, such as the expansion of settlements by Israel and the frequent use of force.

More than ever, persuasion on the part of the international community is an essential ingredient to achieve peace.

Brazil believes that all relevant actors in the region that are prepared to act constructively must have a chance to participate in the process.

Incorporating to the discussions developing countries outside the region would also give more legitimacy and bring new ideas to the peace talks. Brazil encourages the convening of a conference to follow up the reunion of Annapolis.

Mr. President, Madam President,

In my visit to the region during the conflict, I gave, on behalf of the Brazilian people, 14 tons of food and medicines to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

That was not an isolated event.

At the donors conferences of Stockholm and Paris, Brazil contributed a total of US\$10.5 million. Our collaboration in Paris was the largest ever made by Brazil and one of the highest carried out by a developing non-Islamic country.

My Indian colleague will mention our contribution with IBSA, including Brazil, India and South Africa.

Today I have the honor to announce that the Brazilian Government decided to donate another US\$10 million for the reconstruction of Gaza.

In this regards, President Lula has asked Congress to authorize this donation with urgency.

We are convinced that harmony and security will surely prevail over discord and aggression.

Thank you