

This book identifies pathways for the Brazilian foreign policy to play a leading role in building a more democratic, environmentally responsible and socially just Brazil, global governance and world. Considering international cooperation as an indispensable tool for promoting fair, sovereign, and equitable ecological transitions, the book highlights opportunities to strengthen the climate agenda in the relations between Brazil and strategic countries, blocs, organizations and regions. Notably, among them are Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and the Middle East, the United States and Europe, Asia and China, in addition to the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Bretton Woods institutions, and the Group of Twenty (G20), as well as South-South cooperation groups, with emphasis on the BRICS, IBAS, and BASIC. Additionally, this publication examines Brazil's trajectory within the global climate regime, seeking to draw lessons that can help ensure the efficacy and inclusiveness of COP30. From Rio-92, through Rio+20 to Belém, the aim of this book is to contribute to an international strategy oriented towards promoting climate action and the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental.

This book, "Brazilian Foreign Policy and Climate: Towards an Environmentally Responsible and Socially Just Brazil", invites reflection on the importance of a diplomacy that gives centrality to the fight against inequalities while promoting climate action and biodiversity preservation. This requires coherence both from a domestic point of view and in Brazil's actions within the scope of its bilateral, regional and multilateral relations. For example, recognizing the contribution of indigenous peoples in international treaties demands strengthening their rights internally, especially by advancing the demarcation, protection, and support for the management of indigenous peoples' territories.

This publication points out that, with the inauguration of the new government of President Lula, Brazilian foreign policy, historically oriented towards the defense of peace and cooperation among peoples, has the credentials to lead efforts to reinvigorate multilateralism and build a more just, democratic, and effective global governance, which is capable of promoting climate justice in accordance with the concept of *common but differentiated responsibilities*. With coherence and proactivity, Brazil can demand historical responsibility from major countries and set an example in protecting the environment and its peoples.

By valuing diversity, traditional knowledge and cultures that advocate human *involvement* in its foreign policy, we have a unique opportunity to uphold the goal of this book: to build an environmentally responsible and socially just Brazil and world.

Sonia Guajajara  
Minister of Indigenous Peoples  
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BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND CLIMATE:  
Towards an Environmentally Responsible and Socially Just Brazil

Política  
Externa  
Brasileira

coleção  
POLÍTICA  
EXTERNA  
BRASILEIRA

# BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND CLIMATE:

TOWARDS AN ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE AND  
SOCIALY JUST BRAZIL

Maiara Folly  
Marília Closs  
Vitória Gonzalez  
(Editors)

The publication of "Brazilian Foreign Policy and Climate: Towards an Environmentally Responsible and Socially Just Brazil" could not be more timely. The country is, once again, gearing up for a period of intense activity on the international stage, as evidenced, amongst other things, by its presidency of the G20 and its preparations to host the Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP 30) in 2025.

It is essential that sustainability continues to be a subject of debate in Brazilian society. Plataforma CIPÓ and FUNAG's initiative provides a valuable contribution to the contemporary debate on the different dimensions of sustainable development – a contribution that will be of great value to the Brazilian government in defining its policies.

The involvement of academia, and civil society in general, is in line with the transparent process that Brazil has instilled in its presidency of the G20 and its diplomatic activities more broadly. The reflections presented in this book will help to frame a debate on sustainable development that fosters international cooperation in line with a Brazilian perspective – a development approach centred on sustainability that can effectively contribute to post-Agenda 2030 efforts.

Antonio de Aguiar Patriota

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MAIARA FOLLY  
MARÍLIA CLOSS  
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(EDITORS)

# BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND CLIMATE:

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PLATAFORMA  
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# Foreword

Sonia Guajajara\*

With the world facing increasingly extreme climate events, it becomes imperative to rethink the global development model and the interconnection of policies and processes. These events occur not only because developed countries have emitted large amounts of carbon in the past, but also because their current emissions continue to exceed the reduction commitments they have made. When these extreme climate events impact the periphery of the international system, they exacerbate historical damage caused by the expropriation of nature and affect peripheral urban populations, indigenous peoples, and traditional rural and forest communities much more severely.

We, indigenous peoples, question the term “development” (*desenvolvimento*). It makes more sense to speak of “involvement” (*envolvimento*). In the Portuguese language, the verb *desenvolver* (“to develop”) in literal terms could be interpreted as “to involve less” or “to leave behind”, to stop involving. Indigenous traditions emphasize that “involving more” should be the meaning of a people. This means involving ourselves as a people, as well as having a respectful and integral relationship with nature. This should be the meaning of the just transition, currently under negotiation and aiming to “leave no one behind”.

This book, “Brazilian Foreign Policy and Climate: Towards an Environmentally Responsible and Socially Just Brazil”, invites reflection on the importance of a diplomacy that gives centrality to the fight against inequalities while promoting climate action and biodiversity preservation.

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This requires coherence both from a domestic point of view and in Brazil's actions within the scope of its bilateral, regional and multilateral relations. For example, recognizing the contribution of indigenous peoples in international treaties demands strengthening their rights internally, especially by advancing the demarcation, protection, and support for the management of indigenous peoples' territories.

In this context, this book also underscores the urgency of reconciling the fight against climate change with the prevalence of human rights and the defense of democracy. Hate speech and fake news spread not only create antidemocratic poles within societies struggling to consolidate their democracies but also propagate scientific and climate skepticism and erode the effectiveness of governance institutions at both national and global levels.

This publication points out that, with the inauguration of the new government of President Lula, Brazilian foreign policy, historically oriented towards the defense of peace and cooperation among peoples, has the credentials to lead efforts to reinvigorate multilateralism and build a more just, democratic, and effective global governance, which is capable of promoting climate justice in accordance with the concept of *common but differentiated responsibilities*. With coherence and proactivity, Brazil can demand historical responsibility from major countries and set an example in protecting the environment and its peoples.

The book emphasizes that decision-making on foreign policy issues should incorporate and consolidate participatory mechanisms that engage various segments of the Brazilian population, including indigenous peoples, *quilombolas*, and other traditional communities – groups disproportionately affected by environmental racism and climate injustices, and who, at the same time, represent sources of knowledge and leadership for addressing the challenges of the Anthropocene. Consulting indigenous peoples and ensuring their rights to free, prior, and informed consent, in good faith, is a fundamental requirement for any mitigation, adaptation, and transition action that is effectively fair and committed to the mission of preventing global warming from exceeding 1.5°C.

I believe that this is a new and unique moment on the international stage, where emergencies and extreme weather events highlight the need for the integration of policies, especially those related to the environment and human rights.

By valuing diversity, traditional knowledge and cultures that advocate human *involvement* in its foreign policy, we have a unique opportunity to uphold the goal of this book: to build an environmentally responsible and socially just Brazil and world.



## Presentation

Antonio de Aguiar Patriota\*

The publication of “Brazilian Foreign Policy and Climate: Towards an Environmentally Responsible and Socially Just Brazil” could not be more timely. The country is, once again, gearing up for a period of intense activity on the international stage, as evidenced, amongst other things, by its presidency of the G20 and its preparations to host the Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP 30) in 2025.

It is essential that sustainability continues to be a subject of debate in Brazilian society. Plataforma CIPÓ and FUNAG’s initiative provides a valuable contribution to the contemporary debate on the different dimensions of sustainable development – a contribution that will be of great value to the Brazilian government in defining its policies.

The book offers essential analysis and reflections at a crucial moment for climate negotiations. In March 2023, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in its Sixth Assessment Report, found that human activity, particularly greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, had unequivocally caused an average global warming increase of 1.1°C, compared to pre-industrial levels. The impacts resulting from this phenomenon are already being felt in all regions, and we will be subject to natural catastrophes and extreme events more frequently if the warming trend continues. The recent torrential rains in Rio Grande do Sul tragically illustrate this reality.

Equally or even more worrying is the temperature rise threshold of up to 1.5°C, compared to the average for the period from 1850 to 1900 – a level that may have already been exceeded, according to some models. The

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current rate of emissions could lead, according to the report, to adverse and irreversible climate conditions, which reinforces the sense of urgency in our actions. The rise in the average atmospheric temperature tends to reduce the effectiveness of adaptation measures, directing increasing attention to the loss and damage pillar, which has only recently begun to receive due attention within the scope of the Climate Convention.

The data brought forward by the IPCC translates, on a scientific level, into arguments that have long been used by Brazilian diplomacy. The regions that historically contributed least to triggering the rise in global average temperatures are the most affected. According to the intergovernmental panel, fossil fuels accounted for around 75% of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; land use change and agriculture were the main sources of the remaining emissions. The body's Sixth Synthesis Report emphasises that mitigation and adaptation measures more often present "synergies" than "trade-offs" in relation to sustainable development goals. The same report points out that the efficiency of adaptation measures tends to be greater if targeted at groups who are the most vulnerable to climate change, which reiterates the imperative of promoting fair and inclusive transitions. Therefore, the path to low-carbon models presupposes attention to different national realities, focusing not only on their environmental repercussions but also on their social, economic, and cultural ones. There are several possible paths towards climate neutrality. We need to favour those that promote inclusion and reduce inequality.

In Brazil, the energy transition is neither new nor a passing fad; the transformation of the Brazilian energy mix began more than four decades ago. By significantly incorporating sources such as hydroelectricity and biofuels into energy solutions, Brazil now has a 48% share of renewables in its mix – the highest rate for a major economy. In electricity production, Brazil's share of renewable sources is over 90%, an equally extraordinary fact. Projections by Brazil's Energy Research Company (EPE) indicate that the share of renewable sources in the matrix as a whole is expected to exceed 70% in 2050, in particular as a result of the increase in the share of biomass, a potential reinforced by the wide availability of arable land and Brazil's technological dominance in the sector, which allows for the

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production of biofuels in compliance with the strictest sustainability standards. Furthermore, Brazil will continue to expand its use of wind and solar sources, a movement favoured by the expansion of installed capacity and the abundance of sunlight and wind, in addition to territorial availability.

The biofuels sector illustrates solutions that Brazil and other developing countries are able to provide to the international community in terms of decarbonisation. Brazilian policies to stimulate the sector are examples of more accessible pathways, particularly for developing countries, towards a possible energy transition, as they require smaller amounts of financial resources and take advantage of different skills and natural assets. To cite just one example, considering the entire ethanol production chain, including carbon retention in sugarcane plantations, car models developed in Brazil emit fewer greenhouse gases than electric vehicles in operation in most developed countries, which rely on power sectors with high levels of associated emissions.

As they involve profound changes in national economic structures, energy transitions are also an opportunity to reduce inequalities and promote sustainable development. We have supported the most diverse technologies that can contribute to reducing emissions, without aspiring to dictate which energy transition paths are more suited to the socioeconomic realities of other countries. After all, fair and inclusive transitions must consider concerns about energy security, the democratisation of access to these inputs, and reasonable tariffs, in line with the concerns underlying Sustainable Development Goal 7.

Moreover, the efforts of the international community, in particular Brazil, insofar as the means of implementation and climate finance are in line with the need highlighted by the IPCC to “increase manyfold” the volume of resources directed towards this agenda. Brazil has stimulated the debate on innovative financing mechanisms both within the scope of the G20, where it has sought to explore convergences between the financial and sherpa tracks, and through the troika for the Roadmap to Mission 1.5 (United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan and Brazil). The prospect of the update of the Brazilian nationally determined contribution (NDC)

becoming an investment portfolio in the sector is also emblematic of the development opportunities that the transition to a low-carbon economy could enable.

Brazil has also shown renewed domestic and international commitment to combating deforestation – an issue that was included in the global stocktake concluded at COP 28 in Dubai. The reactivation of the Amazon Fund in 2023 and the 50% year-on-year reduction in deforestation in the biome attest to the Brazilian government’s engagement on this matter. The Belém Declaration, which laid the foundations for strengthening the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO), not only enshrines the commitment to zero deforestation by 2030 but also refers to the urgency of measures being taken by the organisation to prevent irreversible climate change in the Amazon.

The discussion on irreversible situations points to broader reflections on interdependence and joint responsibilities in the environmental agenda. It is impossible not to mention the historic achievement of the concept of “Common but Differentiated Responsibilities” (CBDR) since Rio 92. Despite the degree of success Brazil and the other Amazonian countries – which hold the exclusive competence for promoting development and protecting the region – may have in containing deforestation, continued global warming could cause severe imbalances in the forest, with serious ecological consequences throughout South America and beyond.

The environmental agenda is also affected by systemic rivalries, which have produced forces of disintegration in the international community. An example of this contamination is the reinforcement of unilateral measures, such as due diligence rules, which produce economic inefficiencies, distort trade, and transfer excessive burdens to producers in developing countries in a punitive and discriminatory way. In this regard, as I often say, Brazil is increasingly a provider of solutions. It is expected that Brazil’s leading role in the most representative forums of the international community will help produce aggregate, efficient and inclusive solutions to the various challenges mentioned.

The involvement of academia, and civil society in general, is in line with the transparent process that Brazil has instilled in its presidency of the

G20 and its diplomatic activities more broadly. The reflections presented in this book will help to frame a debate on sustainable development that fosters international cooperation in line with a Brazilian perspective – a development approach centred on sustainability that can effectively contribute to post-Agenda 2030 efforts.





## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>ABC</b>	Brazilian Cooperation Agency
<b>ACT</b>	Amazon Cooperation Treaty
<b>ACTO</b>	Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization
<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>ANA</b>	National Agroecology Association
<b>APIB</b>	Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil
<b>ASA</b>	Africa-South America Summit
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>ASPA</b>	Summit of South American-Arab Countries
<b>B20</b>	Business-Twenty
<b>BASIC</b>	Brazil, South Africa, India and China
<b>BFP</b>	Brazilian foreign policy
<b>BIC</b>	Brazil, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>BID</b>	Inter-American Development Bank
<b>BNDES</b>	Brazilian Development Bank
<b>BRICS</b>	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
<b>BRIGC</b>	International Green Development Coalition
<b>C20</b>	Civil Society-Twenty
<b>CAF</b>	Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>CAR</b>	Rural Environmental Registry
<b>CBAM</b>	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
<b>CBDR</b>	Common but differentiated responsibilities
<b>CBERS</b>	China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite
<b>CCWG</b>	High-Level United States-Brazil Climate Change Working Group
<b>CDB</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>CEBC</b>	Brazil-China Business Council
<b>CELAC</b>	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
<b>CES</b>	South American Energy Council

<b>CITES</b>	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
<b>CNPCT</b>	National Commission on Sustainable Development of Traditional Communities
<b>CONAMA</b>	National Environment Council
<b>CONAQ</b>	National Coordination of the Articulation of Rural Black Quilombola Communities
<b>Consea</b>	National Council for Food Security and Nutrition
<b>CONTAG</b>	National Confederation of Agricultural Workers
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties
<b>COSBAN</b>	Sino-Brazilian High-Level Commission for Consultation and Cooperation
<b>Cosiplan</b>	South American Council of Infrastructure and Planning
<b>CPC</b>	Communist Party of China
<b>CPLP</b>	Community of Portuguese Language Countries
<b>CUT</b>	Unified Workers' Central
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>DIEESE</b>	Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socio-Economic Studies
<b>EC</b>	European Community
<b>ECCAS</b>	Economic Community of Central African States
<b>ECLAC</b>	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>ECOSOC</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
<b>EIDs</b>	Integration and Development Hubs
<b>Embrapa</b>	Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation
<b>EMBRAPII</b>	Brazilian Company of Research and Industrial Innovation
<b>ETWG</b>	Energy Transitions Working Group
<b>EUDR</b>	EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FDI</b>	foreign direct investment
<b>Fiocruz</b>	Oswaldo Cruz Foundation
<b>FOCEM</b>	MERCOSUR Structural Convergence Fund

<b>FONPLATA</b>	Financial Fund for the Development of the River Plate Basin
<b>FTAA</b>	Free Trade Area of the Americas
<b>Funai</b>	National Foundation of Indigenous Peoples
<b>FYP</b>	Five-Year Plan
<b>G20</b>	Group of 20
<b>G77</b>	Group of 77
<b>GasBol</b>	Bolivia—Brazil pipeline
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GFSG</b>	Green Finance Study Group
<b>GHG</b>	greenhouse gases
<b>GRULAC</b>	Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries
<b>IBAMA</b>	Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources
<b>IBGE</b>	Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
<b>IBSA</b>	India, Brazil and South Africa
<b>ICMBio</b>	Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation
<b>iCS</b>	Institute for Climate and Society
<b>IDC</b>	International Development Cooperation
<b>IEA</b>	International Energy Agency
<b>IIRSA</b>	The Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>INESC</b>	Institute of Socioeconomic Studies
<b>INPE</b>	National Institute for Space Research
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>IRA</b>	US Inflation Reduction Act
<b>ITS</b>	Institute for Technology and Society
<b>LDF</b>	Loss and Damage Fund
<b>MDA</b>	Ministry of Agrarian Development
<b>MDS</b>	Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger
<b>MERCOSUR</b>	Southern Common Market
<b>MMA</b>	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change

<b>MPLA</b>	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
<b>MST</b>	Brazil's Landless Workers Movement
<b>NAM</b>	Non-Aligned Movement
<b>NbS</b>	nature-based solutions
<b>NDC</b>	Nationally Determined Contribution
<b>NDRC</b>	National Development and Reform Commission
<b>NEPAD</b>	New Partnership for Africa's Development
<b>NLGACC</b>	National Leading Group on Climate Change
<b>NSC</b>	North-South cooperation
<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OIMC</b>	Interdisciplinary Observatory on Climate Change
<b>OPEC</b>	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
<b>ORA</b>	Amazon Regional Observatory
<b>PAA</b>	Food Acquisition Program
<b>PAO</b>	Pan-American Operation
<b>PARLAMAZ</b>	Amazonian Parliament
<b>PDVSA</b>	Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.
<b>PEI</b>	Independent Foreign Policy
<b>PLANAPO</b>	National Plan on Agroecology and Organic Production
<b>PNAE</b>	National School Feeding Program
<b>PNAPO</b>	National Policy on Agroecology and Organic agriculture
<b>PNATER</b>	National Policy for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension
<b>PNMC</b>	National Policy for Climate Change
<b>PNPCT</b>	National Policy on Sustainable Development of Peoples and Traditional Communities
<b>PPCDAm</b>	Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon
<b>PPCerrado</b>	Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation and Forest Fires in the Cerrado
<b>PROINFA</b>	Alternative Energy Sources Incentive Program
<b>Pronaf</b>	National Program for Strengthening Family Farming

<b>Pronamp</b>	National Medium-Sized Rural Producers Support Program
<b>PROSUR</b>	Forum for the Progress and Integration of South America
<b>PT</b>	Workers' Party
<b>RST</b>	Resilience and Sustainability Trust
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SAFs</b>	Agroforestry Systems
<b>SAR</b>	Synthetic Aperture Radar
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SEEG</b>	System for Estimating Greenhouse Gas Emissions
<b>Semiluso</b>	Luso-Brazilian Seminar on Family Farming in Regions at Risk of Desertification
<b>SFWG</b>	Sustainable Finance Working Group
<b>SISAN</b>	National Food and Nutritional Security System
<b>SSC</b>	South-South cooperation
<b>T20</b>	Think-20
<b>TID-Brasil</b>	Institute for Labor, Industry and Development
<b>TPC</b>	Triple Planetary Crisis
<b>U20</b>	Urban-Twenty
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNASUR</b>	Union of South American Nations
<b>UNCCD</b>	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Program
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USP</b>	University of São Paulo
<b>WMO</b>	World Meteorological Organization
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization
<b>YPF</b>	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales
<b>YPFB</b>	Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos



## Chapter 1

# A Transforming Global Order, Geopolitical Turbulence and Climate Change: Challenges and Possibilities for Brazilian Foreign Policy

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The global order has undergone a period of profound change, which has led to great uncertainty, but also to new possibilities. The world is potentially moving in the direction of growing multipolarity. The path, however, is long and winding: old geopolitical rivalries have resurfaced while new tensions between the major powers appear, together with the crisis of multilateralism at various levels. The clash between the United States and China—the latter increasingly aligned with Russia<sup>1</sup>—influences the distribution of power and affects international relations even in geographically distant regions. There is much talk of a “Second Cold War,” but the world now faces more diverse and complex challenges than those associated with that era.

As armed conflicts continue with no prospect of resolution, sometimes for decades, the nuclear threat has resurfaced in the context of the war in Ukraine. At the same time, in addition to security instabilities, new risks come to light. Cutting-edge technologies, for example, while enabling important advances, have produced significant global risks, such as disinformation campaigns—capable of undermining democratic systems and values.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the growth of the far right in various countries and areas of the world is accentuating the multiple crises.

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1 More information on this topic can be found at: Kendall-Taylor, Andrea, and David Shullman. “Navigating the Deepening Russia-China Partnership.” *Center for a New American Security*, January 14, 2021. <https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/backgrounds/documents/CNAS-Report-Russia-China-Alignment-final-v2.pdf?mtime=20210114133035&focal=none>.

2 Perhaps some of the main examples include the use of information technologies for the massive dissemination of fake news and the creation of hate networks during the elections in Brazil and the United States. On this subject, the following papers are recommended: Piaia, Victor, and Marcelo Alves. “Opening



At the same time, structural inequalities are worsening, and the fight against poverty—the incidence of which varies depending on geographical location, race and gender—is suffering setbacks. The past few years in Brazil and around the world have been marked by deepening inequality. Internationally, according to the World Inequality Lab report,<sup>3</sup> there has been a visible process of income concentration since 2019. In Brazil, as elsewhere, the increase in inequality and poverty has been accompanied by an increase in hunger. According to the 2nd National Survey on Food Insecurity in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Brazil, in 2022, 33 million people were going hungry in the country, representing a 70% increase in the number of people in severe food insecurity since 2020.<sup>4</sup>

This scenario has been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. The highly unjust and unequal responses to the health crisis, with deeply misallocated and mismanaged resources, have resulted in a global catastrophe not only for human health, with more than 6.8 million deaths recorded around the world,<sup>5</sup> but also for local and global economies, especially for developing countries. The sanitary crisis has led to an exponential increase in unemployment, food insecurity and poverty in the Global South, which has taken a serious toll on well-being indicators and the dignity of populations.

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the Black Box: Exploratory Analysis of the Bolsonaro Network on Whatsapp.” *Intercom—Brazilian Journal of Communication Sciences* 43, no. 3 (September-December 2020): 135-153. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://www.scielo.br/j/interc/a/JB3zHccN7KnHJXTwsRj8WjF/?format=pdf&lang=en>; and Ruediger, Marco Aurelio, and Amaro Grassi (Coord.). *Disinformation in the 2018 Elections: The Debate about Fake News in Brazil*. Rio de Janeiro: FGV DAPP, 2019. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/dspace/bitstream/handle/10438/29076/FGV%20DAPP%20-%20Disinformation%20in%20the%20Brazilian%20Elections%20.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

3 Chancel, Lucas, Thomas Piketty, Emmanuel Saez, Gabriel Zucman, et al. “World Inequality Report 2022.” *World Inequality Lab*. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://wir2022.wid.world/>.

4 Source and more information: Hermanson, Marcos. “33 milhões passam fome no Brasil, diz pesquisa.” *O Jôio e o Trigo*, June 8, 2022. <https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2022/06/33-milhoes-passam-fome-no-brasil-diz-pesquisa/>. The aforementioned report on food insecurity [Rede Brasileira de Pesquisa em Soberania e Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (Rede Penssan). *II National Survey on Food Insecurity in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Brazil*. São Paulo: PENSSAN Network, 2022], accessed June 12, 2023, can be found at: <https://olheparaafome.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/OLHESumExecutivoINGLES-Diagramacao-v2-R01-02-09-20224212.pdf>.

5 Data from March 2023, retrieved from: Brazil. Ministry of Health. *Painel de casos de doença pelo coronavírus 2019 (COVID-19) no Brasil*. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://covid.saude.gov.br/>.

It is against this backdrop that the ever-increasing impacts of climate change come into play. Far from representing an isolated threat, they aggravate all of those challenges. Rising sea levels, ocean acidification, changes in rainfall patterns—some of the most serious urban consequences of which are floods and landslides—, intensified droughts and desertification, among other phenomena, already affect food production and availability, disrupt livelihoods, cause social tensions and drive migration and forced displacement in various parts of the world, including Brazil.

In addition, climate change converges and interacts with other environmental factors, such as the loss of biodiversity and the pollution and contamination of air, water and soil. The adverse effects of these three threats, referred to by the United Nations (UN) as the “Triple Planetary Crisis,”<sup>6</sup> transcend international borders, posing an existential risk to humanity and highlighting the urgency of joint action within the international system. In Brazil, for example, in 2018 alone, more than one million people were affected by floods, almost 43 million were affected by droughts, and there were more than 85,000 internally displaced people as a result of environmental and climatic disasters.<sup>7</sup>

The purpose of this chapter, by way of an introduction to this book, is to present certain elements of the global order and international geopolitics that are essential when it comes to considering the role of Brazilian foreign policy (BFP), understanding its main challenges and potential in this scenario, and analyzing how these aspects relate to climate change. The text is divided into four sections, which cover the limitations of climate governance, the crisis of multilateralism and the fragmentation of the Global South—or developing countries—, the challenges for BFP given the recent dismantling of environmental and climate policies and the importance of restoring Brazilian credibility. Over the next few pages, the themes of the next chapters will also be announced, which seek, as

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6 More information can be found at: “What is the Triple Planetary Crisis?” UNFCCC, April 13, 2022. <https://unfccc.int/blog/what-is-the-triple-planetary-crisis>.

7 Source and more information at: Louback, Andréia Coutinho (Coord.). *Who Needs Climate Justice in Brazil?* Brasília: Gênero e Clima/Observatório do Clima, 2022. Accessed June 12, 2023. [https://generoeclima.oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/dlm\\_uploads/2022/11/Who-needs-climate-justice-in-Brazil.pdf](https://generoeclima.oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2022/11/Who-needs-climate-justice-in-Brazil.pdf).

a whole and based on different issues, to highlight the relevance of BFP so that Brazil can play a robust role nationally and internationally in the areas of climate and development.

### **Climate change and the limitations of global climate governance**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, other international leaders, and various academics have started employing the term Anthropocene in recognition of the fact that the planet has entered a new geological era, characterized by human impact on the Earth. In the same vein, scientists refer more and more to the concept of planetary boundaries, which establish how far socioeconomic development can go without irreversibly affecting the Earth's regenerative capacity. The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), released in March 2023, reaffirmed not only that the human impact on climate is unequivocal, but also that climate change is already occurring and causing significant environmental, economic, social and political damage.<sup>8</sup> This scenario demands not only an intergenerational approach to decision-making, but also greater and more effective international cooperation.

However, the responses of UN member states have fallen short of the urgency imposed by the Triple Crisis. The governance structure created at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio-92), with the consolidation of the Framework Conventions on climate, biodiversity, and desertification,<sup>9</sup> was certainly an important step, but it is still in need of improvement. Despite the progress represented by the Paris Agreement, through which 196 countries, including Brazil, agreed to make efforts to limit the average global temperature increase to less than 2°C (preferably 1.5°C) above pre-industrial levels, an accumulation

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8 The summary of the 6th Assessment Report (AR6) of IPCC is available at <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>. *Climainfo* platform has developed an excellent summary, which is available [in Portuguese] at: <https://climainfo.org.br/2023/03/19/ipcc-cinco-verdades-sobre-a-crise-climatica/>.

9 These are the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Droughts (UNCCD).

of decades of setbacks or extremely timid improvements calls for more immediate, ambitious, innovative, and integrated collective action.

There is a consensus that current climate governance fails to accommodate the coalitions and multilateral political arrangements which are needed to promote international cooperation and climate action in an effective and agile manner. Such governance has also been unable to ensure robust climate finance, especially for developing nations, and has failed to guarantee that commitments made by states at international level are actually fulfilled. Among the results, it is notable that global supply chains still lack solid guarantees of environmental and climate responsibility and that the goals regarding the cessation of the use of fossil fuels, the main global source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, are far from being achieved.

In addition, there is little emphasis on building an effectively just ecological transition: despite recent efforts, there has been a predominance of agendas linked to mitigation, often led by the interests and priorities of the Global North, with less attention paid to agendas linked to adaptation and loss and damage. The absence, to date, of the approval of a quantified global adaptation target and the delay of almost three decades in establishing a fund for loss and damage [finally approved at the Conference of the Parties (COP) 27, in 2022, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt], despite the long-standing demand from developing countries, are some examples of the global geopolitical disparity in the formulation and implementation of climate actions and policies. This inequality certainly contributes to the weak effectiveness of global governance described above. The very concept of a just transition, which has been widely discussed in various international governance spaces, is still in dispute. More elements on this issue are discussed in Chapter 2 of this book, which addresses a just, sovereign, and equitable transition.

At the same time, situational shocks—especially the conflict in Ukraine—have dominated the attention of the Northern Hemisphere countries, increasing the prevalence of security agendas over other social, economic, environmental, and political urgencies. Although this war has made clear the importance of more agile and significant investments in

renewable energies, the opposite is true in the short term; in Europe, there has been an increase in the use of coal<sup>10</sup> to generate energy and, globally, a race to expand the provision of fossil fuels through alternative suppliers.<sup>11</sup>

There is also a growing risk that financial resources that would have been allocated to the climate and environmental agendas—already far short of the promises made<sup>12</sup>—will be significantly reduced due to economic fluctuations caused by unilateral economic sanctions and the prioritizing of massive investments in defense and security. This jeopardizes the efforts and targeting of resources to promote climate mitigation and adaptation, to protect biodiversity and, more broadly, to comply with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In fact, studies by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) show that the risks linked to the war in Ukraine have proportionally reduced the amount of money allocated to development funding.<sup>13</sup> The war itself, with the combination of its political and economic effects, demands an even greater amount of resources—and distances us from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>14</sup>

Conversely, the growing impact of the climate crisis has meant that international agendas that had long been treated as separate issues are now being tackled in a more integrated way by different sectors of society—states, sub-national governments, civil society, and social movements, as well as the private and financial sectors. This is the case of the climate and development agendas, among others. Despite this, there is a notable

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10 More information at: European Union. "Russia's War on Ukraine Fuels Energy Crisis." *European Parliament*, September 14, 2022. Report launched by the European Parliament available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733643/EPRS\\_BRI\(2022\)733643\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733643/EPRS_BRI(2022)733643_EN.pdf).

11 More information can be found in the report: United Nations. "Global Impact of War in Ukraine: Energy Crisis." Brief no. 3. *UN Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance*, August 2022. [https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/GCRG\\_3rd-Brief\\_Aug3\\_2022\\_.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/GCRG_3rd-Brief_Aug3_2022_.pdf).

12 Despite the commitment to guarantee annual funding of US\$ 100 billion from 2020 onwards, the annual amount destined for climate finance is far from that figure. More information [in Portuguese] at: "Financiamento climático segue abaixo dos US\$ 100 bilhões anuais." *ClimaInfo*, August 1, 2022. <https://climaInfo.org.br/2022/07/31/financiamento-climatico-segue-abaixo-dos-us-100-bilhoes-anuais/>.

13 More information at: "Ukraine War Risks Further Cuts to Development Finance." *UNCTAD*, March 23, 2022. <https://unctad.org/news/ukraine-war-risks-further-cuts-development-finance>.

14 More information at: United Nations. *Combined Effects of War in Ukraine, Pandemic Driving Millions More into Extreme Poverty, Senior United Nations Official Tells Second Committee*. Meetings Coverage, Seventy-Seventh Session, 14th & 15th Meetings (am & pm), GA/EF/3571, 12 October 2022. <https://press.un.org/en/2022/gaef3571.doc.htm>.

absence of legally binding or universally applicable global instruments for certain issues, which means that international governance lacks adequate means to deal with some significant challenges. One example is the lack of a global convention for the protection of forests—in contrast to the agreements on climate, biodiversity and desertification that came out of Rio-92—an initiative that would be important for guaranteeing common agreement targets for combating deforestation and for sustainable agriculture, among others.

On the contrary: what we see is a vacuum in terms of global governance of forests, which until recently had been relegated to institutional spaces of little relevance. As a result, international cooperation against illegal deforestation, an essential and complementary component to efforts at national level, remains fragmented and highly subject to setbacks, depending on the global political situation and the political orientation of national governments. In addition, financial resources, which are fundamental to preventing and combating deforestation and other environmental crimes, remain scarce. Forest governance is further discussed in Chapter 7 of this book.

Faced with this scenario, and in opposition to those trends towards depletion, recent years have seen an increase in international initiatives linked to the preservation of forests and the fight against deforestation. The main examples are the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use in 2021, which, with 140 signatory countries, showed the political will to move forward in structuring governance, and the signing of the Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership in 2022, which seeks to raise funds to combat deforestation. It is important to note, however, that both initiatives were not negotiated in formal multilateral spaces. Being of a voluntary nature, they lack implementation monitoring mechanisms.

There has also been a proliferation of unilateral approval of due diligence rules, which seek to ensure that supply chains are free of products from deforested regions. For Brazil, one of the most important in this regard is the legislation approved by the European Parliament at the end of 2022, which will come into effect from December 2024, a topic discussed in Chapter 10 of this book. Other relevant initiatives in

this area are the variable geometry alliances, with particular emphasis on the coalition between Brazil, Indonesia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (BIC), which is also discussed throughout this work.

Another issue to consider is the lack of connection between agendas that are—or should be—complementary in global governance. Beyond the lack of a broad approach to dealing with the inherent relationship between climate and development, fragmentation also prevails between the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate and the Framework Convention on Biodiversity (the aforementioned UNFCCC and CBD), agendas that have greatly benefited from an integrated approach.<sup>15</sup> Given these gaps, Brazil faces fundamental and urgent tasks for its foreign policy and, more broadly, for implementing an international strategy that has at its core the issue of climate and sustainable development in its three main dimensions: economic, social and environmental. This topic is further explored in Chapter 4. More widely, Brazil must show leadership in strengthening cooperative arrangements, whether by resuming fundamental initiatives for the expansion of multipolarity, such as BRICS, IBSA, and South and Latin American integration organizations, or by creating new spaces for dialogue and coalition.

### **The crisis of multilateralism, the fragmentation of the Global South and the lack of regional integration in South and Latin America**

Major tectonic shifts in geopolitics take place precisely at a time when multilateralism is facing a legitimacy crisis, with widespread erosion of the cooperative global order based on respect for international law and the UN Charter. The election of Donald Trump as president of the United States in 2016 ushered in a period of deepening and growing attacks on the United Nations and other multilateral organizations that form global governance. This rhetoric includes climate change and scientific skepticism that continue to be propagated by far-right governments and

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15 For more on the subject, see: Pettorelli, Nathalie, et al. "Time to Integrate Global Climate Change and Biodiversity Science-Policy Agendas." *Journal of Applied Ecology* 58, no. 11 (November 2021): 2384-2393. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1365-2664.13985>; and five articles exploring the synergies between the Climate and Biodiversity Conventions written and published by the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)*, July 27, 2022. <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/papers-explore-synergies-between-biodiversity-and-climate-frameworks/>.



groups in different regions of the world, such as Latin America, Europe and Southeast Asia.

These political challenges add to the practical bottlenecks faced by multilateral institutions, including the recent inability to ensure the equitable, solidarity-based and fair distribution of vaccines and the treatments and equipment needed to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and other health crises. Moreover, the difficulties faced by the UN in preventing or resolving armed conflicts in a lasting manner, made clear in recent years by the wars in Libya, Palestine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria and, more recently, Ukraine, undermine the legitimacy of the organization. Above all, the inability to deal with protracted and recurrent conflicts reinforces the need to reform the Security Council, whose mode of operation has proved obsolete in order to effectively carry out its role of maintaining international peace and security and promoting human rights. It becomes increasingly clear that the highest body of the organization rests on an outdated and unequal political arrangement that urgently needs to be revised. The same can be said of various other parts of the UN system, which continue to rely on a structure that lacks democracy and transparency, is torn between the Global North and South and exacerbates other inequalities, such as those of race and gender.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, once-agile arrangements such as the G20—which, despite having played an important role in the response to the 2008 international financial crisis, had already been losing momentum as a space for coordination between the world’s largest economies—run the risk of being further weakened by political disputes, especially around Russia. Organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, among other Bretton Woods institutions, are also in need of reform to ensure greater representativeness and, consequently, legitimacy and effectiveness. This contributes to the instability of a global economy experiencing constant shocks and trade disputes. There is thus a general diagnosis of a loss of efficiency in these institutions. Nonetheless,

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16 More information on this can be found in the latest editions of Blue Smoke, *PassBlue’s* newsletter on high-ranking UN appointments. [https://www.passblue.com/article\\_categories/blue-smoke/](https://www.passblue.com/article_categories/blue-smoke/). We particularly recommend the reading of Folly, Maiara, and Enyseh Teimory. “It’s Opaque: Who Runs the UN and How Did They Get There?” *PassBlue*, April 18, 2023. <https://www.passblue.com/2023/04/18/its-opaque-who-runs-the-un-and-how-did-they-get-there/>.



there are no major efforts to transform their operating logic, which has historically been geared towards political and economic conceptions of the Global North, in order to deal with challenges such as the scarcity of climate finance. As long these organizations do not act to the detriment of the development agenda, they can and should play a greater role in the climate and environment agendas, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Finally, governance arrangements led by countries in the Global South have also been weakened to a large extent, not least because of the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of priority these arrangements have been given in some countries' foreign policies. Political divergences and extra-regional rivalries, such as attempts by other regional and global powers to contain the rise of China, as well as the various reactions to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, also undermine the effectiveness of once-efficient South-South political cooperation and coordination channels, such as the G77, BRICS (originally Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa),<sup>17</sup> and IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa). This is particularly serious given the growing gap between demand and availability of resources to finance development, climate adaptation and mitigation, and just transition in developing countries—issues that should be among the top priorities of global governance reform. These are fundamental coalitions for building a more multipolar and multilateral world and are therefore of enormous importance for Brazilian foreign policy. More on this subject is to be found on Chapter 5.

As a result, developing countries have not been able to establish minimum common platforms as quickly and efficiently as they had at other times, whether in building alliances and coalitions to facilitate political coordination in multilateral spaces and organizations, or in developing concrete reform proposals and political alternatives to the *status quo* of Northern dominance.<sup>18</sup> Faced with the visible asymmetry of international power, the South is fragmented and consequently more vulnerable to the imposition of agendas that do not guarantee the

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17 In August 2023, the BRICS announced its expansion, and, from January 2024, the bloc also included as members Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

18 Abdenur, Adriana, and Marília Closs. "Por que precisamos de uma segunda edição da Comissão do Sul?" *Revista Jacobin Brasil*, 6th ed. (2023).

interests of developing countries, which is particularly worrying when it comes to the climate and environmental agendas. This scenario calls for a more active and strategic BFP for the Global South. In this sense, the importance of rebuilding Brazil's ties with the countries of Africa and the Middle East and of a strategic policy towards Asia—especially China—is discussed in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 respectively.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, specifically, there has been a profound dismantling of various regional organizations in recent years. These major setbacks in regional integration have stemmed not only from political differences between governments, but also from the lack of leadership committed to consolidating regional international cooperation. The South and Latin American regional integration process, which experienced a boom during the so-called progressive cycle—or “pink wave”—in the first decade and a half of the 21st century, has ceased to be a priority for several countries, especially those that led the process financially and politically, such as Brazil. During the government of former president Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022), the country not only turned towards the North, but also emptied many of the forums with other countries in the South.

The lack of mutual trust was reflected in the underutilization and emptying of cooperation spaces, including the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR): the former, underutilized and relegated to a diminished purely commercial role; the latter, after the successive departures of several countries, in practice extinct. Similar challenges have been faced by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Despite the election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva at the end of 2022 for a third term (2023-2027) and of other progressive governments, such as Gustavo Petro (2022-2026) in Colombia, there is still strong resistance from governments such as those of Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay<sup>19</sup> to reviving UNASUR. Furthermore, although Brazil has announced its return to CELAC, and

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19 Della Coletta, Ricardo, and Renato Machado. “Países vetam menção à Unasul em comunicado final da reunião de líderes sul-americanos.” *Folha de S. Paulo*, May 30, 2023. [https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2023/05/paises-vetam-mencao-a-unasul-em-comunicado-final-da-reuniao-de-lideres-sul-americanos.shtml#:~:text=Os%20pa%C3%ADses%20que%20abandonaram%20a,\(30\)%2C%20em%20Bras%C3%ADlia.](https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2023/05/paises-vetam-mencao-a-unasul-em-comunicado-final-da-reuniao-de-lideres-sul-americanos.shtml#:~:text=Os%20pa%C3%ADses%20que%20abandonaram%20a,(30)%2C%20em%20Bras%C3%ADlia.)

Lula has sought to restore the group's political weight by attending its 7th Summit in Buenos Aires in his first month in office, it is still difficult to see a complete revitalization of the body. Promising new initiatives, such as the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement)—currently signed by Brazil, but yet to be ratified by Congress—are still making slow progress. The subject is covered in more detail in Chapter 6.

### **Climate policy challenges and the reconstruction of Brazilian foreign policy**

The above scenario illustrates the importance of Brazil rebuilding its proud and active<sup>20</sup> foreign policy, governed by principles that include the defense of national independence and sovereignty, the prevalence of human rights, the defense of peace, and cooperation among peoples for the progress of humanity, as provided for in Article 4 of the Federal Constitution. In a context of extremely high instability, a country with the weight and history of Brazil cannot and shall not be a supporting player. This is especially important in the climate and environment agendas, allied to the development agenda. After all, past experiences show that BFP has the capacity not only to actively participate in innovative diplomatic efforts in these areas, but also to lead them, especially when environmental and climate policies defended in the external sphere are accompanied by consistent progress on the domestic front.

However, the point of departure is not simple. In addition to global and regional challenges, there are a number of internal challenges in the areas of the environment and climate. The current government is faced with the urgent task of reversing the institutional weakening of environmental and climate policies promoted by the previous administration (2019-2022). Among the measures adopted by that government were the closure of the Secretariat for Climate Change and Forests at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) and, in a joint decision

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20 [The expression "política externa ativa e ativa" was coined by Ambassador Celso Amorim, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil.—Trans.]

with Itamaraty, the withdrawal from hosting COP25 in Brazil soil in 2019.<sup>21</sup> This process included attacks on agencies in charge of collecting and analyzing environmental data, especially the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) and, more broadly, on science, research and public education. There was also an institutional dismantling of agencies that had responsibility for overseeing and monitoring environmental crimes, especially the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA) and the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio), which saw a significant reduction in their technical, financial and human resources capacities.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, the National Foundation of Indigenous Peoples (FUNAI)<sup>23</sup> pursued policies contrary to the well-being of indigenous people, contributing to the exacerbation of a long-standing crisis of neglect and violence against them.<sup>24</sup> Alongside this, skepticism regarding climate change, already present in certain segments of Brazilian society, intensified, even in the National Congress. The former administration also paralyzed international cooperation mechanisms for environmental protection, such as the Amazon Fund, breaking partnerships, and bonds of trust that Brazil had built over the last century.<sup>25</sup>

Consequently, Brazil—historically a proactive and constructive country in global debates—lost credibility and space on the international

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21 Although part of this process is being reversed with Brazil's bid to host COP30 in Belém do Pará, the political damage caused by the withdrawal is inestimable.

22 On the dismantling of environmental institutions, the increase in environmental crimes and the rise in violence against socio-environmental defenders under the Bolsonaro government, see: Werneck, Felipe, and Claudio Angelo. "Brazil: 1000 days of destruction—How Jair Bolsonaro Became the World's Most Dangerous Climate Denier." *Observatório do Clima*, 2021. [https://www.oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/1000Days\\_Digital\\_E\\_v1.pdf](https://www.oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/1000Days_Digital_E_v1.pdf); and Neves, Felipe Schaeffer, and Maiara Folly. "Environmental Crimes as Organized Crime: illegal Gold Mining in the Amazon." *Plataforma CIPÓ*, December 2021. <https://plataformacipo.org/en/publications/new-cipo-strategic-report-on-illegal-gold-mining-in-the-amazon/>.

23 After the new government took office, in January 2023, FUNAI became part of an unprecedented Ministry of Indigenous Peoples.

24 On the work of FUNAI, see: Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos (INESC) and Indigenistas Associados (INA). "Anti-Indigenous Foundation: A Portrait of FUNAI under the Bolsonaro Government." *INESC/INA*, June 2022a. [https://inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/release-funai\\_atualizado\\_EN.pdf?x92701](https://inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/release-funai_atualizado_EN.pdf?x92701).

25 On Brazil's loss of credibility and international prestige as a result of the change of direction in Brazilian foreign policy by the Bolsonaro government, see: Ringoni, Gilberto, Giorgio Romano Schutte, and Tatiana Berringer (Eds.). *As bases da política externa bolsonarista. Relações internacionais em um mundo em transformação*. Santo André: Editora UFABC, 2021. Accessed June 12, 2023. [https://editora.ufabc.edu.br/images/Livros/Bases\\_da\\_politica\\_externa\\_bolsonarista.pdf](https://editora.ufabc.edu.br/images/Livros/Bases_da_politica_externa_bolsonarista.pdf).

stage. High levels of deforestation and wildfires, especially in the Amazon and the Cerrado, along with other environmental crimes, have provoked strong negative reactions, both in Brazil and abroad. At the same time, the retraction in international cooperation—an important source of exchanges, partnerships, innovations in public policies and even funding—ended up damaging national interests, as it reduced negotiating capacity in multilateral bodies and contributed to the insertion of additional socio-environmental obligations<sup>26</sup> in trade negotiations, for example. Moreover, the disregard for multilateralism and the distancing from the principles of the Constitution that govern Brazilian foreign policy put Brazil in the opposite direction of regional integration and international cooperation.

Further contributors to this trend were the reduction of dialogue with civil society—evident in the accelerated disassembling of consultative mechanisms and other instruments for social participation, such as the National Environment Council (CONAMA) and the deliberative council of the National Environment Fund, among others. These factors ultimately empowered backward segments of the private sector, which, faced with a perception of impunity, pursued predatory practices in the use of natural resources and the exploitation of labor.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the excessive use of military forces in expensive and inefficient environmental protection operations, contributed to environmental setbacks.<sup>28</sup>

In spite of that, the Brazilian population's concern and interest in the climate issue continues to grow, as shown by various recent studies. In 2021, a survey showed that six out of ten Brazilians said they were “very concerned” about the environment, while 26% said they were “concerned.”<sup>29</sup> The same survey found that Brazilians are very

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26 An example of this were the conditions set out in the European Union's additional letter to the Free Trade Agreement with MERCOSUR, which demand greater environmental commitments from the Southern Cone countries.

27 More information in Teixeira, Izabella, and Ana Toni. “A crise ambiental-climática e os desafios da contemporaneidade: o Brasil e sua política ambiental.” *CEBRI-Revista: Brazilian Journal of International Affairs* 1, no. 1 (January-March 2022): 71-93. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://cebri-revista.emnuvens.com.br/revista/article/view/7>.

28 See: “O negacionismo climático na caserna bolsonarista.” *Climainfo*, November 23, 2021. <https://climainfo.org.br/2021/11/23/o-negacionismo-climatico-na-caserna-bolsonarista/>.

29 Source and more information: “Maioria dos brasileiros diz que aquecimento já está acontecendo e é causado por humanos.” *Observatório do Clima*, February 4, 2021. <https://www.oc.eco.br/Mayria-dos-brasileiros-diz-que-aquecimento-ja-esta-acontecendo-e-e-causado-por-humanos/>.

concerned about climate change and the environment, consider that fires in the Amazon are damaging the country's image and economy and see no dichotomy between environmental protection and economic development.<sup>30</sup> In addition, a survey released in September 2022 indicates that no less than 81% of our population believes that protecting the Amazon should be considered a priority.<sup>31</sup>

As a result, it is clear that, despite recent challenges, the climate debate—which was limited to a few social and political strata until a few decades ago—has been gaining traction in Brazil, both in institutional spaces at different levels, including state and municipal governments, and in social movements and civil society organizations. The climate debate has also gained greater weight on the agendas of political parties, appearing with unprecedented visibility in the presidential campaigns for the 2022 elections.<sup>32</sup>

This growing interest comes as no surprise, given that climate change and environmental destruction already directly or indirectly impact millions of Brazilians. Studies show that an average of 3,400 people are affected by each natural disaster in Brazil, including those who are displaced, left homeless, hit by droughts and even killed. These extreme events also represent significant economic losses. In the first quarter of 2022 alone, for instance, the financial losses caused by extreme weather events amounted to more than R\$ 72 million.<sup>33</sup>

All these factors contribute to high levels of concern about the climate and the environment and, partly as a reaction to challenges faced

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30 The survey *Climate Change According to the Perception of Brazilian Citizens 2021*, by the Institute of Technology and Society (ITS), carried out between the end of September and the beginning of November 2021, is available at: [https://itsrio.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Percep%C3%A7%C3%A3o-sobre-queimadas\\_Report\\_ENGLISH.pdf](https://itsrio.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Percep%C3%A7%C3%A3o-sobre-queimadas_Report_ENGLISH.pdf). Accessed June 12, 2023.

31 The public opinion poll "Amazônia: violência e desafios para o desenvolvimento," by Instituto Clima e Sociedade (iCS) and PoderData, carried out between 28 and 30 July 2022, is available at: <https://cseprs3.s3.amazonaws.com/email-editor-files/0d032777-8e2c-40bc-f691-08d93a37f45b/017fed53-8ffe-4cea-bd1f-874b6a6cf2ca.pptx/>. Accessed June 12, 2023.

32 Dolabela, Helena. "Mudança climática e disputa eleitoral: o que se esperar para 2022?" *JOTA*, September 1, 2022. <https://www.jota.info/opiniao-e-analise/artigos/mudanca-climatica-e-disputa-eleitoral-o-que-se-esperar-para-2022-01092022/>.

33 Janone, Lucas. "A cada desastre natural no Brasil, em média, 3,4 mil pessoas são afetadas." *CNN Brasil*, April 11, 2022. <https://www.cnnbrasil.com.br/nacional/a-cada-desastre-natural-no-brasil-em-media-34-mil-pessoas-sao-afetadas/>.

in recent years, the organized civil society engaged with the issue has possibly never been so well coordinated and diversified since the ecological movements were strengthened in Brazil by the process of preparation for Eco-92. Various movements that were historically associated with other agendas, such as workers' rights, have started to build climate agendas with more attention. Some examples are highlighted below.

Trade union movements, such as the Unified Workers' Central (CUT), analyze the repercussions of the energy transition on labor rights, while the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) points out the distortions created by a production model based on monoculture and the excessive use of agrochemicals. Other initiatives by organized civil society—such as Agenda 2045 of the Climate Observatory, the Amazon 2030 Plan, the Amazon Concertation, the Initiative Climate and Development: Visions for Brazil 2030, and the Institute for Climate and Society (iCS), among others—promote the production of knowledge and build agendas for the adoption of priority measures.

In addition, groups advocating for environmental and climate justice have become more robust. Movements of indigenous and *quilombola*<sup>34</sup> leaders, such as the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB) and the National Coordination for the Articulation of Rural Black Quilombola Communities (CONAQ), are working to ensure that climate is at the center of Brazilian politics, including its international scope. Also noteworthy is the engagement of youth through groups such as Engajamundo, Perifa Connection and Youth Climate Leaders, as well as various periphery-focused organizations, such as those that make up the A Climate for Change Coalition (Coalizão o Clima é de Mudança), which have joined forces to raise awareness of environmental racism and increase the access of groups from the periphery to international climate agendas, including the COPs.

All of this has led to a relentless search for solutions and answers, including through multi-sector alliances, such as the Brazilian Coalition on Climate, Forests and Agriculture, which brings together actors from the

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34 *Quilombolas* are residents of quilombo settlements, communities of resistance first established by escaped slaves in Brazil.



private sector, the financial sector, academia and civil society. Similarly, more progressive segments of the private sector and the financial market, in response to expectations and pressures related to sustainability, are looking for ways to make their operations more sustainable—even if, in the absence of clear regulations and obligations, voluntary actions have a fairly limited impact. Among all these non-governmental actors, a capacity to generate knowledge (technical, scientific, and traditional), social mobilization, including through networks, and, progressively, direct dialogue with international actors is evident.

There has also been a new degree of protagonism and new forms of action by sub-national governments, either by individual municipalities and states or through networks and partnerships, such as the Governors for Climate Consortium, the Interstate Consortium for Sustainable Development of the Legal Amazon and C40 Cities, a global network of mayors promoting sustainable agendas. These actors have also gained more visibility and the ability to speak at international decision-making forums, such as the Climate COP.

All of this contributes to the ability not only to reverse the measures adopted by the previous administration, but also to build a long-term horizon of well-being and sustainability. In doing so, Brazilian civil society proves to be willing and able to resume and strengthen already made commitments, as well as making new ones, aware of its collective responsibility to deal with the climate crisis. It is essential, therefore, that this process of domestic strengthening is accompanied by a redesign of BFP, in order to rebuild broken ties, recover wasted opportunities and restore Brazil's credibility to advance the interests of the different sectors of our society and guide the climate agenda not just from Brazil, but from the South.

### **Restoring international credibility: paths to building a proud and active Brazilian foreign policy on climate and the environment**

The first steps to regaining Brazil's lost credibility on the international stage are to adopt domestic measures, especially towards reducing deforestation and forest fires rates, primarily in the Amazon. Although



it remains at high levels, deforestation in the Amazon fell 49.9% in 2023 compared to 2022.<sup>35</sup> Despite the setbacks faced, Brazil still has the necessary capacity and expertise to combat the destruction of the largest rainforest on the planet. For almost a decade, starting in the mid-2000s, Brazil managed to reduce illegal deforestation, while at the same time increasing its agricultural production.<sup>36</sup> This success has been widely recognized internationally and has helped Brazil gain credibility in climate and environmental negotiations. It is therefore imperative to resume this path.

Thus, Lula's new government has prioritized the promotion of policies grounded in climate justice and scientific evidence, based on reliable and transparent data. Notably, the resumption of environmental monitoring by IBAMA and of the effective application of penalties (such as fines and embargoes)<sup>37</sup> against environmental criminals, as well as the updating of the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon (PPCDAm)<sup>38</sup> and the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation and Forest Fires in the Cerrado (PPCerrado).

Despite these initial advances, more needs to be done. In this sense, the culture of impunity for environmental crimes in Brazil must be ended, not least by perfecting mechanisms such as the Rural Environmental Registry (CAR) and the National Agricultural Production Traceability

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35 Social Communication Secretariat. *Área sob alertas de desmatamento na Amazônia cai 50% em 2023*, January 15, 2024. <https://www.gov.br/secom/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2024/01/area-sob-alertas-de-desmatamento-na-amazonia-cai-50-em-2023#:~:text=A%20C3%A1rea%20sob%20alertas%20de,ap%C3%B3s%20quatro%20anos%20de%20retrocesso>.

36 Ramalho, Renan. "Desmatamento na Amazônia Legal cai 82% em 10 anos, diz governo." *G1*, August 14, 2015. <https://g1.globo.com/natureza/noticia/2015/08/desmatamento-na-amazonia-legal-cai-82-em-10-anos-diz-governo.html#:~:text=A%20C3%A1rea%20desmatada%20de%202013,as%20chuvas%20e%20atividades%20agr%C3%ADcolas>.

37 A survey of the most relevant acts related to the climate agenda in the first 100 days of Lula's government can be found at: Werneck, Felipe, and Claudio Angelo. "Brazil: 1000 days of destruction—How Jair Bolsonaro Became the World's Most Dangerous Climate Denier." *Observatório do Clima*, 2021. [https://www.oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/1000Days\\_Digital\\_E\\_v1.pdf](https://www.oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/1000Days_Digital_E_v1.pdf).

38 During the first hundred days of Lula's administration, a new version of the PPCDAm was made available for consultation. Cf. Brazil. "Plano de Ação para Prevenção e Controle do Desmatamento na Amazônia Legal (PPCDAm)." *Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change*. Accessed December 15, 2023. <https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/assuntos/prevencao-e-controle-do-desmatamento/amazonia-ppcdam-1/>.

System,<sup>39</sup> which must be accompanied by improvements in the tracking of all commodities that are putting pressure on the forest and other sensitive biomes. It will also be necessary to combine strategies to prevent and combat deforestation with the restoration of degraded areas and the reforestation of biomes. This must also be accompanied by a development model focused on generating sustainable jobs through approaches such as bioeconomy and investments in green technologies and infrastructures.

In the same vein, it is essential that Brazil makes progress in refining instruments to ensure the prevention of violence against land defenders, especially with regard to attacks and threats against indigenous, *quilombola*, landless and settled leaders. Data from 2021, 2022 and 2023 shows that Brazil is among the most dangerous countries in the world for socio-environmental defenders and indigenous leaders.<sup>40</sup> This requires guaranteeing access to justice, with rigorous investigation against all relevant actors involved in violations and requiring companies and financial institutions to account for and be held responsible for violence and other harm to land and environmental defenders in all their global operations and production chains, as part of due diligence. Furthermore, Brazil must be aligned with adequate and up-to-date international instruments to combat violence against socio-environmental defenders. In this regard, there is an urgent need to ratify the aforementioned

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39 On this subject, we recommend reading the analysis and recommendations discussed in: Vieira, Flávia do Amaral, and Luísa Falcão. "Operations to Combat Environmental Crimes in the Amazon: Challenges and Best Practices." *Plataforma CIPÓ*, March 2, 2023. [https://plataformacipo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Relatorio-Estrategico\\_Operacoes-de-combate-ao-crime-ambiental-na-Amazonia-Dos-desafios-as-boas-praticas-Plataforma-CIPO.pdf](https://plataformacipo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Relatorio-Estrategico_Operacoes-de-combate-ao-crime-ambiental-na-Amazonia-Dos-desafios-as-boas-praticas-Plataforma-CIPO.pdf).

40 More information can be found at: "Violence, Torture and Threats Continue, Allege Land and Environmental Defenders in Amazonian Brazil Palm Oil Region." *Global Witness*, December 20, 2023. <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/violence-torture-and-threats-continue-allege-land-and-environmental-defenders-amazonian-brazil-palm-oil-region/>; Mena, Fernanda. "Brasil é país mais letal da década para defensores da terra e do ambiente, diz ONG." *Folha de S. Paulo*, September 28, 2022. [https://terradedireitos.org.br/uploads/arquivos/Dossie-Vidas-em-Luta.pdf](https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2022/09/brasil-e-pais-mais-letal-da-decada-para-defensores-da-terra-e-do-ambiente-diz-ong.shtml#:~:text=O%20Brasil%20%C3%A9%20o%20pa%C3%ADs,terra%20e%20pela%20defesa%20ambiental; Brazilian Committee of Human Rights Defenders, and Layza Queiroz Santos, et al. (Eds.). <i>Vidas em luta: criminalização e violência contra defensoras e defensores de direitos humanos no Brasil. Período 2018-2020/1</i>, v. III. Curitiba: Terra de Direitos, 2020. Accessed June 12, 2023. <a href=); Gonçalves, Eliane, and Thiago Padovan. "Brasil é um dos países mais perigosos para defensores de direitos." *Agência Brasil*, Brasília, December 12, 2023. <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/direitos-humanos/noticia/2023-12/brasil-e-um-dos-paises-mais-perigosos-para-defensores-de-direitos>.

## Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (the Escazú Agreement).

Domestic measures to revive environmental policy need to be accompanied by a proud and active climate and environmental diplomacy—but also one that is innovative and assertive. This will be important if Brazil is to reverse the loss of credibility and influence in global geopolitics and international forums that has occurred in recent years. Brazil must continue signaling its unequivocal commitment to socio-environmental protection by taking action to demonstrate that this discourse, not only is not empty and devoid of concrete measures, but will also be supported by immediate action and a long-term strategy. The route towards a low-carbon economy must be one of the central elements of this plan, which needs to be backed up by a more ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and accompanied by a credible and transparent plan for reducing emissions—which urgently corrects the “carbon trick maneuver” announced by the previous government.<sup>41</sup> Also on the external front, it will be necessary to develop political lines of action aimed at reinserting the country as a protagonist in key issues, such as the protection of forests and their peoples and the promotion of food sovereignty and climate justice, including as part of a strategy to reinvigorate multilateralism and international cooperation.

At the same time, foreign policy can and should be marked by greater transparency and, above all, social participation. Given the growing social interest in the agenda, it is important to create new institutional and permanent mechanisms for dialogue with social organizations and movements, bridging the historical gap between the MRE and Brazil’s organized civil society. That would not only deepen the democratization of foreign policy, but also strengthen the Ministry itself. In this sense, decision-making on foreign policy issues should incorporate and

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41 The term “pedalada climática” [“climate pedalling”] has been used by civil society organizations to refer to the updating of the Brazilian NDC in 2020 which, in practice, does not guarantee progressivity in Brazil’s emission reduction targets by changing the use of the base year for the calculations. More information at: Araújo, Suely (Ed.). “Brasil 2045: Building an Environmental Powerhouse. V. 1—environmental policy proposals for 2023-2024.” *Observatório do Clima*, May 19, 2022. <https://www.oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2045-EN%E2%80%94VF.pdf>.

consolidate participatory mechanisms that engage the various segments of the Brazilian population, including indigenous peoples, *quilombolas* and other traditional communities, groups that are disproportionately affected by climate injustices and which, at the same time, represent a source of knowledge and leadership for dealing with environmental and climate challenges. Without an inclusive and intergenerational approach to climate and the environment, it will not be possible to reinstate Brazil as a key player in international debates or reap the benefits of this participation in favor of development and the well-being of the population.

In the context of international climate governance, Brazil must be politically savvy to ensure that it builds common concepts and denominators to bring together multilateral coalitions. This was the case, for example, with the promotion of the concept of “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR), which guided not just Brazil’s actions but those of several other countries during Rio-92. BFP needs an innovative, responsible and supportive strategy to think about Brazil’s international insertion in the Conferences of the Parties—whether at the climate COP, the biodiversity COP or other spaces that are emerging, such as the COP under the Escazú Agreement.

Brazil should also continue to resume bilateral cooperation with partner countries and encourage the improvement of mechanisms to attract donations for international investment in efforts to combat deforestation and preserve biodiversity, as well as climate finance in general. The resumption of the Amazon Fund, announced in the first hundred days of Lula’s administration, is certainly an important sign. However, it is necessary to go further: our relations with partners such as the European Union, the United States and China must be guided by a strategic vision that has climate and the environment at its core, while always paying attention, with regard to trade and supply chains, to the protection of sensitive biomes and vulnerable populations. All these actions are important both for regaining political credibility and for attracting new investments to the Amazon region.

From the point of view of South-South cooperation with countries outside the region, initiatives such as the aforementioned new BIC coalition between Brazil, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia, with the potential to add new members in the future, offer a space for developing countries facing similar challenges with regard to forest areas to share experiences in promoting deforestation-free forest product chains and mobilize support for resources for tropical forest areas. The launch of the BIC coalition sends a message that solutions for tropical forests must be spearheaded by tropical countries, even if alliances with rich countries are necessary to ensure, for example, the suitability of international trade in commodities that put pressure on these forests. In this sense, it is essential to bear in mind that taking care of the forests also means taking care of their populations.

In light of the issues outlined in this chapter, it is urgent for Brazil to build an international strategy with climate as its central axis. Furthermore, it is essential that this strategy—which encompasses, beyond “traditional” foreign policy, international cooperation, trade, investment and social participation, among other elements—be governed by the principles of prevalence of human rights, self-determination of peoples, defense of peace, peaceful settlement of conflicts and cooperation among peoples. It is also necessary to ensure legal guarantees, including the right to an ecologically balanced environment, in line with respect for and promotion of well-established and emerging international standards, such as the declaration approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 2022 on access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right.

In summary, Brazil needs to resume and, more importantly, expand a strategy of aligning development and climate agendas, guaranteeing the promotion of a distributive policy for climate action. In every space, it is necessary to emphasize a new vision of national sovereignty for the country, with climate and environmental responsibility. This strategy must be based on the search for ways to promote inclusive, fair, and sustainable development in Brazil, reaping concrete benefits for Brazilian society and promoting a vision of a democratic and effective global order that meets the realities, demands and priorities of developing countries.

To that end, it will be necessary to foster the idea that, when respectfully constructed, international cooperation is an essential instrument for strengthening Brazilian sovereignty. Thus, a foreign policy that seeks a just, sovereign, and equitable transition is necessary—and only then will Brazil be able to rise, once again, to the role of one of the protagonists on the international stage, from which it should never have departed. Such is the spirit that guides this book.



## Chapter 2

# A Just, Sovereign and Equitable Transition: Formulating a Concept to Guide Brazilian Foreign Policy

Marília Closs

Brazilian foreign policy (BFP) cannot be thought of in isolation and must be integrated into the formulation and implementation of other public policies.<sup>1</sup> This, however, is still a challenge, especially when one considers the historical pattern of BFP issues being kept in relative isolation from public debate and the process of formulating the remaining public policies, such as those more directly related to the economy or to nutrition, for example.<sup>2</sup> This becomes even more challenging when it comes to foreign policy on climate, an agenda which is directly related to central issues for Brazil, such as the environment and biodiversity.

It is therefore essential that Brazilian foreign policy takes these issues into account; especially considering the various challenges the country faces not only in environmental and climate terms, as presented in Chapter 1, but also in terms of social inclusion. At a time when social policies and the democratic rule of law are being rebuilt, it is important that the targets and objectives linked to climate and the environment are connected to issues of social justice, combating inequalities and building

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1 For more information on the discussion of foreign policy as public policy, see: Milani, Carlos, and Leticia Pinheiro. "Política externa brasileira: os desafios de sua caracterização como política pública." *Contexto Internacional* 35, no. 1 (2013): 11-41. Accessed on June 12, 2023. <https://www.scielo.br/j/cint/a/Dy6zLys78XTnTV8YFky9ZJJ/abstract/?lang=pt>.

2 Although some studies have already provided good insights into the foreign policy debate in public opinion, it can still be said that the weight of BFP in the debate is less than that of other types of public policy, such as economic and social policies. More information at: Almeida, Maria Herminia Tavares, Ivan Felipe Fernandes, and Feliciano de Sá Guimarães. "Structuring Public Opinion on Foreign Policy Issues: The Case of Brazil." *Latin American Research Review* 56, no. 3 (2021): 557-574. Accessed on June 12, 2023. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/latin-american-research-review/article/structuring-public-opinion-on-foreign-policy-issues-the-case-of-brazil/A59E3EC39467B5E77EF01DA3C1AF78D7>.



a dignified and fair life. In addition, many conceptions of development—including on climate and the environment—need to be updated. That is why this book advocates the construction of a project for development that is committed to social inclusion and sustainability. What is more: it is necessary to ensure that inclusion policies are also socio-environmental, i.e. that they guarantee a climate and environmental transition at the same time as ensuring a dignified life for its population, by combating poverty, hunger, unemployment, violence, and discrimination.

Inclusion and sustainability must be intertwined at the core of Brazilian democracy. For this reason, the central idea of this book is precisely to discuss the synchronicity between *climate and development* in the most diverse aspects of Brazilian foreign policy. To do this, it is necessary to clarify the basic concepts that should guide Brazil's new course. For example, what is meant by development? What are the limits and challenges of combining development, social inclusion, and climate? It is therefore argued that it is important for Brazil to undergo what is referred to in this book as a *just, sovereign, and equitable transition*. In other words, one that guarantees the country's path towards the decarbonization of the economy and that, at the same time, is inclusive and involves different conceptions of sovereignty: from national sovereignty, to guarantee economic development policies, to energy and food sovereignty.

These discussions have gained a sense of urgency in recent years. Despite an 8% drop compared to the previous year, in 2022 Brazil emitted 2.3 billion gross tons of Greenhouse Gases (GHG).<sup>3</sup> As a result, the country remains among the ten largest emitters of GHG in the world.<sup>4</sup> Studies have already shown how Brazil's emissions curve has remained essentially the same since the approval of the National Policy on Climate Change in 2009—and this is largely due to the failure to meet the target of reducing deforestation, especially in the Amazon. Furthermore, data from the

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3 Maes, Jéssica. "Emissões de carbono do Brasil caem 8% em 2022, mas taxa ainda é 3ª maior desde 2005." *Folha de S. Paulo*, November 23, 2023. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ambiente/2023/11/emissoes-de-carbono-do-brasil-caem-8-em-2022-mas-taxa-ainda-e-3a-maior-desde-2005.shtml>.

4 Lovisi, Pedro, and Diana Yukari. "Veja em 6 gráficos quais são os países que mais poluem." *Folha de S. Paulo*, February 18, 2024. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2024/02/veja-em-6-graficos-quais-sao-os-paises-que-mais-poluem.shtml>.

System for Estimating Greenhouse Gas Emissions (SEEG) point out that Brazil still pollutes more than it generates wealth: in 2022 the country emitted 1.22 kg per dollar generated in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).<sup>5</sup>

In this sense, the resumption of the fight against deforestation, the main national source of GHG emissions, although a priority, is insufficient if carried out in isolation. It is necessary to develop lines of action that are consistent with the objective of reducing emissions in various sectors, making climate a cross-cutting issue<sup>6</sup> both domestically and abroad. In the Brazilian case, there are three central agendas, which will be the focus of this chapter: 1) energy and mining; 2) agriculture and food sovereignty; and 3) industrialization and green technologies. Therefore, in addition to this introduction and concluding remarks, this chapter is subdivided into three sections that address each of these issues, pointing out possible ways for policies in these sectors to drive the transition that Brazil (and the world) needs.

### **Energy and mining: paths towards a just, sovereign, and equitable energetic and mineral transition in Brazil**

Thinking about climate change necessarily involves thinking about energy—or, more specifically, energy transition strategies<sup>7</sup>—and the impacts of aggressive mining. Science shows that, globally, the use of fossil fuels is the main source of greenhouse gas emissions: oil, gas and coal are the main drivers of climate change.<sup>8</sup> According to 2019 data from

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5 Tsai, David, et al. *Análise das emissões de gases de efeito estufa e suas implicações para as metas climáticas do Brasil (1970-2022). Sistema de Estimativas de Emissões e Remoções de Gases de Efeito Estufa, 2023*. Accessed on March 18, 2024. [https://oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Relatorio-SEEG\\_gases-estufa\\_2023FINAL.pdf](https://oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Relatorio-SEEG_gases-estufa_2023FINAL.pdf).

6 A broader discussion of this can be found in: Silva, Marina. *Commitments to rescue the lost Brazilian Socio-Environmental Agenda* [open letter]. September 2022. Accessed on June 12, 2023. <https://marinasilva.org.br/rescuing-the-lost-socio-environmental-agenda/>.

7 In this book, energy transition is understood to be the transformation of the energy matrix of a territory (which can be a municipality, a state, a country, etc.) towards decarbonization through the use of renewable energies. Other similar concepts, such as just transition, are understood differently, as discussed in this chapter.

8 The synthesis report of the Sixth Assessment Cycle of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), released in March 2023, pointed out unequivocally that the use of fossil fuels is the biggest driver of climate change. Accessed on June 12, 2023. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/>.

the BP Statistical Review,<sup>9</sup> that year 84.7% of the world's primary energy consumption came from those three sources.

In recent decades, however, the supply of renewable energies has increased significantly around the world. Examples include the diversification of energy generation—and some of the main ones are photovoltaics, wind power, biomass and, more recently, green hydrogen. In 2019 alone, for example, there was a 14.5% growth in the consumption of renewable energy at a global level.<sup>10</sup> Alongside this, there was, until the recent changes in the geopolitical scenario,<sup>11</sup> an increase in funding for renewable energies and the defunding and reduction of subsidies for fossil fuels, especially coal, oil and natural gas<sup>12</sup>—even though Brazil was often at odds with the world, especially during the 2019-2022<sup>13</sup> period. Despite recent setbacks, such as the resumption of wider funding for coal-fired power plants in some parts of Europe after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine,<sup>14</sup> there are important initiatives towards decarbonizing energy.

However, this energy transition has mostly been led by transnational companies,<sup>15</sup> which have been the leading players in terms of capital and technological innovation in modalities such as wind energy and

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9 BP P.L.C. *BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2019*. Accessed on June 12, 2023. <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/business-sites/en/global/corporate/pdfs/energy-economics/statistical-review/bp-stats-review-2019-full-report.pdf>.

10 BP P.L.C. *BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2019*. Accessed on June 12, 2023. <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/business-sites/en/global/corporate/pdfs/energy-economics/statistical-review/bp-stats-review-2019-full-report.pdf>.

11 The current geopolitical scenario and its new dynamics were discussed in Chapter 1 of this book.

12 On this subject, see: International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and Climate Policy Initiative (CPI). *Global Landscape of Renewable Energy Finance*. Abu Dhabi: IRENA, 2020. Accessed on June 12, 2023. [https://irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2020/Nov/IRENA\\_Global\\_Landscape\\_Renewable\\_Energy\\_Finance\\_2020.pdf](https://irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2020/Nov/IRENA_Global_Landscape_Renewable_Energy_Finance_2020.pdf).

13 More information at: Institute of Socioeconomic Studies (INESC). "Fossil fuel subsidies in Brazil: know, evaluate, reform." *INESC*, Brasília, June 2018. [https://inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/cartilha\\_fosseis\\_ingles.pdf?x21638](https://inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/cartilha_fosseis_ingles.pdf?x21638).

14 An example of this can be found here: "Alemanha anuncia que vai reabrir usinas a carvão." *Frontliner*, June 19, 2022. <https://www.frontliner.com.br/alemanha-anuncia-que-vai-reabrir-usinas-a-carvao/>.

15 For more information, visit the website of the Institute for Strategic Studies of Petroleum, Natural Gas and Biofuels (INEEP). For example, see: Dias, Nathalia Pereira. "Petrobras atrás das operadoras privadas na transição energética." *Petróleo Hoje*, July 19, 2022. <https://ineep.org.br/petrobras-atras-das-operadoras-privadas-na-transicao-energetica/>; and Chaves, Ana Carolina, and Rafael Rodrigues Costa. "O avanço das petroleiras europeias e o recuo da Petrobras na transição energética." *INEEP*, April 22, 2021. <https://ineep.org.br/o-avanco-das-petroleiras-europeias-e-o-recuo-da-petrobras-na-transicao-energetica/>.

green hydrogen almost everywhere in the world, often occupying spaces traditionally filled by national companies and intensifying the process of transnationalization of economies, especially those on the periphery. For countries in the Global South, this has an impact in different spheres, such as economic development, social inclusion and the generation of jobs and income. In addition, in many cases, the traditional actors historically responsible for GHG emissions in the Global North, such as transnational corporations in the mining industry, are benefiting the most from energy transition policies.<sup>16</sup> For this reason, the global scenario of ecological transition demands special attention from the Global South, with active and forceful action not only on the importance of the transition itself, but also on its content, implementation and actors.

In Brazil, the scenario is quite unique. The Brazilian energy matrix, especially the electricity matrix, is considered to be mostly clean due to the huge role played by hydropower. However, according to data released by SEEG in 2023, Brazil has been experiencing an increase in emissions in the energy sector. In 2022, for example, 435 million tons were emitted, up from 387 million tons in 2020. Also according to the SEEG report,<sup>17</sup> in recent years the country has seen a 12.5% rise in emissions from the energy sector, the biggest jump in 50 years. There are several reasons for this. The extreme drought of the last period (especially since 2021) has hampered hydroelectric generation and contributed to a decline in the use of ethanol. In addition, there are elements, discussed below, which are more strictly linked to political economy, and which have also favored this scenario.

Over the last 20 years, the production of fossil fuels (mainly offshore) in Brazil has increased significantly. In this period, oil production, for example, has grown by 113% and is mainly destined for export—which, in practice, means that its production results in both direct and indirect

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16 See Barbesgaard, Mads, and Andy Whitmore. *Smoke and Minerals. How the Mining Industry Plans to Profit from the Energy Transition*. Amsterdam/London: Transnational Institute/London Mining Network, 2022. Accessed on November 22, 2023. <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/smoke-and-minerals>.

17 More information in the report: Sistema de Estimativa de Emissões e Remoções de Gases de Efeito Estufa (SEEG). “Análise das emissões brasileiras de gases de efeito estufa e suas implicações para as metas climáticas do Brasil 1970-2021.” *Observatório do Clima*, 2023. Accessed on June 12, 2023. <https://www.oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/SEEG-10-anos-v4.pdf>.

emissions.<sup>18</sup> In recent years, there has also been strong political and economic movement in favor of the gas market, either with new legislation (such as law 14,134, the so-called “gas law” of 2021) or with new contracts and market reserves.<sup>19</sup> Brazil has thus seen a profound expansion of the gas and coal chain, especially in states like Santa Catarina, where emissions are disproportionate to their consumption. Studies monitoring energy subsidies in Brazil, such as those produced by the Institute of Socioeconomic Studies (INESC),<sup>20</sup> show that there has been a continuous and permanent policy of subsidizing fossil fuels, which goes against a just transition agenda.

In addition, in recent years there has been an increase in the supply of renewable energy in the Brazilian matrix linked to biomass and biodiesel, especially from soybeans.<sup>21</sup> Within this framework, there is a strong domestic policy of encouraging the consumption of biodiesel by adding it to fossil diesel, which means that Brazil is now the second largest producer of biodiesel in the world, behind only the United States. There is a clear relationship between the production of biofuels, the production of soy (currently involved in 70% of biodiesel production in Brazil),<sup>22</sup> and the expansion of agribusiness; consequently, there is also a strong relationship with the concentration of land and income. *RenovaBio* itself, a policy to promote the production and use of biofuels in the national energy matrix, because of the aforementioned issues, ends up being connected to land use issues, such as the expansion of deforestation associated with the stimulation of commodity production in sensitive biomes.

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18 More information at: Institute of Socioeconomic Studies (INESC). “Brazil’s Energy Matrix and the Paris Agreement: between Lack of Ambition and the Many Challenges of NDC Implementation.” *INESC*, Brasília, June 2022b. [https://www.inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/INESC-Rel\\_NDC-EN\\_v5-1.pdf](https://www.inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/INESC-Rel_NDC-EN_v5-1.pdf).

19 This information and other more in-depth analyses of the new gas market and its effects on the Brazilian energy matrix can be found in the document from the Institute for Socioeconomic Studies (INESC) mentioned above.

20 More information at: Institute of Socioeconomic Studies (INESC). “Fossil Fuel Subsidies in Brazil—Know, Assess and Reform.” *INESC*, Brasília, November 2022c. [https://inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/INGLES\\_ESTUDO-COMBUSTIVEIS.pdf?x69356](https://inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/INGLES_ESTUDO-COMBUSTIVEIS.pdf?x69356).

21 According to INESC (2022b), soybean oil continues to lead the way as the main raw material for obtaining biodiesel, with production in the Midwest region standing out.

22 Source and more information at: Institute of Socioeconomic Studies (INESC). “Brazil’s Energy Matrix and the Paris Agreement: between Lack of Ambition and the Many Challenges of NDC Implementation.” *INESC*, Brasília, June 2022b. [https://www.inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/INESC-Rel\\_NDC-EN\\_v5-1.pdf](https://www.inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/INESC-Rel_NDC-EN_v5-1.pdf).

At the same time, the Alternative Energy Sources Incentive Program (PROINFA) also advances the strategy of incorporating the energy sector into the logic of environmental compensation. Thus, the little-known policy of energy expansion and transition that remains in Brazil, instead of having the democratization of energy as its objective, has been based on the expansion of agricultural frontiers for the production of biomass and biofuels and, therefore, on the relaxation of current environmental standards, with the replacement of public agents by private ones.<sup>23</sup> Brazil now has a renewable energy matrix that is closely connected to an unequal agrarian structure—and this is far from the just, sovereign, and equitable transition it needs.

Along with the potential socioenvironmental impacts of biofuels, the very hydroelectric component present in the Brazilian energy—and especially electricity—matrix also needs to be looked at more critically. In 2020, hydropower accounted for more than 65% of the Brazilian electricity matrix, a figure that is the result of a historical choice that has been systematically repeated, with an emphasis on centralized generation in large hydroelectric plants, including in the Amazon, and with electricity destined for the southeast region. However, it is worth remembering that, despite traditionally being considered part of renewable energy, hydroelectric plants can be responsible for huge socio-environmental impacts. In many cases, they modify the local flora and fauna and cause the forced displacement of riverside and other traditional communities. In this context, the sudden expansion of the required local infrastructure for the construction and maintenance of a large hydroelectric plant, such as Belo Monte, Jirau, and Santo Antônio, for example, has proven serious consequences, such as an increase in violence, including of a gender nature. It is also known that, due to other consequences such as

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23 More information at: Cunha, Gabriela, Lilián Roizman, Natália Lobo, Sarah Moreira, and Tica Moreno. "Democratização energética e transição justa na América Latina e no Caribe." *CSA TUCA/ITUC CSI IGB/ REDES Amigos de la Tierra Uruguay/Amigos de la Tierra América Latina y Caribe*, November 2021. Accessed on June 12, 2023. [https://csa-csi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/BRA\\_Resumen-Ejecutivo-Investigacion-Brasil\\_port.pdf](https://csa-csi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/BRA_Resumen-Ejecutivo-Investigacion-Brasil_port.pdf).

the decomposition of trees on the site, Belo Monte, for example, already emits three times more methane than before the dam was built.<sup>24</sup>

The inadequacy of major energy planning instruments—such as regulatory plans, legislation and policies—towards a just energy transition can also be noted. Brazil has fallen short in terms of ambition when it comes to international commitments, for example. The country’s Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), ratified in 2016 but revised in 2021 and resubmitted in 2022, violates the progression principle of the Paris goals. Although in November 2023 the Lula government corrected this violation in the Brazilian NDC, more ambition is needed,<sup>25</sup> especially with regard to mitigation and adaptation goals, which can be done in new round of NDCs to be submitted in 2025 in preparation for COP30.

Other legal instruments do not seem to fit the Brazilian reality either. According to the report “Democratização energética e transição justa na América Latina e no Caribe” [“Energy democratization and just transition in Latin America and the Caribbean”, in Portuguese]<sup>26</sup> there are two essential instruments for energy policy planning in Brazil: the ten-year energy expansion plans and the national energy plans (currently in force: Ten-Year Energy Expansion Plan 2030 and National Energy Plan 2050). While the former are made up of supply and demand studies, the latter take a long-term view. Today, these two documents already incorporate NDC-related milestones into their planning. However, the type of energy transition envisioned in them is conservative, because, even though they include the reduction of emissions in some sectors, there is no good assessment of the social and environmental impacts of the energy production and distribution model. The Ten-Year Energy Expansion Plan 2030 and the 2050 National Energy Plan are not only

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24 See Institute of Socioeconomic Studies (INESC). “Brazil’s Energy Matrix and the Paris Agreement: between Lack of Ambition and the Many Challenges of NDC Implementation.” INESC, Brasília, June 2022b. [https://www.inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/INESC-Rel\\_NDC-EN\\_v5-1.pdf](https://www.inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/INESC-Rel_NDC-EN_v5-1.pdf).

25 Prizibiszki, Cristiane. “Não caia no erro: nova meta climática não representa aumento de ambição.” *O Eco*, Brasília, September 20, 2023. <https://oeco.org.br/noticias/nao-caia-no-erro-nova-meta-climatica-nao-representa-aumento-de-ambicao/>.

26 Cunha, Gabriela, Lilián Roizman, Natália Lobo, Sarah Moreira, and Tica Moreno. “Democratização energética e transição justa na América Latina e no Caribe.” *CSA TUCA/ITUC CSI IGB/REDES Amigos de la Tierra Uruguay/Amigos de la Tierra América Latina y Caribe*, November 2021. Accessed on June 12, 2023. [https://csa-csi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/BRA\\_Resumen-Ejecutivo-Investigacion-Brasil\\_port.pdf](https://csa-csi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/BRA_Resumen-Ejecutivo-Investigacion-Brasil_port.pdf).



unambitious, but it should also be pointed out that, in order to implement them, it would be necessary to make environmental licensing regulations more flexible. After all, both are based on a logic of high expansion of energy production.

Also according to the report, of the five main pieces of energy policy legislation in force in Brazil today, two originate from provisional measures and another two were passed under urgent procedure—which does not contribute to social participation and transparency in terms of energy policy formulation. In parallel, the tax injustice surrounding energy policy in Brazil further weakens the country’s energy democracy, since energy is often produced in territories that suffer from socio-environmental impacts, but the allocation of economic resources from the sector does not benefit them.<sup>27</sup>

In terms of democracy, it is important to note that there is a risk of energy de-democratization in the country. An example of this is that, between 2016 and 2022, energy poverty grew,<sup>28</sup> with more households relying on firewood and coal, for example, mainly due to the increase in the price of gas, which has a marked component of racial and gender inequality.<sup>29</sup> The weakening of Petrobras has also deepened this process, since the company is an important driver of job and income generation and of science and technology production in Brazil. After 2016, the destructuring of the company, which by then was being reorganized in order to convert it from an oil company to an energy company, had a major impact on Brazil’s energy policy, with the dismantling of the schedule and planning for its investments in renewable energies. For example, from 2018, Petrobras began to cease its participation in wind farms and its investment and planning in renewables, turning almost exclusively to

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27 The report cites Rio Grande do Norte as an example, where several communities have suffered the impacts of wind farm installations, but have never seen the financial returns.

28 Cunha, Gabriela, Lilián Roizman, Natália Lobo, Sarah Moreira, and Tica Moreno. “Democratização energética e transição justa na América Latina e no Caribe.” *CSA TUCA/ITUC CSI IGB/REDES Amigos de la Tierra Uruguay/Amigos de la Tierra América Latina y Caribe*, November 2021. Accessed on June 12, 2023. [https://csa-csi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/BRA\\_Resumen-Ejecutivo-Investigacion-Brasil\\_port.pdf](https://csa-csi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/BRA_Resumen-Ejecutivo-Investigacion-Brasil_port.pdf).

29 According to the report, this means “more time spent on reproductive labor and less time doing paid work that enables women to achieve economic autonomy”, as well as the fact that women are the most affected by health problems caused by prolonged exposure to wood-burning smoke.



the exploration and production of fossil fuels.<sup>30</sup> As a result, an important instrument in the construction of energy transition and democracy has lost strength.

This went hand in hand with an energy policy of privatization, such as in the case of Eletrobras, Latin America's largest energy company, which was privatized in June 2022, triggering adverse impacts such as the fragmentation of the system of distributors,<sup>31</sup> a plan to conduct mass layoffs of employees<sup>32</sup> and the expansion of outsourcing of workers. In general terms, a significant part of the expansion of renewable energy generation in modalities such as wind power and hydroelectric plants has been based on megaprojects that are often accompanied by the violation of labor and human rights and the degradation of common goods, which corroborates the process of de-democratization mentioned above.

This book argues that, in addition to the energy transition, it is important to move towards energy democratization.<sup>33</sup> This must go beyond access to energy itself, and also include elements such as public debate, transparency and social participation in decision-making, formulation and implementation of policies for energy production and distribution. To make progress in this direction, in terms of energy security, Brazil needs to expand the sources of renewable energy in its matrix, diversifying it. However, any form of energy generation expansion must follow two principles: decentralization, avoiding megaprojects, and the incorporation of responsible socio-environmental impact analysis policies in its formulation and implementation, which include community and territorial participation and consultation. In addition, any policy

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30 On this, see: Pamplona, Nicola. "Petrobras ignora transição energética e mantém renováveis fora de novo plano de investimentos." *Folha de S. Paulo*, November 19, 2021. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2021/11/petrobras-mantem-renovaveis-fora-de-novo-plano-de-investimentos.shtml>. See also: Chaves, Ana Carolina. "As petrolíferas europeias têm uma visão muito mais ambiciosa para os renováveis do que a Petrobras." *Carta Capital*, April 20, 2021. <https://ineep.org.br/as-petroliferas-europeias-tem-uma-visao-muito-mais-ambiciosa-para-os-renovaveis-do-que-a-petrobras/>.

31 Nozaki, William. "A desestatização do sistema Eletrobras." *Le Monde Diplomatique Brasil*, May 27, 2021. <https://diplomatique.org.br/a-desestatizacao-do-sistema-eletobras/>.

32 "TST suspende plano de demissão voluntária da Eletrobras." *Superior Labor Court*, September 2, 2023. <https://tst.jus.br/-/tst-suspende-plano-de-demiss%C3%A3o-volunt%C3%A1ria-da-eletobras>.

33 In this text, following the guidelines established at the 3rd Regional Conference on Energy, Environment and Work, energy is considered to be a fundamental right, related to the exercise of human rights and collective life.

to expand energy infrastructure must be accompanied by periodic monitoring and evaluation of socio-environmental impacts.

Furthermore, it is necessary to ensure that the generation of energy from renewable sources can lead to employment, income and socio-environmental inclusion. For this reason, the formulation of energy policy must be closely linked to reflections on forms of work, in order to avoid their precariousness. Against this backdrop, the re-establishment of the decarbonization timetable for Petrobras and the resumption of the project for its transition from an oil company to an energy company can play a central role in the process of democratizing energy in Brazil.

The issue of mining is also closely linked to energy issues. In addition to the fact that a significant part of the most traditional sources of renewable energy depends largely on mineral extraction, traditional forms of mining are also outdated—and their large-scale use, when uncoupled from a broader social development strategy, causes considerable damage not only to the environment, but also to the economy. In Brazil, the majority of mining, especially in the mining-steel chain, is dominated by large private companies. Today, the sector is responsible for 5% of Brazilian emissions<sup>34</sup> and for socio-environmental disasters that are among the biggest in the country, such as the cases of Mariana and Brumadinho. Some companies have made climate commitments which, apart from being unambitious, have not been fully met.

During the 2019-2022 administration, predatory mining reached exponential levels. The expansion of mining on indigenous lands and large transnational mining led to what the Mining Observatory called “pure dynamite”.<sup>35</sup> This has occurred under the strong influence of national, but above all transnational, lobbies, both on the part of

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34 More information at: Angelo, Maurício. “Mineradoras e siderúrgicas emitem 107 milhões de toneladas de CO<sub>2</sub> por ano no Brasil e soluções de mercado não dão resultado.” *Observatório da Mineração*, August 11, 2022. <https://observatoriodamineracao.com.br/mineradoras-e-siderurgicas-emitem-107-milhoes-de-toneladas-de-co2-por-ano-no-brasil-e-solucoes-de-mercado-nao-dao-resultado/>.

35 Source and more information: The Mining Observatory, and Smoke Signal. *Pure dynamite: How Bolsonaro’s Government (2019-2022) Mineral Policy Set Up a Climate and Anti-Indigenous Bomb*. Report. Brasília/São Paulo, March 2023. Accessed June 12, 2023. [https://www.sinaldefumaca.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/sdf-eng\\_pure\\_fdynamite\\_final.pdf](https://www.sinaldefumaca.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/sdf-eng_pure_fdynamite_final.pdf).

large industrial mining companies and groups associated with illegal mining. The Temer and Bolsonaro governments also approved a series of provisional measures and decrees that unraveled the bureaucracies that regulate mineral activity, including industrial mining but also *garimpeiro*<sup>36</sup> activity<sup>37</sup>. The result, as mentioned, was the relaxation of regulations, including the introduction of a new Mining Code and a Strategic Pro-Minerals Policy, which presented serious flaws from the point of view of socio-environmental protection. According to the National Institute for Space Research (INPE), there was a 787% increase in illegal mining on indigenous lands between 2016 and 2022.<sup>38</sup>

These setbacks have caused significant damage to Brazil's credibility abroad, raising questions about the country's ability to fulfill its international commitments in the areas of climate, the environment and human rights. In light of this, Brazil's new foreign policy must act to reinforce the country's commitment to global frameworks that have been negotiated multilaterally, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as frameworks that are still under construction aimed at guaranteeing human rights and labor rights, such as the Treaty on Business and Human Rights, under discussion at the United Nations. In this sense, a constructive return to multilateral forums and discussions aimed at expanding environmental, social, and economic protections could provide international support for the necessary domestic efforts for a just, sovereign and equitable transition, which have been discussed at length throughout this chapter.

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36 The wildcat miners who work in the small-scale gold mining camps of the Brazilian Amazon are commonly known as *garimpeiros*.

37 Mining Observatory and Smoke Signal (2023), for example, mentions that the Temer government transformed the former National Department of Mineral Production (DNPM) into the National Mining Agency (ANM). The structure remained similar, but with an "air of modernization and efficiency" that, in practice, undermined socio-environmental guarantees and changed the rates and distribution of Financial Compensation for the Exploration of Mineral Resources.

38 See Stabile, Arthur, and Poliana Casemiro. "Garimpo aumentou 787% em terras indígenas entre 2016 e 2022, aponta Inpe." *G1*, February 11, 2023. <https://g1.globo.com/meio-ambiente/noticia/2023/02/11/garimpo-aumenta-787percent-em-terras-indigenas-entre-2016-e-2022-aponta-inpe-infografico.ghtml>.

## **Agriculture and food sovereignty: the urgency of a new Brazilian policy**

With regard to the second part of this chapter's tripod, which has already covered the energy and mining issues and will also address the issue of industry, Brazilian agriculture also plays a fundamental role in the just transition agenda. After all, the agricultural sector is one of the most important pillars of the Brazilian economy and is, at the same time, the second largest GHG emitting sector. In addition, changes in land use, the main source of Brazilian emissions, are closely linked to agriculture, since the current rate of deforestation in Brazil is mainly driven by the expansion of the agricultural frontier into sensitive biomes such as the Amazon and the Cerrado. That is why thinking about the climate agenda in Brazil necessarily involves thinking responsibly about agricultural policy. Changes in land use, which include deforestation, accounted for an exorbitant 49% of Brazil's GHG emissions in 2021. In 2020, the percentage was 46% and in 2021 the increase in emissions from the sector was more than 18%—and this was mainly due to the expansion of deforestation. A significant part of this expansion is linked to the advance of agricultural frontiers, especially those of soy, corn, and cattle.

According to the SEEG report published in 2023,<sup>39</sup> the agricultural sector's emissions rose by 3.8% in 2021, reaching 601 million tons and totaling 25% of emissions, making it the second highest emitting sector. The report points out that this is the biggest increase since 2004—and the sector alone accounts for more emissions than the whole of South Africa. In 2021, emissions from the agricultural sector were the highest in the historical series, in which livestock was the main source of emissions—and pushed up the growth of the macro sector, especially with the growth of cattle herds. According to SEEG data, emissions from the beef and dairy cattle sectors together account for 92% of livestock emissions. Among emissions from the agriculture sector, most of the increase was driven by fertilizer consumption. Emissions from the sum of land use change and

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39 More information in the report: Sistema de Estimativa de Emissões e Remoções de Gases de Efeito Estufa (SEEG). "Análise das emissões brasileiras de gases de efeito estufa e suas implicações para as metas climáticas do Brasil 1970-2021." *Observatório do Clima*, 2023. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://www.oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/SEEG-10-anos-v4.pdf>.

the agricultural sector together account for 75% of Brazil's emissions. The data is closely connected, since a large part of deforestation is driven by agriculture.

Observing the agro-cultural scenario in Brazil is not simple, as there is a mosaic of actors and practices, and we can speak of a multiplicity of agricultural sectors in the country: small, medium and large producers; from family farming to sectors that are part of the international commodities chain. However, one specific sector should be highlighted: agribusiness. The sector is relevant not only because of its role in the national economy and trade balance, but also because of its great political strength,<sup>40</sup> marked by a strong presence in the National Congress.

Brazilian agribusiness was boosted in the 1970s and 1980s during the formation of the agro-industrial complexes, but especially since the 2000s with the commodities boom. Although there is great diversity in agribusiness, with companies increasingly adopting sustainability plans, it can be said that this is a sector that typically makes intensive use of chemical inputs.<sup>41</sup> In addition, in general, they are dynamically focused on the international market, with little added value. Meanwhile, at the opposite end of the spectrum, family farming, which only began to be recognized and institutionally strengthened at the end of the 1990s and especially in the 2000s, brings together agricultural practices linked to conventional production and the intensive use of inputs, as well as the agricultural practices of traditional peoples and those linked to the ways of life of indigenous, *quilombola*, riverside and *caiçara* communities. It is the type of socio-economic dynamic responsible for most of the food that reaches the plates of the Brazilian population and involves different economic arrangements, such as cooperatives, fairs, community production and the solidarity economy.<sup>42</sup>

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40 Pompeia, Caio. "Challenges for the transition to sustainable food systems." *Nexo Jornal*, July 4, 2021. <https://pp.nexojornal.com.br/opinia%20o/2021/Desafios-para-a-transi%20c%27%20a-sistemas-alimentares-sustent%20a%20veis>.

41 Source and more information at: Grisa, Catia, Eric Sabourin, Ludivine Eloy, and Renato S. Maluf (Eds). *Sistemas alimentares e territórios no Brasil*. Porto Alegre: Editora da UFRGS, 2022. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://agritrop.cirad.fr/601804/1/Sistemas%20alimentares%20e%20territorios%20no%20Brasil%202022.pdf>.

42 More information at National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG) and Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socio-Economic Studies (DIEESE). *Anuário Estatístico da Agricultura*

In short, the production and export of commodities was historically elevated to the position of the main state priority in the sector in a country with two types of agriculture: one for domestic consumption and the other for export. At the same time as the production and export of commodities has taken center stage, family farming has seen its budget greatly reduced: the National Program for Strengthening Family Farming (PRONAF), one of the sector's main policies, suffered a 24% reduction between 2014, its peak, and 2018; and the allocation of its credit has become increasingly selective, with a broad regional concentration of resources (especially in the South and Midwest regions of the country), in addition to the concentration of investment in grains such as soybeans, corn and coffee. Other policies aimed at agroecology, such as the Second and Third National Plans for Agroecology and Organic Production (PLANAPO), have been profoundly undermined, to the point that the latter has not even been implemented.

In addition, most of the resources (including credit lines, mainly materialized in the Safra Plan, investments, and subsidies) are destined for agribusiness or large rural entrepreneurs: in 2021, while PRONAF and the National Medium-Sized Rural Producers Support Program (PRONAMP) each received around 12% of credits, sectors linked to agribusiness received around 60%. In the 2019/2020 Safra Plan, contract values were also unequal: while PRONAF and PRONAMP received an average of R\$ 28 billion, the sectors linked to agribusiness were awarded more than R\$ 134 billion.<sup>43</sup> Agribusiness is also the sector that receives the most tax exemptions, as well as being a sector that, proportionally, has little participation in the generation of employment and income.<sup>44</sup>

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*Familiar*—2023/Ano 2. CONTAG/DIEESE, Brasília, July 2023. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://ww2.contag.org.br/documentos/pdf/17916-696048-anua%CC%81rio-agricultura-2023-web-revisado.pdf>.

43 Source and more information at: Merlino, Tatiana. "Os números mostram: agronegócio recebe muitos recursos e contribui pouco para o país." *O Joio e o Trigo*, October 7, 2021. <https://ojoioeotrigocom.br/2021/10/os-numeros-mostram-agronegocio-recebe-muitos-recursos-e-contribui-pouco-para-o-pais/>.

44 Mitidiero Junior, Marco Antonio, and Yamila Goldfarb. "O agro não é tech, o agro não é pop e muito menos tudo. Mudança climática, energia e meio ambiente." *Associação Brasileira de Reforma Agrária/Friedrich-Ebert Foundation*, São Paulo, September 2021. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/brasilien/18319-20211027.pdf>.

Furthermore, as mentioned, there is significant regional inequality in terms of the distribution of resources.<sup>45</sup>

While Brazil is poised to become an agricultural powerhouse, hunger has once again become a reality in the country. According to the 2nd National Survey on Food Insecurity in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Brazil, in 2022 at least 33 million people went hungry in Brazil, a 70% increase in the number of people experiencing severe food insecurity since 2020.<sup>46</sup> The pandemic has reduced not only the amount of food on the plate, but also its nutritional quality: meat, fruit, cheese, vegetables and legumes were the food items which, percentage-wise, were subject to the greatest reduction in consumption,<sup>47</sup> further contributing to food insecurity. According to a report carried out by the National Agroecology Association (ANA), between 2016 and 2022, Brazil witnessed a process of financial, institutional, and bureaucratic dismantling of its public and social policies developed during the 2000s linked to guaranteeing food security.<sup>48</sup>

From 2003 onwards, during the first two terms in office of presidents Lula and Dilma Rousseff, a series of fundamental policies and instruments were formulated and implemented in the sector, such as the National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (Consea), the Food Acquisition

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45 According to Mitidiero Junior and Goldfarb (2021), the South receives 34% of credits and has 16.8% of rural establishments; the Midwest, 26% of credits and 6.8% of establishments; the Southeast, in turn, benefits from 24% of resources and has 19.1% of establishments; the Northeast has only 9% of resources, but 45.7% of establishments; and the North, finally, receives 7% of credit and has 11.4% of rural establishments. Thus, relatively speaking, the Midwest, with the smallest number of rural establishments, is the region that most often receives credits.

46 See Rede Brasileira de Pesquisa em Soberania e Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (REDE PENSSAN). *II National Survey on Food Insecurity in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Brazil*. São Paulo: PENSSAN Network, 2022. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://olheparaafome.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/OLHESumExecutivoINGLES-Diagramacao-v2-R01-02-09-20224212.pdf>. More information on the same subject can be found at: Hermanson, Marcos. “33 milhões passam fome no Brasil, diz pesquisa.” *O Jôio e o Trigo*, June 8, 2022. <https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2022/06/33-milhoes-passam-fome-no-brasil-diz-pesquisa/>.

47 More information at: Iwasawa, Nathália. “Comida saudável sumiu do prato dos brasileiros; ‘fome é escolha política’, afirma pesquisadora.” *O Jôio e o Trigo*, April 15, 2021. <https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2021/04/comida-saudavel-sumiu-do-prato-dos-brasileiros-fome-e-escolha-politica-afirma-pesquisadora/>.

48 Lourenço, Andréia Vígolo, et al. *Brasil, do flagelo da fome ao futuro agroecológico: uma análise do desmonte das políticas públicas federais e a agroecologia como alternativa*. Rio de Janeiro: Articulação Nacional de Agroecologia, 2022. Accessed June 12, 2023. [https://agroecologia.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Brasil-do-flagelo-da-fome-ao-futuro-agroecologico\\_ANA-2022.pdf](https://agroecologia.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Brasil-do-flagelo-da-fome-ao-futuro-agroecologico_ANA-2022.pdf).



Program (PAA), the Organic Law on Food and Nutritional Security, the National Food and Nutritional Security System (Sisan) and, later on, the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), among others. This framework for the food security agenda was also closely connected to the sustainability agenda, especially in the context of the creation of the National Commission on Sustainable Development of Traditional Communities (CNPCT), and the implementation of the National Policy on Sustainable Development of Peoples and Traditional Communities (PNPCT) and the National Policy on Agroecology and Organic agriculture (PNAPO).

More recently, these developments faced a number of challenges. Food security policies have been stripped away,<sup>49</sup> such as the dismantling of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension and the PNAE, the significant decrease in resources applied to PRONAF and the reduction in budget allocations for the Acquisition of Food from Family Farming. In addition, after Provisional Measure 1061 of 2021, PAA was modified, incorporated into *Auxílio Brasil*, a cash transfer programme, and transformed into *Alimenta Brasil*. As a consequence, the criteria for allocating resources (which previously prioritized regions with higher poverty rates) have been changed and the seed purchase modality has been discontinued.

Even with these policies and instruments being weakened, a scenario that started to change from 2023, most of the food produced for the Brazilian population's table still comes from family farming. According to the Agricultural Census carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in 2017, more than 70% of the food consumed by Brazilians came from family farming. Despite years of record food production by agribusiness, the price of food has risen—as was the case during the pandemic years, which shows that the sector is not responsible for guaranteeing the food security of the Brazilian population, in spite of increases in productivity and agro-exports. Even though Brazil sees itself as an agricultural power, it is not yet a sovereign, supportive and

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49 More information at: Alves, Schirlei. "O desmonte da segurança alimentar, em números." *O Joio e o Trigo*, March 21, 2022. <https://outraspalavras.net/outrasmidias/o-desmonte-da-seguranca-alimentar-em-numeros/#:~:text=Em%20seis%20anos%2C%20o%20Programa,b%C3%A1sico%20j%C3%A1%20come%C3%A7a%20a%20faltar%E2%80%A6>.



sustainable one. After all, Brazil is placed in the international division of labor as an exporter of commodities, which creates considerable economic imbalances. This makes it clear that there is a need to redesign Brazilian agricultural policy, including actions to supervise and monitor production, especially of soy, corn, and beef, in order to cut its links with land-grabbing practices and environmental crimes.

An important step in this direction would be to strengthen the ABC Plan<sup>50</sup> by allocating more resources within the target percentage for the sector, by increasing investments in technologies such as biological nitrogen fixation, animal waste treatment in Agroforestry Systems (SAFs), among others, and also by increasing the projects resulting from the ABC Plan, such as the ABC Program and ABC+. Greater support for initiatives like these would help to reduce the disparity in resources, subsidies, and credits between those earmarked for agribusiness and for small and medium-sized producers and family farming. In this sense, it is encouraging the announcement, in December 2023, that the resources transferred to the PAA exceeded R\$ 1 billion,<sup>51</sup> as per the historical demand of movements and civil society organizations.<sup>52</sup> It is also promising the announcement made in June 2023 of a new Safra Plan, the largest in history, with the provision of R\$ 364.2 billion in rural credit, and with a focus on stimulating sustainable production of food and low carbon agriculture.<sup>53</sup>

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50 See more about the ABC Plan, a plan designed to achieve Low Carbon Agriculture, at: <https://www.gov.br/agricultura/pt-br/assuntos/sustentabilidade/planoabc-abcmais/publicacoes/abc-english.pdf>.

51 Ministry of Development and Social Assistance, Family and Fighting Against Hunger. *Recursos para o PAA em 2023 ultrapassam R\$ 1 bilhão, o maior desde a criação do programa*, December 22, 2023. <https://www.gov.br/mds/pt-br/noticias-e-conteudos/desenvolvimento-social/noticias-desenvolvimento-social/recursos-para-o-paa-em-2023-ultrapassam-r-1-bilhao-o-maior-desde-a-criacao-do-programa>.

52 See Lourenço, Andréia Vigolo, et al. *Brasil, do flagelo da fome ao futuro agroecológico: uma análise do desmonte das políticas públicas federais e a agroecologia como alternativa*. Rio de Janeiro: Articulação Nacional de Agroecologia, 2022. Accessed June 12, 2023. [https://agroecologia.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Brasil-do-flagelo-da-fome-ao-futuro-agroecologico\\_ANA-2022.pdf](https://agroecologia.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Brasil-do-flagelo-da-fome-ao-futuro-agroecologico_ANA-2022.pdf).

53 Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. *Com a disponibilização de R\$ 364,2 bilhões em crédito rural, Mapa fez o maior Plano Safra da história*, December 22, 2023. <https://www.gov.br/agricultura/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/com-a-disponibilizacao-de-r-364-2-bilhoes-em-credito-rural-mapa-fez-o-maior-plano-safra-da-historia#:~:text=BALAN%C3%87O-,Com%20a%20disponibiliza%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20de%20R%24%20364%2C2%20bilh%C3%B5es%20em%20cr%C3%A9dito,major%20Plano%20Safra%20da%20hist%C3%B3ria&text=As%20pol%C3%Aáticas%20agr%C3%ADcolas%20em%202023,Safra%20da%20hist%C3%B3ria%20do%20Brasil>.

*Food sovereignty* plays a central role in rethinking agricultural policy in Brazil. This concept, politically constructed by La Via Campesina more than 25 years ago during the World Food Conference held in Rome by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO),<sup>54</sup> addresses the importance of going beyond the idea of food security. Indeed, food security is important, but not enough: people must not only have access to food, but also have agency and self-determination over the process of producing, distributing and consuming food. This is why Brazil must think in terms of food sovereignty when formulating its agricultural policy. In other words, a firm policy to combat hunger based on strengthening forms of production that guarantee dignity for workers in the sector, means of distribution that support a fair economic model and food of nutritional quality for consumption by the entire population.

For this reason, food sovereignty and rural development must be thought of in conjunction to build an agriculture that meets social demands and needs. Several of the programmes linked to the Ministry of Agrarian Development were based on these concepts, such as the National Policy for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (PNATER), PRONAF and PAA itself. The resumption of this line of action, accompanied by its reformulation so as to also meet the needs of climate mitigation and adaptation, would strengthen the promotion of sustainable development in its social, economic and environmental pillars.

At the international level, Brazil must resume its leadership position on the agenda to combat hunger and revitalize and expand international cooperation, especially South-South cooperation. It also needs to take responsibility for the international commitments it has made with regard to agriculture, in particular the Global Methane Pledge. Another fundamental instrument in this regard is the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants,<sup>55</sup> approved by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2018, which deals with elements such as the right to land,

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54 On La Via Campesina and its work over 25 years, see: "Via campesina comemora 25 anos de resistência em defesa da soberania alimentar." *Brasil de Fato*, October 16, 2021. <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2021/10/16/via-campesina-comemora-25-anos-de-resistencia-em-defesa-da-soberania-alimentar>.

55 Accessed December 26, 2023. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1650694>.

biological diversity, the right to a clean and safe environment, cultural rights and traditional knowledge.

### **Industrialization and technological transition: paths towards a reindustrialized, fair and sustainable Brazil**

The third part of this chapter deals with the importance of a sustainable industrialization process. In recent years, Brazil has undergone a profound process of deindustrialization—that is, the decline in the share of industry in a country’s economy. Although this process has been underway since the 1980s, with small intervals—such as between 2001 and 2010—Brazil’s deindustrialization has intensified significantly since 2015. In 2018, for example, the share of the manufacturing industry in the GDP, one of the main gauges for assessing the degree of industrialization in a country, was just over 11%, with the index peaking at 27% in 1988.<sup>56</sup>

There is extensive debate in the economic sciences about the “natural” rates of deindustrialization in a country. After broad and consistent growth in the role of industry in a national economy, services and information technologies often gradually take over the main job- and income-generating spaces. However, for middle and low-income countries, deindustrialization is not usually accompanied by the maintenance of high-skilled jobs, good income generation or the maintenance of added value in the production chain. For this reason, it is argued that deindustrialization has occurred *prematurely* in Brazil: instead of guaranteeing income distribution and social equity, it contributes to most of the Brazilian workforce being allocated to low-wage, low-productivity, and low-skill services.

Much of this is due to Brazil’s failure to adequately join the third electronic industrial revolution and, consequently, its loss of competitive capacity in the new global technological arena. This all adds up to structural elements of dependence and international division of labor that were accentuated after the 2008 crisis, which arrived late but with a significant impact on Brazil and Latin America. As a result, even important efforts,

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56 Source and more information: “Entrevista de Esther Dweck, Ministra da Gestão empossada em 2023, a Breno Altman.” *Opera Mundi*, April 11, 2022. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agY\\_Y4ITGyg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agY_Y4ITGyg).

such as in the first decade of the 2000s, were not enough to reverse the deindustrialization that began in the late 1980s. This process has gained greater momentum since 2015, with a profound worsening of industrialization indicators. Brazil is now allocated as a “demand” for industrialized products for the world with a large—and growing—domestic market.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, as we have seen, sectors linked to agribusiness have taken over the country’s main economic activities.

In short, deindustrialization in Brazil has meant a decline in the economic importance of various sectors, but with an emphasis on the manufacturing and construction industries, which has resulted in the reprimarization of exports, with marked regressive specialization and increased dependence on foreign trade and investment.<sup>58</sup> Since then, the Brazilian economy has seen the demobilization of the links in its local production chains, which have been systematically replaced by imports, relegating to the national economy the almost exclusive role of service and extraction economy, with notable concentration on raw materials. This is accompanied by the systematic financialization of the Brazilian economy and difficulties to join the digital industrial revolution. In this sense, the small percentage of the Brazilian economy that corresponds to industry is, for the most part, in previous industrial stages.

However, most of the reactions to deindustrialization have been through regressive policies, with strategies to reduce costs, especially labor costs and taxes, rather than through greater investment in productivity and innovation. This highlights the distributive nature of deindustrialization: it weighs more heavily on the lower classes. Furthermore, it means that Brazil has only been included in global chains in sectors that are complementary to those led by multinationals, in a scenario of increased financialization, setting the Brazilian economy and industry apart from the contemporary dynamics of productive gains.<sup>59</sup>

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57 Source and more information: “Entrevista de Esther Dweck, Ministra da Gestão empossada em 2023, a Breno Altman.” *Opera Mundi*, April 11, 2022. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agY\\_Y4ITGyg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agY_Y4ITGyg).

58 Source and more information at: Roubicek, Marcelo. “Raio-X do tombo: a indústria brasileira na década em 4 gráficos.” *Nexo Jornal*, March 7, 2021. <https://www.nexojornal.com.br/expresso/2021/03/07/Raio-X-do-tombo-a-industria-brasileira-na-decada-em-4-graficos>.

59 Diegues, Antonio Carlos. “Missões de política industrial nos limites da reindustrialização possível.” *Carta Capital*, January 23, 2023. <https://www.cartacapital.com.br/blogs/observatorio-da-economia-contemporanea/missoes-de-politica-industrial-nos-limites-da-reindustrializacao-possivel/>.

If Brazil is to overcome its dependence on the Global North and manage to build a sovereign economic policy to advance its development project, it is important to resume a project of industrialization that is aligned with social inclusion and the eradication of poverty. In Brazil's case, this means building an economy that does not depend exclusively on the export of commodities, especially those that do not guarantee decent working conditions or respect for the environment. In addition, this policy must simultaneously and transversally incorporate technological advances, especially in the sense of digitalization, and climate and environmental responsibility. In other words, technical progress, job creation, improving (green) infrastructure and correcting inequalities, but in a sustainable way, must be at the heart of the project.

That is why the Brazilian industrialization policy must not focus on outdated agendas, especially those linked to the second industrial revolution, related to car machinery, energy generation using fossil fuels, among others. The (new) industrialization process in Brazil must be based on the production of science and technology and the qualification of the workforce, with an emphasis on the domestic (and not just the foreign) market. Industrialization must be strategic and must be thought of through *social missions*, i.e. scientific and technological development in specific sectors where there are urgent socio-environmental demands, with an emphasis on areas such as basic sanitation, focusing on its universalization, and health, guiding the development of public services and pharmaceuticals.

Due to the drastic reduction in the state-owned productive sector, Brazilian bureaucracy lacks the autonomy to formulate strategies, which poses challenges for a possible reindustrialization. However, it is possible to outline some strategies for formulating industrial policy. Antonio Carlos Diegues,<sup>60</sup> a professor at the University of São Paulo (USP), for example, outlines what he considers to be three fundamental missions: 1) increasing industrial productivity above the rate of growth of GDP per capita; 2) advancing the development of intelligent, technological,

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60 Diegues, Antonio Carlos. "Missões de política industrial nos limites da reindustrialização possível." *Carta Capital*, January 23, 2023. <https://www.cartacapital.com.br/blogs/observatorio-da-economia-contemporanea/missoes-de-politica-industrial-nos-limites-da-reindustrializacao-possivel/>.

and digitalized public service systems in areas such as health, education, mobility, security and solutions for agribusiness; 3) fostering economic and technological activities aimed at decarbonization.

Diegues also discusses some of the key actions needed to achieve these goals. Firstly, it is important to reduce the gap between large and small and medium-sized companies in terms of resources and investments, since the latter are the largest employers in the manufacturing industry and the most vulnerable to deindustrialization. A responsible tax policy and the revival of initiatives such as the Brazilian Company of Research and Industrial Innovation (EMBRAPII) can also play a vital role in restoring Brazil's industrial productivity.

For the development of intelligent service systems, the author recommends encouraging the creation of ecosystems of agents, ranging from companies to research institutions and startups, for example, through the coordination of strategic public purchases; the establishment of specific programmes at the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) for this type of initiative, which encompass all stages, such as technology development, commercialization and implementation; and the exponential expansion of human resources with the training to do this, which necessarily involves expanding vacancies in public and private education in strategic areas. In a complementary way, Rafael Marques,<sup>61</sup> president of the Institute for Labor, Industry and Development (TID-Brasil), points out that strengthening the health industrial complex could be critical to reindustrialization, as long as it explores interfaces with other sectors and manufacturing segments that also have a high demand for production and require elements such as professional qualifications, scientific research and biotechnology.

Finally, with regard to promoting economic and technological activities linked to decarbonization, Diegues points out that it is crucial for BNDES to be guided by sustainable principles when formulating its portfolio, especially along the path of decarbonization and the energy transition. In addition, public policies in all sectors must be aligned with

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61 Marques, Rafael. "Caminhos para a reindustrialização do Brasil." *Brasil de Fato*, December 14, 2022. <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2022/12/14/artigo-caminhos-para-a-reindustrializacao-do-brasil>.

this objective, including, for example, tax reductions for the energy transition and investments to establish public mobility with fleets powered by renewable energy sources throughout the country. The author exemplifies that housing policies, such as *Minha Casa Minha Vida*,<sup>62</sup> should also include solar energy projects and other measures to strengthen their sustainable footprint.

The document *Plano Indústria 10+* [Industry 10+ Plan],<sup>63</sup> formulated in partnership between the Unified Workers' Central (CUT), the Labor, Industry and Development Institute and the Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socio-Economic Studies (DIEESE), points to similar paths. When discussing the importance of productivity gains in industry, the organizations suggest the articulation of local and national agents—also for the formation of innovation ecosystems—coupled with strategic investments in research and development. In addition, the organizations emphasize the need for an industrial policy that is also environmental, with an emphasis on sustainable solutions in the area of infrastructure.

Petrobras is essential to this process. As already mentioned, it is important to include it in a decarbonization timetable. This, however, must go hand in hand with technological development that guarantees energy sovereignty, with an emphasis on building refineries and high value-added production chains and on generating jobs and income. In a complementary way, the industrialization of parts of the agribusiness chain is important to qualify the employment generated from it and to make it more responsible from a socio-environmental point of view.

BNDES should also play a crucial role in this process. It is now possible to take a critical look at the role of BNDES during the first four governments of the Workers' Party (PT), from 2002 to 2016, due to the priority it gave to financing large companies—or the so-called national champions. Today, it has become clearer that the bank needs

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62 *Minha Casa Minha Vida* (my house, my life) is Brazil's first nationwide large-scale social house building programme, initially introduced in 2009.

63 CUT, TID-Brasil, and DIEESE. *Plano Indústria 10+. Desenvolvimento produtivo e tecnológico. Proposta do Macrossetor da Indústria para o Debate*. 2018. Accessed March 13, 2023. <http://tidbrasil.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/PLANO-INDU%CC%81STRIA-10-Mais-Versa%CC%83o-01.10.18-VE.pdf>.



to put more emphasis on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in its financing portfolio, without forgetting the solidarity and cooperative economy, and to move towards digitalization: “an inclusive, technological, digital and industrializing bank, driving the transition to a low-carbon economy, with priorities of productive inclusion and intelligent and digital reurbanization,” as stated by the current presidency of the Bank.

Within this framework, from a domestic point of view, Brazil needs to be committed to an economic and fiscal policy that is aligned with its industrialization strategy, ensuring that it is regulated and supervised to avoid socio-environmental impacts. The mobilization of green infrastructure, low-carbon jobs and the decarbonization of industry, through energy efficiency policies, is also fundamental. In other words, there is room to promote a “new phase” of environmentally sustainable, socially fair and quality job-generating industrialization. This will also require an active foreign policy in the search for opportunities to transfer technology and open up markets that benefit Brazilian industries. In this sense, the goal of achieving reindustrialization should be given priority during the negotiation of free trade agreements—such as the one between the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the European Union—in order to prevent any trade openings from reinforcing Brazil’s predominant status as an exporter of commodities and importer of high value-added technological products.

### **Just, sovereign and equitable transition: conclusion**

In the current political scenario, Brazil has the chance to make political progress towards a *just, sovereign, and equitable transition*. To do this, given the economic and social nature of the country today, there are three main areas, covered in the three sections of this chapter: energy and mining, agriculture, and industry. Firstly, it is important to ensure that the energy and mining policy transition is democratized, i.e. in addition to guaranteeing access and distribution, there must be greater transparency and social participation in the formulation and implementation of generation policies. It is also necessary to challenge what is considered renewable energy in Brazil, since hydroelectric power



generation and biofuel production in the country still produce significant socio-environmental impacts.

Secondly, the formulation of policies for agriculture and food systems must be guided by the perspective of rural development and, above all, food sovereignty. Ensuring that large-scale food producers are free from environmental crimes and immediately halting the advance of cattle, soy and rice production over sensitive biomes and protected areas are arduous but essential tasks for a more sustainable and just Brazil. Past experiences show that it is possible not only to maintain the same levels of production, but also to increase them while combating deforestation. To do this, it is essential to strengthen low-carbon agriculture programmes. At the same time, the strengthening of family farming and the immediate resumption of public policies in this area offer the possibility of thinking about a sovereign and equitable transition for Brazilian food systems.

Thirdly, and in parallel, Brazil needs a reindustrialization plan. However, it should not be guided by 20th century industrial policies. On the contrary: based on the diagnosis of essential sectors for scientific and technological development, specific sectors should receive policies and investments for green industrial and infrastructural development, with the generation of low-carbon jobs.

Finally, two observations are worth making. Firstly, as discussed in the first chapter of this book, there is still a great deal of inequality (and dependency) in international relations. For this reason, this book classifies sovereignty as a central axis in the socio-environmental transition: the concept should be understood not merely as food sovereignty and energy sovereignty, but, more broadly, as a concept that should guide Brazil in the formulation and implementation of policies to guarantee a dignified insertion into the international political economy. Secondly, it should be noted that class, race, and gender are structurally intertwined in all these processes. After all, depending on these social markers, some people are more impacted by climate change and the socio-environmental consequences of unjust policies. For this reason, the dimensions of equity need to guide the notions of transitions in energy and mining, agriculture and food, and industry. We therefore conclude with the case for a *just*

transition, to ensure that social inclusion is structurally included in the formulation of policies; a *sovereign* transition, to ensure that the Brazilian state and its public policies, in their domestic and external aspects, are the central actor in the economic transformation that is needed; and an *equitable* transition, to ensure that it is equal for all people, regardless of class, gender or race.

These are all domestic as well as international agendas. For this reason, BFP, in its broad conception, i.e. including not only the Brazilian diplomatic service but also other relevant state and non-state actors, can and must act to materialize a *just, sovereign, and equitable transition*. This means both advocating standards and measures aligned with sustainability at the multilateral level and ensuring that sustainability, in its social, economic, and environmental aspects, is at the heart of any strategy for Brazil's international insertion. This aspect should be applied across the board, and thus guide Brazil's position in discussions on climate and environmental issues, as well as in trade negotiations, human rights, peace and security, gender equality, among others.

In this sense, some steps are important. Brazil's commitment to fulfilling its international commitments, such as the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, are crucial and must be accompanied by the resubmission of a more ambitious NDC. At the same time, engagement with agendas and instruments such as the Treaty on Business and Human Rights and the Declaration of the Rights of Peasants will also be essential to give the Brazilian transition process a climate and socio-environmental justice dimension. Finally, for the transition to take place in a truly universal manner, Brazilian foreign policy must also be based on the principle of horizontal and mutually beneficial cooperation, with special and differentiated attention to the countries and societies of the Global South.



## Chapter 3

# Climate and Finance: The Role of the G20 and the Bretton Woods Institutions

João Cumarú

The transformations in the current global balance of power are the strongest since the current international order was established after the Second World War. The international public debate is currently focused on the revision of global governance—the institutions and mechanisms responsible for coordination and cooperation between countries and other interested parties—and greater representation of the countries of the Global South in international organizations, especially the agencies of the United Nations (UN) system. The attempt to achieve more equal participation by these countries is often resisted by established major powers.

Contemporary crises, such as those related to international finance, climate change and localized conflicts, and the transformations of multilateralism take place in a complex context. The world faces a looming recession, an armed conflict with a global impact and serious setbacks in poverty reduction, hunger alleviation and pursuit of development in the context of a highly uneven response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the midst of this turbulence, climate change continues to pose profound present and future challenges. As reflected in Chapter 1, these challenges do not occur in isolation and form the nexus of the so-called Triple Planetary Crisis (TCP), i.e. the combination of the interconnected crises of climate change, loss of biodiversity and nature, and pollution.

On many occasions, existing global governance has been ineffective in tackling the Triple Planetary Crisis. In addition to climate-related setbacks in the commitments made by rich countries—including in the context of the war in Ukraine—older problems have resurfaced. Key institutions of global governance, such as the Bretton Woods institutions

and the G20, including central bodies of the UN system, remain subject to geopolitical disputes, and fragmentation between specialized agencies often prevents a coordinated response to cross-cutting issues such as climate change.

The consequences of this mismatch should not be underestimated. The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, has classified the TCP as “our number one existential threat,” requiring “an urgent and total effort to change the scenario.”<sup>1</sup> However, the main challenges facing humanity are not evenly distributed. Developing countries and vulnerable populations across the planet bear the disproportionate burden of the impacts of the TCP. Indigenous and traditional communities, black people, women, youth, LGBTQIA+ groups and migrants—among other groups—do not have adequate access to development, climate adaptation and humanitarian resources, including for preventive approaches. At the same time, these groups exercise strong leadership and produce innovations and solutions that are often overlooked in important discussions about reform and the effectiveness of global governance.

Understanding the urgency of the debate on the TCP, the need to think of alternatives so that the Bretton Woods system is better prepared to support countries in dealing with it, and seeing the G20 as one of the ways to encourage this to happen, this chapter aims to contribute to the specialized literature on the subject, which is fundamental for a better understanding of the dynamics and responses to the TCP. Thus, in addition to this introduction and the concluding remarks, the text is divided into five other sections: first, a brief contextualization of the so-called Triple Planetary Crisis and its challenges is presented; then, the initiatives of the institutions of the Bretton Woods system (IMF and World Bank) in tackling the TCP are discussed. Next, there is a summary of how the climate and biodiversity agendas entered the G20 agenda and what the current state of the art is; and, in view of the challenges posed to the G20, ways to advance the climate and biodiversity agenda within the G20 are also presented. Finally, in light of Brazil’s rotating presidency

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1 Guterres, António. “Opening Remarks at Press Encounter on the Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to a Second Term of Office.” *United Nations*, June 18, 2021. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/node/257932>.

of the G20, initiated in December 2023, some ideas are presented for potential Brazilian priorities within the grouping, such as strengthening efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **The challenges of current global governance**

In the last decade, and especially in the last five years, global governance has been severely weakened by a number of factors, such as the intensification of geopolitical rivalries, including growing tensions between the United States and China, and the crisis in Ukraine. To make matters worse, the restrictions on financial conditions and the increase in external debt in many countries threaten the recovery, resumption or even promotion of sustainable development, the fight against poverty and hunger, and the implementation of responses to the TCP. More broadly, these restrictions jeopardize the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, crucial instruments for promoting sustainability and tackling climate change at a global level.

It is important to note that the problems of global governance do not end with the United Nations. In addition to the UN, there are other institutions whose mission and actions are relevant to tackling the TCP. These include the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and International Monetary Fund—IMF), which have been heavily criticized for not adequately incorporating the dimensions of climate and sustainability; the World Trade Organization (WTO), where discussions on trade and sustainability remain fragmented, despite a promising Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies reached in 2022; and groups of countries such as the G7,<sup>2</sup> the Group of Twenty (G20)<sup>3</sup> and the BRICS (originally Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), where issues related to the TCP have been incorporated in a disparate manner.

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2 Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

3 Currently formed by 19 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America), by the European Union (represented by the European Central Bank and the rotating presidency of the European Council) and, since 2023, the African Union (AU), represented by the rotating presidency of the bloc.

Regional organizations (whether or not they are part of the UN system), sub-national governments, civil society entities and private sector actors are also relevant stakeholders in global climate governance. However, the degree to which these actors respond to the TCP varies widely in space and time; and many gaps, distortions, contradictions and duplications still need to be corrected, since not all of them make sufficient commitments or manage to mobilize resources to meet the needs that climate finance requires, for example. The current shape of climate governance falls short of the leadership needed to accelerate a global and just transition. Without access to the financial resources needed to adapt to climate change, the most vulnerable countries tend to be unable to adjust to the changing times.

As a result, consolidated global governance forums, especially the UN system (including regional partners)<sup>4</sup> and the Bretton Woods institutions continue to lose ground to ad hoc agreements, especially the G20 and the G7. In this sense, in debates on sustainable development, the UN—historically the center of gravity of global governance and the most universal space for international relations—is sometimes neglected by member states in favor of “clubs” such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the BRICS. These changes stem not only from the aforementioned challenges, but also from the outdated nature of global governance institutions, whose design dates back to the post-war era and is therefore no longer suited to the contemporary challenges of a global order that is moving, albeit with great uncertainty, towards greater multipolarity.

Although there is a trend towards a multipolar world, the apparent inability of multilateral mechanisms to offer solutions to contemporary and older problems (in particular, the challenges of equitable and sustainable development), which characterizes the crisis of multilateralism, affects the countries and populations of the South disproportionately. The most vulnerable countries, where the world’s poorest people live, and generally

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4 These include the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the European Union, among others.

those most impacted by climate change, need broad support for a change in circumstances.

In addition, the SDGs suffer serious setbacks in areas such as hunger eradication and environmental protection. The huge infrastructure gap in the South is only partially filled by emerging economies, especially China. And the gap is widening between the commitments made by donor countries in development assistance and climate finance, on the one hand, and the resources made available in practice. These are just a few of the contemporary challenges.

All of this takes place against a worrisome backdrop of slowing global economic growth: according to IMF data, it went from 6% in 2021 to 3.2% in 2022,<sup>5</sup> and is forecast at just 2.9% for 2023,<sup>6</sup> 3.1% for 2024 and 3.2% for 2025.<sup>7</sup> This would be the worst performance of the global economy since 2001, except for the global financial crises and the most acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, there has been a significant increase in global inflation, from 4.7% in 2021<sup>8</sup> to 8.7% in 2022. Even if the expected partial reduction in this rate materializes—a projection of 6.8% in 2023, 5.8% in 2024 and 4.4% by 2025<sup>9</sup>—global economic conditions are expected to continue to hit the most vulnerable populations hardest. They will also weaken the capacity of states to provide essential public services, including environmental protection and climate action, and to coordinate preventive policies and responses to emerging challenges.

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5 International Monetary Fund. *World Economic Outlook Update. Near-Term Resilience, Persistent Challenges*. Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, July 2023. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2023/07/10/world-economic-outlook-update-july-2023>.

6 International Monetary Fund. *World Economic Outlook*, January 30, 2024. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/#:~:text=Description%3A%20The%20January%202023%20World,historical%20average%20of%203.8%20percent>.

7 International Monetary Fund. *World Economic Outlook Update. The risks to global growth are broadly balanced and a soft landing is a possibility*. Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, January 2024. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2024/01/30/world-economic-outlook-update-january-2024>.

8 International Monetary Fund. *World Economic Outlook Update. A Rocky Recovery*. Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, April 2023. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2023/04/11/world-economic-outlook-april-2023>.

9 International Monetary Fund. *World Economic Outlook Update. The risks to global growth are broadly balanced and a soft landing is a possibility*. Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, January 2024. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2024/01/30/world-economic-outlook-update-january-2024>.



To make matters worse in terms of the global economy, many countries in the Global South are expressing dissatisfaction with the way climate finance and development aid is being provided. This is mainly due to the large percentage that comes in the form of loans (which increases the debt burden in already indebted countries) and the lack of transparency about the types of resources made available. Today, the two main institutions of the Bretton Woods system are facing periods of structural remodeling, especially with regard to climate finance. The World Bank is undergoing a year-long review of its processes with the aim of finalizing reforms on climate finance by 2023, and the IMF is working to incorporate climate change into its operations.<sup>10</sup>

As for the decisions of the G20, which brings together emerging and developed economies, although they do not have the force of international law, they support relevant processes within the UN, for example on climate change and development finance. The Group of Twenty has become a pillar of multilateralism, although it is still dominated by Western countries. In this sense, the following sections detail how these post-war institutions (World Bank and IMF) and the G20 are facing up to the enormous challenges posed by the Triple Planetary Crisis.

## **Bretton Woods and the climate agenda**

When it comes to the World Bank, the reform agenda has been dominated by the most powerful countries, think tanks and environmental groups from the advanced economies of the Global North, reflecting their interests and threatening the bank's core objectives of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity, as Gallagher and Bandhary point out in a report by the Global Development Policy Center.<sup>11</sup> According

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10 Broadly speaking, the proposed reforms include: catalyzing private finance; increasing climate loans; incorporating climate change into financial operations (this involves providing policy advice to member countries on how to deal with the economic implications of climate change and seize the opportunities of the transition to a low-carbon economy); building an international carbon price floor agreement to complement the Paris Agreement; and improving strategies for countries to accelerate climate finance. See International Monetary Fund. *The IMF and Climate Change*. Accessed June 5, 2023. <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/climate-change#overview>; and The World Bank. *Climate Change*. Accessed June 5, 2023. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/climatechange>.

11 Gallagher, Kevin, and Rishikesh Bhandary. "World Bank Evolution as if Development *and* Climate Change Really Mattered." *Gegi Policy Brief*, March 2023. [https://www.bu.edu/gdp/files/2023/03/GEGL\\_PB\\_023\\_KG-WB-Reform-FIN.pdf](https://www.bu.edu/gdp/files/2023/03/GEGL_PB_023_KG-WB-Reform-FIN.pdf).

to this report, despite the warnings, the ongoing discussions on reforms at the World Bank run the risk of neglecting the main development priorities, such as education and health, in the poorest countries.

The process of structural reforms (which go beyond the climate finance agenda) led by the main shareholders (high-income countries) also imposes some risks by putting forward proposals that, at the same time, end up limiting the bank's financing and operating capacity. This practice of rich countries making promises—which don't always fully materialize—about climate finance, by way of example, ends up sowing distrust in low-income nations, which need these inputs to build and implement climate mitigation and adaptation policies. This is the shared sentiment, for example, surrounding the pledge made by rich countries that they would allocate US\$ 100 billion to climate action from 2019, which has not yet been fulfilled.

It is important that the World Bank's development is not limited to the climate issue, but that it is favorable to sustainable development in its three pillars: economic, social and environmental. This requires an increase in capital<sup>12</sup> to increase lending power, with fair rates, particularly for the nations of the Global South.

In addition to the World Bank's capital power, there is a strong demand for borrowing countries to have greater say and representation in the bank's decision-making processes, since, as mentioned, high-income countries are among the largest shareholders.<sup>13</sup> With regard to structural reforms that could strengthen the capacity to promote climate finance, developing nations are calling for resources to be available not only for efforts related to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, known as climate mitigation. They are calling for an increase in support for climate adaptation projects; in other words, resources that allow them to invest

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12 The World Bank has allocated US\$ 100 billion from 2020 to 2022 for global public goods but estimates that developing countries and the private sector would need to spend much more—US\$ 2.4 trillion a year—to meet these needs.

13 Gallagher, Kevin, and Rishikesh Bhandary. "World Bank Evolution as if Development *and* Climate Change Really Mattered." *Gegi Policy Brief*, March 2023. [https://www.bu.edu/gdp/files/2023/03/GEGI\\_PB\\_023\\_KG-WB-Reform-FIN.pdf](https://www.bu.edu/gdp/files/2023/03/GEGI_PB_023_KG-WB-Reform-FIN.pdf).

in the means to adapt their infrastructure and social services to the increasing frequency of extreme weather events.<sup>14</sup>

As for the IMF, there is formal recognition that climate change is a critical challenge for the institution and that there is a climate financing gap, especially in emerging countries that are more vulnerable to its effects. At the same time, it is clear that governments are incapable of dealing with this new reality on their own. According to estimates, between US\$ 3 trillion and US\$ 6 trillion a year will be needed by 2050 in investments to tackle the climate challenge. However, by the end of 2022, only US\$ 630 billion of this total had been spent; furthermore, only a small part had been allocated to emerging and more vulnerable countries.<sup>15</sup> In this context, for the IMF, current policies to combat climate change are largely reinforcing asymmetries and neglecting the necessary funding for adaptation and mitigation in the most vulnerable countries.<sup>16</sup>

One of the institution's bets is on the Resilience and Sustainability Trust Fund (RST), a long-term financing mechanism launched in 2022, with a focus on vulnerable countries, to create resilience to external shocks (which can be applied to the effects of climate change) and ensure sustainable growth. Despite being defended as an action that "helps to remove obstacles to private investment by adopting climate-friendly policies such as fossil fuel subsidy reforms, climate-related disclosures and regulatory changes" (in the words of its Director General, Kristalina

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14 Gallagher and Bhandary 2023.

15 Prasad, Ananthkrishnan, Elena Loukoianova, Alan Feng, and William Oman. *Mobilizing Private Climate Financing in Emerging Market and Developing Economies*. *International Monetary Fund Staff Climate Note 2022/007*. Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, July 2022. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/staff-climate-notes/Issues/2022/07/26/Mobilizing-Private-Climate-Financing-in-Emerging-Market-and-Developing-Economies-520585>.

16 According to the Task Force on Climate, Development and the IMF (2023), there are a variety of flaws in the current IMF policies, including the overreliance of the fund on carbon pricing to offset the costs of a green transition, the focus on fiscal austerity as a prerequisite for loan eligibility, and the lack of flexibility in addressing different national environmental and economic contexts. See Task Force on Climate, Development and the International Monetary Fund, Rishikesh Bhandary, and Marilou Uy (Eds). "The International Monetary Fund, Climate Change and Development—A Preliminary Assessment." *TCDIMF*, March 2023. <https://www.bu.edu/gdp/files/2023/03/TF-Assessment-Report-FINAL.pdf>.

Georgieva),<sup>17</sup> this fund has drawn criticism from countries that consider the quota limits insufficient for emergency loans.<sup>18</sup>

In this sense, proposals in line with the initiatives to reform the two major institutions of the Bretton Woods system have been taking shape at the United Nations climate summits. At the Conference of the Parties (COP) held in Egypt in 2022, the COP27, this demand for reform of the financial system and multilateral development banks was included in the final document, for example. The COP27 decision also called on countries to implement measures to substantively increase climate finance, such as grants, guarantees and non-debt instruments, to address fiscal concerns and risk appetite in the financial markets.<sup>19</sup>

Also in Egypt, after decades of pressure from the most vulnerable developing countries, there was an important breakthrough with the announcement of the creation of the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF) to compensate countries affected by the losses and damage imposed on them by climate change. Despite the agreement, there is a long way to go to make this fund truly able to provide financing on the scale and speed that increasingly frequent extreme weather events demand.

The first Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement, finalized at COP28 held in December 2023 in the United Arab Emirates, also reinforced the essential need to scale up grant-based and highly concessional finance to developing countries.<sup>20</sup> In Dubai, new measures have been adopted to operationalize the Loss and Damage Fund,<sup>21</sup> although the donations

17 “IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva’s Opening Remarks.” *International Monetary Fund*, April 10, 2023. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2023/04/10/sp041023-md-iff-bwc-paulson-institute-panel-scaling-up-resilience-and-sustainability-financing>.

18 Kozul-Wright, Alexander. “G20 finance heads face reform calls from Global South.” *Al Jazeera*, April 11, 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2023/4/11/g20-finance-heads-face-reform-call-from-global-south>.

19 *Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan*. Accessed August 10, 2023. [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop27\\_auv\\_2\\_cover%20decision.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop27_auv_2_cover%20decision.pdf).

20 UNFCCC. Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement. Fifth session, Agenda item 4 – First global stocktake. *United Arab Emirates*, December 13, 2023. [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2023\\_L17\\_adv.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2023_L17_adv.pdf).

21 UNFCCC, Secretariat. *Operationalization of the new funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage and the fund established in paragraph 3 of decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4*. Report by the Transitional Committee. 2023. Accessed March 18, 2024. <https://unfccc.int/documents/632319>.

announced on the occasion have been kept at around 700 million dollars,<sup>22</sup> a modest amount when considering the significant damages climate change is already causing in developing countries.

In this effort to find alternatives to climate finance, the so-called Bridgetown Initiative<sup>23</sup> is gaining momentum. Devised by a group led by the Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley, and her climate finance envoy, Avinash Persaud, the idea, announced at COP 26 in Glasgow, was further developed with the help of academics and civil society from different nationalities, who gathered in Bridgetown, Barbados, in July 2022.

In concrete terms, the initiative calls for the temporary suspension of interest payments on loans when a country is facing a natural disaster or extreme weather events. It also calls for greater action by the IMF and urges multilateral development banks to provide additional loans, including concessional loans, of US\$ 1 trillion for developing nations to invest in climate resilience.<sup>24</sup> Adding to the different reform initiatives, in June 2023, the Paris Summit brought together leaders from at least 50 countries—many of them African—to discuss a New Global Financing Pact that takes into account the pillars of the TCP. One of the objectives was to address the reluctance of rich countries to engage with the key demands of the Global South on debt relief and new financing. The ambition of French diplomacy was that the Summit could also help drive greater action ahead of the climate negotiations for COP 28 (in Dubai at the end of 2023). Its concrete impacts were limited, and some participants, such as South Africa, expressed disappointment with the slow progress in dealing with the debt of the poorest states.

Despite having generated some momentum for reforming the financial system to promote climate action, the summit, which gave

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22 "COP28 Agreement Signals 'Beginning of the End' of the Fossil Fuel Era." *UN Climate Change News*, December 13, 2023. <https://unfccc.int/news/cop28-agreement-signals-beginning-of-the-end-of-the-fossil-fuel-era>.

23 For more details, see: <https://www.foreign.gov.bb/the-2022-barbados-agenda/>. Accessed June 3, 2023.

24 Shan, Lalitha. "Rebranding Global Financial Architecture? Shortfalls of Current Climate Finance Initiatives." *Heinrich Böll Foundation*, June 21, 2023. <https://us.boell.org/en/2023/06/21/rebranding-global-financial-architecture-shortfalls-current-climate-finance-initiatives>.

prominence to the proposals championed by Prime Minister Mia Mottley, achieved few concrete results, which fell short of the world's needs.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, there is a fear that both the Bridgetown Initiative and a proposal for a New Global Financing Pact will fail to address the root of the problem by not providing solutions for a deeper reform of the international financial architecture. In other words, while recognizing the importance of public financing, these efforts are still based on structures that strengthen financialization and the private financing model, which has been unable to correct asymmetries and deal with debt cancellation and relief needs. Regarding the Bridgetown Initiative, there are fears that the suspension of debt payments in the event of disasters, which would be negotiated on a case-by-case basis by the shareholders, could end up merely postponing the debt crisis.<sup>26</sup> Finally, the Paris Summit was highly criticized for, on the one hand, proposing to stimulate a “global” financing pact, and on the other hand, being restricted to a small group of countries with little transparency and very limited participation by society organizations.<sup>27</sup> In the midst of such challenges, the G20—the main forum for international economic cooperation between large economies and with an important role in seeking to strengthen the global financial architecture—has also sought to play a more prominent role in the quest to expand climate finance. This issue will be addressed in the following section.

## The G20 and the challenges of the climate and biodiversity agendas

With the institutional inertia of the UN system, the Bretton Woods institutions and other established components of global governance, the G20 has gained importance as a forum for political coordination

25 For more details, see: Jessop, Simon, Leigh Thomas, and Tommy Wilkes. “Paris Climate Summit Gives Fresh Impetus to Development Bank Reform.” *Reuters*, June 23, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/paris-climate-summit-gives-fresh-impetus-development-bank-reform-2023-06-23/>.

26 Shan, Lalitha. “Rebranding Global Financial Architecture? Shortfalls of Current Climate Finance Initiatives.” *Heinrich Böll Foundation*, June 21, 2023. <https://us.boell.org/en/2023/06/21/rebranding-global-financial-architecture-shortfalls-current-climate-finance-initiatives>.

27 “Statement: Concerns on the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact and its governance and policy implications.” *Civil Society Financing for Development (FFD) Mechanism*, June 19, 2023. <https://csoforffd.org/2023/06/19/statement-concerns-on-the-summit-for-a-new-global-financing-pact-and-its-governance-and-policy-implications/>.

in financial and economic matters, as well as in other areas of global interest. As an arrangement that brings together major economies—both emerging and industrialized—the grouping today occupies a privileged space for formulating global agendas, coordinating political positions and pushing for reforms of global governance institutions. Even before the recent entry of the African Union, the G20 countries already accounted for around 85% of the world's GDP, 75% of global trade and 60% of the current population.<sup>28</sup> Together, its member states are responsible for more than 80% of the world's GHG emissions.<sup>29</sup>

Over the last decade, the G20 has incorporated parts of the global climate agenda, including some topics related to fuel subsidies. Back in 2009, in Pittsburgh, USA, G20 leaders committed to rationalizing and phasing out, in the medium term, inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage unnecessary consumption. Back in 2015, the G20 asked the countries in the group to present their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and ratify the Paris Agreement. In order to mobilize financial resources for green energies and decarbonization strategies without compromising energy access targets, the G20 began to act through some of its working groups, such as the Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG) and the Energy Transitions Working Group (ETWG), and through engagement groups, such as Think 20 (T20).

In 2016, a new Green Finance Study Group (GFSG) was established under the G20 Finance Track to identify institutional and market barriers to green finance. Under Italy's presidency (2021), Finance Ministers and Central Bank presidents endorsed that the group be elevated to a working group, the aforementioned SFWG, responsible for producing the G20 Sustainable Finance Roadmap.

While working to ensure that the G20 does not lose sight of the need for profound reform of the international financial system, some emerging

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28 Hutt, Rosamond, and Timonhy Conley. "What Is The G20?" *World Economic Forum*. Accessed June 9, 2023. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/11/g20-summit-what-you-need-to-know/>.

29 "G20 Economies are Pricing More Carbon Emissions but Stronger Globally More Coherent Policy Action is Needed to Meet Climate Goals, Says OECD." *OECD Web archive*, October 26, 2021. <https://web-archiv.oecd.org/2021-10-27/614338-g20-economies-are-pricing-more-carbon-emissions-but-stronger-globally-more-coherent-policy-action-is-needed-to-meet-climate-goals-says-oecd.htm>.

economies have also worked to ensure that the group incorporates commitments in the climate area. For example, during Argentina's presidency of the G20 (2018), the final declaration of the meeting of heads of state incorporated considerations related to adaptation to climate change and extreme weather events. More recently, under Indonesia's presidency (2022), the group's final document not only referred to climate challenges, but also recognized the risks related to biodiversity loss and made passing references to the problems of desertification. Also in 2022, Finance ministers and Central Bank presidents held an exclusive meeting on climate mitigation, where they discussed political and regulatory approaches to mobilizing climate finance as an extension of the G20 Sustainable Finance Roadmap determined the previous year.<sup>30</sup>

When it took over the presidency in 2023, India indicated that it would focus on climate finance, energy security and green hydrogen in the renewable energy sector.<sup>31</sup> These themes were also highlighted at the 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 summits, respectively under the presidency of Japan, Saudi Arabia, Italy and Indonesia. Indian Sherpa Amitabh Kant repeatedly stated that the developed world was taking limited climate action, including on climate finance.

Looking exclusively at the official communiqués from the G20 summits of heads of state and government, it is possible to identify the evolution of the climate agenda. In the Leaders' Declaration agreed at the Rome Summit in November 2021,<sup>32</sup> climate issues appeared more than thirty times, while aspects relating to biodiversity were mentioned six times in the document. Although the G20 declarations in Rome (2021) and Riyadh (2020) did not explicitly mention the word "forest,"

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30 "At Their Last Meeting in 2022, G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Demonstrates Concrete Actions to Tackle Global Economic Challenges. Joint Press Release n. 24/279/DKom. G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting." *Bank Indonesia*, October 14, 2022. [https://www.bi.go.id/en/publikasi/ruang-media/news-release/Pages/sp\\_2427922.aspx](https://www.bi.go.id/en/publikasi/ruang-media/news-release/Pages/sp_2427922.aspx).

31 India. "India's forthcoming G20 Presidency." Press Release. *Ministry of External Affairs*, September 13, 2022. [https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/35700/Indias\\_forthcoming\\_G20\\_Presidency](https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/35700/Indias_forthcoming_G20_Presidency).

32 Brazil. "Declaração dos Líderes do G20 Roma." Nota à imprensa n. 138. *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, November 2, 2021. [https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/canalais\\_atendimento/imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/declaracao-dos-lideres-do-g20-roma](https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/canalais_atendimento/imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/declaracao-dos-lideres-do-g20-roma).



the Bali Declaration of 2022,<sup>33</sup> in addition to having a strong climate component, also devoted attention to the agenda of desertification and soil degradation. The leap forward made by the energy issue at the group's summits is also noteworthy. In 2008, at the Washington Summit,<sup>34</sup> there was only one mention of energy. In 2022, there were 143 mentions (considering energy and variations such as clean energy, green energy, energy access, energy crises, etc.) in the body of the text of the G20 Leaders' Declaration, partly as a result of the energy crisis in Europe aggravated by the conflict in Ukraine.

Despite the progress made in incorporating climate issues into its agenda, the G20 has yet to focus in a more substantive way on agendas related to and central to efforts to tackle climate change and environmental preservation. In addition to paying more attention to mitigation issues than to the adaptation and loss and damage agendas, the G20 has not yet demonstrated the political will to, for example, mobilize efforts and funding for compliance with the Convention on Biological Diversity and, more specifically, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, approved in 2022.

Considering its role as the most biodiverse country in the world and the urgency of halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity, including to contain climate change, Brazil's presidency of the G20 can serve as an opportunity for the world's largest economies to devote greater attention and financial resources to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

### **How can the climate agenda move forward through the G20?**

Although the G20 is not representative of all UN member states, it offers a strategic space to formulate preventive measures and responses

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33 "G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration." Bali, November 15-16, 2022. <http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/2022/G20%20Bali%20Leaders-%20Declaration,%2015-16%20November%202022,%20incl%20Annex.pdf>.

34 "Declaration of the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy." *G20 Information Centre*, Washington, D.C., November 15, 2008. <http://www.g20.utoronto.ca/2008/2008declaration1115.html>.

to global catastrophic risks such as the Triple Planetary Crisis and to press for the reform of global governance in these areas. Considering the financial nature of the group, significantly incorporating climate agendas and associated issues, such as biodiversity protection, would require the development of greater synergies between the G20, the UN system and the Bretton Woods institutions. This is a crucial component of strengthening multilateralism<sup>35</sup> as envisioned by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, and could be done through greater coordination between the G20 and the COPs on climate and biodiversity, as well as through initiatives such as the stimulus package proposed by the UN Secretary-General to boost the implementation of the SDGs,<sup>36</sup> and the Biannual Summits to bring together the G20, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and international financial institutions.

The time is opportune to reinforce the links between the G20 and other global governance institutions to strengthen climate action, mainly in terms of expanding the funding available to foster a green transition in developing countries. This is because the group is being chaired by a string of emerging economies that have long advocated a fairer financial system and a more balanced division of climate responsibilities. After Indonesia's presidency in 2022, India took over the leadership of the group. It is now chaired by Brazil in 2023-2024 and subsequently by South Africa. There is therefore a window of opportunity to incorporate the perspectives and priorities of the Global South into key agendas such as climate and biodiversity. With regard to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, the G20 countries can act to encourage compliance with multilateral policies and regulatory frameworks aimed at forest protection<sup>37</sup> and curbing biodiversity loss more broadly.

35 United Nations. "Strengthening Multilateralism 2022. Video message by António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, to G20 Foreign Ministers." *UN Web TV*, July 7, 2022. <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1y/k1y530pukf>.

36 United Nations. "Guterres calls for G20 to agree \$500 billion annual stimulus for sustainable development." *UN News*, February 17, 2023. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/02/1133637#:~:text=Stimulus%20plan,a%20transformation%20to%20working%20digitally>.

37 The G20 plays a strategic role in forest conservation. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) pointed out that eight G20 members are among the top ten countries with the largest forest area and, in the Rome Declaration in 2021, the group also made a commitment to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

As part of the Rome Declaration, the goal of collectively planting 1 trillion trees by 2030, for example, needs to be reiterated by its members in order to create carbon sinks to facilitate an increase in forest cover around the planet. It is estimated that G20 countries' investments in nature-based solutions (NbS) need to reach US\$ 285 billion a year by 2050 to deal with climate, biodiversity and land degradation crises. In total, the G20's annual investments in NbS need to increase by at least 140% to meet all the agreed climate, biodiversity and land restoration targets by 2050, according to a report by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).<sup>38</sup> In this sense, one of the possibilities is for the group to encourage nature-based policies that preserve biodiversity, provide equitable socioeconomic benefits to local and traditional communities, who must have their right to free, prior and informed consultation respected, and guarantee socio-environmental protection in the G20 countries and beyond.

It is important to emphasize that the G20, like the G7 and other blocs of countries that currently exist, should not replace the existing climate governance regime. Certainly, G20 leaders have a responsibility to fulfill global commitments to tackle the climate crisis with a sense of urgency, and this challenge requires a change in global governance. However, the negotiations and agreements that will lead to tackling the TCP must take place within the framework of the United Nations and the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to the UN conventions on climate, biodiversity and desertification. The grouping must be equally attentive to strengthening the efforts to implement the SDGs, so that the emphasis on climate finance does not lead to the neglect of the agenda aimed at promoting sustainable development in a broader sense.

In this sense, the importance of the engagement groups of the G20, such as T20, Civil Society-Twenty (C20), Business-Twenty (B20) and Urban-Twenty (U20), which involve research institutes, civil society, the private sector and municipal actors, respectively, to provide

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38 See United Nations Environment Programme. *State of Finance for Nature in the G20—Leading by Example to Close the Investment Gap*. Nairobi: UNEP/World Economic Forum/ELD, 2022. Accessed June 14, 2023. <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/state-finance-nature-g20-report>; Haryanto, Rizky, Dean Affandi, and Smita Tanaya. "6 Ways the G20 Can Maximize the Role of Forests in Climate Action." *World Resources Institute*, April 27, 2022. <https://www.wri.org/insights/6-ways-g20-can-maximize-role-forests-climate-action>.

recommendations for the actions of the G20,<sup>39</sup> should be highlighted. Although these groups still need to be more inclusive and transparent and, above all, better incorporated into the decision-making process of the Sherpa (political) and Finance Tracks of the G20, they make up strategic spaces so that agendas that are central to the societies of the Global South, such as climate finance and sustainable development, remain firmly on the agenda of G20 ministers and heads of state. In the case of Brazil, which has a plural civil society strongly engaged with international agendas and which, in addition to having assumed the new G20 presidency in December 2023, will host COP30 in 2025, the engagement groups can serve as a valid channel for raising the ambition of the commitments agreed within the G20 and which can be further elevated to broader multilateral mechanisms, such as the COPs on climate and biodiversity. The Brazilian presidency of the G20 and the possibilities it could offer are the subject of the next section.

### **G20 and the Brazilian presidency (2023-2024): what to expect**

The need to reform the international financial architecture is a historical demand of Brazilian foreign policy. In 2005, at the G20 meeting in China, Brazil, along with other nations from the Global South, secured a commitment from the G20 that the first stage of IMF's quota and voice reform would be carried out.<sup>40</sup> Efforts such as these, aimed at making the institutions of global financial governance more democratic and effective, will continue to be a priority for Brazil.

Beyond economic and financial issues, in light of what has been discussed in this chapter, there is a significant window of opportunity to strengthen the role of the G20 and its links with other global governance institutions to promote climate action, including in order to support developing nations to mitigate and adapt to climate change and halt and

39 The *engagement groups*, which are independent of governments and made up of various stakeholders from the international community, hold relevant meetings for the G20 discussions. They represent different segments—the business community (B20), civil society (C20), trade unions (L20), scientists (S20), think tanks (T20), urban cities (U20), women (W20) and youth (Y20)—of the G20 member countries and make various contributions, such as drawing up recommendations in their areas of interest.

40 Banerjee, Stuti. "Brazil and G20: The Power of the Global South." *India Council of World Affairs*, January 25, 2023. [https://www.icwa.in/show\\_content.php?lang=1&level=3&ls\\_id=8944&lid=5832](https://www.icwa.in/show_content.php?lang=1&level=3&ls_id=8944&lid=5832).

reverse the loss of biodiversity and the effects of desertification. This window of opportunity results from the consecutive presidencies of Global South countries: Indonesia (2022), India (2023), Brazil (2024)—the birth place of the UN conventions on climate, biodiversity and desertification in Rio de Janeiro during Eco-92—and, subsequently, South Africa.

These three latter countries have a history of political coordination and cooperation to reform global governance, including in the area of climate, through BRICS (originally Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) and BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China). Therefore, the three consecutive presidencies form an opportune moment to act not only to ensure that the Rio-92 agenda on climate, biodiversity and desertification is prioritized and takes into account the demands of developing countries, but also to ensure that the implementation of decisions taken over the next few cycles is complementary and monitored.

In this way, Brazil's presidency of the G20 represents a unique opportunity to strengthen coordination and cooperation between the world's largest economies on key issues of the Triple Planetary Crisis, while incorporating the perspectives and priorities of the Global South into the group's action plan and decisions, which have repercussions at a global level. Brazil will be able to contribute its experience on issues such as combating hunger and eradicating poverty to give impetus to the SDGs, as well as emphasizing the importance of reducing inequalities to increase climate resilience around the world.<sup>41</sup>

When it comes to food and energy security—which have even greater consequences for the poorest, particularly in developing and low-income countries—Brazil, as the world's third-largest food exporter and a major producer of biofuels, has room to make an emphatic contribution to the debate. With a view to advancing the energy transition agenda (in a just, sovereign and equitable way)—which also has an impact on protecting biodiversity and mitigating climate change—focusing on building sustainable solutions based on the bioeconomy, such as hydrogen, solar

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41 In addition to these issues, the energy transition, the digital economy, the development of the blue economy, rising interest rates and the indebtedness of developing countries could also be discussed, with due consideration for the effects on them.

and wind energy, and biofuels, biomass and biomethane, should be some of Brazil's focuses ahead of the G20.

In turn, keeping international food supply chains stable, accessible and free of environmental crimes and human rights violations is an important aspect of the food security agenda that can be addressed with greater emphasis from 2024 onwards. Considering recent efforts in Brazilian foreign policy, such as the Summit of the member countries of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) in Belém, whose final declaration emphasized the importance of indigenous peoples and local and traditional communities in the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources, it would be important for this recognition to be made within the framework of the G20 as well.

In general, Brazil's presidency of the G20 must remain sensitive and give precedence to the priorities of emerging countries, preventing more pressing issues for developed countries, such as peace and security issues and the war in Ukraine in particular, from dominating or paralyzing the grouping's agenda. With the backing of the current troika<sup>42</sup> (India, Brazil and South Africa), Brazil will be able to lead efforts to turn the attention of the G20, and the world, to the needs of the countries and societies of the developing world, without leaving anyone behind. A positive sign in this direction concerns the three major priorities established by the Brazilian presidency to guide the work of the G20 in 2024. Under the motto 'Building a Just World and a Sustainable Planet,' Brazil chose to give centrality to three themes of strong interest to the Global South: the fight against hunger, poverty and inequality; energy transitions and the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental); and global governance reform.<sup>43</sup> To make progress in these areas, Brazil established three temporary G20 frameworks. First, a Task Force to discuss and launch a Global Alliance against Hunger

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42 The G20 troika is a support system for the presidency of the group, which consists of three member countries: the past member country, the current one and the one that will take over the presidency in the future. The troika is responsible for driving the G20 agenda for a year and hosting the summit.

43 Brazil. "Um G20 com a cara do Brasil." G20, December 1, 2023. <https://www.g20.org/pt-br/noticias/um-g20-com-a-cara-do-brasil>.

and Poverty.<sup>44</sup> Second, a Task Force for a Global Mobilization Against Climate Change,<sup>45</sup> which for the first time brings together both the Sherpa and Finance Tracks around the climate agenda, with the aim of (1) advancing credible, robust and just national transition plans; and (2) setting principles and priorities for accelerating structural changes in the financial sector, with a view of aligning financial flows with the goal of limiting climate change to 1.5°C, as a complement to public funding. Finally, a G20 Initiative on Bioeconomy designed to foster international dialogue and action on the subject.<sup>46</sup>

## Conclusion

Achieving global emissions neutrality (net-zero) by 2050 and building climate resilience require significant reforms at the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to strengthen the capacity of member states to mobilize the necessary financial resources. In this context, this chapter has shown that reforms of the Bretton Woods system must consider ways to increase investment and support for national development strategies that are equitable, low-carbon and resilient, reduce poverty, supply global public goods, and strive to minimize risks and maximize sustainable development. In addition, the World Bank and the IMF should promote a gradual increase in the scale of capital and lending capacity.<sup>47</sup> As demonstrated, these lines of action need to be guided by greater access, decision-making power and representativeness of the countries of the Global South.

In the same vein, leadership from the G20 countries in fulfilling and mobilizing means to enable developing countries to meet internationally

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44 G20 Brasil 2024. *Issue Note of the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty Change*. (Documents: issue notes). Accessed May 2024. <https://www.g20.org/pt-br/documentos>.

45 G20 Brasil 2024. *Issue Note Task Force for a Global Mobilization Against Climate Change*. (Documents: issue notes). Accessed May 2024. <https://www.g20.org/pt-br/documentos>.

46 G20 Brasil 2024. *Issue Note Bioeconomy Initiative*. (Documents: issue notes). Accessed May 2024. <https://www.g20.org/pt-br/documentos>.

47 Gallagher, Kevin, and Rishikesh Bhandary. "World Bank Evolution as if Development and Climate Change Really Mattered." *Gegi Policy Brief*, March 2023. [https://www.bu.edu/gdp/files/2023/03/GEGL\\_PB\\_023\\_KG-WB-Reform-FIN.pdf](https://www.bu.edu/gdp/files/2023/03/GEGL_PB_023_KG-WB-Reform-FIN.pdf).

agreed commitments within (and beyond) the grouping is essential to restore confidence in multilateralism and global governance institutions. It is therefore imperative to make progress on demands such as the renegotiation and conversion of debts into climate actions, and even debt forgiveness, so that countries with high levels of indebtedness are also able to implement climate mitigation, adaptation and energy transition policies.

Greater ambition will also be required for the G20 to act more effectively to stimulate the necessary reforms so that the architecture of global financial and economic governance is better suited to responding not only to the climate crisis but to the challenges of the Triple Planetary Crisis as a whole. This also means dealing more directly with the issue of biodiversity loss, especially in terms of support for countries in the Global South to strengthen and develop the mechanisms, technologies and resources necessary for the preservation and sustainable use of their biodiversity.

This chapter has shown that, in order for the G20 to be able to act effectively on agendas that are related to, but at the same time broader than, economic and financial discussions, it would be important to ensure dialogue and complementarity between its work and decisions and those of the other global governance institutions. For example, there would need to be greater interaction between the G20 and existing processes, such as the SDGs and their high-level panels and summits, ECOSOC, the climate and biodiversity COPs, as well as ongoing reform processes. In this context, Brazil's presidency of the G20 in 2023-2024 and its proposal to host COP30 in 2025 represent an important opportunity for the G20 to push through the necessary reforms so that the international financial system is more effective in promoting sustainable development and climate action at a global and universal level, but with special attention to developing countries.





## Chapter 4

# Brazilian Foreign Policy: From Rio-92 to COP30

Flávia do Amaral Vieira

In May 2023, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva announced that Brazil would host the Conference of the Parties (COP) 30 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2025. The announcement came after the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) approved Brazil's candidacy and confirmed a proposal made even before the beginning of his term. At COP27, held in November 2022 in Egypt, Lula presented the plan to hold the event in the Amazonian city of Belém do Pará. Although the holding of COP30 in the capital of Pará still depends on the formal UN approval phase, the indication that the largest global climate discussion event will take place for the first time in the Amazon underscores the commitment of Brazilian diplomacy to once again position the country in a global leadership role on environmental and climate issues. In this sense, the country is once again guiding the global agenda from the South, with a perspective that combines *climate* and *development*.

Historically, Brazil is renowned for having played a proactive and constructive role in international negotiations on the environment, often occupying the position of leader among developing countries.<sup>1</sup> This trajectory is marked by 1992, when, still in the context of re-democratization, the country hosted the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Eco-92 or Rio-92), and 2012, when it hosted Rio+20. Rio-92 is considered a milestone in the creation of the global climate framework, as it initiated the negotiation process for the drafting of three important conventions: the United Nations

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1 Abdenur, Adriana, et al. "Climate and International Strategy: New Paths for Brazil. Ideas for discussion." *Plataforma CIPÓ*, November 2022. <https://climainternacional.plataformacipo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Climate-and-International-Strategy-1.pdf>.

Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Droughts (UNCCD). These two important events held in Brazil were marked by popular activism, with a strong presence of civil society organizations and social movements interested in expanding the channels of participation and influence in international negotiations, aspects that should be reinforced at COP30 in 2025.

Currently, the multilateral climate change regime has evolved and established a series of new goals and commitments, such as the Paris Agreement, signed in 2015 within the scope of the UNFCCC, which aims to keep the increase in the global average temperature below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and, preferably, to make efforts to limit this increase to 1.5°C. Since then, the COPs have become a space in which the nations announce their own greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets, the so-called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

In the last decade, the role of Brazilian foreign policy (BFP) in climate and environment issues has been gradually weakened, and the agenda was strongly neglected from 2019 to 2022. Today, however, the prognosis for Brazilian diplomacy in the coming years is one of reconstruction and reconfiguration of multilateralism, and a reassertion of the country's role as a regional and developing country leader, with an emphasis on climate and environmental discussions. In fact, Brazil is a key country in the climate change negotiations, considering that it has a large part of the world's largest rainforest, the Amazon, and also one of the main reservoirs of fresh water, the Guarani Aquifer. Furthermore, although the three largest GHG emitters (China, the European Union, and the United States) together account for 42.6% of global emissions, Brazil plays an increasing role in contributing to global warming, being the sixth largest emitter in the world.<sup>2</sup> This is mainly due to illegal deforestation.

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2 More information in the report: Sistema de Estimativa de Emissões e Remoções de Gases De Efeito Estufa (SEEG). "Análise das emissões brasileiras de gases de efeito estufa e suas implicações para as metas climáticas do Brasil 1970-2021." *Observatório do Clima*, 2023. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://www.oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/SEEG-10-anos-v4.pdf>.

In this sense, this chapter proposes an investigation into the challenges and possible paths for the BFP in the international climate agenda, based on a reflection on its role in the environment and climate conferences,<sup>3</sup> from Rio-92 to the Amazon COP in 2025. The aim is to outline perspectives for an increase in Brazilian ambition in its climate change resilience policy (considering mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, among other mechanisms) and thus to guide the reconstruction of the country's leadership role in global negotiations, especially from the Global South, given the various inequalities that permeate the climate agenda.

The chapter is made up of three sections, in addition to this introduction and the final thoughts. The first analyzes Brazil's role as a global leader at the Eco-92 and Rio+20 international conferences. The second section then briefly explores the role of Brazilian foreign policy at the climate conferences. Finally, the third section reflects on the challenges of contemporary Brazilian foreign policy from the third Lula administration onwards (2022-2026) for the climate and development agenda. In the final remarks, based on what has been said in these sections, recommendations are made for this new agenda to be transformed into ambitious targets for adapting to and mitigating climate change and into measures that promote a just, sovereign and equitable transition, as well as sustainable development and climate justice.

### **From Eco-92 to Rio+20: Brazil as a global leader in environmental conferences**

Since the late 1960s, with the strengthening of the environmental movement, international mobilizations questioning models of exploitation of the planet's resources and denouncing the negative impact

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3 For explanatory purposes, it should be noted that "COPs" refers to various Conferences of the Parties, events aimed at dialogue on monitoring member states' compliance with an international convention. This article analyzes different Conferences of the Parties: the environment conferences, which arose from the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment in 1972; the climate conferences, since the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, and which had its first edition in 1995; biodiversity, where the Convention on Biological Diversity is monitored; and desertification, the object of which is the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Droughts.

of industry on the environment have become more frequent. With the institutionalization at international level of the understanding that these problems required global action, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment took place in Stockholm in 1972. Also known as the Stockholm Conference, it marked the beginning of more structured discussions on the environment at a global level, but still in a very polarized way. At the time, Brazilian diplomacy was already in the spotlight, seeking to lead third world countries, which defended their right to development and pointed out the responsibility of developed countries for large-scale consumption and production, which resulted in unsustainable use of natural resources.<sup>4</sup> Among the results of the Conference was the creation of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

In 1987, with the release of the report “Our Common Future”,<sup>5</sup> or the Brundtland Report, by the World Commission on Environment and Development, which had been created within the framework of UNEP, foundations were laid for the inclusion of the theme of sustainable development in international conferences. The report started from a complex approach to the causes of socioeconomic and ecological problems in global society, highlighting the interconnection between the economy, technology, society and politics, and drawing attention to a new ethical stance, characterized by responsibility towards future generations.<sup>6</sup> One of the main recommendations of the document was to hold a world conference to address the issues that had been raised.

In 1989, the United Nations (UN) called for a new conference. Although the main official reasons for choosing Brazil to host the first Conference on Environment and Development were the pioneering work on deforestation produced by the National Institute for Space Research

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4 Viola, Eduardo J., and Hector R. Leis. “Desordem global da Biosfera e a nova ordem internacional: o papel organizador do ecologismo.” In *Ecologia e Política Mundial*, edited by Hector R. Leis. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 1991, 23-50.

5 Comissão das Nações Unidas sobre Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento. *Nosso futuro comum*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora da Fundação Getulio Vargas, 1991. Accessed March 18, 2024. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>.

6 Brüseke, Franz. “O problema do desenvolvimento sustentável.” In *Desenvolvimento e natureza: estudos para uma sociedade sustentável*, edited by Clovis Cavalcanti. INPSO/FUNDAJ, Instituto de Pesquisas Sociais, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Ministério de Educação, Governo Federal, 1994. <http://168.96.200.17/ar/libros/brasil/pesqui/cavalcanti.rtf>.

(INPE) and the global repercussions of the assassination of leading extractivist and environmentalist Chico Mendes, the fact that Brazil had been the leading voice of the developing countries in 1972 was also preponderant.<sup>7</sup> Thus, twenty years after Stockholm, Rio de Janeiro hosted Eco-92.

At the time, the Brazilian government was highly mobilized to hold the event. In fact, the federal capital was temporarily moved to Rio de Janeiro and the Armed Forces were called in to provide security and guarantee the presence of heads of state. During the Conference, the term “sustainable development” was consolidated as a real objective to be achieved by the countries. Another element that stood out in the work of the BFP was the effort to promote multilateral regional and global relations aligned with a strong position of national sovereignty over the Amazon. This sought to reverse international threats of tutelage over the biome and also to curb biopiracy.<sup>8</sup>

During the Conference, debates began to shape global actions for the protection of the environment and the recognition of responsibilities for its preservation, starting with the enshrinement of the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR). This principle states that developed countries should bear the greater costs of sustainable development, taking into account the proportions of the damage already caused and their respective capacities. This postulate stems from the principle of equality, whereby unequal treatment should be given to unequal people in order to equalize them based on a material logic. At the end of the Conference, as mentioned, three central conventions for the multilateral climate change regime were signed (the UNFCCC, the CBD and the UNCCD). In addition, other instruments were signed that function as global environmental frameworks, such as Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Declaration of Principles Relating to Forests.

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7 Pinto, Henrique, and Camila G. Alves. “Algumas considerações sobre o papel do Brasil na Rio+20—a geopolítica ambiental em ação.” *Revista Geonorte* 3, no. 1 (2013): 361-373.

8 Cervo, Amado L., and Clodoaldo Bueno. *História da Política Exterior do Brasil*. Brasília: Editora da Universidade de Brasília, 2002.

This was also one of the first international events after Brazil's re-democratization. Previously, despite having participated in the Stockholm Conference, the country, during the military governments (1964-1985), had adopted a markedly developmentalist economic policy, characterized by major public infrastructure projects with significant environmental impacts, such as the construction of the Trans-Amazonian Highway and the installation of the nuclear power plant in Angra dos Reis.<sup>9</sup> This context gave impetus to the mobilization for the broad participation of society: parallel to the Rio-92 Conference, the Global Forum was held, a summit that brought together around 10,000 representatives of civil society, making it the first event of its kind in the world. In this sense, in addition to its formal results, Rio-92 was notable for the great mobilization of civil society and public opinion. Brazil's foreign policy for Rio-92 was thus recognized for its ability to reconcile opposing interests and build a large-scale conference in an organized manner.

On the twentieth anniversary of Eco-92, Rio de Janeiro hosted the Rio+20 meeting. In the twenty years between the two events, several other international meetings and agreements on sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity were formalized, such as the Kyoto Protocol, ratified in 1997. This Protocol was a binding document, complementary to the Rio-92 Framework Convention on Climate Change, which established a commitment to reduce GHG emissions by 5.2% between 2008 and 2012, based on 1990 levels. Rio+20 mobilized an assessment of the progress, setbacks and emerging challenges related to the decisions adopted in the interval between the two conferences and was widely criticized for its difficulty in achieving practical results, even though it represented a renewal of the political commitment to sustainable development.

Even so, compared to Rio-92, Rio+20 made progress in the discussion of various issues, such as poverty, hunger and its relationship with the environment, the joint responsibility of all countries and the international

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9 Japiassú, Carlos Eduardo and, Isabela Franco Guerra. "30 anos do Relatório Brundtland: nosso futuro comum e o desenvolvimento sustentável como diretriz constitucional brasileira." *Revista de Direito da Cidade* 9, no. 4 (2017): 1884-1901. Accessed May 31, 2023. <https://www.e-publicacoes.uerj.br/index.php/rdc/article/view/30287/23220>.

cooperation needed for this purpose. Once again playing a leading role among developing countries, Brazil was also one of the leaders of a project for a monetary fund to finance actions aimed at sustainability, which was eventually not approved by the developed countries.

The Brazilian task force in charge of the logistics, organization, structure and mobilization of the event also prepared an official text, the “Document of Brazil’s Contribution to the Rio+20 Conference,” presenting Brazil’s initial visions and proposals on the themes and objectives of the Conference.<sup>10</sup> The country set as its main objectives the eradication of poverty, the full consideration of the concept of sustainable development in decision-making and the strengthening of multilateralism. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the recognition of the international reorganization underway, with its repercussions on the structure of global governance. In other words, Brazilian diplomacy acted to be recognized as a global leader, considering a geopolitical scenario and historical context in which Brazil stood out for its economic growth, for a proud and active foreign policy and for the institutionalization of greater South-South cooperation, among other elements.

Propositional action in global governance mechanisms was also enhanced by the construction and strengthening of political and economic arrangements and blocs, such as the then-emerging BRICS grouping (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Organization of American States (OAS), the G77, a coalition of developing nations that aims to promote the collective economic interests of its members and create greater joint negotiating capacity at the UN, and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). These alliances and efforts to build blocs and consensus, including regional ones, have reinforced the endeavor of the BFP to consolidate Brazil as an influential player in decisions and issues with global implications, such as climate negotiations.

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10 Brazil. *Documento de contribuição brasileira à Rio+20*, 2012. Accessed May 28, 2023. <http://www.rio20.gov.br/documentos/contribuicao-brasileira-a-conferencia-rio-20.html>.



## **Brazilian foreign policy at the Climate Conferences**

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) inaugurated the multilateral climate change regime, laying the foundations for annual conferences for the states that ratified it. This section will briefly analyze the role of the BFP in the Climate Conferences, highlighting COPS 3, 14, 21 and 27, with the aim of identifying the ways in which the Brazilian position on the multilateral climate and environmental agenda has been built.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the supreme body of the Framework Convention, a meeting at which the progress and difficulties of the signatory states in combatting climate change and its economic, environmental and social impacts are assessed. At these events, deliberations are taken by consensus, and the only actors with voting power are the government delegates of the parties. However, journalists and representatives of civil society organizations can participate as observers. At the end of each COP meeting, a resolution is drawn up to guide countries' actions during the following period. Conferences are identified by the name of the city in which they take place and by their edition number.

In Brazil, the Convention was ratified by the National Congress in February 1994 and came into force in May of the same year, with the respective deposit of the instrument with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Also in 1994, the Ministry of Science and Technology established a structure responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Convention in the country: the Climate Change Coordination Office. Although the Convention stipulates that developing countries do not have the commitment to reduce their gas emissions without financial compensation, Brazil has since formulated and implemented some programmes that contain measures to mitigate climate change, albeit with progress and setbacks.<sup>11</sup>

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11 Teixeira, Breno Simonini, Danielly Godiva Molleta, and Gustavo Luedemann. "Brasil: esforços nacionais sobre as mudanças climáticas." In *Governança ambiental no Brasil: instituições, atores e políticas públicas*, edited by Adriana Maria Moura. Brasília: Ipea, 2016, 287-310.

Regarding the Climate Conferences, the literature highlights that the first major breakthrough came only at COP3 in Kyoto in 1997, when the aforementioned Protocol with GHG reduction targets was approved.<sup>12</sup> The document made a distinction between early industrializing countries, included in Annex I, which have individual mandatory targets, and late industrializing countries, such as Brazil, China and India, which would not be required to adopt specific targets. In 1997, the Brazilian delegation made a proposal to create a fund that would set fines for countries that failed to meet the mandatory targets. Although the proposal was not accepted, an adaptation of it was included in the so-called Clean Development Mechanism, in which non-Annex I countries can develop their own mechanisms to grant carbon credits. These credits can be traded in the international system and acquired by Annex I countries that have difficulties meeting their targets. Although they relate to surplus pollution rights, the mechanism also sought to create an incentive to encourage non-Annex I countries to reduce their emissions.<sup>13</sup> In short, the BFP played an active role in laying the foundations for what is now known as the carbon market.

Another act of Brazilian diplomacy highlighted by the international relations literature took place during COP14 in Poland in 2008.<sup>14</sup> At the conference, Brazil and other emerging countries took on a more prominent role by presenting ten domestic commitments to reduce emissions. Brazil also presented its National Policy on Climate Change (PNMC), which was later institutionalized by Law No. 12.187/2009. In 2010, at COP16 in Cancun, Brazil announced the regulation of the PNMC through Decree

12 For more information, see: Viola, Eduardo. "O regime internacional de mudança climática e o Brasil." *Revista brasileira de Ciências Sociais* 17, no. 50 (October 2002): 25-46. Accessed November 28, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-69092002000300003>; Moreira, Helena Margarida, and Analucia Bueno dos R. Giometti. "Protocolo de Quioto e as possibilidades de inserção do Brasil no Mecanismo de Desenvolvimento Limpo por meio de projetos em energia limpa." *Contexto internacional* 30, no. 1 (April 2008): 9-47. Accessed July 27, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-85292008000100001>.

13 Silva, Raissa Pereira Araújo e. "O Brasil e o regime internacional de mudanças climáticas: Contribuições Nacionalmente Determinadas e o Acordo de Paris (COP 21)." Graduate specialization final paper, Universidade de Brasília, 2019.

14 Barbado, Norma and, Antonio C. Leal. "Global Cooperation on Climate Change and Implementation of SDG 6 in Brazil." *Research, Society and Development* 10, no. 3 (2021). Accessed July 13, 2023. <https://rsdjournal.org/index.php/rsd/article/view/13290>.

No. 7.390, which made the country the first nation to formally assume and impose emission reduction targets on itself.

At COP21, held in Paris in 2015, Brazil was the first developing country to commit to an absolute reduction in GHG emissions in the economy as a whole in its NDC. On that occasion, the aforementioned Paris Agreement was signed, succeeding the Kyoto Protocol, making the Conference one of the most important of the decade. An innovation was the adoption of the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” as the basis for achieving the goals set by countries in their own NDCs. In other words, with the development of national targets set by the countries themselves, it was recognized that all states have an obligation to contribute to efforts to prevent climate change, although each actor has a different responsibility when considering their history of industrialization.<sup>15</sup>

In Paris, Brazil played a major role as a negotiator for the Global South, holding several conferences with civil society and strengthening its work with the BASIC coalition (Brazil, South Africa, India and China).<sup>16</sup> The then Minister of the Environment, Izabella Teixeira, played a substantial role in the drafting of the Agreement, facilitating dialogues between rich and emerging countries.<sup>17</sup> Also in 2015, Brazilian diplomacy played a central role in building the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing Sustainable Development.

However, in recent years, during the period from 2019 to 2022, Brazil’s climate ambitions have stalled or gone backwards. In 2020,

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15 Santos, Maureen, et al. “COP 21: O Comitê de Paris, a movimentação dos países nas negociações e um alerta vermelho para novos mecanismos de mercado.” *Heinrich Böll Foundation*, December 9, 2015. <https://br.boell.org/pt-br/2015/12/09/cop-21-o-comite-de-paris-movimentacao-dos-paises-nas-negociacoes-e-um-alerta-vermelho>.

16 The BASIC group was created in 2009 during COP15 in Copenhagen. The group emerged from the drafting of a joint document consisting of non-negotiable terms, a demand for increased funding for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries and a proposal for a second commitment period for developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol. For more information, see Silveira, Mariana Balau. “De Copenhagen to Paris: a evolução do BASIC no complexo de Regime de Mudanças Climáticas [From Copenhagen to Paris: the Evolution of BASIC Countries at the Regime Complex of Climate Change].” *Brazilian Journal of International Relations* 8, no. 2 (2019): 384-405. Accessed July 12, 2023. DOI: 10.36311/2237-7743.2019.v8n2.08.p384.

17 Girardi, Giovana. “Roubamos a cena”, diz ministra Izabella sobre a COP-21.” *Estadão*, December 13, 2015. <https://www.estadao.com.br/sustentabilidade/governo-brasileiro-sobre-a-cop21-roubamos-a-cena/>.

the first update of the Brazilian NDC was presented, with targets that, in practice, would allow Brazil to emit considerably more GHGs than established in the previous NDC. The revision was considered a “climate backpedal” maneuver [*pedalada climática*] and prompted legal action at the domestic level. In 2021, in a new update, the country closed its participation in COP26 in Glasgow with the same commitment made in Paris seven years earlier. The following year, in the new revision, the government submitted a target with higher future emissions levels than those already stipulated, instead of a target with a progressive drop in emissions—once again backtracking on its commitments.<sup>18</sup>

During this period of retraction of Brazilian diplomacy on the international climate agenda, environmental policy also went through a period of fragmentation and dismantling. There were budget cuts, advances in the flexibilization of protective legislation and paralysis of the territorial planning process, such as the demarcation of new indigenous lands and *quilombola* territories, as well as openly anti-environmentalist speeches. These factors have contributed to record-breaking deforestation in the Amazon,<sup>19</sup> leading civil society to play a strong role in denouncing the increase in environmental crimes in the biome, in search of international solidarity and policies to impose economic sanctions on Brazilian agricultural products linked to deforestation.<sup>20</sup> At COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh in 2022, there were three Brazilian participation spaces at the event, one led by civil society and another by governors, who discussed ways of confronting environmental setbacks, in contrast to the preaching of the federal government, whose discussion space was emptied and discredited during the conference.<sup>21</sup>

18 Unterstell, Natalie, and Nathália Martins. *NDC do Brasil: avaliação da atualização submetida à UNFCCC em 2022*. Nota Técnica, Instituto Talanoa, 2022. Accessed July 12, 2023. <https://institutotalanoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Analise-NDC-2022-2.pdf>.

19 “Amazônia registra recorde de desmatamento no primeiro semestre de 2022.” *Ipam Amazônia*, July 8, 2022. <https://ipam.org.br/amazonia-registra-recorde-de-desmatamento-no-primeiro-semester-de-2022/>.

20 Werneck, Felipe, and Claudio Angelo. “Brazil: 1000 days of destruction—How Jair Bolsonaro Became the World’s Most Dangerous Climate Denier.” *Observatório do Clima*, 2021. Accessed July 4, 2023. [https://www.oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/1000Days\\_Digital\\_E\\_v1.pdf](https://www.oc.eco.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/1000Days_Digital_E_v1.pdf).

21 The spaces were: the federal government hub, supported by organizations linked to agriculture, livestock and industry; the Brazil Climate Action Hub, organized by Brazilian civil society; and finally, for the first time, the space of the Interstate Consortium of the Legal Amazon, led by the governor of the state of Pará, Helder Barbalho.

Despite the lack of Brazilian leadership, COP27 yielded some gains for developing countries, such as the creation of a specific financial mechanism to compensate poor countries that are suffering from extreme weather events, known as the loss and damage fund. Another positive point was the inclusion of forests in the final document and the mention, for the first time, of nature-based solutions (NbS), a step forward for countries that still have large areas of forest. The mention of forests also helps to initiate greater dialog and complementarity between the climate COPs and the biodiversity ones.<sup>22</sup>

The election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva at the end of 2022, with a government platform aimed at retaking a progressive international position on the environment and climate agenda, opened up an opportunity to reverse the scenario of environmental setbacks. At the start of the Lula 3 administration (2023-2026),<sup>23</sup> Brazil's discourse has been one of ambition to establish an inclusive path towards neutralizing emissions and decarbonizing its economy,<sup>24</sup> as well as a position of leadership in the multilateral regime, as demonstrated, for example, by the country's bid to host COP30 in the Amazon, in Belém do Pará.

In June 2023, at the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact, in Paris, the current president gave a strong speech taking a stand at the South, as a developing country, blaming rich countries for the climate crisis and demanding what they had promised in terms of financing.<sup>25</sup> In these statements, which combine ambitious domestic commitments with demands on developed nations, it can be said that Lula has put the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities into practice.

In this sense, it can be seen that the role of the BFP in the climate change regime has changed constantly over the decades. If, initially,

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22 WWF Brasil. "Acordo de Perdas e Danos e volta do Brasil à diplomacia climática são destaques da COP27." *WWF Brasil*, November 20, 2022. <https://www.wwf.org.br/?84140/Acordo-de-Perdas-e-Danos-e-volta-do-Brasil-a-diplomacia-climatica-sao-os-destaques-da-COP27>.

23 It is called Lula 3 because Lula has already been president for two other terms, from 2003 to 2010.

24 "Veja a íntegra do discurso de Lula na COP 27." *G1*, November 16, 2022. <https://g1.globo.com/meio-ambiente/cop-27/noticia/2022/11/16/veja-integra-do-discurso-de-lula-na-cop-27.ghtml>.

25 Vilela, Pedro Rafael. "Lula diz que países ricos têm que financiar proteção das florestas." *Agência Brasil*, June 22, 2023. <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/politica/noticia/2023-06/lula-diz-que-paises-ricos-tem-que-financiar-protecao-das-florestas>.

in the 1970s, diplomacy played a sovereigntist and developmentalist role, from the 1990s onwards Brazil became a key player in this regime, playing a fundamental role in international conventions related to the issue. Despite the aforementioned retraction during Jair Bolsonaro's government, in Lula's third term, the discourse is that of resuming its role as a leader of emerging economies.

On the domestic front, some important progress has already been made, such as a significant drop in deforestation rates in the Amazon in the first half of 2023, and a robust response to illegal mining on indigenous lands. On the other hand, Brazil still has difficulties in adapting its economic development policies to the climate change regime, as evidenced by the difficulties in preventing the socio-environmental impacts of major infrastructure projects and promoting an energy transition towards a reduction and eventual elimination of the role of fossil fuels.

These domestic advances and contradictions are reflected in Brazil's international actions. The following section takes a closer look at the opportunities and challenges for the BFP during President Lula's third term in office, considering aspects of the global geopolitical situation as well as factors related to domestic environmental and climate policy.

### **Lula 3: challenges and opportunities for Brazil's new foreign policy on the road to COP30**

As mentioned above, the climate and development agenda experiences a moment of discursive strengthening in Lula 3, with the BFP regaining prominence. In parallel to the international movements, the Amazon has come to occupy a new place in domestic policies, having returned to the spotlight due to programmes such as the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon (PPCDAm), which was resumed on the first day of President Lula's new term. In addition, two important international conferences were announced for the region. The first is the Amazon Summit, the Fourth Meeting of Presidents of States Parties to the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, which took place in August 2023 in Belém do Pará and was preceded by the "Amazon Dialogues," which brought together around 30,000 representatives of civil society

and social movements to discuss measures to promote sustainable development in the region. The second is the aforementioned COP30, in 2025, which should also take place in the capital of Pará.

It is worth noting that the Amazon is considered to be the world's largest carbon sink, which gives Brazil significant bargaining power in international negotiations. Thus, this section investigates the challenges and paths needed for the BFP to, while steering clear of greenwashing discourses<sup>26</sup>, materialize into an ambitious policy of resilience to climate change and leadership in global negotiations, especially from the Global South, on the climate and development agenda.

To do this, first of all, it is necessary to tackle significant internal challenges, related to issues such as the energy crisis facing the Amazon, marked by blackouts and the high price of electricity, even though the region produces 26% of Brazil's hydroelectric power. The Legal Amazon also has nine of the eleven cities that emit the most carbon in the country due to deforestation and fires, according to data from the System for Estimating Greenhouse Gas Emissions (SEEG),<sup>27</sup> as well as serious problems with basic sanitation and urban planning. The commodity-based development model exacerbates rural impoverishment, environmental problems, unequal land distribution and lack of access to education and health.<sup>28</sup> Thus, outside the urban axis, socio-environmental conflicts impose the urgency of prioritizing land regularization processes in the region, in order to reduce violence and various forms of inequality. In short, the reality of the Amazon, from a historical context of exploitation of natural resources, is very much based on environmental racism<sup>29</sup> and climate injustice.

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26 *Greenwashing* is a popularly used term for the façade manipulations made by the business sector to public opinion in order to present an environmentally responsible public image.

27 Prizibiszki, Cristiane. "Municípios da Amazônia lideram ranking de Mayres emissores de gases de efeito estufa." *O Eco*, June 13, 2022. <https://oeco.org.br/noticias/municipios-da-amazonia-lideram-ranking-de-Mayres-emissores-de-gases-de-efeito-estufa/>.

28 Horn, Claudia. "O Fundo Amazônia: caminhos para a inclusão social." *Friedrich Ebert Foundation*, São Paulo, March 2023. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/brasilien/20254.pdf>.

29 The concept of environmental racism refers to the formulation of public environmental and urban planning policies that affect or harm individuals, groups or communities differently—intentionally or unintentionally—on the basis of race, ethnicity or color, including in disaster contexts; as well as the absence of public services aimed at combating socio-spatial segregation. See: Alves, Gabrielle, and Mariana de Paula.

The city of Belém, the capital of Pará, which was nominated to host COP30, still has no adaptation and mitigation plan for the climate emergency, even though local civil society has been pushing for the construction of a Municipal Forum on Climate Change since 2021. In addition, there is a shortage of hotel accommodation for an event of this size, and various problems with urban infrastructure, such as public transport and water resources. In this scenario, the Pará state government has been criticized for celebrating the climate conference<sup>30</sup> while defending the exploitation of fossil fuels in the Amazon<sup>31</sup> as Pará presents one of the highest deforestation rates among the states in the Brazilian Amazon.<sup>32</sup> Thus, there are many challenges for Belém to become a model venue for tackling climate change in time for COP30.

On the other hand, hosting the largest global conference on climate can represent an opportunity for the city to receive investments in green infrastructure, which can transform the urban fabric, integrating it with services and public spaces, promoting local culture and boosting income generation. Overall, for Brazil, COP30 opens the way to raise the country's influence and global agenda in this area, highlighting the priorities of the Global South and strengthening the participation of civil society in the negotiating spaces. Therefore, in order to reinsert itself internationally as a responsible and purposeful actor until COP30, Brazil must, from a domestic point of view, seek to reconcile, in practice and beyond discourse, the climate change agenda and the incentive for economic development, considering its poverty and social inequality rates.

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"Environmental and Climate Racism in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro." *Center for Brazil Studies One Pager*, no. 24 (September 2022). Accessed August 22, 2023. <https://www.ou.edu/content/dam/International/brazil-studies/docs/One%20Pager%2024%20-%20Alves%20and%20Paula.pdf>.

30 Moliterno, Danilo. "Governador do Pará anuncia candidatura de Belém para sediar a COP30, em 2025." *CNN*, January 11, 2023. <https://www.cnnbrasil.com.br/politica/governador-do-para-anuncia-candidatura-de-belem-para-sediar-a-cop30-em-2025/>.

31 Bethônico, Thiago. "Helder Barbalho defende que Petrobras estude exploração de petróleo na Amazônia." *Folha de S. Paulo*, May 15, 2023. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2023/05/helder-barbalho-defende-que-petrobras-estude-exploracao-de-petroleo-na-amazonia.shtml>.

32 Cardoso, Rafael. "Desmatamento no Brasil cresceu 22% no ano passado." *Agência Brasil*, June 12, 2023. [https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2023-06/desmatamento-no-brasil-cresceu-22-no-ano-passado#:~:text=Na%20an%C3%A1lise%20por%20estados%2C%20o,2%25%20\(168.446%20hectares\)](https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2023-06/desmatamento-no-brasil-cresceu-22-no-ano-passado#:~:text=Na%20an%C3%A1lise%20por%20estados%2C%20o,2%25%20(168.446%20hectares).).



In this context, debates on investment in the bioeconomy and the valorization of sociobiodiversity are gaining momentum. The bioeconomy is the industrial production model based on the use of biological resources, with the aim of offering solutions for the sustainability of production systems with a view to replacing fossil and non-renewable resources.<sup>33</sup> The concept of the sociobiodiversity production chain, on the other hand, emphasizes the encouragement of sociobiodiversity services, strengthening cultural identity, incorporating local values and knowledge, and ensuring the fair and equitable distribution of its benefits.<sup>34</sup> These discussions have an impact on the way in which Brazil inserts itself abroad, since they have the potential to contribute to the construction of an economic model based on sustainable, low-carbon agriculture and an energy matrix with modern renewable energies, fundamental aspects for Brazil to combat deforestation and reduce its GHG emissions, which, in turn, are necessary conditions for building credibility to play a global leadership role on the road to COP30.

In addition to announcing new international commitments, it is important that the country moves forward with the construction of action plans with deadlines, budgets and clear targets aimed at implementing the responsibilities it has already taken on. Some of these existing responsibilities are: carbon neutrality by 2050, the goal of eliminating illegal deforestation by 2030;<sup>35</sup> restoring and reforesting 12 million hectares of forest by 2030; and the commitment to reduce methane emissions by 30% by 2030.

In this movement to revive the climate and environmental agenda, combining *climate* and *development*, it is essential to increase Brazil's ambition in its emission reduction targets in the face of new alarming projections of global warming. These projections point to an increase of

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33 "Bioeconomia: sobre o tema." *Embrapa*. Accessed July 4, 2023. <https://www.embrapa.br/tema-bioeconomia>.

34 For more information, see: Brazil. *Plano nacional de promoção das cadeias de produtos da sociobiodiversidade*. Ministérios do Meio Ambiente (MMA), do Desenvolvimento Agrário (MDA) e do Desenvolvimento Social e Combate à Fome (MDS). July 2009. <https://bibliotecadigital.economia.gov.br/bitstream/123456789/1024/1/Plano%20Sociobiodiversidade.pdf>.

35 For more information, see: Brazil. *Prevenção e Controle do Desmatamento*. Ministério de Meio Ambiente e Mudança do Clima s/a. Accessed August 22, 2023. <https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/assuntos/prevencao-e-controle-do-desmatamento>.

1.5°C in relation to pre-industrial global temperatures in the next three years, or even in 2024, with the influence of the El Niño phenomenon, especially in the Amazon. This phenomenon causes extreme drought, which has a disproportionate impact on traditional communities, riverside communities and indigenous peoples, as well as an increase in carbon dioxide emissions due to the possibility of trees dying.

On the mitigation agenda, Brazil should take a cautious and constructive stance on the carbon market and pricing agenda, as set out in Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.<sup>36</sup> Forestry activities are important for generating carbon credits. However, in the application of this type of enterprise, processes of deterritorialization and substantive alteration of the ways of life of traditional communities have been noticed. Therefore, despite the importance of economic instruments for decarbonization, it is necessary to create mechanisms and commitments that are formalized and registered at the COPs to guarantee that the process of free, prior and informed consultation of the territories affected by carbon pricing dynamics is carried out, as provided for in Convention 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO). In addition, Brazil must act to prevent carbon offsetting practices from replicating a climate governance approach that exacerbates inequalities between developed and developing countries.

It is worth remembering that the Amazon not only covers Brazil, but also Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, French Guiana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. In this sense, the role of the BFP at COP30 would benefit from the materialization of the efforts initiated at the Amazon Summit and the measures set out in the Belém Declaration approved at the time, which seeks to promote South-South cooperation projects, coordination between neighbors in multilateral and regional debates and a common agenda to promote sustainable development, conservation and sustainable use of forests and water. The declaration also aims to point out ways for orderly action to avoid the point of no return in the Amazon, combat deforestation and illegal activities in the

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<sup>36</sup> The carbon market refers to transactions between companies and institutions that have no legal obligation to reduce emissions but intend to offset them. Credits are generated based on rules and methodologies applied to activities that reduce emissions or promote carbon sequestration, such as forestry activities.

region and promote economic development with social inclusion and the generation of income and employment, based on mechanisms for social participation and the strengthening of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO).

In addition to the Climate COP discussed so far, the climate and development agenda of the BFP needs to be strengthened at the Biodiversity and Desertification COPs. At the CBD Conferences of the Parties, Brazil, an environmentally megadiverse country, plays a central role in the negotiations. So far, with the influence of agribusiness and international corporations, the country still faces challenges, such as experimenting with genetically modified organisms and spreading the use of pesticides.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, in 2022, the conference ended with a historic agreement to guide global action on nature until 2030: in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the parties decided that the main goal is to preserve one third of the planet's nature by 2030. The document also contains proposals to increase funding for developing countries—one of the main points of contention during the discussions. In this new phase, it is important that the leadership of the actions of the BFP is redirected towards opening up dialogue and adopting measures to protect biodiversity, indigenous peoples, traditional communities and family farming.

The Desertification COP, on the other hand, receives far less media attention and is sometimes referred to as the “COP of the Poor.”<sup>38</sup> After all, desertification is a problem of the Global South, as it is much more concentrated in Africa and the Middle East. Even so, some arid and semi-arid areas in Latin America, such as northeastern Brazil, are also at risk of desertification. Therefore, as a country that suffers from the consequences of droughts, Brazil must mobilize South-South ties, through arrangements such as the Group of 77, in order to support efforts, currently led by African countries, for drought prevention, management and response

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37 Bittencourt, Naiara A., and Jaqueline P. de Andrade. “O que está em jogo nas negociações sobre a biodiversidade na ONU?” *Heinrich Böll Foundation*, December 6, 2022. <https://br.boell.org/pt-br/2022/12/13/o-que-esta-em-jogo-nas-negociacoes-sobre-biodiversidade-na-onu-sociobiodiversidade>.

38 Da Silva, Darly. “Combate à desertificação e a COP dos pobres.” *Terceiro Incluído* 4, no. 1 (2014): 1-23. Accessed August 22, 2023. DOI:10.5216/teri.v4i1.33941.

instruments. Other key measures are the creation of mechanisms aimed at increasing the yield of cultivated areas without depleting soils or destroying forests, advocating ways to mitigate the advance of arid lands and pushing for the expansion of climate finance for these purposes.

For measures like this to have the necessary resources to be implemented, Brazil must continue to advocate for positive incentives from developed countries. In the Brazilian context, specifically, the search for external partnerships should prioritize financial support for the implementation of projects and programmes developed by Brazil itself, such as the PPCDAm; the low-carbon agriculture program; Brazilian traceability systems and the promotion of due diligence in the production chains of goods and resources; and land regularization and territorial planning initiatives, with an emphasis on the demarcation of indigenous lands, the titling of *quilombola* lands and the creation of new Conservation Units. The Amazon Fund, which had been paralyzed during Bolsonaro's administration, was re-established at the beginning of the Lula 3 administration and could play a central role in this process of attracting resources. Between 2008 and 2019, the Fund raised US\$ 1.3 billion in voluntary donations. In this new phase, it is up to the BFP to push for new contributions to the Amazon Fund, such as those promised by the United States, the European Union and the United Kingdom, worth US\$ 500 million,<sup>39</sup> 20 million euros,<sup>40</sup> and 80 million pounds,<sup>41</sup> respectively.

To summarize, the movement to regain the leadership of BFP in international relations, and especially among developing countries, depends on a combination of domestic and international measures. These measures must seek not only to increase the ambition of climate and biodiversity preservation commitments, but also to guarantee the means, technology and financial resources so that these ambitious targets

39 "Joe Biden anuncia doação de US\$ 500 milhões para o Fundo Amazônia." *G1*, April 20, 2023. <https://g1.globo.com/jornal-nacional/noticia/2023/04/20/joe-biden-anuncia-doacao-de-us-500-milhoes-para-o-fundo-amazonia.ghtml>.

40 Verdélio, Andreia. "União Europeia fará doação de 20 milhões de euros para Fundo Amazônia." *Agência Brasil*, June 12, 2023. <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/politica/noticia/2023-06/uniao-europeia-fara-doacao-de-20-milhoes-de-euros-par-fundo-amazonia>.

41 "Reino Unido anuncia R\$ 500 milhões para o Fundo Amazônia." *BBC*, May 5, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/articles/c6p98ym9rjjo>.

can be implemented in practice in Brazil, the Amazon countries and the developing world in general.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that the climate issue is not just an environmental issue: it also involves social, economic and geopolitical aspects and consequences. The increasingly frequent effects of climate change, such as droughts, floods and heatwaves, are capable of destroying crops, housing and infrastructure, and causing the migration of affected populations. In this sense, tackling the climate crisis means ensuring equity and sustainability for present and future generations. This chapter sought to analyze how Brazilian foreign policy has acted and how it can contribute to building a proactive role for the state in multilateral conferences and negotiations.

To this end, the construction of Brazil's role as a global leader in environmental conferences, from Eco-92 to Rio+20, and climate conferences, as well as biodiversity and desertification conferences, was investigated. Based on the reflection on the challenges of contemporary BFP in the Lula 3 government, recommendations were presented so that this agenda can be transformed into ambitious targets for adaptation and mitigation of climate change (without neglecting other mechanisms, such as loss and damage), and into measures that promote sustainable development and climate justice, especially in the Amazon.

It was argued that Brazil, as an emerging economy and in coherence with a sustainable development model, should aim to establish, without any further setbacks, an inclusive path towards neutralizing emissions and decarbonizing its economy. To achieve this goal, an important step would be to announce a bolder NDC, together with a clear and specific emissions reduction plan that can be monitored by Brazilian society and the international community.

The chapter also emphasized the importance of creating and maintaining spaces for the BFP to consult with all sectors of society in order to define policies and mechanisms for implementing the documents signed during the various international conferences related to climate and the environment. In this regard, the importance of the contributions

made by civil society organizations, universities, research institutions and the productive sectors from Eco-92 to the Amazon Summit was highlighted. These spaces would also benefit from creating conditions for greater participation by the most vulnerable populations to climate change, such as indigenous peoples, *quilombolas*, traditional and low-income communities, and the predominantly black population.

The chapter emphasized the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which recognizes that developed countries must assume greater costs for sustainable development, in order to plead for the expansion of climate cooperation. However, this does not mean that the principle can be used as a shield to prevent developing countries from adopting responsible stances in the fight against the climate crisis. By including the concept of climate justice at the heart of international strategy, Brazilian diplomacy will be able to influence, from a Southern perspective, an agenda that has traditionally been guided by the North. In the search for new alliances and the resumption of traditional ones, Brazil will be able to defend more strongly that the climate agenda goes beyond mitigation, underlining that it only makes sense to develop climate policies considering development and social inclusion across the board.

Finally, the chapter addressed the importance of the leadership of the BFP not being restricted to climate conferences. Brazil is the most biodiverse country in the world and has the opportunity to give impetus to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework around the world and to raise the international profile of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Droughts. The actions of the BFP, drawing on cooperation with other Amazonian countries, under the leadership of a strengthened ACTO and, more broadly, coordination with the countries of the Global South, could recover and consolidate the country's leading role in the world in the run-up to and during COP30.



## Chapter 5

# South-South Cooperation on Climate and Environment: The Role of IBSA, BRICS and BASIC

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According to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), released in March 2023, the efforts of countries to contain the increase in the Earth's temperature have proved insufficient to ensure that warming is limited to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels. To reach this limit, there must be a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2035. If this objective fails to be met, the report concludes that there is a high chance of reaching a point of no return in terms of the warming of planet Earth, with catastrophic consequences for all species, especially in the tropics.<sup>1</sup>

The IPCC also points to the need for coordinated multilateral action, with the implementation and reform of existing arrangements, as well as the creation of new global governance arrangements, if the targets for limiting global warming set out in the Paris Agreement, signed in 2015, are to be achieved. As already stated in this book, the world is facing a Triple Planetary Crisis, and its combat depends on the implementation of evidence-based policies at the domestic level, as well as robust international cooperation mechanisms.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Johnson, Scott K. "New IPCC Climate Report Contains Everything You Need to Know." *Ars Technica*, March 20, 2023. <https://arstechnica.com/science/2023/03/ipcc-again-advises-urgency-as-it-releases-last-piece-of-climate-report/>.

2 Teixeira, Izabella, and Ana Toni. "A crise ambiental-climática e os desafios da contemporaneidade: o Brasil e sua política ambiental." *CEBRI Revista* 1, no. 1 (January-March 2022). Accessed June 20, 2023. <https://cebri.org/revista/br/artigo/21/a-crise-ambiental-climatica-e-os-desafios-da-contemporaneidade-o-brasil-e-sua-politica-ambiental>.



Despite the setbacks experienced between 2019 and 2022, climate has once again gained prominence on the BFP agenda of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's new government (2023-2026). In the speech he gave after his victory in the second round of the elections in October 2022, Lula argued that Brazil needed to resume "its protagonism in the fight against the climate crisis, protecting all our ecosystems, especially the Amazon forest."<sup>3</sup> In his inauguration speech, in January 2023, he reaffirmed the importance of the issue, advocating the preservation of Brazil's biomes with "sovereignty and responsibility [...] in solidarity, never in subordination."<sup>4</sup>

The need for Brazil to position itself as a leader in tackling the climate crisis, an issue of global importance which therefore requires coordinated efforts between different countries and international organizations, opens up spaces for new cooperation arrangements. During its first two terms in office (2002-2010), the Lula administration prioritized a "proud and active" foreign policy, which sought international prominence. During this period, Brazil benefited from the new global order that was emerging at the beginning of the 21st century, with the growth of the so-called "emerging powers." Although it faces a new international conjuncture, with new threats—in addition to the climate issue, there is the rise of the far right and the crisis of liberal democracy<sup>5</sup>—it is still important for Brazil to use the multilateral arrangements it helped to build over the first decades of the 21st century to regain a leading role in the environmental agenda, prioritizing international cooperation, especially from the Global South.

This chapter therefore looks at Brazil's initiatives in the field of international cooperation, with a focus on what is known as South-South cooperation (SSC) and the arrangements of the so-called variable geometry coalitions, with special emphasis<sup>5</sup> on the following groups:

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3 "Lula's Victory Speech 30/10/2022." *BrazilWire*, November 1, 2022. <https://www.brasilwire.com/lulas-victory-speech-30-10-2022/>.

4 "Discurso de posse do presidente Lula no Congresso Nacional." *Lula*, January 1, 2023. <https://lula.com.br/discurso-de-posse-lula-2023/>.

5 Milani, Carlos, and Diogo Ives. "A política externa brasileira a partir de 2023: a necessidade de uma frente ampla nacional, regional e internacional." *CEBRI Revista* 2, no. 5 (January-March 2023). Accessed July 1, 2023. <https://cebri.org/revista/br/artigo/78/a-politica-externa-brasileira-a-partir-de-2023>.

BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa),<sup>6</sup> IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) and BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China). It analyzes how these coalitions can be used to host initiatives on climate issues, based on a recap of what has already been done in this area and the potential space for emerging powers to create new climate governance arrangements.

The chapter is divided into five sections, in addition to this introduction and the concluding remarks, which address the challenges and opportunities of South-South cooperation in the field of climate governance. Firstly, the role that international cooperation in general and South-South cooperation in particular play in Brazilian foreign policy is explained, based on a brief historical overview of how climate cooperation has been included in the BFP. It then looks more specifically at Brazil's involvement in variable geometry coalitions, with a focus on the BRICS, IBSA and BASIC groups.

### **International cooperation and South-South cooperation in climate and environment: paths for Brazilian foreign policy**

International Development Cooperation (IDC) came into existence after World War II as a result of two distinct political processes: the reconstruction of Europe and decolonization.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the East-West divide characterized by the bipolarity of the Cold War, the Second World War also saw the deepening of the divide between the Global North and South, between “developed” countries and those considered “underdeveloped” or “developing.” It was within this framework that the idea of Development Cooperation began, with countries being separated into “donors” and “recipients” of foreign aid. According to Besharati and Esteves:

The political-institutional architecture that supported the North/South divide was built around the World Bank

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6 In August 2023, the BRICS announced its expansion, and, from January 2024, the bloc also included as members Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

7 Esteves, Paulo, and Manaíra Assunção. “South-South Cooperation and the International Development Battlefield: Between the OECD and the UN.” *Third World Quarterly* 35, no. 10 (2014): 1775-1790.

and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In this context, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD housed high-income countries, or “Western donors,” while the Group of 77 (G77) brought together underdeveloped countries, or “aid recipients.”<sup>8</sup>

Because of the asymmetries in political-institutional arrangements, North-South cooperation (NSC) is seen by many as a space for affirming the bonds of colonial dependency between the metropolis (industrialized countries) and its former colonies (the poor and underdeveloped Global South), with a vertical model of cooperation often linked to economic conditions or mere charitable relations. On the other hand, SSC was born as a space for more horizontal and egalitarian relations, focused on technical cooperation and technology transfer, based on the need to overcome underdevelopment.

The origins of SSC can be traced back to the Bandung Conference in 1955 and the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). In the context of the struggle for independence of the former European colonies in Asia and Africa, the NAM saw the need for the newly independent countries to cooperate with each other in order to gain sovereignty and reduce their dependence on the developed countries and their former metropolises. It can be said that the first United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964 and the creation of the G77, mentioned above, constitute the starting point for articulations between countries of the Global South in the field of IDC.<sup>9</sup>

In the case of Brazil specifically, the relationship between the BFP and South-South cooperation can be traced back to this period, although the place of SSC in foreign policy discourse in the 1950s and 1960s often seems contradictory. Although Brazil positioned itself as a developing

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8 Besharati, Neissan, and Paulo Esteves. “Os BRICS, a cooperação sul-sul e o campo da cooperação para o desenvolvimento internacional [our translation].” *Contexto Internacional* 37, no. 1 (2015): 289-330. Accessed June 1, 2023. <https://www.scielo.br/j/cint/a/Lsf5qvXRbVnJH6Jttw674RD/abstract/?lang=pt>.

9 For more information, see the aforementioned texts by Esteves and Assunção (2014), and Besharati and Esteves (2015), as well as Curtis and Taylor. “The United Nations.” In *The Globalization of World Politics*, edited by John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, 334-349.

country, it also saw itself as a Western country, sharing the signs and values of the West, especially during the height of the Cold War. At the same time, third-world rhetoric appeared strongly in Brazilian diplomatic discourse, even though the country never formally joined the NAM.

Initiatives such as the Pan-American Operation (PAO), founded during the Juscelino Kubitschek administration (1956-1961), fostered initial discussions on the need for joint cooperation between the countries of the American continent in order to overcome underdevelopment. In the 1960s, Brazil took part in forums such as UNCTAD and the G77,<sup>10</sup> based on the thesis of the three D's of Brazilian Chancellor Araújo Castro (1963-1964)—decolonization, disarmament and development—which guided foreign policy practices during that decade and the next.<sup>11</sup> Even during the authoritarian period of the Military Dictatorship (1964-1985), South-South cooperation featured prominently in Brazilian foreign policy.

During the 1980s and 1990s, due to economic pressures and the adoption of the neoliberal consensus that gained momentum after the end of the Cold War, there was a slowdown in SSC initiatives, which regained ground at the beginning of the 21st century with the rise of emerging powers, including Brazil, something that will be discussed in greater depth in the next section. Before that, the history of climate and environmental issues on the agenda of international cooperation and Brazilian foreign policy will be discussed.

The environment came to the fore in international discussions at the end of the 1960s. In 1968, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) approved the creation of a conference on the environment, which came to fruition in 1972 in what became known as the Stockholm Conference, leading to the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)—a topic discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. In

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10 Junior, Haroldo Ramazini, Marcelo Passini Mariano, and Rafael Augusto Ribeiro Almeida. "As diferentes dimensões da cooperação sul-sul na política externa brasileira." In *Política Externa Brasileira, Cooperação Sul-Sul e negociações internacionais*, edited by Haroldo Ramazini Junior and Luis Fernando Ayerbe. São Paulo: Cultura Acadêmica, 2015, 13-50.

11 Milani, Carlos, and Rubens Duarte. "Cooperação para o desenvolvimento e cooperação sul-sul: a perspectiva do Brasil." In *Política Externa Brasileira, Cooperação Sul-Sul e negociações internacionais*, edited by Haroldo Ramazini Junior and Luis Fernando Ayerbe. São Paulo: Cultura Acadêmica, 2015, 51-79.

1979, the first World Climate Conference was held, organized by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).<sup>12</sup>

At that time, the debates around the need for cooperation to protect the environment were focused on the idea of conservationism. Like other issues that drew the attention of South-South cooperation and the IDC, global governance mechanisms and cooperation in favor of the environment were still relegated to the background of international discussions, to the terrain of so-called *low politics*, eclipsed by the dilemmas of the security agenda and the East-West conflict that curbed debates on the international agenda during the Cold War.

The Stockholm Conference in 1972 already signaled what would become the great debate on environmental protection and the different positions between the countries of the Global North and South. During the conference, developed countries began to defend the thesis of “zero growth,” introduced by the Club of Rome, which proposed a brake on economic and population growth in order to deal with the finiteness of natural resources. In contrast, the countries of the Global South, mostly newly independent colonies, argued in favor of the right to development.<sup>13</sup>

Between the 1970s and 1980s, there was an increase in the number of international agreements on the environment—such as the creation of the IPCC in 1988. The major turning point in the world’s climate agenda, however, came only after the end of the Cold War and the relaxation of East-West tensions, with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as Eco-92 or Rio-92. Following the Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, there has been a significant expansion of multilateral agreements on the environment and climate, a trend that has continued to this day.<sup>14</sup>

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12 For more information, see Vogler, John. “Environmental Issues.” In *The Globalization of World Politics*, edited by John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, 387-403; Gupta, Joyeeta. “A History of International Climate Change Policy.” *WIREs Climate Change* 1 (2010).

13 BEZERRA, Joana Carlos. “O papel do meio ambiente na política externa brasileira.” *Ideias* 6 (2013) 151-173.

14 Vogler, John. “Environmental Issues.” In *The Globalization of World Politics*, edited by John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, 387-403; Gupta, Joyeeta. “A History of International Climate Change Policy.” *WIREs Climate Change* 1 (2010).

Rio-92 was a turning point for Brazilian foreign policy and its environmental and climate agenda—with Brazil taking a leading role after a few years away from the debate.<sup>15</sup> This prominent position on the issue has geopolitical and strategic roots, especially with regard to the Amazon rainforest, a region that has historically aroused the interest of various foreign powers. On the other hand, throughout the 20th century, the issue of the Amazon was included in the BFP in a contradictory way, with the forest sometimes seen as an “obstacle to development” and sometimes as a “source of national pride.”<sup>16</sup>

With regard to the environmental issue more broadly, the BFP has historically sought to align discussions on environmental protection with concerns associated with promoting development and guaranteeing national sovereignty, two aspects which, at certain times, have overlapped with the environmental agenda. During the Military Dictatorship, the environmental issue was subordinated to the development-security binomial. The Stockholm Conference took place during the administration of Emílio Médici (1969-1974), with his “Diplomacy of the National Interest.” Thus, at the Conference, Brazil, seen by some as leadership among the underdeveloped countries in defense of the right to development, took a position that also sought to reinforce its sovereignty in relation to the national development projects that were being carried out in the country. Active participation in the event was also an attempt to improve the country’s international reputation, which had been damaged by human rights violations committed by the state during the dictatorship.

Still, the Brazilian position outlined in Stockholm gained strength at Rio-92. As discussed in Chapter 4, the idea that the preservation of the environment should not come at the expense of the development of poor countries was placed as a central concept in 1992, with the adoption of the concept of “sustainable development,” first elaborated in 1987 in the Brundtland Commission report, but also seen as a victory for Brazil’s diplomatic efforts during Rio-92.

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15 For more details on Rio-92, see chapter 4 of this book.

16 Bezerra 2013, 157.

The concept of sustainable development reveals the impossibility of thinking about environmental and climate issues without taking into account the reduction of global inequalities and asymmetries, especially in terms of poverty. Rio-92 also introduced the concept of “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR), seeking an idea of justice within the need for ecological transition. In other words, the concept promotes the view that, while all countries must act to mitigate the effects of global warming and to protect the environment and biodiversity, one must also recognize the differences in levels of development between states and the need to deal with issues of historical reparations in the international system.<sup>17</sup> The concept of CBDR has become fundamental, as shown below, in the formulation of coordinated cooperation policies on climate and the environment between emerging countries in the 21st century.

During the 1990s, South-South cooperation was relegated to the background due to the post-Cold War political and economic situation. At a time when the ideology of neoliberal globalization predominated as the main political-economic arrangement, Brazil sought to strengthen existing multilateral governance mechanisms. The deepening of economic openness in the 1990s encouraged investments in activities with a significant environmental impact, such as large-scale mining, the construction of new roads and large hydroelectric dams, and the advance of soybean monoculture. In this scenario, the Brazilian state failed to monitor and combat illegal deforestation, especially in the Amazon rainforest, which had an impact on its strategy in international environmental discussions.

As a result, Brazil adopted a defensive position when signing the Kyoto protocol in 1997, for example, advocating that “historical/cumulative per capita emissions should be the basis for calculating responsibility for mitigating emissions, while maintaining the right to development as a fundamental component of the world order.”<sup>18</sup> The

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17 Epstein, Charlotte. “Common but Differentiated Responsibilities.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, March 20, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/common-but-differentiated-responsibilities>.

18 Basso, Larissa. “Coalizão pró-clima é condição para o ingresso do Brasil na OCDE.” *Boletim de Economia e Política Internacional*, no. 34 (September-December 2022): 59. Accessed July 7, 2023. <https://repositorio.ipea.gov.br/handle/11058/11837>.

Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration (1994-2002) focused mainly on guaranteeing Brazil's sovereignty over the problem of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon, an object of harsh criticism in the international system during the period.

However, in the early 2000s there was a change in the international order. At the turn of the century, a series of economic crises particularly affected the developing countries that had adopted the ruling neoliberal economic agenda. These crises led to a successive wave of protests and demonstrations, with political and economic implications, which denounced the negative results of neoliberal globalization on the periphery of the international system and criticized a model of global governance that mostly privileged power structures that benefited developed countries. From then on, the world witnessed the search for new models of governance, including in the field of the climate agenda and the environment.

### **Variable geometry coalitions: spaces for South-South cooperation on climate and the environment in the 21st century**

The election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva for his first two terms in office (2003-2010) raised the priority given to Brazilian foreign policy, which was described as “proud and active” by then Chancellor Celso Amorim. During this period, Brazil sought a position of leadership among the countries of the Global South in order to promote the reform of existing governance arrangements, but without severing its good relations with the developed countries.<sup>19</sup>

Brazil's stance was not something isolated within the international system during this period. The beginning of the 21st century was marked by the rise and increased importance of developing countries in international politics, especially the BRICS group, putting South-South cooperation back on the agenda. As Milani and Duarte note:

In the transition to the 21st century, the tectonic plates of the world's economic and political order shifted, and the

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19 Muxagato, Bruno. “A projeção internacional do Brasil para um mundo multipolar (2003-2010).” *Chronique des Amériques* 14, no. 4 (October 2014).



importance of semi-peripheral countries in the processes of economic globalization gradually grew. The issues of the graduation of countries like China, India and Brazil, the geopolitical repositioning of countries like Russia or the transition of countries like South Africa, Indonesia, Mexico and Turkey have been on the international agenda since the beginning of the 21st century, to varying quality, scale and degree. In some cases (South Africa, Brazil, China and India, for example), the political dimension of SSC has been emphasized in discourses, in the definition of principles and in the reconstruction of a symbolic development cooperation regime.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, external and internal conjunctures have allowed Brazil to impose itself as an important player on the global chessboard. In the regional field, the country has not only deepened regional integration by expanding and strengthening the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) but has also taken the lead in creating the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), established in 2008 to promote cooperation between neighbors in areas including defense, health, culture, the environment and science and technology.

During the first decades of the 21st century, throughout the governments of the Workers' Party (PT)—including the terms of President Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016)—the BFP also sought to enable new partnerships within a low-intensity institutional model. This model, also known as variable geometry coalitions, allows for flexibility and fluidity, enhancing Brazil's relations with strategic partners without necessarily creating binding political commitments. These institutional arrangements were in line with the interests of emerging powers such as China, India, Russia and South Africa. In this way, throughout the 2000s, forums such as IBSA, BRICS and BASIC were created and deepened. This section will look at the links between these three coalitions in the field of climate and the environment.

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20 Milani and Duarte 2015, 53.

## IBSA and South-South cooperation

The first of these groups to be created, in June 2003, was the India, Brazil and South Africa Discussion Forum, known by the acronym IBSA, which was born mainly out of the need felt by Brazil to broaden the dialogue with some of the most important countries in the Global South—in this case, the three largest multi-ethnic and multi-cultural democracies on the planet.<sup>21</sup> The arguments in favor of creating IBSA were related to the fact that Brazil, India and South Africa share historical and economic similarities, despite some differences in the field of foreign policy. The three countries share a colonial past, are considered the largest and most populous democracies in their respective regions and, in the early 2000s, were consolidating themselves as emerging middle powers on the international stage. In addition, they face similar problems with regard to the enormous social and racial inequality in these countries.<sup>22</sup>

IBSA acts as a forum for consultation and policy coordination, with its main focus being the reform of global governance. Thus, cooperation between its members takes place through working groups and assistance to other countries via the IBSA Fund. Since its creation, ten trilateral ministerial meetings have been held, the first in 2003 and the last in September 2022. It is important to note that, between 2018 and the aforementioned meeting, there were apparently no meetings of the group,<sup>23</sup> which illustrates the low priority given by the Bolsonaro government to variable geometry coalitions and SSC.<sup>24</sup>

The IBSA Fund is probably the most visible aspect of the forum and aims to finance South-South cooperation projects. Created in 2004, the group has gone on to implement various cooperation projects in other

21 Amorim, Celso. "Brazilian Foreign Policy under President Lula (2003-2010): An Overview." *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, no. 53 (2010): 214-240. Accessed November 29, 2023. <https://www.scielo.br/rj/rbpi/a/CMNH5Hc6x63gRKQKY4yGgbj/abstract/?lang=en>.

22 Stuenkel, Oliver. *India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA)—The rise of the Global South?* New York: Routledge, 2015; Vieira, Marco Antonio. "IBSA at 10: South-South Development Assistance and the Challenge to Build International Legitimacy in a Changing Global Order." *Strategic Analysis* 37, no. 3 (2013): 291-298.

23 Research into sources and public domain channels did not identify any information about possible IBSA meetings between 2018 and 2022.

24 See IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission Meetings. Accessed July 3, 2023. <http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/Trilateral%20Ministerial%20Commission%20Meetings.html>.

countries of the Global South, such as Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and Congo. These projects are primarily focused on the areas of poverty alleviation, food security and public health, and are supported by the UN System, with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) being responsible for managing the fund.<sup>25</sup>

In its conception, the IBSA Fund is a good example of the idea of horizontal relations advocated by South-South cooperation, aimed at exchanging experiences and public policy projects. By 2022, 29 projects financed by the fund had been completed, six projects were underway and seven were due to start in 2023. In the field of climate and the environment, the IBSA Fund has financed projects linked to solid waste management in countries such as Guyana and Haiti, projects to use renewable energies, such as solar energy in Guinea-Bissau, and a project to mitigate soil degradation caused by the impact of climate change in Senegal, for example.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to the projects financed by the IBSA Fund, a series of task forces have been set up over the course of the IBSA Forum's existence. With regard to the environmental issue, especially in the field of climate transition, the group created a trilateral task force on biofuels in 2006;<sup>27</sup> signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in wind resources in 2007<sup>28</sup> and a memorandum of cooperation on solar energy in 2010.<sup>29</sup> Most importantly, a working group on climate and the environment was created in 2008.<sup>30</sup>

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25 Brazil. "Fundo IBAS aprova projeto sobre segurança alimentar na República do Congo." *Agência Brasileira de Cooperação, Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, December 29, 2022. <https://www.gov.br/abc/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/fundo-ibas-aprova-projeto-sobre-seguranca-alimentar-na-republica-do-congo>.

26 United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation. "IBSA-Fund Annual Report 2022—India, Brazil and South Africa. Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation." *UNOSSC/UNDP*, 2023. Accessed September 11, 2023. <https://unsouthsouth.org/2022/11/20/ibsa-fund-annual-report-2022/>.

27 IBSA-Trilateral. *Memorandum of Understanding on Establishing a Trilateral Task Team on Biofuels*. Brasília, September 13, 2006. <http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/mou/20060913IBSABiofuels.pdf>.

28 IBSA-Trilateral. *Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Wind Resources*. Pretoria, October 17, 2007. <http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/mou/20071017IBSAWindResources.pdf>.

29 IBSA-Trilateral. *Memorandum of Understanding on Solar Energy*. Brasília, April 15, 2010. <http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/mou/23042010solarenergy.pdf>.

30 IBSA-Trilateral. *Memorandum of Understanding on the Cooperation in the Field of Environment under the Brazil India and South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum*. New Delhi, October 15, 2008. <http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/mou/20081015IBSAEnvironment.PDF>.

The main objectives of the latter were to promote cooperation in the transfer of knowledge and the development of clean technologies; to strengthen South-South cooperation on climate change; and to develop common strategies for negotiations within the United Nations forums on climate and the environment. However, even though the IBSA dialogue forum considers the importance of trilateral actions in the area of preserving the environment and biological diversity and in combating climate change, over time there has been little progress in terms of implementing concrete projects. The last meeting of the working group on the environment took place in 2011—currently, the IBSA working groups are: Customs and Tax Administration; Agriculture; Trade, Investment and Infrastructure; Defense; Blue Economy; Energy; and Tourism.<sup>31</sup> From a multilateral point of view, the three countries have sought to articulate positions, especially within the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), including on issues related to the fight against biopiracy.<sup>32</sup>

Although the climate issue was addressed at the last trilateral ministerial meeting in 2022, when the countries reaffirmed their commitments to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement,<sup>33</sup> the climate issue needs to be further institutionalized within IBSA. In this sense, for this agenda to advance in a more substantive way, a necessary first step would be to reactivate the working group on climate and the environment, as well as strengthening this agenda in the other working groups, especially those related to agriculture, the blue economy and energy. In these spaces, cooperation projects could be considered in the areas of energy transition, green infrastructure and strengthening family

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31 Brazil. "Fórum de diálogo Brasil, Índia e África do Sul (IBAS)." *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, January 19, 2015. [https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/assuntos/mecanismos-internacionais/mecanismos-inter-regionais/ibas?set\\_language=pt-br](https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/assuntos/mecanismos-internacionais/mecanismos-inter-regionais/ibas?set_language=pt-br).

32 IBSA-Trilateral. "Deepening Cooperation in IBSA: Perspectives from Key Sectors." *Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)*, New Delhi, 2020. <https://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/FINAL-IBSA%20Report-web-min.pdf>.

33 Brazil. "India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum 10th IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission Meeting 21 September 2022." *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, September 28, 2022. <https://www.gov.br/funag/en/content-centers/news/india-brazil-south-africa-dialogue-forum-10th-iba-trilateral-ministerial-commission-meeting-21-september2022>.

farming, for example. In addition, the IBSA Fund could be revitalized to finance more climate change adaptation and mitigation projects, including making these axes a priority in the fund's financing portfolio.

### **BRICS and South-South cooperation**

After the creation of IBSA, the BRIC group was created in June 2009, initially made up of Brazil, Russia, India and China. The term BRIC first appeared in a report published by the investment bank Goldman Sachs in 2001 to designate the four emerging countries whose economies were experiencing considerable growth and which could be seen as new economic powers and/or recipients of investment throughout the 21st century. It was only a matter of time before the countries referred to by the acronym came together to think about coordinated policies and define joint strategies for action in the international system. At the time, the four countries accounted for a third of the world's population and 15% of its economy.<sup>34</sup> In addition, two of these countries—China and Russia—are part of the permanent body of the United Nations Security Council. It seemed only natural, given the situation at the time, that they should join forces to deal with common issues.

Although the report that gave rise to the group made no mention of any country on the African continent, in 2011, South Africa formally joined the group, expanding the acronym to BRICS. Since then, the group has been gaining importance on the international stage, especially in terms of financing South-South cooperation projects and creating new economic governance mechanisms, as was the case with the creation of the New Development Bank in 2014, known as the BRICS bank, with the aim of financing multilateral development projects.

The issue of sustainable development features repeatedly in the joint declarations of BRICS heads of state since their foundation, along with the need to adopt “green” practices and the need for inclusive economic growth to deal with the issue of climate change. Based on their understanding as emerging powers, the BRICS countries have built a

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34 Amorim, Celso. “Brazilian Foreign Policy under President Lula (2003-2010): an overview.” *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 53 (2010): 214-240.

discourse in defense of the countries of the Global South in the context of discussions on climate change—in fact, one of the guidelines of the New Development Bank would be to “mobilize resources for sustainable infrastructure and development projects in the BRICS countries and other emerging economies.”<sup>35</sup>

In addition, the bloc has other important initiatives, such as the BRICS Energy Research Cooperation Platform, created in 2018, and the preparation, in 2021, of the action plan for energy cooperation until 2025, with an emphasis on biofuels and renewable energies. These measures are especially important because energy is a key sector for the bloc’s countries: with the exception of Brazil, fossil fuels are the main source of GHG emissions in the BRICS countries, with a particular emphasis on the use of oil, gas and coal. Given the emissions profile of the bloc’s countries, which are among the largest emitters in the world, there can be no energy transition in the world without a solid and coherent policy on the part of the BRICS.

However, although the countries in the group have managed to converge on some agendas, especially those related to the economy and the global financial architecture, experts point to the lack of convergence between Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa when it comes to creating global governance mechanisms on climate. The countries of the bloc tend to act separately within existing multilateral structures, especially Russia, while Brazil, India, China and South Africa tend to act within the framework of the G77 + China and through the BASIC coalition, which will be dealt with later.<sup>36</sup> Although the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2015 was celebrated by the bloc and its countries have produced joint declarations calling for full implementation of the agreement by all signatory countries,<sup>37</sup> the BRICS members have different

35 Kiprizli, Göktuğ. “Through the Lenses of Morality and Responsibility: BRICS, Climate Change and Sustainable Development.” *Uluslararası İlişkiler* 19, no. 75 (2022): 65-82.

36 Downie, Christian, and Marc Williams. “After the Paris Agreement: What Role for the BRICS in Global Climate Governance.” *Global Policy*, 2018. Accessed July 8, 2023. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12550>.

37 BRICS. “Comunicado Conjunto da Reunião dos Chanceleres do BRICS em Pequim. Nota à imprensa n. 200.” *Instituto de Pesquisa de Relações Internacionais (IPRI)—Repertório de Política Externa*, June 20, 2017. <http://www.funag.gov.br/ipri/repertorio/index.php/categorias/26-mecanismos-inter-regionais/brics/729-comunicado-conjunto-da-reuniao-dos-chanceleres-do-brics-em-pequim>.

views on the level of ambition and mechanisms to be adopted for states to implement their respective Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).<sup>38</sup>

Other issues are important. For example, although the NDB has sustainable development as a principle, its current portfolio finances more projects linked to fossil fuels than renewable energies. Since the bank was founded, only fifteen of all loans have gone to renewable energy projects and five to social infrastructure projects.<sup>39</sup> In addition, most intra-bloc trade relations are still based on the fossil energy trade.

A common point that can be highlighted in the discourse of the BRICS countries, especially the countries that make up the BASIC group, is the promotion of the concept of CBDR, which recognizes the role of the group in the ecological transition, but also emphasizes the responsibility of developed countries. The joint communiqué published on the occasion of the Ninth Meeting of BRICS Environment Ministers, held in June 2023 in South Africa, stressed the need for developed countries to honor their commitments in the field of adaptation by assisting developing countries in their climate transition.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the countries reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the goals set out in the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC. They also proposed to strengthen collaboration on matters relating to the green economy and the circular economy.

However, the issue of CBDRs comes up against an apparent contradiction that is the target of criticism from developed countries towards the BRICS. Although these countries are also financiers and creditors, especially in South-South cooperation projects and through the NDB, they still consider themselves to be developing countries and

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38 For more information on each country's NDC see: Mattos, Beatriz, Camila Amigo, Caroline Boletta, Maria Beatriz Peixoto, Maria Clara Pereira, and Priscila Papagiannis. "Ambição climática dos países BRICS. Sumário Executivo." *BRICS Policy Center*, 2023. Accessed August 11, 2023. [https://bricspolicycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Sumario-Executivo-Ambicao-Climatica-BRICS\\_WEB.pdf](https://bricspolicycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Sumario-Executivo-Ambicao-Climatica-BRICS_WEB.pdf).

39 More information at: "All Projects." *New Development Bank*. Accessed October 7, 2023. <https://www.ndb.int/projects/all-projects/>.

40 South Africa. Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment. *Joint Statement of the Ninth (9th) BRICS Environment Ministers Meeting*. Accessed December 5, 2023. <https://www.gov.za/news/media-statements/forestry-fisheries-and-environment-9th-brics-environment-ministers-meeting-28>.

therefore potential recipients of aid, a complex political equation. The case of China is emblematic—although it has historically been responsible for 12.7% of global greenhouse gas emissions, behind the United States and Europe, in 2022 it became the largest GHG emitter on the planet.<sup>41</sup> In addition, the country has become the second largest economy on the planet, with the possibility of becoming the largest economy in the world in the next decade, as well as becoming the main trading partner for several countries in the Global South, including Brazil. This has led to criticism from developed countries of China’s advocacy of common but differentiated responsibilities.

In addition, China, India, Russia and Brazil are among the ten largest emitters of CO<sub>2</sub> on the planet. With the exception of Brazil, whose main source of emissions is associated with deforestation, the emissions of the other BRICS countries are mostly due to the burning of fossil fuels, increasing the tension between the members of the bloc and the developing nations regarding their responsibilities in combating the environmental and climate crisis.

### **BASIC and South-South cooperation**

One space for concertation that involves most of the BRICS countries is the BASIC group, founded in the context of the Copenhagen Climate Conference, COP15, in 2009. Over time, BASIC, made up of Brazil, South Africa, India and China, has become one of the most important variable geometry coalitions in the field of climate and the environment. Acting mainly through the G77 + China, BASIC was formed in the face of the need to create a joint negotiating strategy during the Copenhagen Conference for a new global framework to replace the Kyoto Protocol, and in the face of the need to secure greater funding from developed countries for mitigation projects in developing countries.<sup>42</sup>

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41 Vieira, Flávia do Amaral, Adriana Erthal Abdenur, and João Cumarú. “A China na Amazônia brasileira: explorando as conexões entre o aumento da exportação de *commodities* e o desmatamento. Policy Brief 01.” *Plataforma CIPÓ*, October 2022. [https://plataformacipo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/policy-brief-01-20221020\\_PT.pdf](https://plataformacipo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/policy-brief-01-20221020_PT.pdf).

42 Olsson, Marie, Aaron Atteridge, Karl Hallding, and Joakim Hellberg. “Together Alone? Brazil, South Africa, India, China (BASIC) and the Climate Change Conundrum. SEI brief.” *Stockholm Environment Institute*,



BASIC was set up to fulfill the “common but differentiated responsibilities” formalized at Rio-92, highlighting the right to development of the poorest countries. The group also gained prominence during COP15, when it drew up the Copenhagen Accord with the United States, which recognized the need to limit the increase in the Earth’s temperature to 2°C, laying the foundations for the Paris Agreement, which was signed in 2015.

Since then, BASIC has held meetings between environment ministers from the four countries, seeking to converge positions and create consensus on global climate governance. The last BASIC Meeting of Ministers on Climate Change, the thirtieth, took place virtually in April 2021, during the pandemic, and was chaired by India.<sup>43</sup> On that occasion, efforts were made to implement the NDCs of the respective countries, considering the difficulties imposed by the pandemic. The minutes of the BASIC meetings also point to an emphasis on the concept of CBDR. Since 2017, BASIC has signaled in its statements the need to create a loss and damage fund, agreed at COP27 in Egypt, and the need to increase support from developed countries for the implementation of climate mitigation and adaptation strategies in the developing world. However, consensus has not always been reached. During the Paris Agreement discussions, for instance, only South Africa initially defended the goal of containing global warming to 1.5°C, while Brazil, India and China were in favor of the 2°C goal. However, later on, only Brazil formally joined the so-called “High Ambition Coalition” proposed by island and European countries, which advocates ambitious strategies to limit the increase in the Earth’s temperature to 1.5°C.<sup>44</sup>

Even so, strengthening BASIC, including by resuming meetings of environment ministers and possibly institutionalizing meetings between

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November 29, 2010. <https://www.sei.org/publications/together-alone-brazil-south-africa-india-china-basic-climate-change-conundrum/>.

43 China. Ministry of Ecology and Development. *Joint Statement Issued at the Conclusion of the 30th BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change Hosted by India on 8th April 2021*. Accessed July 10, 2023. [https://english.mee.gov.cn/News\\_service/news\\_release/202104/P020210420346484492808.pdf](https://english.mee.gov.cn/News_service/news_release/202104/P020210420346484492808.pdf).

44 Amorim, Alice, Maureen Santos, and Paulo Esteves. “Resultados da COP 21 e a participação do BASIC.” *BPC Policy Brief* 6, no. 2 (April-May 2016). Accessed July 10, 2023. [https://bricspolicycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/BPC\\_Policy\\_Brief\\_V6N2\\_resultados\\_da\\_cop21\\_e\\_a\\_participacao\\_do\\_basic.pdf](https://bricspolicycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/BPC_Policy_Brief_V6N2_resultados_da_cop21_e_a_participacao_do_basic.pdf).

the group's heads of state on the margins of the climate COPs, could strengthen Brazil's ambitions to consolidate itself as a global player in the debate on global governance for the climate and the environment. Certainly, this kind of action can help on the road to COP30, in the Brazilian Amazon.

## **Conclusion**

As discussed throughout the chapter, the climate emergency has demanded rapid responses in order to halt the increase in the Earth's surface temperature by up to 2°C. This will require responses at a multilateral level, which makes international cooperation more essential than ever. This chapter has shown that the 2000s saw an important transformation of the international order, with the rise of emerging powers, including Brazil, in the quest for international prominence and the reform of existing global governance institutions. These countries, notably Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, have joined together in several coalitions of varying geometry to assert their positions in multilateral forums. These coalitions, which include BRICS, IBSA and BASIC, have sought to strengthen South-South cooperation on a number of issues, including those concerning the environment.

The environmental issue and climate change have become important components of the discourse and actions of these groups, with a series of task forces and inter-ministerial meetings to discuss ways of balancing the preservation of the environment with the search for development. Despite the inherent contradictions of variable geometry coalitions, which guarantee flexibility in the positioning of their members, arrangements such as BRICS, IBSA and BASIC can help Brazil to promote South-South cooperation again and regain its leadership among developing countries, after a period, during the Bolsonaro administration, of prioritizing relations with a limited number of developed countries based on purely ideological criteria.

The year 2023, in particular, presented great opportunity for Brazil to exercise its leadership. The country took over the presidency of IBSA at the beginning of 2023, coinciding with the group's 20th anniversary, with

Brazil's *pro tempore* presidency of MERCOSUR and with the transition from the Indian presidency to the Brazilian presidency of the G20, which took place in December 2023, at the same time as COP28 in Dubai. During 2024, the G20 troika is made up of the forum's three member countries, India, Brazil and South Africa. This means that the next few years will be conducive to strengthening a South-South agenda in the field of climate and the environment, with the political climate once again favoring initiatives carried out within coalitions of variable geometry.

In addition to more consolidated arrangements, as in the case of the BRICS, Brazil should also diversify its partnerships—including with the so-called BIC coalition, which brings together Brazil, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Congo with the aim of strengthening a pact for the preservation of tropical forests. Together, the three countries hold 52% of the planet's remaining tropical forests and could therefore benefit from coordination to deal with biodiversity management and forest conservation, acting in a coordinated manner in discussions and negotiations on the subject.<sup>45</sup>

Generally speaking, despite the limitations of flexible arrangements and the disparities that sometimes exist between their members, variable geometry coalitions are important spaces for advancing the priorities of the Global South in the field of climate and the environment. In the case of Brazil in particular, its role in these spaces is proving to be a great opportunity for the country to once again consolidate its position as a global leader in the areas of climate, biodiversity and, more broadly, sustainable development.

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45 Anjos, Anna Beatriz. "Brasil, Indonésia e República do Congo anunciam cooperação para preservar florestas." *Agência Pública*, November 14, 2022. <https://apublica.org/2022/11/brasil-indonesia-e-republica-do-congo-anunciam-cooperacao-para-preservar-florestas/>.

## Chapter 6

# Brazilian Foreign Policy Towards Latin America and the Caribbean: Paths for the (Re)Construction of Sustainable and Sovereign Regional Integration

Marília Closs

Since 2015, several social indicators in Latin America and the Caribbean have worsened significantly. The economic growth of the beginning of the last decade has slowed down; poverty and hunger have returned to 1990s levels<sup>1</sup> and violence has increased.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has had serious impacts on the health, economic and food security of the population. At the same time, many of the continent's economic conditions have deteriorated, with a marked decrease in the pace of productive growth and in the implementation of public policies that induce social inclusion. At the same time, climate change and extreme events are already severely affecting the continent, aggravating this picture of overall weak socio-economic development.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Latin American continent is particularly vulnerable to climate change and susceptible to extreme events such as hurricanes, hailstorms, tornadoes and floods. In addition, other phenomena such as an increase

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1 United Nations. *Balance Preliminar de las Economías de América Latina y el Caribe 2022*. Santiago: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2023. Accessed August 7, 2023. <https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/48574-balance-preliminar-economias-america-latina-caribe-2022>.

2 Data shows that violence has worsened both in the public safety sector, as demonstrated by a report in the newspaper *Brasil de Fato* (Pina, Rute. "Por que a taxa de homicídios na América Latina aumentou, na contramão da média global." *Brasil de Fato*, July 11, 2019. <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2019/07/11/por-que-a-taxa-de-homicidios-na-america-latina-subiu-na-contramao-da-media-global>), and in terms of gender-based violence, as the ECLAC report shows (United Nations. *La Pandemia en la Sombra: Femicidios o Femicidios Occurridos en 2020 en América Latina y el Caribe*. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), November 24, 2021. <https://www.cepal.org/pt-br/comunicados/cepal-menos-4091-mulheres-foram-vitimas-feminicidio-2020-america-latina-caribe-apesar#:~:text=At%20least%204.091%20women%20were%20v%C3%ADtimas%20of%20feminic%C3%ADdio%20in%2026,a%20each%20year%20consolida%20e>).

in the frequency of droughts, intense variation between heat waves and cold spells, melting of the permafrost in the Andes, variation in rainfall and changes in harvest conditions also have a major impact on political, economic and social life in Latin America.<sup>3</sup> The climate emergency makes disasters more frequent and intense, kills people in conditions of greater vulnerability, causes the forced displacement of communities and threatens infrastructure in both urban and rural areas. Among other consequences, there is a risk that the role of the region as a food producer will be affected and that food insecurity will increase.<sup>4</sup>

As in other continents, the most vulnerable populations in Latin America suffer disproportionately from the climate crisis. However, in a region that is structurally and conjuncturely marked by inequality and its expansion, the current panorama is that of peripheral populations, especially black and indigenous populations, living in aggravated situations of insecurity in their basic forms of subsistence as a result of climate change. This is all the more accentuated by the state of political economy: in most Latin American countries, the model of development and social inclusion through traditional extractivism implemented in past decades has reached exhaustion. Part of this is due to the instability of commodity prices and their impact on economies that depend on the export of these products. However, the exhaustion of this cycle also comes alongside the consolidation of new political programmes, on the streets and at the voting booths, in which it has become clear that an exclusively predatory and extractive relationship with nature is incapable of dealing with the continent's social and economic challenges.

The impacts of climate change in Latin America cross international borders and therefore require collective responses. Thus, South and Latin American integration processes must be priority spaces for implementing effective responses to the challenge. To this end, it is important that

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3 More information at: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Accessed August 7, 2023. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-working-group-ii/>.

4 Koop, Fermín. "Relatório do IPCC: crise climática se aprofunda na América Latina." *Diálogo Chino*, March 1, 2022. <https://dialogochino.net/pt-br/mudanca-climatica-e-energia-pt-br/51427-relatorio-do-ipcc-efeitos-da-crise-climatica-se-aprofundam-na-america-latina/>.

Brazilian foreign policy (BFP) is engaged, resuming the leadership role it has historically occupied in the formulation and implementation of regional dialogues and concertations, with greater attention to the climate agenda. This chapter is divided into two main sections, in addition to this introduction and the final considerations. The first presents a political panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean. Next, the main socio-environmental and climate challenges in the region are presented, based on a historical contextualization of extractivism on the continent, with an emphasis on the obstacles faced today in the energy agenda (including energy infrastructure), critical minerals and deforestation. The final considerations explore possibilities and ways forward for BFP.

### **A brief overview of the multilateral regional scenario and the political conjuncture in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Historically, Latin America has been one of the main areas—perhaps the main one for Brazilian foreign policy. With few exceptions, such as during the 2019-2022 period, in recent decades, albeit with different contours, the construction of instruments that guarantee political and security stability and the expansion of economic relations with neighboring countries has been a priority in Brazil's international insertion strategy. Some examples are the transformation, during the 1970s, of rivalrous relations into economic and political cooperation between Brazil and Argentina; the expansion of trade relations with the countries of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), created in 1991; the intensification of energy cooperation with countries like Paraguay and Bolivia from the 1980s onwards; and, in the 2000s, more consolidated political, infrastructural and security integration projects, materialized in the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), created in 2008. There are other important initiatives, such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), founded in 2011, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)—the latter, as part of the UN system, has for decades played an important role in the dialogue to promote economic policies in the region.

As a result, these policies and spaces guided Brazil's international strategy more broadly, even shaping the way its multilateralism was built—notably based on the defense of peaceful conflict resolution and the construction of multipolarity. More than that: Latin America used to be thought of as Brazil's platform for the world and this led the BFP to draw up a joint strategy for the region's development. Since 2015, however, the institutional architecture of cooperation in Latin and South America has been profoundly weakened, affecting all the main multilateral spaces for dialogue. Part of this is due to the economic and political crises, but also to the interruption of the cycle of political alignment between the early 2000s and 2015, brought about by the electoral victories of left-wing and center-left governments in the region, popularly known as the pink wave.<sup>5</sup>

This process has been mirrored in regional organizations. MERCOSUR, a central organization for the economic and commercial integration of the Southern Cone and for Brazil's international economic insertion, has been undergoing a process of excessive flexibilization<sup>6</sup> since the middle of the last decade, with an emphasis on open regionalism,<sup>7</sup> which has led to a loss of identity for the organization and the fragmentation of its members' commercial negotiation strategies. Among other things, the possibility of Uruguay leaving the bloc, considered by the current government of Luis Lacalle Pou, is one of the examples of the crisis that MERCOSUR has been facing.

UNASUR, on the other hand, was emptied with the departure of successive countries and, consequently, mischaracterized, with the loss of its core function of guaranteeing political, defense and infrastructure

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5 The election of Mauricio Macri in Argentina in 2015 is probably the key moment for understanding that the so-called pink wave was coming to an end. The election of Jair Bolsonaro in 2018 brought to light that, rather than the dismantling of governments on the left, there was a process of radicalization of the Latin American right.

6 Barrenango, Amanda, and Nastasia Severgnini. "Las Posturas en Torno a la Flexibilización del MERCOSUR, 30 Años Después: ¿Armonía de Voces o Concierto Desafinado?" *Conjuntura Austral* 12, no. 60 (2021): 19-34. Accessed July 28, 2023. <https://seer.ufrgs.br/ConjunturaAustral/article/view/112723>.

7 Frenkel, Alejandro. "El MERCOSUR se Dobla pero (aún) no se Rompe." *Nueva Sociedad*, July 2022. <https://nuso.org/articulo/el-mercosur-y-su-crisis-de-identidad-se-dobla-pero-aun-no-se-rompe/>.

integration in South America.<sup>8</sup> Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru formally withdrew from UNASUR between 2018 and 2019. In 2020, so did Uruguay. In 2023, Brazil, Argentina and Colombia announced their return to the organization. However, there has yet to be any progress towards its more solid reconsolidation. Meanwhile, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) has experienced little progress in building political consensus to advance robust regional cooperation projects and initiatives.<sup>9</sup>

Against this backdrop, Latin American arrangements are in crisis. In the words of experts such as González, Hirst, Luján, Romero and Tokatlián,<sup>10</sup> there is a double crisis: one of Latin American regionalism and one of inter-American multilateralism, which materializes in a mixture of stagnation, fragility and decay in the main regional organizations, which have been losing their political meaning. This has been reflected, for example, in the absence of a negotiated solution to the political situation in Venezuela, which has gone on for almost a decade. Faced with the deepening and extension of the Venezuelan crisis, and the aforementioned weakening of the South and Latin American institutional architecture, the inter-American system has not proved capable of sustaining the necessary dialogue for a way out of the conflict. On the contrary: the Organization of American States (OAS) has shown itself to be incapable of proposing solutions to one of the hemisphere's most complex recent crises.

Similarly, the regional organizations and coalitions built by governments on the right of the political spectrum, especially since 2015, have not yielded good results either. The Lima Group, created in 2017

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8 Tanscheit, Talita. "Eleições 2022: o Brasil na América do Sul." *Boletim Lua Nova*, 2022. Accessed July 28, 2023. <https://boletimluanova.org/eleicoes-2022-o-brasil-na-america-do-sul1/>.

9 Gonzalez, Guadalupe, Monica Hirst, Carlos Luján, Carlos Romero, and Juan Tokatlián. "Conjuntura crítica, transição de poder e esvaziamento latino-americano." *Nueva Sociedad* (August-September 2021). Accessed July 28, 2023. <https://nuso.org/articulo/conjuntura-critica-transicao-de-poder-e-esvaziamento-latino-americano/>.

10 Gonzalez, Guadalupe, Monica Hirst, Carlos Luján, Carlos Romero, and Juan Tokatlián. "Conjuntura crítica, transição de poder e esvaziamento latino-americano." *Nueva Sociedad* (August-September 2021). Accessed July 28, 2023. <https://nuso.org/articulo/conjuntura-critica-transicao-de-poder-e-esvaziamento-latino-americano/>.



and made up of 12 countries,<sup>11</sup> has not achieved its central objective of contributing to a peaceful and negotiated solution to the Venezuelan crisis. The Forum for Progress and Integration of South America (PROSUR), created in 2019 as a kind of attempt to replace UNASUR, in practice has remained little more than an acronym, especially after Chile announced in 2022 its withdrawal from the initiative. In the power vacuum of Brazilian leadership, other actors tried to fill the space, but were unsuccessful. As a result, regional cooperation, which was once a priority in the foreign policies of Latin American countries, has been deeply weakened. As a result, Latin America and the Caribbean are politically and commercially disintegrated, which accentuates the economic crises, especially in the industrial sectors of countries like Brazil and Argentina.

However, recent years have shown that the subcontinent is experiencing a new political moment. In addition to new progressive governments in power,<sup>12</sup> innovative programmes are also emerging, including in the area of climate. The elections of Gabriel Boric (in December 2021) in Chile and Gustavo Petro (in June 2022) in Colombia, for example, were preceded (and guided) by widespread demonstrations demanding, among other things, a less predatory relationship with nature and the construction of a dignified life for the entire population.<sup>13</sup> For the subject of this chapter, this has meant important changes. Even with political difficulties, Boric is seeking to implement a just transition project through Congress, while Petro has a project to decarbonize the economy by reducing the economic importance of oil.

At the same time, in the first few months of his administration, Lula had already given important signals that South and Latin American

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11 When the Lima Group was formed, the following countries were present: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru.

12 Examples of this are the elections of Andrés Manuel López Obrador in 2018 in Mexico, Alberto Fernández in Argentina in 2019, Luis Arce in Bolivia in 2020, Gabriel Boric in Chile in 2021, Xiomara Castro in Honduras in 2021, Gustavo Petro in Colombia in 2022 and Bernardo Arévalo in Guatemala in 2023.

13 More information about the cycle of protests that later gave rise to the political program that elected Gabriel Boric in: Tanscheit, Talita Santiago. "Das ruas à constituinte: a reinvenção da ação coletiva no Chile." *Jacobin Brasil*, June 15, 2021. <https://jacobin.com.br/2021/06/das-ruas-a-constituente-a-reinvencao-da-acao-coletiva-no-chile/>. In addition, more information about the political project that led to Gustavo Petro's victory in: Closs, Marília. "O segundo turno das eleições presidenciais na Colômbia." *Le Monde Diplomatique Brasil*, June 15, 2022. <https://diplomatie.org.br/o-segundo-turno-das-eleicoes-presidenciais-na-colombia/>.

integration is a priority for the BFP agenda, notably by convening a South American Summit of Presidents in May 2023. Another example of a new moment marked by political will to build new regional arrangements is the Amazon Summit and its Belém Declaration, discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. Despite this, a number of challenges continue to be faced in pushing forward a broader cooperation agenda involving Latin America and the Caribbean in efforts to tackle regional challenges in areas such as security.

Transnational organized crime, a recurring challenge in Latin America for decades, has expanded and become more complex, taking advantage not only of new technologies, but also of the lack of effective responses and measures to prevent and combat it. In recent years, there has been an increase in transnational networks linked to environmental and climate crimes, which demands solid and context-specific responses. Another challenge is the lack of large-scale funding for the policies needed in the region. One example is the infrastructure agenda, which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections. While during the so-called pink wave the physical integration project was spearheaded to varying degrees by Brazil, with the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) playing an important role, the current scenario is different, with a smaller budget available at national and regional level.

Finally, another geopolitical element that aggravates these circumstances is the growing rivalry between China and the United States, which places Latin America as a territory of dispute (economically, politically, militarily and culturally). In this scenario, faced with the 2019-2022 weakening of Brazilian foreign policy for the continent, Chinese capital has been systematically taking over spaces that had previously been occupied by Brazilian companies,<sup>14</sup> as discussed in the next sections of this chapter. Without well-designed strategies to deal with the competition between the great powers in Latin America, the region loses opportunities and faces new geopolitical constraints.

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14 Roy, Diana. "China's Growing Influence in Latin America." *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 15, 2023. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-influence-latin-america-argentina-brazil-venezuela-security-energy-bri>.

## Climate and environment in Latin America: panorama and challenges

In the international division of labor, Latin America has historically played the role of commodity producer and exporter. In practice, this means that the continent is not only economically dependent on the countries of the Global North, but also has economies that are deeply dependent on primary products. Brazil's economic profile—and its structural dependence on the export of products such as soybeans, cattle, rice and corn—is discussed in Chapter 2 of this book, but it is important to bear in mind that almost all the other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have a similar profile: dependence whether on the production and export of agricultural products, or on the exploration and export of minerals or hydrocarbons, especially oil and natural gas. According to data released in 2023 by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), more than 50% of the total exports from the region are natural resources, although in some countries this figure is even higher.<sup>15</sup>

The literature in Latin America points out that extractivism, i.e. the relationship between the economy and nature in which the appropriation of land for the exploitation of natural resources organizes the social, political, and economic life of countries and territories, has been the dominant social model in Latin America and the Caribbean since the colonial period.<sup>16</sup> It even continued throughout the cycle in the 2000s in which progressive left-wing and center-left governments were in power in several Latin American and Caribbean countries. Countries like Brazil, Argentina, but above all Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador did not just preserve but deepened their dependence on the production and export of primary products and an extractivist pattern of economic and social

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15 United Nations. *Panorama de los Recursos Naturales en América Latina y el Caribe*. Executive summary. Santiago: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2023. Accessed September 12, 2023. <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c76a7a2f-5dc9-4eb6-b7e8-1cf98ab85e4d/content>.

16 For a more comprehensive discussion on extractivism, see: Gudynas, Eduardo. "Transições ao pós-extrativismo." In *Descolonizar o imaginário: debates sobre pós-extrativismo e alternativas ao desenvolvimento*, edited by Gehard Dilger, Miriam Lang, and Jorge Pereira Filho. São Paulo: Fundação Rosa Luxemburgo, 2016; Acosta, Alberto, and Ulrich Brand. *Pós-extrativismo e decrescimento: saídas do labirinto capitalista*. São Paulo: Elefante, 2018.

policy. Maristella Svampa refers to this phenomenon as the *commodity consensus*.<sup>17</sup> As a result, various public and social policies formulated and implemented during the progressive cycle—which were fundamental to income distribution on the continent—were deeply dependent on income from, for example, oil and gas.

The maintenance of primary-export and extractivist paradigms in Latin American economies has had a number of consequences, ranging from the marked deindustrialization of recent years to the persistence of patterns of structural inequality in the continent's countries, and even the worsening of violence in the countryside and forests. According to a report released by Global Witness in 2022, almost 70% of the murders of socio-environmental leaders between 2012 and 2022 took place in Latin America—almost 40% of them in indigenous territories, home to less than 5% of the continent's population. Brazil, Colombia and Mexico are the countries with the highest murder rates.<sup>18</sup>

Violence against environmental defenders is structural on the continent, and the Atlas de Justicia Ambiental (EJAtlas) shows that most of it is related to the development of energy sector infrastructure and the extraction of hydrocarbons and minerals.<sup>19</sup> Against this backdrop, the socio-environmental situation in Latin America and the Caribbean today presents challenges in a number of areas. In particular, this chapter identifies three key themes with particularly challenging scenarios. These are: energy (including energy infrastructure), critical minerals and deforestation.

## **Latin America and the energy transition agenda**

As shown above, many Latin American economies are dependent on the production and export of fossil fuels. According to 2023 figures

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17 Svampa, Maristella. "‘Consenso de los Commodities’ y lenguajes de valoración en América Latina." *Nueva Sociedad* (March-April 2013). Accessed September 12, 2023. <https://nuso.org/articulo/consenso-de-los-commodities-y-lenguajes-de-valoracion-en-america-latina/>.

18 "Una década de resistencia." *Global Witness*, September 29, 2022. <https://www.globalwitness.org/es/decade-defiance-es/>.

19 For more information, see the Environmental Justice Atlas, a platform that compiles data on justice and socio-environmental conflicts. Accessed September 12, 2023. <https://ejatlas.org/>.

released by ECLAC, the region has around 20% of the world's oil reserves—the second largest reserves in the world, behind only the Middle East.<sup>20</sup> In many cases, there is a dependence on oil and gas revenues around the various stages of the hydrocarbon production chain, whereas national oil companies also play important roles in other areas of the economy, and are even key players in the development of science, technology and innovation in their countries. In this sense, Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB), Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (YPF) and Petróleos de Venezuela S.A (PDVSA), for example, play important roles in the economies of Bolivia, Argentina and Venezuela, respectively—a similar case to Petrobras in Brazil. Looking at the continent comparatively, it can be seen that South America in particular (more than other regions of the continent) is largely dependent on the extraction, production and export of fossil resources.

Meanwhile, there was no consolidation of an energy transition paradigm in Latin America and the Caribbean. Throughout the progressive cycle, the predominant perspective of energy policy in the region has been the search for energy security and sovereignty<sup>21</sup>—at national and regional level—based on joint infrastructure and energy cooperation projects. For this reason, some regional trends related to energy are a cause for concern from a sustainability point of view, such as the tendency towards maintaining the use of fossil fuels, including by continued financing and the oil boom in some countries, and the inclusion of polluting energy sources, such as natural gas, in the list of consumed and produced fossil fuels.

There is therefore a mismatch in the region between energy targets—especially in the sense of energy expansion in many countries—and greenhouse gas (GHG) emission mitigation targets<sup>22</sup>. Countries

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20 United Nations. *Panorama de los Recursos Naturales en América Latina y el Caribe*. Santiago: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2023. Accessed September 12, 2023. <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c76a7a2f-5dc9-4eb6-b7e8-1cf98ab85e4d/content>.

21 It is worth noting, however, that in several countries the concept of sovereignty has been combined with dimensions of deepening energy democracy, with increased access to energy and participation in policymaking.

22 Almeida, Patricio Calles, et al. "Transición Energética en Latinoamérica: ¿Hacia Dónde Vamos? SEI Brief" *Stockholm Environment Institute*, January 2023. <https://www.sei.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/transicion-energetica-sei2023.002.pdf>.

like Ecuador and Mexico, for example, have increased their fossil fuel production targets in order to improve their economic performance, while countries like Venezuela and Bolivia continue to attach the implementation of public and social policies to oil and gas revenues. As a result, investments in fossil fuels, in the infrastructure needed for their production and distribution, and in subsidy policies for these energy sources remain stable.<sup>23</sup>

This means that fossil fuels continue to be widely financed on the continent, either directly or through subsidies—and the need to maintain their production is even mentioned as an essential source of funds for expanding investments in renewable energies. In other words, in a contradictory way, fossil fuels have been part of the discourse of political leaders as a necessary instrument for energy transition policies in Latin America.<sup>24</sup>

Contrary to global trends, some countries, such as Guyana and, to a lesser extent, Argentina, are experiencing an oil boom:<sup>25</sup> in Guyana, recent discoveries of oil reserves have attracted the presence of transnational companies, most notably ExxonMobil, generating criticism from the scientific community and environmentalists.<sup>26</sup> In Argentina, the Vaca Muerta field, where 85% of energy is fossil fuel, continues to be one of the national priorities; and the launch of a new thermoelectric plant in the Rio Turbio region is also a cause for concern. In addition, the expansion

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23 Curzio, Carlos Tornel, Rafael Enrique Fonseca Chávez, Ana Sofía Signoret, and Dulce María López. "Transición Energética en América Latina y Caribe: Tendencias Regionales y Orientaciones de Política Pública para una Transformación Eco-Social." *Friedrich Ebert Foundation*, May 2022. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mexiko/19568.pdf>.

24 An example of this is the different positions on the role of fossil fuels in the Amazon rainforest during the Amazon Summit in August 2023. More information at: Maes, Jéssica. "Com política contra petróleo na Amazônia, Petro se opõe a extrativismo e busca nova esquerda." *Folha de S. Paulo*, August 11, 2023. [https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ambiente/2023/08/com-politica-contra-petroleo-na-amazonia-petro-se-opoe-a-extrativismo-e-busca-nova-esquerda.shtml?utm\\_source=whatsapp&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=compwa](https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ambiente/2023/08/com-politica-contra-petroleo-na-amazonia-petro-se-opoe-a-extrativismo-e-busca-nova-esquerda.shtml?utm_source=whatsapp&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=compwa).

25 "Qué Países Son los Nuevos Protagonistas del Boom Petrolero que Vive América Latina." *El Comercio*, July 31, 2023. <https://elcomercio.pe/mundo/latinoamerica/petroleo-que-paises-son-los-nuevos-protagonistas-del-boom-petrolero-que-vive-america-latina-guyana-argentina-brasil-venezuela-mexico-colombia-noticia/?ref=ecr>.

26 Winter, Kethlyn. "A Guiana e o Petróleo: as perspectivas de desenvolvimento do país e os desafios desse recurso estratégico." *Boletim OPSA*, no. 1 (January-March 2023). Accessed September 15, 2023. [http://opsa.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Boletim\\_OPSA\\_2023\\_n1.pdf](http://opsa.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Boletim_OPSA_2023_n1.pdf).

of the use of fracking—an unconventional exploration technique that has been banned in several countries around the world<sup>27</sup> due to its serious environmental impacts and risks to human health—is a cause for concern in countries such as Argentina and Mexico.<sup>28</sup>

Another alarming trend is the inclusion of gas as a transition fuel in Argentina and Mexico<sup>29</sup>—or even in Brazil, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this book. Also of concern is the maintenance of coal as a widely used source in countries such as Mexico, Colombia and Chile—even though the latter is establishing programmes to reduce its use.<sup>30</sup> In this context, there are also attempts to catalyze the use of coal to produce blue hydrogen.<sup>31</sup> These are dynamics that, in practice, maintain the same pattern of extractivism and the use of highly polluting and environmentally damaging energies. It is therefore possible to perceive a limited vision of energy decarbonization on the continent, as well as the lack of a coherent plan with clear and specific goals and objectives to promote a just transition.

This shows that, apart from the commitments in the sector established in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), there is no greater regional coordination towards an energy transition at the multilateral level. Although there are important exceptions, such as the Chilean and Colombian cases, at regional level the transition from fossil fuels and higher emission levels towards renewable energies has not been at the center of the discussion. Thus, more broadly, it can be seen that many Latin American and Caribbean countries, as they continue

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27 “Brasil pode financiar duto que trará gás produzido com fracking na Argentina.” *ClimaInfo*, June 23, 2023. <https://clima.info.br/2023/06/22/brasil-pode-financiar-duto-que-trara-gas-produzido-com-fracking-na-argentina/>.

28 Curzio, Carlos Tornel, Rafael Enrique Fonseca Chávez, Ana Sofía Signoret, and Dulce María López. “Transición Energética en América Latina y Caribe: Tendencias Regionales y Orientaciones de Política Pública para una Transformación Eco-Social.” *Friedrich Ebert Foundation*, 2022. Accessed September 13, 2023. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mexiko/19568.pdf>.

29 Almeida, Patricio Calles, et al. “Transición Energética en Latinoamérica: ¿Hacia Dónde Vamos? SEI Brief.” *Stockholm Environment Institute*, January 2023. <https://www.sei.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/transicion-energetica-sei2023.002.pdf>.

30 Curzio, Carlos Tornel, Rafael Enrique Fonseca Chávez, Ana Sofía Signoret, and Dulce María López. “Transición Energética en América Latina y Caribe: Tendencias Regionales y Orientaciones de Política Pública para una Transformación Eco-Social.” *Friedrich Ebert Foundation*, 2022. Accessed September 13, 2023. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/mexiko/19568.pdf>.

31 Blue hydrogen, unlike green hydrogen, is obtained by burning fossil fuels (mainly natural gas and coal).

to be dependent on hydrocarbons both in energy and economic terms, face material and political difficulties in raising the priority given to the transition agenda.

### **Latin American challenges for a sustainable mining agenda**

In addition to the energy agenda, another relevant issue that involves considerable challenges concerns mining. There are two reasons for this: historically, mining in Latin America has had a highly damaging socio-environmental pattern. Since the process of colonization, the region was consolidated as an exporter of metals, and this was maintained with the establishment of the republics and deepened in the 1990s, when foreign investment increased and made the sector more dynamic. Mega-mining, led by large regional and international corporations, had a boom from then on, with financial concentration in certain sectors and economic actors, especially those linked to the extraction of gold, silver, iron ore, copper and zinc. It can therefore be said that between the 1990s and the 2010s, “traditional” extractivism was predatory, concentrated, maintained North-South relations and patterns of dependency and accentuated socio-environmental conflicts.

However, new elements have emerged in recent years to complicate the scenario. The energy transition model promoted by European countries, the United States and China, for example, is largely dependent on a series of minerals. The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that there are at least 17 minerals that are critical to the energy transition, especially lithium, nickel, cobalt, copper, graphite and rare earths.<sup>32</sup> For this reason, the IEA estimates that around 3 billion tons of these resources will need to be extracted in order to implement plans to expand the use of wind, solar and geothermal energy—as well as their storage—with a

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32 These metals are needed for electric batteries and the storage of different types of energy, as well as for industrial activity and a more electrified economy. Mining projects to extract these metals could take more than a decade to become operational, so there will be more shortages in the next decade. As a result, the total production value of these metals could increase more than fourfold between 2021 and 2040. For source and more information, see the report: International Energy Agency. “The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions. World Energy Outlook Special Report.” IEA, May 2021. <https://www.iea.org/reports/the-role-of-critical-minerals-in-clean-energy-transitions>.



500% increase in their demand.<sup>33</sup> There is therefore a geopolitical race for the metals that will play a key role in the economy of the future. This is especially important for Latin America and the Caribbean: a large part of the reserves of these resources are on Latin American soil. Countries like Peru, Mexico and Chile, for example, have large reserves of tin, zinc and cobalt. According to data released by ECLAC in 2023, the region holds around 25% of what are known as strategic minerals.<sup>34</sup>

The main example is the lithium chain, as about 60% of its global reserves are in Latin America. Although countries like Brazil and Mexico have significant lithium reserves, the continent's (and the world's) largest reserves are concentrated in the so-called "lithium triangle," made up of Bolivia, Argentina and Chile, the countries with the three largest global reserves. As a result, in recent years there has been a huge increase in projects related to lithium extraction in Latin America; the number of projects underway, for example, doubled between 2021 and 2022.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, the IEA estimates that, in order to meet energy-related emissions mitigation projections, the demand for lithium will increase 42 times by 2040<sup>36</sup>—in other words, the trend is for this growth to continue.

The current lithium extraction process is dominated by large extra-regional transnational companies, especially Chinese corporations. This happens both at the beginning of the production chain, with these corporations already operating in lithium extraction, and at the end, with the automobile giants using the material in batteries to produce electric cars, for example. The Chinese companies Gangfeng, CBC and Tianqi already operate in lithium extraction in Mexico, Bolivia and Chile,

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33 International Energy Agency. "The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions. World Energy Outlook Special Report." IEA, May 2021. <https://www.iea.org/reports/the-role-of-critical-minerals-in-clean-energy-transitions>.

34 United Nations. *Panorama de los Recursos Naturales en América Latina y el Caribe*. Santiago: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2023. Accessed September 12, 2023. <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c76a7a2f-5dc9-4eb6-b7e8-1cf98ab85e4d/content>.

35 Fornillo, Bruno. "Las fronteras latinoamericanas del litio: espejismos, guerras y desfosilización." *Nueva Sociedad* (July-August 2023). Accessed September 12, 2023. <https://nuso.org/articulo/306-fronteras-latinoamericanas-del-litio/>.

36 International Energy Agency. "The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions. World Energy Outlook Special Report." IEA, May 2021. <https://www.iea.org/reports/the-role-of-critical-minerals-in-clean-energy-transitions>.

respectively; in Argentina, over 20% of the projects involve Chinese capital.<sup>37</sup> Companies from other countries, such as Canada, the United States, Germany and Australia, are also already operating in Latin American territories and, in addition, Canadian, American, German and Australian companies already dominate the other end of the chain, in the production of electric cars.

This scenario poses a series of challenges for countries with lithium reserves. Firstly, large-scale lithium extraction has major socio-environmental impacts. After all, it requires the use of large quantities of water, contaminates underground reserves and extensively degrades the soil in the extraction territories. Furthermore, in the case of the three countries in the lithium triangle, a large part of the reserves that are easy to access and exploit are located in areas that are currently occupied by indigenous populations, mainly Aymara and Atacameño peoples. In practice, this has meant the forced displacement of these populations and, consequently, the loss of their livelihoods.<sup>38</sup>

However, the region does not have a solid legal and political framework to guarantee that the resource is extracted in the most socio-environmentally responsible way, nor to ensure that it is accompanied by technological and scientific development. In practice, the populations that occupy the affected territories end up being held hostage by the predatory practices of foreign companies, which have failed to comply with basic socio-environmental and human rights protocols. Today, one example of a socio-environmental violation, among many others, is in Salinas Grandes de Jujuy, Argentina, where for more than two decades 33 indigenous communities have been protesting against the advance of predatory extractivism and demanding the implementation of more

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37 Dietz, Kristina. "¿Transición Energética en Europa, Extractivismo Verde en América Latina?" *Nueva Sociedad* (July-August 2023). Accessed September 12, 2023. <https://nuso.org/articulo/306-transicion-energetica-europa-extractivismo-verde-america-latina/>.

38 Reventós, Berta. "O lítio nos pertence': os indígenas que lutam contra exploração do 'ouro branco.'" *BBC*, August 30, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/articles/cpv2ky6glylo>. Trotte, Alyssa, Deborah Lopes, and Marília Closs. "Território, autonomia, soberania e extrativismo: panorama de conflitos socioambientais na Bolívia durante a pandemia a partir dos casos do TIPNIS, Chepete-El Bala e da extração de lítio." *Revista NORUS* 11, no. 19 (2023): 64-94. Accessed January 5, 2023. <https://periodicos.ufpel.edu.br/index.php/NORUS/article/view/25130>.

robust protocols that guarantee respect for the well-being of the local population.<sup>39</sup>

In this scenario, there are attempts to strengthen regional coordination to ensure that lithium extraction brings positive returns for Latin American societies. Bolivia, Chile and Mexico, for example, already have public companies to coordinate part of the lithium extraction and industrialization chain. Initiatives such as the proposal for a “Lithium OPEC”, whose name refers to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and which seeks to ensure dialogue between the countries with the largest reserves, already discuss the importance of regional coordination on the issue. However, it is still an incipient effort: not only has the regional coalition made little progress in the debates, but it is difficult to stand up to political (and technological) giants such as China or European countries.

### **An agenda to combat deforestation in Latin America**

Another fundamental issue linked to the climate and environment agenda in the region, in addition to energy and critical minerals, is deforestation, one of the most serious phenomena facing the continent. The growth in recent years of deforestation in the Amazon, a forest shared by eight South American countries, is widely known and is further discussed in Chapter 7 of this book. However, it should be noted that the increase in deforestation is a reality not only in the Amazon biome, but in several others. In the Argentinian, Paraguayan and Bolivian Chaco, deforestation has increased mainly due to the predatory and sometimes criminal expansion of soy and cattle production.<sup>40</sup> Bolivia, incidentally, has had some of the world’s highest rates of increase in deforestation in recent years.<sup>41</sup> In Brazil, the Cerrado, Pantanal and Atlantic Forest have

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39 Roth, Sabrina. “Comunidades indígenas recusam extração de lítio na Argentina.” *Diálogo Chino*, March 12, 2019. <https://dialogochino.net/pt-br/industrias-extrativistas-pt-br/24733-comunidades-indigenas-recusam-extracao-de-litio-na-argentina/>.

40 Aizen, Marina. “Desmatamento no Chaco: uma bomba de carbono ignorada.” *Diálogo Chino*, July 15, 2021. <https://dialogochino.net/pt-br/mudanca-climatica-e-energia-pt-br/44454-desmatamento-no-chaco-uma-bomba-de-carbono-ignorada/>.

41 “Forest Pulse: The Latest on the World’s Forests.” *World Resources Institute*, 2023. Accessed September 17, 2023. [https://research.wri.org/gfr/latest-analysis-deforestation-trends?utm\\_campaign=treecoverloss2022&utm\\_medium=bitly&utm\\_source=PressKit](https://research.wri.org/gfr/latest-analysis-deforestation-trends?utm_campaign=treecoverloss2022&utm_medium=bitly&utm_source=PressKit).

seen a similar situation over the last four years—except that the latter has been close to its point of no return for years.<sup>42</sup> A similar scenario occurs in the Central American rainforests.<sup>43</sup> The Pampas biome, which stretches across Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, is following a similar path and was, in proportion to its size, the most heavily deforested in Brazil in 2021.<sup>44</sup>

Deforestation in Latin America and the Caribbean is deeply linked to the primary-export economic model discussed earlier in this chapter. After all, a large part of illegal deforestation is closely linked to the expansion of commodity production and agricultural frontiers in the different countries. For the most part, this is due to the expansion of cattle, soybean, corn and rice production. In practice, therefore, deforestation in various biomes is also linked to the maintenance of land structures that perpetuate a historical pattern of land concentration across the continent.

In addition, this phenomenon is connected to the expansion of transnational crime networks, which in turn is closely linked to the climate agenda. After all, many environmental crimes, such as land invasions and grabbing, illegal mining, logging and wildlife trafficking, are already part of transnational criminal flows and chains. Furthermore, these same networks are increasingly connected to international drug trafficking, the results of which are the reproduction of cycles of violence in urban spaces as well. These are networks that also perpetuate challenges linked to financial crimes, such as corruption, money laundering and tax evasion, which end up reducing the capacity of the region's states to provide basic services such as education, health and public safety.<sup>45</sup>

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42 "A Mata Atlântica é a floresta mais devastada do Brasil." *SOS Mata Atlântica*, 2023. Accessed September 17, 2023. <https://www.sosma.org.br/causas/mata-atlantica/>.

43 More information at: "Los Bosques que Perdimos: Así es la Deforestación en Centroamérica." *Expansión*, June 22, 2023. <https://expansion.mx/mundo/2023/06/22/los-bosques-que-perdimos-asi-es-la-deforestacion-en-centroamerica>.

44 More information at: Velleda, Luciano. "Desmatamento florestal do Pampa cresceu 92,1% em 2021, aponta relatório do MapBiomas." *Sul 21*, July 18, 2022. <https://sul21.com.br/noticias/meio-ambiente/2022/07/desmatamento-do-pampa-cresce-921-em-2021-aponta-relatorio-do-mapbiomas>. In addition, see: Prizibiszki, Cristiane. "Pampa perdeu 3,4 milhões de hectares de vegetação nativa em 35 anos." *O Eco*, October 14, 2022. <https://oeco.org.br/noticias/pampa-perdeu-34-milhoes-de-hectares-de-vegetacao-nativa-em-35-anos/>.

45 Neves, Felipe Schaeffer, and Maiara Folly. "Crimes ambientais como crime organizado: a extração ilegal do ouro na Amazônia. Strategic report 04." *Plataforma CIPÓ*, December 2021. [https://plataformacipo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Relato%CC%81rio-Estrate%CC%81gico-4\\_v2.pdf](https://plataformacipo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Relato%CC%81rio-Estrate%CC%81gico-4_v2.pdf).

## **From national to regional: the multilateral climate and environment agenda in Latin America**

Given this whole scenario, it can be seen that Latin America is crossed by socio-environmental, climatic and ecological conflicts. At the national level, several Latin American and Caribbean countries have made important—and to some extent innovative—advances in their national laws and constitutions on the climate and environment agendas that are relevant to the three areas discussed in this chapter: energy, mining and deforestation. Bolivia and Ecuador, for example, have included the rights of nature in their constitutions and enshrined plurinationality, affirming the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples—although this often does not materialize in practice. As already mentioned, Gabriel Boric's Chile is trying to move forward with its just transition, while Gustavo Petro's Colombia seeks to make progress with legislation on oil production and the decarbonization of the country's economy. Even with some important precedents, domestic policies alone are not enough to deal with cross-border challenges.

However, despite the fact that elements linked to natural resources and nature have historically been present in international relations in Latin America—often even structuring them—there is still no strong, up-to-date paradigm to meet the current challenges. On the multilateral agenda, from the point of view of regulatory frameworks, since the 1990s there have been regional agreements that seek to promote sustainable development. One that stands out is MERCOSUR, which introduced a Framework Agreement on the Environment in 2001. As well as incorporating the concept of sustainable development, the agreement contains guarantees for environmental protection and the establishment of regional environmental law, with the aim of broadening the cooperation process. The bloc also made progress in the 2000s in consolidating actions for the Guaraní Aquifer (which, in a global context of increasing water scarcity, has become even more strategic for the region) and for the protection of biodiversity, including the environmental agenda in the 2011 Strategic Social Action Plan. However, given the magnitude of the challenges addressed earlier in the chapter in the areas of energy, mining and deforestation, it can be said that the institutional instruments of

MERCOSUR for climate and the environment are not only insufficient, but also outdated.

Something similar can be observed within UNASUR. The consolidation of the organization came after successive presidential summits with the aim of building joint conceptions of development in various areas—and since the first Summit of South American Presidents in 2000 in Brasília, nature has been considered a central element for South American integration. Natural resources were also the subject of subsequent meetings in Brasília, Cusco and Cochabamba in 2000, 2004 and 2006 respectively. When the institution began its activities, it became clear that, in addition to expanding dialogue and political consultation between South American countries, UNASUR would have a number of key agendas for advancing regional integration: health and infrastructural integration, especially the expansion of energy infrastructure. Given the nature of the Latin American socio-environmental scenario described in this section, this last element—energy infrastructure—is central to the region's climate agenda. It therefore deserves special attention.

The projects linked to the expansion of regional infrastructure within UNASUR came mainly from the organization's takeover of the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA). Formally launched in 2000 in the Brasília Declaration, IIRSA was initially conceived as an institutional mechanism for coordinating actions between South American countries to leverage integration projects in transport, energy and communications infrastructure, which in practice aimed to increase productivity and boost regional trade. In the same year, its ten Integration and Development Axes (EIDs) were defined and, from then on, its portfolio was developed, based on the diagnosis that intra-regional infrastructure was a bottleneck for joint development.

However, IIRSA was a mechanism that was created from the perspective of open regionalism. Initially, the initiative was designed to attract foreign investment—its Technical Coordination Committee was even led by the Financial Fund for the Development of the River Plate Basin (FONPLATA), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF), which

provided technical support and funding, but in practice had a great deal of influence over project approval. As a result, contemporary analyses of the work of IIRSA during this period show that there was excessive emphasis on the quest to build trade corridors and, in this first phase, this took precedence over the perspective of integrated and sustainable regional development.<sup>46</sup>

In light of this—and with the aim of giving greater political support and a more strategic vision to infrastructure integration—in 2009, at the Third Ordinary Meeting of the Council of UNASUR Heads of State and Government, the South American Council of Infrastructure and Planning (Cosiplan) was founded. It absorbed IIRSA, which in turn became a technical body of Cosiplan, along with its portfolio and its EIDs. This reduced the role of the international banks, while at the same time trying to give the portfolio of works a greater perspective of joint development. Thus, the consolidation of regional infrastructure became one of the central elements of Brazilian leadership in South America, and the BNDES began to play an even more important role in financing works in the region.<sup>47</sup> With the expansion of regional infrastructure works, Brazil consolidated itself not only as the main leader of the integration process, but also as its main payer.

However, a post-process assessment shows that the portfolio of works carried out by the BNDES, despite having made significant disbursements for the region's infrastructure, ended up financing mostly national works—and not those with a regional dimension or connection. In other words, the majority of the implemented works were not for physical or digital international connections that would guarantee physical continental integration. By 2016, for example, 483 of the 581 projects carried out under the Cosiplan portfolio were characterized as national,

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46 Jaeger, Bruna. "Infraestrutura enquanto recurso de poder na Economia Política Internacional: um estudo sobre a atuação regional do Brasil (2000-2016)." PhD diss., Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (PEPI/IE/UFRJ), 2021.

47 Couto, Leandro Freitas. *Desenvolvimento, integração e assimetrias: caminhos e descaminhos da aproximação regional na América do Sul*. Brasília: Fundação João Mangabeira, 2013.

while 98 of them were transnational—even though a significant part of them had not been completed.<sup>48</sup>

Still within the framework of UNASUR, the First South American Energy Summit was held in 2007 to discuss the need to think about the sustainable use of energy and South America's energy potential. This process gave rise to the South American Energy Council (CES), whose main objective over the years has been to guarantee energy security and build a common energy policy. For Brazilian foreign policy, these elements are especially important, since Brazil's own energy security depends on its relationship with neighboring countries—especially Paraguay and Bolivia, due to the Itaipu hydroelectric dam and the Brazil-Bolivia gas pipeline (GasBol), respectively.

However, it is worth noting that, despite the work of the CES, there were different political projects regarding energy for the region. The Venezuela of Hugo Chávez (president of the country between 1999 and 2013), for example, on several occasions made it clear that its project for regional integration was based on the work of the large state-owned oil companies, which played an important role in the economic policy of several countries.<sup>49</sup> The Bolivarian project for regional energy integration would take the form of national energy companies and the creation of binational companies. However, this was not a consensus. After all, other countries believed that the process of energy integration should be based on the alignment of regulatory frameworks and the formulation of common policies, but with a lower degree of multilateral intervention, while more right-wing governments did not prioritize the work of state-owned energy companies.

In light of this, it can be seen that the region sought to build an institutional architecture, especially during the progressive cycle, between the first decade of the 21st century and 2015, on agendas that were relevant to the climate and the environment, such as energy and (energy)

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48 Jaeger, Bruna. "Infraestrutura enquanto recurso de poder na Economia Política Internacional: um estudo sobre a atuação regional do Brasil (2000-2016)." PhD diss., Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (PEPI/IE/UFRJ), 2021.

49 Couto, Leandro Freitas. *Desenvolvimento, integração e assimetrias: caminhos e descaminhos da aproximação regional na América do Sul*. Brasília: Fundação João Mangabeira, 2013.



infrastructure. Yet this was not based on principles and paradigms that take into account the urgent socio-environmental dimensions to deal with the ecological and climate crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially to face the challenges associated with the energy transition, the extraction of critical minerals and the fight against illegal deforestation. The result is not only the continuation of national and regional extractive policies that promote the continued use of fossil fuels, the use of critical minerals without robust environmental and human rights controls and the expansion of deforestation, but also the continuation of violent socio-environmental conflicts in the fields, rivers and forests.

## **Conclusion**

Latin America and the Caribbean are structurally marked by socio-environmental and climate conflicts, which are sharpened and fed back into the political and economic crises the region is facing. At the same time, we can already see the (social and economic) exhaustion of the extractive cycle or commodity consensus in the region. However, as presented in this chapter, the regional institutional architecture cannot yet cope with environmental urgencies and the climate emergency. Rather, the few initiatives that existed in the area were emptied between 2015 and 2022. After a period of disengagement over the last half-decade, with the change in the Brazilian federal government as of January 2023, a possibility has opened up for the BFP to actively resume a Latin American policy to tackle a series of challenges, especially in the areas of energy, infrastructure (mainly energy infrastructure), critical minerals and deforestation.

This re-engagement must start with a critical assessment of the elements to be improved and the programmatic updating of the political project for Latin America and the Caribbean that is being sought. In this respect, it is necessary to give greater prominence to the climate and environment agenda, which, as discussed throughout the chapter, have not been priority areas on the regional agenda. Brazilian foreign policy itself did not have a guideline for the region in terms of climate and the environment. On the contrary: the political paradigms of regional integration were based precisely on infrastructural expansion—without

greater socio-environmental responsibilities—and on the principle of energy security—mainly from oil and gas. That is why it is necessary to find a new consensus—which, this time, is not based on an extractivist logic and the commodification of nature.

In this sense, the energy transition agenda must be central to the reorientation of South and Latin American integration. A solid alternative is the construction of a *regional energy market*, i.e. the construction of regional governance through a contractual market that would stimulate systems for the sale and exchange of energy in different modes, with emphasis on the transfer of technology and the sharing of good practices to encourage renewable energies.<sup>50</sup> The construction of a regional energy market could be based on the establishment of common instruments and rules, such as an energy trading system and financing mechanisms for energy transmission connections, without, however, altering the structuring of national markets with regard to ownership and concessions, for example. With this, new investments would be possible—including from untapped complementarities in the region. This could provide a common space for formulating a regional energy policy that moves towards an energy transition based on a cohesive paradigm. Given the current political scenario, it is unlikely that Latin America will move towards a consistent transition without joint efforts, political incentives from regional leaders (such as Brazil) and solid economic instruments.

It is also important that Brazilian foreign policy aims to formulate joint strategies in the face of the expanding dispute over critical minerals. Regional bodies can be key spaces for establishing robust socio-environmental rules and standards to prevent human rights violations and an increase in deforestation and environmental crimes in production chains. Regional coordination, at the economic and political levels, can also help to ensure that the mineral sector is not dominated by companies from extra-regional countries and that paths are identified so that actors from the region are also involved not only in the extraction of resources, but above all in the production of green products with added value derived

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50 The proposal for a regional energy market has been discussed by Pedro Barros, a researcher at the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea). Pedro kindly gave an interview to Plataforma CIPÓ and discussed the proposal further.

from them, such as electric vehicles, and in the generation of science and technology around the chain.

A big part of the challenge is to ensure that the incentive for sustainability is incorporated into the work plan of regional institutions and organizations in a coordinated way, including within the framework of MERCOSUR, CELAC, ECLAC and, if it is strengthened again, UNASUR. To this end, it will be necessary to promote the revitalization of these bodies and update their programmes, thematic chambers and working groups so that climate and environmental considerations are incorporated and advanced both separately, through their own initiatives, and in a cross-cutting manner, when addressing issues such as energy, infrastructure, scientific and technological cooperation, for example. UNASUR itself, a key organization for cooperation, does not have a specific council for environmental and climate issues, which demonstrates the size of the gap in the regional institutional architecture.

Finally, an instrument that should be emphasized in Brazilian foreign policy is the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, or Escazú Agreement, which in May 2023 was forwarded to the National Congress by President Lula, but has yet to be ratified by Brazil. The agreement is simultaneously a legal agreement, a human rights treaty and a regional multilateral cooperation and dialogue mechanism<sup>51</sup> that aims to unite the environmental and human rights agendas with the aim of building a regional environmental democracy, and is politically innovative compared to other regions of the world.<sup>52</sup> Today's climate emergency makes it socially, environmentally, politically and economically unfeasible to carry on with a new cycle based exclusively on extractivism and physical, energy and infrastructural integration via high-impact projects. Therefore, South and Latin American integration,

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51 Abdenur, Adriana, Maiara Folly, and Gabrielle Alves. "Implantar Acordo de Escazú dária chance ao Brasil de tomar dianteira na questão ambiental." *Folha de S. Paulo*, April 23, 2022. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/amp/mundo/2022/04/implantar-acordo-de-escazu-daria-chance-ao-brasil-de-tomar-dianteira-na-questao-ambiental.shtml>.

52 The Escazú Agreement also includes the Regional Public Mechanism and the Conference of the Parties; while the first initiative aims to guarantee the participation of civil society in the agenda, the second seeks to update and give substance to the climate agenda and its relationship with human rights.

through already consolidated institutions as well as emerging mechanisms such as the Escazú Agreement, needs to start from new paradigms, with the climate and environmental agenda as the central axis.

Given the scenario of continued energy and economic dependence of several countries on fossil fuels, the energy transition will not happen unless there is joint coordination to establish common policies—and, above all, leadership in this process. The revitalization and expansion of integration must be organized around concepts linked to climate and the environment, without losing focus on social inclusion and reducing inequalities. This is why Brazilian foreign policy must take the lead and help steer this process towards a just socio-environmental and climate transition.



## Chapter 7

# Pan-Amazon Cooperation: The Role of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) and Brazil

Maiara Folly e Viviana Porto

Over the years, the Amazon has aroused worldwide interest due to its immense biodiversity, hydrographic network and cultural diversity. The forest plays a fundamental role in regulating the climate, being recognized as the largest continuous tropical forest on the planet, and is home to a rich diversity of species of flora and fauna, as well as other biological kingdoms that are unique to this area of the world.<sup>1</sup> The region is also a center of traditional knowledge, home to a multitude of indigenous peoples, riverside dwellers, *quilombolas* and traditional communities, play a key role in keeping the forest standing. The more than 410 indigenous groups that inhabit the region play a vital part in maintaining the ecological balance, through the application of ancestral practices of sustainable management of the land and natural resources.

More broadly, it is estimated that the Amazon region is home to a population of 33.5 million people, around 20.9 million of whom live in rural areas<sup>2</sup>. However, the Amazon faces significant challenges that threaten the preservation of these natural and cultural elements. The accelerated transformation of the landscape, driven by deforestation, the expansion of the agricultural frontier and the unrestrained exploitation of natural resources, represents a direct threat to the integrity of the forest.

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1 Rede Amazônica de Informação Socioambiental Georreferenciada (RAISG). *Amazon under Pressure*. Digital Atlas 2020. Accessed 25 April 25, 2023. <https://atlas2020.amazoniasocioambiental.org/>.

2 Sampaio, Shaula Maíra Vicente de, and Maria Lúcia Castagna Wortmann. "Guardiões de um imenso estoque de carbono—Floresta Amazônica, populações tradicionais e o dispositivo da sustentabilidade." *Ambiente & Sociedade* 17, no. 2 (2014): 71-90. Accessed April 25, 2023. <https://www.scielo.br/j/asoc/a/jdLTZBYwt8LWxG6MrppH4yt/?lang=pt#>.

In addition, climate change and pollution also put additional pressure on this ecosystem, further compromising its resilience and biodiversity. These problems require a coordinated approach to ensure the sustainability and protection of the region, as well as the well-being of local populations.

In recent years, especially during 2019-2022, Brazilian foreign policy (BFP) has been affected by domestic policies towards the Amazon<sup>3</sup> and other biomes. In 2020, Brazil saw a 9.5% increase in gross greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, while global gas emissions fell by 7%. The main reason for this rise in the country was changes in land use, especially deforestation in biomes such as the Amazon and the Cerrado.<sup>4</sup>

In the month of December 2022 alone, the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) registered a loss of vegetation of approximately 218.41 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>5</sup> Recovering these deforested areas will be a slow and complex process that will require ongoing restoration and protection efforts. In this sense, as will be discussed below, the conjuncture inaugurated by the new government of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has the challenge and the duty to take decisive and priority action in the Amazon region.

It is worth remembering that the Amazon region extends beyond national borders and is shared by Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, French Guiana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. This creates challenges for coordinating efforts to implement public policies that cover the entire basin. Even in the absence of a solid governance framework for transboundary forest areas, international cooperation for the Amazon

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3 The Legal Amazon comprises an extensive area corresponding to approximately 59% of Brazil's territory. It encompasses the entirety of eight states: Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Mato Grosso, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima and Tocantins. It also covers part of the state of Maranhão. For more information, see: "O que é? Amazônia legal." *Ipea desafios do desenvolvimento*, no. 5, ed. 44, June, 8 2008. [https://www.ipea.gov.br/desafios/index.php?option=com\\_content&id=2154:catid=28](https://www.ipea.gov.br/desafios/index.php?option=com_content&id=2154:catid=28).

4 Data from the System for Estimating Greenhouse Gas Emissions (SEEG), an initiative of the Climate Observatory, in 2021. Sistema de Estimativa de Emissões e Remoções de Gases de Efeito Estufa (SEEG). "Análise das emissões brasileiras de gases de efeito estufa e suas implicações para as metas climáticas do Brasil 1970-2020." *Observatório do Clima*, 2021. Accessed May 1, 2023. [https://seeg-br.s3.amazonaws.com/Documentos%20Analiticos/SEEG\\_9/OC\\_03\\_relatorio\\_2021\\_FINAL.pdf](https://seeg-br.s3.amazonaws.com/Documentos%20Analiticos/SEEG_9/OC_03_relatorio_2021_FINAL.pdf).

5 Gross emissions from land use change showed a worrying increase of 23.7% between 2019 and 2020. This alarming rate also marked the highest amount of emissions recorded since 2009. These figures reveal a worrying trend of increasing deforestation in both the Amazon region and the Cerrado in recent years. More information on the website *TerraBrasilis*, by INPE. Accessed May 2, 2023. [http://terrabrasilis.dpi.inpe.br/app/dashboard/deforestation/biomes/legal\\_amazon/increments](http://terrabrasilis.dpi.inpe.br/app/dashboard/deforestation/biomes/legal_amazon/increments).

involves a range of actors, such as governments, multilateral organizations, local communities, indigenous peoples, social movements, environmental organizations and the private sector, including agricultural companies.

This diversity of perspectives and interests, which are often antagonistic, makes it challenging to build consensus on establishing sustainable practices in relation to forests. In addition, many international cooperation initiatives to promote sustainable development lack the financial resources to be implemented on the necessary scale. As a result, illicit practices such as illegal deforestation, illegal logging and illegal wildlife hunting tend to prevail over sustainable resource management techniques. Ultimately, weaknesses in the coordination of cross-border efforts to prevent forest loss cause profound environmental and social damage, not to mention exacerbating climate change.

Pan-Amazonian cooperation is therefore essential to tackle the complex challenges posed within the region. It can take different forms, such as sharing data and police intelligence to curb, investigate and punish cross-border crimes. Coordination between neighbors is also important for promoting a positive agenda that encourages the sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources (human and financial) to develop economic alternatives that reconcile environmental preservation with social inclusion. In this context, the role of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) becomes central. ACTO is an intergovernmental organization made up of eight Amazonian countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela.<sup>6</sup> It aims to promote cooperation, the sustainable development of the Amazon region and the well-being of its inhabitants, while reducing asymmetries between member countries.

This chapter discusses cooperative arrangements between the countries of the Amazon—particularly within the framework of ACTO.

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6 The overseas departments of France, French Guiana, is not a member of ACTO, although in August 2023, during an annual speech to French ambassadors, French President Emmanuel Macron announced that —because of French Guiana—his country is a candidate for membership of ACTO and that he “hopes that Brazil and all the other powers in the region will accept our candidacy and allow us to participate in this format.” Read more at: Moreira, Assis. “Macron acha que França faz parte da Amazônia e pede adesão à OTCA.” *Valor Econômica*, August 29, 2023. <https://valor.globo.com/opiniao/assis-moreira/coluna/macron-acha-que-franca-faz-parte-da-amazonia-e-pede-adesao-a-octa.ghtml>.



Throughout the text, the importance of regional cooperation in the preservation and sustainable development of the Amazon is discussed; the history, initiatives and programmes implemented by ACTO to address the environmental and social challenges in the region are presented, as well as the challenges and bottlenecks faced by the organization itself; and the importance of Brazil in this scenario is highlighted, especially since the change in conjuncture with the electoral defeat of former president Jair Bolsonaro. The text is divided into three sections, in addition to this introduction and the final comments. The sections deal respectively with the background to ACTO, its creation and evolution, and the prospects for strengthening the organization after the Amazon Summit.

### **Background: from the Amazon Cooperation Treaty to ACTO**

The environmental issue has gained greater importance in international relations since the 1970s. In a globalized scenario and growing awareness of the importance of environmental preservation, combined with the Stockholm Declaration of 1972<sup>7</sup> and the United Nations Water Conference in Mar del Plata in 1977,<sup>8</sup> international attention was also drawn to the Amazon ecosystems. As a result, the countries of the Amazon came together with the aim of strengthening regional cooperation. This mutual commitment was formalized in 1978 through the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT), in which a series of cooperative principles were established as the basis for joint action by the Amazon countries.<sup>9</sup>

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7 As discussed in chapters 4 and 7 of this book, the Stockholm Conference, which led to the Stockholm Declaration, was the first world conference on the environment and played an important role in raising environmental issues to the forefront of international concerns. Original document available at: <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/29567/ELGP1StockD.pdf>. Accessed May 8, 2023.

8 To see the report of the Conference on the implementation of the Mar del Plata Action Plan in 1978: Organización Mundial De La Salud. *31ª Asamblea Mundial de la Salud, Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Agua: Aplicación del Plan de Acción de Mar del Plata: Informe del Director General*. April 12, 1978. Accessed June 12, 2023. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/194656>. To see more about the recent Water Conference in New York in 2023: Pateiro, Laura. "Las Claves de la Conferencia del Agua de la ONU" *The Conversation*, March 19, 2023. <https://theconversation.com/las-claves-de-la-conferencia-del-agua-de-la-onu-201987>.

9 The Amazon Cooperation Treaty of 1978 is available at: <https://www.oas.org/dsd/publications/unit/oea08b/ch04.htm>. Accessed May 12, 2023.

Much of this effort to strengthen cooperative ties with the Amazon's neighboring countries came from Brazil, not least because of the tensions the country was experiencing in its relations with Argentina over disagreements over the use of water resources in the River Plate Basin during the negotiations for the construction of the Itaipu dam on the border with Paraguay,<sup>10</sup> which lasted until the end of the 1970s. Thus, faced with the possibility of disputes in relations with the Southern Cone countries, the BFP turned its attention to the Amazon region, seeking to avoid possible regional isolation.

Brazil and Peru began the first talks on a cooperation project in the Amazon and, in 1975, signed bilateral agreements covering border areas, technical-scientific cooperation and an Agreement for the Conservation of Flora and Fauna in the Amazon Territories. The following year, Presidents Ernesto Geisel (Brazil) and Morales Bermúdez (Peru) signed new treaties, including the Agreement for the Constitution of a Brazilian-Peruvian Joint Sub-Commission for the Amazon. As of 1975, the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Management of Amazonian Flora and Fauna, made up of Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, paved the way for the discussion of issues related to the pan-Amazon. Shortly afterwards, in March 1977, the Brazilian government consulted the other Amazonian countries on the possibility of establishing a regional treaty.<sup>11</sup>

Faced with the dictatorial governments in power at the time, Brazil's proposal to establish a regional agreement was not considered a plausible option by Venezuela, given that it was the South American country with the oldest democratic tradition in the region. In this sense, there was a certain distrust of the political interests of the Brazilian Foreign Affairs Ministry, Itamaraty. However, thanks to the positive reception of the other Amazonian countries to the proposal, Venezuela opted not to be left

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10 Caubet, Christian G. *As grandes manobras de Itaipu: energia, diplomacia e direito na Bacia do Prata*. São Paulo: Acadêmica, 1991; Pereira, Osny Duarte. *Itaipu: prós e contras. Ensaio sobre a localização, no Brasil, da maior barragem do mundo e suas implicações em nossa política continental*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1974.

11 Nunes, Paulo Henrique Faria. "A organização do tratado de cooperação amazônica: uma análise crítica das razões por trás da sua criação e evolução." *Revista de Direito Internacional* 13, no. 2 (2016): 221-245. Accessed May 15, 2023. <https://www.publicacoesacademicas.uniceub.br/rdi/article/view/4037/pdf>.

out of the agreement, especially due to its border disputes with Colombia and Guyana.

Once all the countries involved had given positive signals, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty was finally signed in July 1978 in Brasilia and ratified by the eight countries that share the Amazon (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela). The ACT is a legal instrument that recognizes the transboundary nature of the Amazon and lays the foundations for regional cooperation. The treaty's main objective was to promote cooperation between the signatory countries for the protection, conservation and sustainable development of the Amazon, taking into account its environmental, social and economic importance. In this sense, it sought to establish a permanent mechanism to intensify contacts between the countries in order to overcome "the episodic and discontinuous character" of these relations.<sup>12</sup>

Through the ACT, the member countries have committed to establishing mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation, sharing information and scientific knowledge, promoting technical exchange and seeking to harmonize policies and actions related to the protection of the Amazon. The treaty also encourages the active participation of indigenous populations and local communities in the decision-making process, recognizing their traditional knowledge and their importance for the conservation of the region.<sup>13</sup> The guiding principles established in the treaty are: 1) the exclusive competence of the countries of the region in the development and protection of the Amazon; 2) national sovereignty in the use and preservation of natural resources and therefore the absolute priority of internal efforts in the development policy of the Amazonian areas of each state; 3) regional cooperation as a way of facilitating the achievement of these two objectives; 4) balance and harmony between

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12 Ricupero, Rubens. "O Tratado de Cooperação Amazônica." *Revista de Informação Legislativa* 21, no. 81 (January-March 1984): 177-196. Accessed May 22, 2023. <https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/186318/000406292.pdf?sequence=1>.

13 Brazil. Decree n. 85.050, of August 18, 1980. *Presidency of the Republic, Civil House*. [https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/atos/decretos/1980/d85050.html](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/atos/decretos/1980/d85050.html).

development and ecological protection; and 5) absolute equality between all partners.<sup>14</sup>

According to Ambassador Rubens Ricupero, during the ACT negotiation process, “for the first time, Brazil had a defined policy for the Amazon.”<sup>15</sup> However, as already mentioned, the advance of Amazonian diplomacy was also driven by a series of external factors, which raised the status of the Amazon as an issue of global interest and, as a consequence, encouraged dialogue between the countries of the region. This was due to the increased interest of the international community in issues related to climate change, biodiversity, the preservation of natural resources and the rights of indigenous peoples, which led to debates about the recognition of the Amazon as a world heritage site and the need for its “internationalization.”<sup>16</sup> These debates have aroused strong concerns about the loss of sovereignty on the part of the countries that make up the region, giving impetus to measures that seek to emphasize the role of Amazonian governments and societies in building solutions to the problems faced by the region.

Although the negotiation of the ACT, which is binding, was initially considered a success, the enthusiasm of the member countries for the treaty waned after it had been signed. This is partly due to the fact that the Andean Pact, between Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, Colombia and Peru, was given a higher priority on the foreign policy agenda of the countries involved.<sup>17</sup> This is not to say that the ACT was completely abandoned, but

14 More information at: Brazil. Organización del Tratado de Cooperación Amazónica (OTCA). *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, January 1, 2015. <https://www.gov.br/mre/es/temas/mecanismos-internacionais/mecanismos-de-integracion-regional/organizacions-del-tratado-de-cooperacion-amazonica-otca>.

15 Ricupero, Rubens. “O Tratado de Cooperação Amazônica.” *Revista de Informação Legislativa* 21, no. 81 (January-March 1984): 177-196. Accessed May 22, 2023. <https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/186318/000406292.pdf?sequence=1>.

16 The proposal to grant “international” status to the Amazon is highly controversial because of its implications in terms of the loss of sovereignty of Amazonian countries and potential foreign interference in the region. On the subject, see Cristovam Buarque’s (former Brazilian Minister of Education during the first Lula government) statement on defending the sovereignty of the Amazon, available at: <https://www25.senado.leg.br/web/atividade/pronunciamentos/-/p/pronunciamento/373962>.

17 The Andean Pact (now the Andean Community) was established in 1969 by Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, Colombia and Peru. Its aim was to achieve integral and autonomous development through Andean and South American integration. However, concerns arose about possible competition between the Andean Pact and the ACT, since the Andean Pact was the main regional project for most of the member countries of the ACT. See: Nunes, Paulo Henrique Faria. “A organização do tratado de cooperação amazônica: uma

its implementation and the institutionalization of its provisions have progressed gradually over time.

## Creation and evolution of ACTO

In 1995, the ACT signatory countries reached an agreement on the creation of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), but its Permanent Secretariat, with legal personality, was only created in Brasilia in December 2002, with its permanent installation in the Brazilian capital in March 2003. The negotiations for the creation of the ACTO took longer than the creation of the ACT itself. This is because the establishment of an organization with legal personality under international law involves a series of political, bureaucratic and legal concerns and requirements.

One of the main challenges was to guarantee the autonomy of the organization. It was deemed important for ACTO to have its own structure and decision-making capacity that would allow it to carry out its activities without external interference that could compromise its objectives and fundamental principles. To this end, the organization's duties and competencies were defined, as well as governance mechanisms to ensure its independence.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the issue of maintaining the financial structure of ACTO has been—and continues to be—a significant challenge for its efficient operation and for the implementation of programmes and projects covering the entire Amazon basin.

The ACTO Permanent Secretariat is responsible for applying the ACT, in accordance with the resolutions adopted at the Meetings of Foreign Ministers and at the Amazon Cooperation Council, as well as promoting efforts to implement and coordinate the activities provided for in the treaty.<sup>19</sup> Its executive powers cover the execution of cooperation projects, programmes and initiatives established by the member countries.

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análise crítica das razões por trás da sua criação e evolução." *Revista de Direito Internacional* 13, no. 2 (2016): 221-245. Accessed May 28, 2023. <https://www.publicacoesacademicas.uniceub.br/rdi/article/view/4037/pdf>.

18 Caruza, Daniela. "Organizações internacionais como aparato de produção simbólica do Estado: o caso da Organização do Tratado de Cooperação Amazônica (OTCA)." *Revista Antropolítica*, n. 46 (2019). Accessed May 29, 2023. <https://periodicos.uff.br/antropolitica/article/view/41912>.

19 Protocol of amendment (in Castilian) available at: <http://otca.org/pt/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PROTOCOLO-DE-ENMIENDA.pdf>. Accessed May 30, 2023.

Thus, this fixed structure has made it possible to create an institutional memory and implement programmes and partnerships over a longer-term horizon.<sup>20</sup>

The head of the Permanent Secretariat is the Secretary General, who is in charge of coordinating and managing the body's activities and effectively implementing the policies and programmes established under the treaty. According to the ACTO regulations, the holder of this position must be a citizen of one of the member countries, but cannot be of the same nationality as his or her predecessor. The Secretary General is selected by the Meeting of Foreign Ministers, requiring unanimity in the choice; the term of office is three years, with one re-election permitted.<sup>21</sup> Through a South-South cooperation approach, ACTO operates in various dimensions, such as political-diplomatic, strategic and technical. Its objective is to create synergy between governments, multilateral organizations, cooperation agencies, organized civil society, social movements, the scientific community, productive sectors, indigenous peoples and society as a whole, with the aim of effectively implementing the Amazon Cooperation Treaty.<sup>22</sup>

On the political-diplomatic side, ACTO seeks to promote dialogue and collaboration between member countries, encouraging consensus-building and the implementation of joint actions to tackle the region's common challenges. This dimension of cooperation involves the negotiation of multilateral agreements, treaties and bilateral agreements that strengthen regional cooperation and the sustainable development of the Amazon. In strategic terms, ACTO seeks to identify and implement policies and programmes that address the specific needs of the region, taking into account its geographical, social, cultural and environmental characteristics. This dimension therefore includes the formulation of action plans, strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of

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20 Brazil. Organização do Tratado de Cooperação Amazônica (OTCA). *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, 9 April 2014 (updated in 2022). Accessed June 1, 2023. <https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/assuntos/mecanismos-internacionais/mecanismos-de-integracao-regional/organizacao-do-tratado-de-cooperacao-amazonica-otca>.

21 More information on the decision-making bodies of ACTO is available at: <http://otca.org/pt/as-instancias-de-decisao/>.

22 More information at: <http://otca.org/pt/quem-somos/>.

natural resources, as well as the promotion of infrastructure projects and socioeconomic development.<sup>23</sup>

At the technical level, ACTO seeks to encourage the transfer of knowledge and training between member countries. This involves the exchange of good practices, experiences and technologies that contribute to the sustainable management of the Amazon. In this sense, the organization facilitates technical cooperation in areas such as environmental monitoring, watershed management, biodiversity conservation, rural development and the protection of rights of indigenous peoples.<sup>24</sup> An example of an initiative carried out within the framework of ACTO is the Amazon Regional Observatory (ORA), launched in 2021. The center collects and shares information on the Amazon region, including biodiversity, species protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), forests, water resources and indigenous peoples.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Amazon Summit and ACTO strengthening: Brazil's role**

According to the protocol that gave rise to ACT, as mentioned above, the organization's role is to reaffirm the principles of the ACT and strengthen the process of regional cooperation. However, it is necessary to analyze its capacity to meet these objectives on the basis of certain criteria. Firstly, the institutional structure must be considered, including its Permanent Secretariat and decision-making bodies such as the Meetings of Foreign Ministers and the Amazon Cooperation Council.<sup>26</sup>

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23 Colombia. Organización del Tratado de Cooperación Amazónica (OTCA). *Cancillería de Colombia*. Accessed October 10, 2023. <https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/organizacion-del-tratado-cooperacion-amazonica-otca#:~:text=El%20principal%20objetivo%20del%20TCA,y%20preservaci%C3%B3n%20del%20medio%20ambiente>.

24 For more information on political-diplomatic and technical aspects, see the Wakaya program at: "Programa de Diversidade Biológica para a Bacia/Região Amazônica." *Wakaya/OTCA*. Accessed May 30, 2023. <http://wakaya.otca.org/>.

25 "Observatório Regional Amazônico é lançado." OTCA, November 10, 2021. <http://otca.org/pt/observatorio-regional-amazonico-e-lancado/#:~:text=O%20ORA%20estar%C3%A1%20em%20permanente,processo%20de%20valida%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20de%20dados>.

26 Silva, Rodolfo Ilário da. *A cooperação multilateral entre os países amazônicos: a atuação da OTCA*. São Paulo: Cultura Acadêmica, 2013. Accessed June 3, 2023. <https://repositorio.unesp.br/bitstream/handle/11449/109301/ISBN9788579834820.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

As mentioned, the institutionalization of a permanent and well-defined structure has allowed initiatives to continue over time. In addition, the organization's work has been able to circumvent significant political challenges. For example, in recent years, ACTO members Brazil, Colombia and Peru did not recognize the government of Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela, also a member of the organization. Even so, although meetings involving high-level political leaders, such as foreign ministers, from the eight member countries were not possible, ACTO continued to make progress in implementing partnerships and technical and scientific projects approved by the eight nations, including in the area of biodiversity, forests, management memoranda and integrated fire management.<sup>27</sup> This ability to survive governments of different political persuasions over time demonstrates the importance of having a permanent institutional structure.

Secondly, the ability to mobilize financial, technical and human resources to implement cooperation programmes and projects must be verified. Although it has its own budget, it is still insufficient for the organization to be equipped to deal with the challenges and growing needs for regional coordination to avoid the point of no return in the Amazon biome. ACTO has a staff of only 33 people,<sup>28</sup> including its secretariat, directors, consultants and technical and administrative advisors. By way of example, the construction of the physical space and the purchase of computers and tools needed to build the Amazon Regional Observatory, one of the most robust projects carried out by ACTO in recent years, represented a total cost of just under US\$ 550,000.<sup>29</sup> For the organization to be able to implement more comprehensive projects with greater impact, it is therefore necessary to increase its budget and the technical and human resources allocated to it.

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27 Doria, Vinicius. Entrevista. "Carlos Alfredo Lazary Teixeira: 'Países da Amazônia têm capacidade de preservar a Floresta.'" *Correio Braziliense*, July 30, 2023. <https://www.correio braziliense.com.br/politica/2023/07/5112868-carlos-alfredo-lazary-paises-da-amazonia-tem-capacidade-de-preservar-a-floresta.html>.

28 "Nuestro equipo." OTCA. Accessed September 23, 2023. <http://otca.org/nuestro-equipo/>.

29 Observatório Regional Amazônico and Organização do Tratado de Cooperação Amazônica. *Informe anual Observatorio Regional Amazônica*, 2021. Brasília: OTCA/ORA, 2022. Accessed September 23, 2023. [https://ora.otca.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Informe-ORA-2021-ESP-29-Agosto\\_Final2.pdf](https://ora.otca.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Informe-ORA-2021-ESP-29-Agosto_Final2.pdf).



With the election of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Brazil has shown signs of wanting to move in this direction. Even before his inauguration, during COP27 in Egypt in November 2022, the then president-elect announced his intention to hold a summit of the member countries of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty to “discuss in a sovereign manner the promotion of integrated development in the region, with social inclusion and climate responsibility.”<sup>30</sup> Once in office, in January 2023, during the seventh meeting of the Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Buenos Aires (Argentina), Lula declared that

cooperation from outside our region is very welcome, but it is the countries that are part of these biomes that must take the lead, in a sovereign manner, in initiatives to take care of the Amazon. That is why it is critical that we value our Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization—ACTO [emphasis added].<sup>31</sup>

In August 2023, the Fourth Meeting of Presidents of States Parties to the Amazon Cooperation Treaty was held in Belém. The so-called “Amazon Summit” sought to give new impetus to the common cooperation agenda, adapting it to new regional and global realities. In the days leading up to the meeting of heads of state, the Brazilian government also organized the “Amazon Dialogues” in Belém, an open space for self-organized events by civil society. The initiative was marked by intense social participation, with more than 400 events and parallel activities proposed and the participation of more than 30,000 people over three days.<sup>32</sup>

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30 Source and more information at: “Lula na COP27: Confira a íntegra do discurso.” *Brasil de Fato*, November 16, 2022. <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2022/11/16/lula-na-cop27-confira-a-integra-do-discurso>.

31 Source and more information at: Verdélio, Andreia. “Países da região devem liderar preservação da Amazônia, diz Lula.” *Agência Brasil*, January 24, 2023. <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/politica/noticia/2023-01/paises-da-regiao-devem-liderar-preservacao-da-amazonia-diz-lula>.

32 Brazil. *Diálogos Amazônicos evidenciam importância de participação social*. Secretaria-Geral da Presidência da República, August 17, 2023. <https://www.gov.br/secretariageral/pt-br/noticias/2023/agosto/dialogos-amazonicos-evidenciam-importancia-de-participacao-social>.

At the end of the government summit, the Belém Declaration<sup>33</sup> was approved, which emphasizes the urgent need for cooperation to avoid the point of no return in the Amazon. The text proposes an Amazonian Alliance to Combat Deforestation, announces the beginning of the dialogue process for the creation of an Integrated Air Traffic Control System and welcomes the future establishment of the Center for International Police Cooperation in the Amazon, based in Manaus. These measures, which would allow for the sharing of data and intelligence, are especially important given the increase in the number of organized crime networks operating in the Amazon in recent years, especially those linked to illegal environmental practices with transnational dimensions,<sup>34</sup> such as networks that benefit from the commercialization and money laundering of profits obtained through the illegal extraction of timber and gold, among others.

The signatories of the Belém Declaration also invited the region's development banks to form a "Green Coalition" to promote financial solutions to boost socially, environmentally and economically sustainable productive activities and ventures. In addition, the declaration expresses firm support for the institutional strengthening of ACTO, not only through the reactivation of existing mechanisms, such as special commissions, at ministerial level, in the areas of (i) environment, (ii) science and technology, (iii) health, (iv) education, (v) indigenous peoples' affairs, (vi) transports, infrastructure and communications and (vii) tourism,<sup>35</sup> but also through the creation of new bodies under the aegis of ACTO. These include, among others:

- A Forum of Amazon Cities to strengthen cooperation between local authorities in the States Parties, especially cities in border

33 See the full text of the objectives agreed to in the Belém Declaration, which contains 113 paragraphs, at Brazil. *Belém Declaration*, November 2023. <https://www.gov.br/planalto/pt-br/assuntos/cop28/belem-declaration>.

34 For more information on transnational environmental crime networks see: Neves, Felipe Schaeffer, and Maiara Folly. "Crimes ambientais como crime organizado: a extração ilegal do ouro na Amazônia. Strategic report 04." *Plataforma CIPÓ*, December 2021. [https://plataformacipo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Relato%CC%81rio-Estrate%CC%81gico-4\\_v2.pdf](https://plataformacipo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Relato%CC%81rio-Estrate%CC%81gico-4_v2.pdf).

35 Brazil. *Belém Declaration*, November 2023. <https://www.gov.br/planalto/pt-br/assuntos/cop28/belem-declaration>.

- areas, aiming at the implementation, at local level, of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals;
- A working group to advance the assessment of an institutional link between the Amazonian Parliament (PARLAMAZ)<sup>36</sup> and ACTO;
  - An Intergovernmental Scientific Technical Panel for the Amazon, which will annually convene representatives of the State Parties, including technicians, scientists and researchers in order to promote the exchange of knowledge, methodologies, studies and systematization of information and the preparation of periodic reports on prioritized topics to promote sustainable development and prevent the Amazon from approaching a point of no return;
  - An Amazon Indigenous People Mechanism to promote dialog between governments and indigenous peoples in the Amazon;
  - A Observatory of Rural Women for the Amazon Region, which would take the form of an interactive data platform with tools to inform the development of strategies, projects, programmes and public policies for women working in agricultural, forestry and aquaculture activities;
  - A Network of Water Authorities of the ACTO States Parties to foster cooperation in the sustainable management of regional water resources, with the aim of establishing regional protocols for monitoring, cooperation and mutual support in the management of water resources in the Amazon;

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36 The Amazonian Parliament emerged as a result of an initiative by the Congress of the Republic of Peru during a meeting held in Lima in April 1989. Representatives of the legislative chambers of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela were present at the founding of this important regional body. The first president of the Amazonian Parliament was Héctor Vargas Haya, then president of the Peruvian Congress. From that historic meeting in the Legislative Palace of Peru, a Joint Declaration was issued which established the beginning of the process of creating the Amazonian Parliament as a permanent, unicameral regional body. The Amazonian Parliament is made up of representatives of the Legislative Assemblies of the states that have signed the Amazon Cooperation Treaty. More information at: <https://www.congreso.gob.pe/ParlamentoAmazonico/>. Accessed June 7, 2023.

- An Amazon Network of Forest Authorities to strengthen the implementation of the ACTO Forest Program and the relevant actions of the Amazonian Strategic Cooperation Agenda.<sup>37</sup>

The proposal of multiple new regional cooperation initiatives, such as those listed above, indicates that there is growing recognition that there is no unilateral way out for the Amazon. Even if Brazil manages to fulfill President Lula's announced promise of zero deforestation by 2030, without the other countries that are part of the basin doing the same, it will not be possible to prevent the Amazon from reaching the point of no return. The emphasis placed on strengthening ACTO in the Belém Declaration also makes it clear that the countries of the region see the Organization not only as the center of gravity for implementing projects and initiatives that should guide the course of regional cooperation for the preservation of the Amazon, but also as a body that can facilitate political coordination between its members in multilateral debates and forums, such as the UN Conferences of the Parties on climate and biodiversity.

Such political coordination can increase the bargaining power of Amazonian countries in negotiations and discussions aimed, for example, at ensuring that developed countries allocate more robust financial resources so that developing nations can act both to preserve their biodiversity and to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. Ultimately, regional coordination in multilateral forums increases the chances that the political, economic and social priorities of Amazonian countries are taken into account in global decision-making processes.

Although the preservation and sustainable development of the Amazon must be led by the Amazon countries, cooperation with partners outside the region who share similar challenges can also be fruitful. In this sense, the Amazon Summit was attended by the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia, which together hold most of the world's remaining tropical forests, with the aim of boosting a political alliance for the sustainable development of forests in anticipation of the 28th edition of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations

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37 More information at: <https://www.congresso.gov.pe/ParlamentoAmazonico/>. Accessed June 7, 2023.

Framework Convention on Climate Change, whose president was also in Belém.

Brazil's leadership, demonstrated by its ability to convene a summit of Heads of State of the ACTO signatory countries, something that had not happened since 2009, will be fundamental in ensuring that the Belém Declaration is accompanied by concrete initiatives and projects, under the leadership of ACTO, aimed at strengthening technical and political cooperation for the sustainable development of the Amazon basin. More than 60% of the Amazon biome is located in Brazilian territory and, in this sense, it is natural that the most biodiverse country in the world should be a protagonist in intra- and inter-regional efforts aimed at environmental preservation and tackling climate change. However, Brazil's global influence does not depend solely on natural factors: it requires results from the domestic point of view. In other words, for efforts such as the Amazon Summit to contribute to Brazil's international integration strategy, the country must first continue to show positive results in terms of reducing deforestation, preserving biodiversity, protecting indigenous peoples and adopting clean and sustainable energy models.

Secondly, Brazil must be able to exercise leadership to ensure that advances in terms of domestic public policies also take place on a regional scale and to leverage political will to build unified positions in multilateral forums, even with countries with large forest areas outside the region. This process necessarily involves strengthening ACTO, the only international organization based on Brazilian soil, which therefore needs to be supported politically and financially by Brazil.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that pan-Amazon cooperation, represented by ACTO and other cooperative agreements, plays a key role in the protection and sustainable development of the region. By sharing information, knowledge and resources, Amazonian countries can more effectively tackle environmental challenges and promote the well-being of local communities. To achieve this, it was argued that a sustained

commitment is needed, with political will and additional investment and financial resources.

The chapter has argued that ACTO, the only international organization that brings together the Amazon countries with the aim of promoting sustainable development in the region, must play a central role in the process of regional cooperation to avoid the Amazonian point of no return and provide socially, environmentally and economically sustainable alternatives. This requires, however, significant strengthening of the institutional structure of the organization, including in terms of budgets and human resources.

The text also showed that, since the election of President Lula at the end of 2022, Brazilian foreign policy has shown signs that the country will act to guarantee the necessary means to revitalize ACTO. A first important step in this direction was the fulfillment of the promise to hold the Fourth Meeting of Presidents of States Parties to the Amazon Cooperation Treaty. The so-called Amazon Summit resulted in the Belém Declaration, which includes ambitious pledges to build robust regional cooperation initiatives that have ACTO as their center of gravity, such as an Intergovernmental Scientific Technical Panel of the Amazon, the “IPCC of the Amazon,” a Forum of Amazon Cities, an Observatory of Rural Women for the Amazon, among others. Finally, the chapter concluded that Brazil must play a leading role both in strengthening technical and political cooperation between its Amazonian neighbors and in cooperating with countries outside the region, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia, in broader efforts to preserve the planet’s biodiversity.



## Chapter 8

# Brazilian Foreign Policy towards Africa and the Middle East on Climate and the Environment: Challenges and Possibilities

Renata Albuquerque Ribeiro, Marília Closs and Maiara Folly

Historically, Brazilian foreign policy (BFP) has aimed to achieve development and autonomy.<sup>1</sup> In addition, it has been guided by the principles of defending the sovereignty of peoples and non-intervention, achieving a peaceful tradition based on dialogue to build the country's relations with other players in the international system. This way, Brazil has managed to build partnerships with countries from different regions of the world—sometimes with more, sometimes with less intensity—in areas such as trade, science and technology, energy, infrastructure, climate and the environment.

In this sense, the African continent and the Middle East have played important roles in the history of the BFP, albeit inconsistently. These two regions have significant populations and ethnic diversity, as well as considerable geopolitical importance. They also represent important trading partners for Brazil, with which the country maintains relations of different dimensions—historical, political, cultural and commercial. Thus, a wide range of themes have been present in Brazil's relations with Africa and the Middle East—both in bilateral relations and in partnerships involving three or more international actors. The energy agenda has historically occupied a central place in efforts to draw closer to the two regions, and more recently partnerships have also been developed in the environmental and climate areas.

While taking into account their social, economic and geographical peculiarities, both regions have characteristics in common, among which

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1 Pinheiro, Leticia. *Política externa brasileira* (1889-2002). Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2004.



the high degree of vulnerability to the consequences of climate change stands out. For example, some African countries have registered record temperatures<sup>2</sup> and, in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, temperatures have risen almost twice as fast as the global average.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the likely reduction in rainfall and the warming of average temperatures could contribute to severe drought on the African continent<sup>4</sup> and in the Middle East, a region characterized by geography of dry and desert areas. The combination of these phenomena will compromise water and food security in the area, greatly affecting local populations.

With regard to both regions, Brazilian foreign policy has historically been pendular—i.e. at times it has maintained solid and consistent relations, and at other times it has opted for disengagement and the dismantling of these relations. However, currently, with a third Lula administration and the restructuring of both the BFP and environmental and climate policy, there is an opportunity for relations with both regions to be more structured and coherent. This will empower Brazilian foreign policy not only to return to successful policies of the past, but also to reflect critically on previous cycles and update policies towards Africa and the Middle East in a qualified manner, especially in the climate and environment agendas.

Historically, the BFP for the two regions has similarities. The inclusion of Africa and the Middle East in the same organizational framework of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) demonstrates the link for the BFP of the two spaces. After having been deactivated and incorporated by the Europe Secretariat during the 2019-2022 federal administration,<sup>5</sup> the Africa and Middle East Secretariat was recreated in January 2023, which shows the importance of the current political moment for advancing

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2 “Calor atinge marcas sem precedentes no sul da África.” *Metsul*, January 23, 2022. <https://metsul.com/calor-atinge-marcas-sem-precedentes-no-sul-da-africa/>.

3 “Mudança climática pode devastar Oriente Médio e Mediterrâneo Oriental.” *Reuters/Agência Brasil*, September 6, 2022. <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/internacional/noticia/2022-09/mudanca-climatica-pode-devastar-oriente-medio-e-mediterraneo-oriental>.

4 United Nations. “Mudanças climáticas têm impacto alarmante na África, afirma novo relatório.” *UN News*, October 19, 2021. <https://news.un.org/pt/story/2021/10/1767042>.

5 Camarotto, Murillo. “Itamaraty recria secretaria dedicada à África e Oriente Médio.” *Valor Econômico*, January 2, 2023. <https://valor.globo.com/politica/noticia/2023/01/02/itamaraty-recria-secretaria-dedicada-africa-e-oriente-mdio.ghtml>.

dialogues, policies and partnerships. This chapter therefore deals with the two regions together. However, for clarity and for historical reasons and because of the nature of relations, at certain points the BFP for North Africa will be discussed together with the BFP for the Middle East and, therefore, separately from the BFP for Sub-Saharan Africa.

The aim of this chapter is to present an overview of Brazil's relations with both regions, highlighting the activities carried out in the areas of climate and the environment, and pointing out possible ways to strengthen them. The first section presents the historical aspects of Brazil's relations with Africa and the Middle East. The second section presents the activities carried out in the climate and environment agenda with the two regions. The third section presents future prospects and possibilities. The final considerations are then presented.

### **Historical aspects: advances and setbacks in Brazilian foreign policy towards Africa and the Middle East**

Brazil's relations with African countries have been marked by advances and setbacks: there have been moments of closer ties and denser partnerships of different kinds, followed by moments of cooling and relative distance between the two sides of the Atlantic.<sup>6</sup> When relations between the country and the continent began to advance more strongly along modern lines, the Brazilian economy depended on the slave trade, which dates back to the 16th century. For this reason, relations were initially marked by the forced displacement of Africans to Brazil in order to make up the country's workforce, whose economy was based on the plantation system.<sup>7</sup>

At the state level, Brazil's relations with the countries of that continent began with the country's independence on September 7, 1822. Throughout the 20th century, there were formal attempts at rapprochement, especially with South Africa, which is still a key country

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6 Penha, Eli Alves. *Relações Brasil-África e geopolítica do Atlântico Sul*. Salvador: Editora da UFBA, 2011.

7 An agricultural system based on monoculture for export on large estates.

in Brazilian foreign policy towards the continent.<sup>8</sup> The two countries began contacts in 1918, but it was only in 1939 that a trade agreement was signed that directly involved both parties. From the 1940s onwards, therefore, there was a more significant rapprochement between Brazil and the continent, with the opening of a South African diplomatic representation in Rio de Janeiro and a Brazilian delegation in Pretoria. During the 1950s, Brazil was aligned with the traditional axes of power, while maintaining a certain distance from African nations. As a result, in the context of the struggles for independence, the Brazil of Getúlio Vargas (1951-1954) and Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961) did not immediately support the African nations, but instead sided with the Portugal.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1960s, there was a new attempt at rapprochement, materialized above all in the creation of the Africa division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the opening of Brazilian embassies in Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria, as part of the so-called Independent Foreign Policy (PEI) of Jânio Quadros (1961). This was followed by a phase of estrangement during the first two military governments (1964-1969).<sup>10</sup> A new rapprochement began in the 1970s; this time, however, with a more strategic air, as the 1973 oil crisis made it necessary to open up relations with other producing countries in order to diversify Brazil's sources of fossil fuel. In 1975, Brazil was the first country to recognize Angola's independence, despite the communist orientation of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, which won the country's civil war in a Cold War context.

Also in the 1970s, Brazilian construction companies began to settle on the African continent to carry out infrastructure work, including major highways. In 1979, the Brazilian oil company Petrobras arrived in Angola to participate as a partner-investor in the exploration of oil

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8 Visentini, Paulo Fagundes. *A relação Brasil-África: prestígio, cooperação ou negócios?* Rio de Janeiro: Alta Books, 2016.

9 Penha, Eli Alves. *Relações Brasil-África e geopolítica do Atlântico Sul*. Salvador: Editora da UFBA, 2011.

10 Pereira, Analucia Danilevicz. "As relações Brasil-África: do nexu escravista à construção de parcerias estratégicas." *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Africanos* 5, no. 9 (2020): 11-32. Accessed December 11, 2023. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346309499\\_as\\_relacoes\\_brasil-africa\\_do\\_nexo\\_escravista\\_a\\_construcao\\_de\\_parcerias\\_estrategicas](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346309499_as_relacoes_brasil-africa_do_nexo_escravista_a_construcao_de_parcerias_estrategicas).

blocks on the country's continental shelf.<sup>11</sup> The 1980s saw a continuation of Brazil's relations with African countries, very much marked by trade relations, especially in the areas of energy, mining and civil construction. For example, Odebrecht started working in Angola in 1984 and Vale do Rio Doce in Mozambique in 1987. In the 1990s, Fernando Henrique Cardoso's foreign policy (1995-2003) prioritized rapprochement with the United States and Europe, resulting in relative retraction with African countries, except with the countries of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), with Nigeria, strategic because of its oil, and with South Africa, of great political importance.<sup>12</sup> Since it was founded in 1996, the CPLP has played an important role for the BFP in Africa, especially in terms of cooperation and cultural exchange.

The 2000s, in turn, represented a turning point for Brazil towards the African continent. The proud and active foreign policy was aimed at diversifying partnerships with developing countries. Part of this process was the opening of embassies in countries such as Benin, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, São Tomé and Tanzania, as well as the reopening of embassies in countries such as Nigeria and Togo. In total, over the course of Lula's first two governments, almost twenty new embassies were opened and more than five Brazilian embassies were reopened in Africa.

As a result, trade, diplomatic and cultural relations have expanded and, in terms of partnership, Brazil has established numerous South-South cooperation projects, especially in areas where it has recognized expertise, such as health, education and agriculture.<sup>13</sup> Also noteworthy is the issue of energy, where three trends are important: relations arising from the need to import African oil into Brazil, which consequently brought the country closer to Angola and Nigeria; the strengthening of

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11 Santos, Chico. "Petrobras extrai apenas 0,5% do petróleo de Angola." *Valor Econômico*, November 7, 2007. <https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/bitstream/handle/id/482060/noticia.htm?sequence=1>.

12 Miyamoto, Shiguenoli. "O Brasil e a comunidade dos países de língua portuguesa (CPLP)." *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 52 (2009): 22-42. Accessed December 11, 2023. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0034-73292009000200002>.

13 For more information, see: Milani, Carlos R. S., Enara Echart Muñoz, Rubens de S. Duarte, and Magno Klein. *Atlas da política externa brasileira*. CLACSO/EdUERJ/FAPERJ/CNPq/Labmundo, December 2014. [https://www.clacso.org.ar/libreria-latinoamericana/libro\\_detalle.php?id\\_libro=927&pageNum\\_rs\\_libros=0&totalRows\\_rs\\_libros=898](https://www.clacso.org.ar/libreria-latinoamericana/libro_detalle.php?id_libro=927&pageNum_rs_libros=0&totalRows_rs_libros=898).

Petrobras in Africa, a company that has played a crucial role in Brazil's relations with the continent; and South-South technical cooperation projects in biofuels.

The 2010s, especially from 2015 onwards, were marked by a less active profile in Brazilian foreign policy in general—and also in relation to African nations. From 2016 onwards, activities between the two sides of the Atlantic lost momentum and were marked by frustrations on both sides, the failure to reach several agreements and the greater involvement of the religious component as one of the pillars of these relations, especially during the Jair Bolsonaro administration (2019–2022).<sup>14</sup> In the latter, the weakening of the BFP for Africa has increased. There has been significant acceleration in the closure of diplomatic representations, with the shutting down of embassies and a decrease in the number of diplomats stationed on the continent.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, there has been a significant decrease in Brazil's economic presence in Africa. The departure of Petrobras in 2020 came after four decades of the company operating on the continent, a period in which it played an important role in economic and technical cooperation. The withdrawal or drastic reduction in the presence of large companies that already had a history of presence in Africa in areas including civil construction and mining, such as Odebrecht and Vale, are also important milestones for the reduction in the flow of relations and investments in African territory. The dismantling of South-South cooperation, especially technical cooperation, has also been considerable; for example, the activities of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) have changed significantly, moving away from a more technical profile

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14 Nadir, Mohammed and Flávio Thales. "Mourão em Angola: entre compromissos de Estado e defesa da Igreja Universal." *Brasil de Fato*, July 20, 2021. <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2021/07/20/artigo-mourao-em-angola-entre-compromissos-de-estado-e-defesa-da-igreja-universal>.

15 During Jair Bolsonaro's administration, Brazil had only 90 diplomats working on the African continent, a much smaller number compared to the 338 professionals who were in Europe during the same administration, according to a survey carried out by Alma Preta Jornalismo. More information at: "O que restou da relação Brasil e África são resquícios da aproximação de governos anteriores, avaliam especialistas." *Alma Preta*, January 21, 2022. <https://www.almapreta.com.br/sessao/africa-diaspora/o-que-restou-da-relacao-brasil-e-africa-sao-resquicios-da-aproximacao-de-governos-anteriores-avaliam-especialistas>.

towards activities aimed at expanding the agribusiness market on the continent, a topic that will be discussed later in this chapter.<sup>16</sup>

Closer relations with the Middle East began mainly in the second half of the 20th century. The issue of energy, as mentioned, has also been a structuring factor in relations with the region, especially since the 1970s. Historically, Brazil has managed to remain a relevant player politically<sup>17</sup> and economically, while keeping a certain distance from the recurring conflicts in the region. In the second half of the 20th century, the rapprochement between Brazil and the Middle East took place mainly within the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM),<sup>18</sup> which encouraged cooperation between developing countries and helped consolidate South-South cooperation as a partnership strategy between them. In the 1970s, in a context of oil crises, Brazil expanded its diplomatic and commercial relations with the Arab world, as well as with the African continent, due to the need to diversify fossil fuel sources.<sup>19</sup>

Subsequently, the BFP has established relations of different natures and dimensions with the Arab world. Of particular note on the climate agenda is cooperation with Arab countries in the area of desertification, which has been practiced since the 1980s. At the time, the International Seminar on Combating Desertification was held in Natal, Rio Grande do Norte. This was the initial stage of the cooperation between Brazil and countries with aridity problems, especially the Arab countries, which is described in more detail in the next section.<sup>20</sup>

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16 Santos, Clóvis Caribé Menezes dos. "As mudanças do papel desempenhado pela Embrapa no atual cenário das relações de cooperação internacional do Brasil com países africanos no agro." In *Potências tradicionais e emergentes na África subsaariana*, edited by Elga Almeida and Elsa Kraychete. Salvador: Editora da UFBA, 2022.

17 Brazil recognized the State of Palestine in 2010, which helped to consolidate Brazil's positive image with the Arab world.

18 Despite not being a member country of the Non-Aligned Movement, Brazil has held observer status for decades.

19 Traumann, Andrew Patrick. "A diplomacia dos petrodólares: relações do Brasil com o mundo árabe (1973-1985)." Master's thesis, Universidade Estadual Paulista, 2007. Accessed May 2, 2023. [https://repositorio.unesp.br/bitstream/handle/11449/93425/traumann\\_ap\\_me\\_assis.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repositorio.unesp.br/bitstream/handle/11449/93425/traumann_ap_me_assis.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

20 For more information, see: Rego, André Heráclio. *Os sertões e os desertos: o combate à desertificação e a política externa brasileira*. Brasília: FUNAG, 2012.

Especially in the post-Cold War period and from the 2000s onwards, foreign policy towards the region gained new impetus. The BFP, with its historic cooperative and pacifist stance and armed with a project of international insertion that had South-South cooperation as one of its bases, was important for the creation, development and implementation of the Summit of South American-Arab Countries (ASPA),<sup>21</sup> an interregional integration mechanism. The forum, created in 2005, aimed to bring political leaders from both regions closer together on political, economic, historical and cultural issues. The ASPA portfolio includes outstanding projects in areas such as education and the promotion of interregional trade.<sup>22</sup> In this process, the role of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) stands out, as the regional organization that carried out the dialogue with the Arab world for the implementation of projects via ASPA.

Brazil has thus managed to establish a variety of relationships with the Middle East and Africa, ranging from South-South cooperation projects, including technical cooperation, participation in peace missions, as well as cultural, commercial and economic-financial partnerships and multilateral arrangements that include the creation of multilateral organizations. However, from 2015 onwards, cooperation projects cooled with the retraction of the BFP<sup>23</sup> and, in the case of the Middle East, the deepening of the unstable scenario in the region.<sup>24</sup> Having presented this brief history, the following section looks at the activities carried out by Brazil with both areas of the world, more specifically with regard to the climate and environmental agendas.

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21 Brazil. "Cúpula América do Sul-Países Árabes (ASPA)." *Ministério do Meio Ambiente*. Accessed May 2, 2023. <https://antigo.mma.gov.br/pol%C3%ADtica-sobre-mudan%C3%A7a-do-clima/item/849.html>.

22 Menen, I. R. "Geopolítica da Cooperação Sul-Sul entre Brasil e Oriente Médio: variáveis conjunturais e estruturais para a análise das perspectivas de contribuição do Brasil para a resolução da crise na Síria." Master's thesis, Universidade Federal da Integração Latino Americana, 2020. Accessed April 15, 2023. <https://dspace.unila.edu.br/handle/123456789/5873;jsessionid=8F2B71BDC6C9C000BD01F8BCA69D761>.

23 Cornetet, João Marcelo Conte. "A política externa de Dilma Rousseff: contenção na continuidade." *Conjuntura Austral 5*, no. 24 (2014): 111-150. Accessed December 11, 2023. <https://seer.ufrgs.br/ConjunturaAustral/article/view/47628>.

24 Menen, I. R. "Geopolítica da Cooperação Sul-Sul entre Brasil e Oriente Médio: variáveis conjunturais e estruturais para a análise das perspectivas de contribuição do Brasil para a resolução da crise na Síria." Master's thesis, Universidade Federal da Integração Latino Americana, 2020. Accessed April 15, 2023. <https://dspace.unila.edu.br/handle/123456789/5873;jsessionid=8F2B71BDC6C9C000BD01F8BCA69D761>.

## **Agreements and partnerships in areas relevant to the climate and environment agenda**

Throughout the 20th century, Brazil managed to accumulate considerable political and diplomatic capital on the climate and environment agendas. As a result, some of these issues have been present in the country's foreign relations with different players in the international system. In the cases discussed here—Africa and the Middle East—Brazil has developed various activities in the area of energy, both fossil and renewable. The emphasis on these energy agendas came about for two reasons: firstly, because the country depends on imported oil to fuel its development model; and secondly, because Brazil has expertise in developing and using technologies to produce renewable energies such as hydroelectricity, biofuels, biomass, solar energy and wind power. On the other hand, the cooperation agenda in the area of climate still requires greater institutionalization and depends on the political will of the government in question, which has hindered the implementation of lasting initiatives. However, it is also possible to list some cooperation projects on climate and the environment, both multilaterally and bilaterally.

At the multilateral level, in forums attended by countries from the African continent, climate and environmental issues were only the subject of more visible cooperation after the first decade of the 2000s, when a framework cooperation agreement was signed in the context of national programmes to combat desertification between Brazil and the other members of the CPLP. In May 2006, the environment ministers of the eight CPLP countries, meeting in Brazil, signed the Brasilia Charter, establishing a platform for cooperation in areas such as biodiversity, combating desertification, renewable energies, marine and coastal environmental management, waste and water management and environmental education.<sup>25</sup> In the following years, some of the countries in the bloc took part in editions of the Luso-Brazilian Seminar on Family

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25 Rego, André Heráclio. *Os sertões e os desertos: o combate à desertificação e a política externa brasileira*. Brasília: FUNAG, 2012.



Farming in Regions at Risk of Desertification (Semiluso), strengthening dialogue and exchange on the subject.

In addition to the subject of desertification, Brazil has implemented a cooperation policy with countries on the African continent based on the expansion of renewable energies as a path to energy transition. For this reason, in the early 2000s, the BFP began to implement a series of technical cooperation projects to encourage the use of biofuels.<sup>26</sup> During this period, Brazilian foreign policy at the time also followed the expansion of the operations of Petrobras on the continent,<sup>27</sup> both in the oil sector and in renewable energies, as part of biofuels diplomacy.

More recently, the forest agenda has also been highlighted in Brazil's partnership with African countries, specifically the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Together with Indonesia, the three countries formed the alliance of countries with the world's largest tropical forests—known by the acronym BIC (Brazil, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo). The alliance was announced during COP27 in Egypt at the end of 2022 and aims to value the biodiversity of the countries and to promote fair remuneration for the ecosystem services provided by the three nations.<sup>28</sup>

In the bilateral sphere, cooperation relations (in the form of South-South cooperation, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter) between Brazil and sub-Saharan African countries were particularly noteworthy in the 2000s. This is the case of relations between Brazil and South Africa and the historic alliance in defense of developing countries in the international climate change regime. Together with China and India,

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26 Ribeiro, Renata Albuquerque. "Cooperação Sul-Sul em biocombustíveis: interesses e contradições da Política Externa Brasileira em Moçambique (2003-2015)." PhD diss., Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 2018. Accessed May 29, 2023. <https://www.labmundo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Tese-2018-Renata-Albuquerque-Ribeiro.pdf>.

27 Coutinho, Isadora Caminha, Isadora da Silveira Steffens, and Taís Cristóvão Martins Vieira. "A atuação da Petrobras na África durante o governo Lula." *Revista Perspectiva: reflexões sobre a temática internacional* 7, no. 13 (2014): 9-23. Accessed May 22, 2023. <https://seer.ufrgs.br/index.php/RevistaPerspectiva/article/view/64856/37437>.

28 Brazil. "Brasil, Indonésia e República Democrática do Congo anunciam aliança dos países detentores das maiores florestas tropicais do mundo." *Ministério do Meio Ambiente e Mudança do Clima*, November 10, 2022. <https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/brasil-indonesia-e-republica-democratica-do-congo-anunciam-alianca-dos-paises-detentores-das-Mayres-florestas-tropicais-do-mundo>.

the two countries formed the BASIC group (Brazil, South Africa, India and China), discussed in Chapter 5.<sup>29</sup> In 2013, Brazil and South Africa began cooperating to strengthen environmental preservation strategies. This policy bilaterally complemented what the BASIC group had already signaled with the signing of the memorandum of understanding in 2008.<sup>30</sup>

For almost a decade and a half, technical cooperation between Brazil and Africa has been quite significant: in 2010, for example, around 60% of Brazilian technical cooperation resources went to African countries.<sup>31</sup> The portfolio of projects for the continent was mainly made up of actions in the areas of agriculture, industry, education (especially vocational training) and health—the latter led by the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz). Although these projects are not directly concerned with climate and the environment, many of them are connected to these agendas.

In this sense, among the policies linked to agriculture, led mainly by the coordination between Embrapa and the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), an agency linked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were the so-called structuring projects: cooperation projects with a long-term perspective, planned and adapted to the economic conditions and biomes of the receiving countries, and formulated and implemented through continuous participatory consultations with local partners during all phases of the project. Among the structuring projects in tropical agriculture carried out by the partnership between Embrapa and ABC, we highlight the Cotton-4 project to improve cotton production in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad, the technical support for the development of technological innovation in Mozambique and the Support for the Development of Rhiziculture project in Senegal. In a complementary way, the Innovative Agricultural Market program, launched in 2010, was

29 Lima, Guilherme. "A atualização da política externa do Brasil na agenda internacional ambiental: a transformação da posição brasileira em mudança do clima." Master's thesis, Universidade de Brasília, 2012.

30 "Brasil e África do Sul ampliarão cooperação de proteção ambiental." *Exame*, September 16, 2013. <https://exame.com/tecnologia/brasil-e-africa-do-sul-ampliarao-cooperacao-de-protecao-ambiental/>.

31 IPEA and World Bank. *Ponte sobre o Atlântico. Brasil e África Subsaariana: parceria Sul-Sul para o crescimento*. 2011. Accessed July 26, 2023. [https://repositorio.ipea.gov.br/bitstream/11058/3094/1/Livro\\_Ponte%20sobre%20o%20Atl%20ntico%20Brasil%20e%20c%381frica%20Subsaariana\\_parceria%20Sul-Sul%20para%20o%20crescimento.pdf](https://repositorio.ipea.gov.br/bitstream/11058/3094/1/Livro_Ponte%20sobre%20o%20Atl%20ntico%20Brasil%20e%20c%381frica%20Subsaariana_parceria%20Sul-Sul%20para%20o%20crescimento.pdf).

important in strengthening relations between academics and researchers on the African continent and Embrapa.

The Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) also played an important role in developing agricultural cooperation policies. The concept used to guide policy formulation was mainly food sovereignty (discussed in Chapter 2 of this book). In 2010, a highlight was the Brazil-Africa Dialogue on Food Security, Combating Hunger and Rural Development, which welcomed high-level representatives from 45 African countries and discussed topics such as sustainable agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture development, agro-extractive forestry activities and water resource management. The event resulted not only in greater institutionalization of the dialogue on food security, but also in the approval of an action plan which included the joint implementation of ten pilot programmes in different regions of Africa and the creation of an Afro-Brazilian center of excellence in bioenergy.<sup>32</sup>

The following year, the MDA led a technical cooperation project in the area of family farming with Ghana. In addition, as discussed above, there were also a number of energy-related projects, with a particular emphasis on biofuels policy. Of particular note at the time was the work of Biocom, a joint venture specializing in the production of sugar, ethanol and electricity between Odebrecht, Sonangol, the Angolan state-owned company, and Demer, a private Angolan company.<sup>33</sup>

At the multilateral level with the Arab countries, the initiatives organized by ASPA stand out. The partnership held four summits between 2005 and 2015: the first in Brasilia in 2005; the second in Doha in 2009; the third in Lima in 2012; and the fourth in Riyadh in 2015. The Brasilia Declaration<sup>34</sup> was approved in 2005 at the first summit. In its

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32 For more information, see the report IPEA and World Bank. *Ponte sobre o Atlântico. Brasil e África Subsaariana: parceria Sul-Sul para o crescimento*. 2011. Accessed July 26, 2023. [https://repositorio.ipea.gov.br/bitstream/11058/3094/1/Livro\\_Ponte%20sobre%20o%20Atl%20c3%a2ntico%20Brasil%20e%20c3%81frica%20Subsaariana\\_parceria%20Sul-Sul%20para%20o%20crescimento.pdf](https://repositorio.ipea.gov.br/bitstream/11058/3094/1/Livro_Ponte%20sobre%20o%20Atl%20c3%a2ntico%20Brasil%20e%20c3%81frica%20Subsaariana_parceria%20Sul-Sul%20para%20o%20crescimento.pdf).

33 IPEA and World Bank. *Ponte sobre o Atlântico. Brasil e África Subsaariana: parceria Sul-Sul para o crescimento*. 2011. Accessed July 26, 2023. [https://repositorio.ipea.gov.br/bitstream/11058/3094/1/Livro\\_Ponte%20sobre%20o%20Atl%20c3%a2ntico%20Brasil%20e%20c3%81frica%20Subsaariana\\_parceria%20Sul-Sul%20para%20o%20crescimento.pdf](https://repositorio.ipea.gov.br/bitstream/11058/3094/1/Livro_Ponte%20sobre%20o%20Atl%20c3%a2ntico%20Brasil%20e%20c3%81frica%20Subsaariana_parceria%20Sul-Sul%20para%20o%20crescimento.pdf).

34 See the Brasília Declaration in: United Nations. *South American and Arab Countries Summit*. Brasília Declaration. Accessed January 26, 2024. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-208847/>.

seventh article, on sustainable development, the countries reiterate their commitment to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, adopted at Rio-92, and also to the Plan of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002. They also stress the need for developed countries to honor their commitments to climate finance.

Two actions are particularly relevant in the context of ASPA: the Ministerial Meeting on Water Resources and Desertification and the Meeting of Environment Ministers. In 2007, the organization's First Meeting of Ministers of Environmental Affairs was held in Nairobi (Kenya). The following year, the First Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Water Resources and Combating Desertification was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In 2008, a meeting of ASPA experts on water resources and desertification was held in Recife, Pernambuco, in preparation for the Second Meeting of Environment Ministers to be held in Riyadh that same year. The main result was the drafting of a joint communiqué listing areas of interest for regional cooperation, such as renewable energy, irrigated agriculture, water reuse and biotechnology.<sup>35</sup> In Recife, Brazil proposed the creation of a framework agreement for cooperation in the implementation of national plans to combat desertification, along the lines of the partnership negotiated with the CPLP countries, but this did not come to fruition as some of the participating countries claimed that the proposal needed to be further discussed and detailed.<sup>36</sup> As a result of these partnerships, ABC has carried out a series of technical cooperation projects with Arab countries.<sup>37</sup>

In the following decade, Brazil and Middle Eastern countries continued to strengthen bi-regional cooperation on climate, energy and the environment. In 2015, the Riyadh Declaration (4th ASPA Summit)

35 More information at: Mendes, Daniela. "Cúpula América do Sul-Países Árabes debate desertificação e recursos hídricos." *Ministério do Meio Ambiente e Mudança do Clima*, July 23, 2008. <https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/noticias/cupula-america-do-sulpaises-arabes-debate-desertificacao-e-recursos-hidricos>.

36 Rego, André Heráclio. *Os sertões e os desertos: o combate à desertificação e a política externa brasileira*. Brasília: FUNAC, 2012.

37 Menezes, I. R. "Geopolítica da Cooperação Sul-Sul entre Brasil e Oriente Médio: variáveis conjunturais e estruturais para a análise das perspectivas de contribuição do Brasil para a resolução da crise na Síria." Master's thesis, Universidade Federal da Integração Latino Americana, 2020. Accessed April 15, 2023. <https://dspace.unila.edu.br/handle/123456789/5873;jsessionid=8F2B71BDC6C9C000BD01F8BCA69D761>.

determined that energy should become one of the fundamental axes of the bi-regional relationship in the following years, reaffirmed the support of the group for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and planned the holding of the 1st Meeting of the ASPA Subcommittee on Agricultural Cooperation in February 2016.<sup>38</sup> Cooperation remained active until 2019, when Brazil withdrew from UNASUR, resulting in a decline in integration between the two regions.<sup>39</sup>

When it comes to bilateral international cooperation projects with the Middle East, two players stand out: the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Israel. In 2018, Brazil and the UAE signed a cooperation agreement in the areas of renewable energy—specifically solar energy—and innovation.<sup>40</sup> The following year, the countries signed a series of cooperation acts, including an agreement in which environmental bodies would cooperate in the areas of environmental conservation and endangered species, as well as developing initiatives in ecotourism and wetland management, among other agendas.<sup>41</sup> In 2023, new agreements were signed.<sup>42</sup> On that occasion, Brazilian ambassador André Corrêa do Lago, Secretary for Climate, Energy and the Environment at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, signed a memorandum of understanding with the UAE. This document provided for a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from heavy industry and collaboration in scientific production, large-scale family farming,

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38 Brazil. "Riyadh Declaration—IV Summit of South American-Arab Countries—Riyadh, November 10 and 11, 2015." *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, November 24, 2015. <https://www.gov.br/mre/en/contact-us/press-area/press-releases/riyadh-declaration-iv-summit-of-south-american-arab-countries-riyadh-november-10-and-11-2015>.

39 Menen, I. R. "Geopolítica da Cooperação Sul-Sul entre Brasil e Oriente Médio: variáveis conjunturais e estruturais para a análise das perspectivas de contribuição do Brasil para a resolução da crise na Síria." Master's thesis, Universidade Federal da Integração Latino Americana, 2020. Accessed April 15, 2023. <https://dspace.unila.edu.br/handle/123456789/5873;jsessionid=8F2B71BDC6C9C000BD01F8BCA69D761>.

40 "Brasil e Emirados Árabes discutem cooperação em energia e inovação." *Anpei*, April 26, 2018. <https://anpei.org.br/brasil-e-emirados-arabes-discutem-cooperacao-em-energia-e-inovacao/>.

41 Verdélio, Andreia. "Brasil assina oito acordos bilaterais com Emirados Árabes." *Agência Brasil*, October 18, 2019. <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/politica/noticia/2019-10/brasil-assina-oito-acordos-bilaterais-com-emirados-arabes>.

42 The United Arab Emirates is an important partner for Brazil in the Middle East. Bilateral trade has grown over the years, with a notable increase in Brazilian exports of products such as beef, chicken, sugar, iron ore and agricultural products. The United Arab Emirates is also an important investor in Brazil, especially in the energy, infrastructure and real estate sectors. See: "Investimentos de fundos árabes no Brasil atingem US \$20 bilhões." *Estadão*, July 4, 2022. <https://investidor.estadao.com.br/ultimas/investimentos-fundos-arabes-brasil/>.

energy transition and water security. Investment agreements were also signed for the development of green diesel in the state of Bahia.<sup>43</sup>

With Israel, Brazil has cooperated on issues of agricultural technology development, such as precision irrigation and water resource management, including water reuse; biotechnology (especially biosensors) and biotic and abiotic stress tolerance (drought and heat); as well as possibilities in the areas of bioeconomy, start-up companies and the use of drones for digital agriculture/remote sensing.<sup>44</sup> In addition, in 2014, Brazil and Yemen established a formal partnership to share knowledge, technologies and techniques in projects and programmes linked to environmental preservation, subsistence agriculture, sustainable development, the fight against hunger, and social action.<sup>45</sup> The agreement, however, was only approved by the House of Representatives in 2017. In North Africa, Egypt has proved to be an important partner for Brazil in the agricultural field and there are cooperation agreements to establish partnerships<sup>46</sup> and exchange researchers in areas such as digital agriculture, climate change and irrigation and water management technologies. These partnerships mainly involve Embrapa and the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture.

### **Future prospects: cooperation possibilities and potential partners**

Although Brazilian relations with Africa and the Middle East have historically been pendular, important South-South cooperation projects have been formulated and implemented in recent decades. However, there is plenty of room to make them more solid and, above all, to go beyond cooperation and trade in fossil fuels to build actions based on updated

43 "Lula assina acordos comerciais e de cooperação com os Emirados Árabes Unidos." *Band News*, April 15, 2023. <https://www.band.uol.com.br/bandnews-fm/noticias/lula-assina-acordos-comerciais-e-de-cooperacao-com-os-emirados-arabes-unidos-16595985>.

44 "Cooperação e estratégias de inovação para o agro na agenda do presidente da Embrapa em Israel." *Mais Soja*, May 19, 2022. <https://maisoja.com.br/cooperacao-e-estrategias-de-inovacao-para-o-agro-na-agenda-do-presidente-da-embrapa-em-israel/>.

45 Brazil. "Brasil e Iêmen têm acordo de cooperação técnica aprovado na CREDN." *Câmara dos Deputados*, December 19, 2017. <https://www2.camara.leg.br/atividade-legislativa/comissoes/comissoes-permanentes/credn/noticias/brasil-e-iemem-tem-acordo-de-cooperacao-tecnica-aprovado-na-credn>.

46 Brazil. "Acordo de cooperação com o Egito marca primeira semana da agenda internacional." *Embrapa*, May 12, 2022. [https://www.embrapa.br/en/busca-de-noticias/-/noticia/70695979/acordo-de-cooperacao-com-o-egito-marca-primeira-semana-da-agenda-internacional?p\\_auth=6x6PO7yC](https://www.embrapa.br/en/busca-de-noticias/-/noticia/70695979/acordo-de-cooperacao-com-o-egito-marca-primeira-semana-da-agenda-internacional?p_auth=6x6PO7yC).

conceptions of climate and the environment, taking into account the dimensions of mitigation and adaptation.

With the African continent, at the multilateral level, the BFP should take a strategic look at the financing scenario and formulate a coordinated policy to guarantee the expansion of projects on the climate and development agenda on the African continent, especially in the areas of renewable energy and agriculture. In addition to revitalizing cooperative arrangements that have lost steam in recent years, such as the CPLP and the South America-Africa Summit (ASA), Brazil could create new partnerships with important regional blocs, such as the African Union, in order to help the continent achieve Agenda 2063,<sup>47</sup> and with other multilateral partners, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC)<sup>48</sup> and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In particular, cooperation could be expanded with funding from investment and development banks such as the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) and the African Development Bank. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 5 of this book, the New Development Bank could play a more active role in climate finance in Africa, especially in the areas of energy transition, industrialization and technological development and innovation.<sup>49</sup>

In the area of forests, considering that a political declaration with indications of general areas for cooperation already exists<sup>50</sup>—the partnership between Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and

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47 For more information, see African Union content: African Union. *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*. Accessed May 22, 2023. <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>.

48 During President Lula's visit to Luanda in August 2023, the Angolan president proposed a rapprochement between SADC, the main multilateral group in southern Africa, and MERCOSUR. With a GDP of US\$ 470 billion (R\$ 2.3 trillion) and an estimated population of 210 million, SADC brings together 16 countries from the southern African region: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Learn more at: André, Fabiana. "Em Angola, Lula questiona pagamento da dívida de países africanos ao FMI." *Folha de S. Paulo*, August 16, 2023. [https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2023/08/em-angola-lula-questiona-pagamento-da-divida-de-paises-africanos-ao-fmi.shtml?utm\\_source=sharenativo&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=sharenativo](https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2023/08/em-angola-lula-questiona-pagamento-da-divida-de-paises-africanos-ao-fmi.shtml?utm_source=sharenativo&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=sharenativo).

49 Albuquerque, Renata and Adriana Abdenur. "Como os BRICS podem impulsionar a cooperação em energias renováveis." *Diálogo Chino*, June 23, 2022. <https://dialogochino.net/pt-br/mudanca-climatica-e-energia-pt-br/55236-opiniao-como-os-brics-podem-impulsionar-a-cooperacao-em-energias-renovaveis/>.

50 Brazil. "Brasil, Indonésia e República Democrática do Congo anunciam aliança dos países detentores das Mayres florestas tropicais do mundo." *Ministério do Meio Ambiente e Mudança do Clima*, November 10,



Indonesia—this could be materialized through concrete cooperation projects in techniques for combating illegal deforestation and environmental crimes (which include illegal mining, such as for gold, and land grabbing), biodiversity conservation, bioeconomy practices and science and technology. It would also be interesting to see if there are any lessons to be learned by Brazil from the Great Green Wall project to contain desertification in the Sahel region, which began in 2007.<sup>51</sup>

Also at the multilateral level, Brazil can cooperate with African countries to advance common priorities for the developing world in international climate negotiations, such as the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Considering that both actors still face high levels of social inequality, cooperation between Brazil and African countries must combine the urgency of climate action with the need to implement innovative public policies that reduce poverty and hunger and foster job creation.

At the bilateral level, the resumption of the BFP for Africa on a more sustainable basis requires an updating of the previous paradigms of Brazil-Africa relations. For example, it would be necessary to include climate and environmental components and criteria in the planning of structuring projects. On the agricultural agenda, it would be important to resume the policies, led by Embrapa, the Ministry of Agrarian Development and the ABC, of technical cooperation based on sustainable, family and low-carbon agriculture (Chapter 2 of this book further discusses this last concept).

The resumption of the energy agenda, in turn, should be guided by the search for an energy transition. Sharing successful experiences in Brazil in terms of access to energy, such as the Light for All Program, set up in 2003, can help African countries overcome the enormous challenges of access to electricity, especially in rural areas. In line with emission

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2022. <https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/brasil-indonesia-e-republica-democratica-do-congo-anunciam-alianca-dos-paises-detentores-das-Mayres-florestas-tropicais-do-mundo>.

51 Nunes, Mônica. "A Grande Muralha Verde, iniciada em 2007 na África, ganha 'floresta olímpica' com 355 mil árvores." *Conexão Planeta*, August 11, 2021. <https://conexaoplaneta.com.br/blog/a-grande-muralha-verde-iniciada-em-2007-na-africa-ganha-floresta-olimpica-com-355-mil-arvores/>.



reduction commitments backed by the continent and Brazil, such as the Paris Agreement, the potential resumption of the operations of Petrobras in Africa should be included in the decarbonization schedule of the state-owned company, in the sense of transforming it from an oil company into an energy company. With this in mind, it may be possible to work together with African companies on technological development processes aimed at expanding renewable energies.

Finally, we need to take a critical look at the continent's biofuels policy. Brazil, with its vast experience in producing ethanol from renewable sources, throughout the 2000s offered technical assistance and training to African countries interested in developing their own biofuel industries. This cooperation has the potential to boost sustainable economic growth and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. However, what has frequently been seen is the expansion of sugarcane estates, which contributes little to building a just, sovereign and equitable transition.<sup>52</sup> In other words, Brazil's biofuels policy for Africa cannot be at the service of income concentration and the maintenance of patterns of social inequality.

Also in the area of renewable energy—and more specifically solar energy—Brazil could strengthen cooperation with countries that have already invested in expanding the use and production of renewable energies, such as Morocco.<sup>53</sup> In the field of climate change, the Gambia has excelled in several areas<sup>54</sup> and could offer technical cooperation projects for the protection of biodiversity and the care of water resources.<sup>55</sup> Finally, the energy transition model implemented in South Africa has many

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52 For more information, see: Luiz, Julyiana Ramos, et al. (Eds.). *Política externa, agricultura e modelos de desenvolvimento: conceitos, teorias e estudos de caso*. Curitiba: Appris, 2022.

53 Ceurstemont, Sandrine. "A megasina de energia solar encravada no deserto que pretende abastecer a Europa." *BBC Brasil*, May 7, 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/vert-fut-39696898>.

54 "Gâmbia é único país com chance de cumprir meta do Acordo de Paris." *Um só Planeta*, September 18, 2021. <https://umsoplaneta.globo.com/clima/noticia/2021/09/18/gambia-e-unico-pais-com-chance-de-cumprir-meta-do-acordo-de-paris.ghtml>.

55 Maza, Juan, and Marta Rey. "Combater as alterações climáticas ao longo do rio Gâmbia." *DW*, October 14, 2022. <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/combater-as-altera%C3%A7%C3%B5es-clim%C3%A1ticas-ao-longo-do-rio-g%C3%A2mbia/video-61680688>.

lessons for Brazil and can also be an interesting source of inspiration, both to absorb good practices and to avoid repeating past mistakes.<sup>56</sup>

In all cases, whether they are multilateral or bilateral, efforts must be made to ensure that certain mistakes are not replicated, especially with regard to environmental and human rights violations. For example, cooperation projects in the agricultural field need to be wary of replicating the agribusiness development model, which often has negative consequences for the environment and local communities, causing land conflicts and increasing income concentration. Projects to encourage the use of renewable energies, on the other hand, need to be carried out with rigorous consultation with the affected communities, in order to mitigate socio-environmental impacts.

With the Middle East, considering areas of mutual benefit and the imperative of environmental preservation, Brazil could improve cooperation with countries in the Arab world on four main issues: renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, forest conservation and technological cooperation to combat climate change, as well as strengthening the projects already underway to combat desertification. On the energy agenda, both Brazil and some Middle Eastern countries have great potential for developing renewable energies, such as solar, wind and biomass. One possible area of cooperation would be the sharing of knowledge and technology in this sector, with a view to diversifying the energy matrix and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

In agriculture, Brazil is an important producer of commodities, while some Middle Eastern countries have scarce water resources and face challenges in food production. Cooperation could focus on the exchange of sustainable agricultural practices, such as efficient irrigation techniques and soil management, with the aim of increasing agricultural resilience and productivity while reducing environmental impact. Once again, coordination between Embrapa and ABC could play an important leading role.

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56 "Transição energética e cooperação internacional: o que o Brasil pode aprender com a África do Sul." *Ep Br*, December 8, 2022. <https://epbr.com.br/transicao-energetica-e-cooperacao-internacional-o-que-o-brasil-pode-aprender-com-a-africa-do-sul/>.

In terms of forest conservation, while Brazil has the largest part of the Amazon rainforest, with immeasurable biodiversity, the Middle East also has unique biodiversity sites, such as the Hajar Mountains, located in the northeast of Oman and the east of the United Arab Emirates. Therefore, both actors could benefit from exchanging knowledge and experiences in the sustainable management of natural resources, protecting ecosystems and combating environmental degradation, with an emphasis on the possibilities for cooperation in the production of science and technology. In addition, it is possible to move towards greater political coordination in multilateral spaces, such as the Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Finally, with both Africa and the Middle East, cooperation projects in the area of climate must be careful not to end up promoting business initiatives by companies that are not very committed to the environmental cause and are adept at greenwashing. In the same vein, any expansion of trade agreements, whether at multilateral level or via agreements between blocs and regional organizations, must necessarily include socio-environmental criteria and requirements.

## **Conclusion**

Although Brazil has traditionally been a leading player in global climate negotiations and forums dedicated to sustainable development, this chapter has shown that, despite a long history of cooperation, especially on energy issues, South-South cooperation initiatives for Africa and the Middle East in the area of sustainability have often been interrupted depending on the political conjuncture. In view of this, there are a number of challenges facing the BFP for both regions.

In the case of Africa, throughout the first decade and a half of the 21st century, Brazil was committed to strengthening ties with African nations through bilateral and multilateral agreements, either seeking to share knowledge and experience in areas such as renewable energy, biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, or learning from African nations about successful experiences and technologies applied on the other side of the Atlantic. A notable

example is the collaboration between Brazil and African countries in promoting the use of biofuels as an alternative to fossil fuels.

However, there is still great potential to strengthen political and practical cooperation initiatives to tackle common challenges such as deforestation, ecosystem degradation, desertification, access to electricity and water security. To this end, the chapter has demonstrated that it will be necessary to consolidate and create new partnerships both bilaterally and within multilateral organizations. In this context, we highlight forums such as the CPLP, which already has a history of consolidated cooperation in the cultural area, but which must be expanded to other priority areas, such as sustainability, and also more flexible arrangements, such as the BIC alliance for forests—which must go beyond political declarations and start implementing concrete technical cooperation projects.

In the case of the Middle East, the chapter pointed out some challenges for strengthening the relationship with Brazil based on more sustainable premises, especially given the role of the region as one of the largest producers of fossil fuels in the world. Even so, a series of bilateral initiatives were presented in areas such as combating desertification, which have the potential to be expanded alongside cooperation programmes in irrigation techniques and water resource management. Faced with the imperative of promoting an energy transition, joint action in renewable energy projects has also been pointed out as an area with potential for cooperation to be explored.

In general terms, the chapter argued that the Middle East and Africa can and should once again occupy a central place for the BFP. There are ways for Brazil to rebuild its trade and economic relations, as well as to take steps to ensure that the environmental and climate agendas are at the heart of a more structured, lasting and less volatile partnership for these two regions. This effort could even strengthen Brazilian ambitions to consolidate a foreign policy that is capable of contributing to a fairer and more sustainable global order, with a greater role for the Global South.



## Chapter 9

# New Frontiers in Brazil's Foreign Affairs: The Climate and Environment Agenda in Relations with China

João Cumarú

The rise of Asia as a dynamic hub of the world economy with growing political influence, including in multilateral bodies, makes it necessary to deepen the debate on this region as well, especially with regard to China. Asia encompasses not only the main trading partner of Brazil—China—but also other partners of historical and geopolitical importance, such as Japan, South Korea and India. Furthermore, especially since the beginning of the 2000s, there has been a notable strengthening of regional and interregional integration mechanisms on the Asian continent, with emphasis on arrangements such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the most recent Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, originally “One Belt, One Road”—also known as the “New Chinese Silk Road”), which turned ten years old in 2023.

Some parts of the region, such as small island countries and Bangladesh, already suffer heavily from the consequences of climate change, be it rising sea levels, a worsening water crisis in Central Asia or melting glaciers in the Himalayas, which threaten the water security of millions of people. In addition, in some countries in the region, including the coastal areas of China, South Korea and Japan, typhoons are likely to become more frequent and powerful, such as Typhoon Doksuri,<sup>1</sup> which hit China and the Philippines in August 2023, causing the worst rainfall

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1 United Nations. “Tufão Doksuri provoca chuvas mais fortes em 140 anos na China.” *UN News*, August 3, 2023. <https://news.un.org/pt/story/2023/08/1818537>.

recorded in 140 years. In other places, such as Pakistan, recurrent flooding already leads to the forced displacement of millions of people.

At the same time, Asia faces various geopolitical tensions, including between China and the United States (US) over the status of Taiwan, and also in the Chinese region of Xinjiang, inhabited by the Uighurs and rich in oil. Among many other tensions are those in the Tibetan Plateaus, an area occupied by the Tibetans and fundamental to water issues in China since it is the source of the country's main rivers, and in the Kashmir region, a highly militarized area that has suffered from terrorist attacks due to the dispute between India and Pakistan.

On the other hand, there is a proliferation of initiatives and arrangements, some of them multilateral, to deal with common challenges in the region, such as the climate crisis. At the ASEAN forum,<sup>2</sup> which brought together heads of state in November 2022 in Cambodia, climate was placed at the heart of the agenda, and member states deepened the discussion around a Green Deal for the organization. This took place against a backdrop of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit the tourism sector hardest and reconfigured regional and global value chains.

Among all the countries on the Asian continent, the People's Republic of China stands out, and its importance today goes far beyond economic cooperation with countries in all regions. China is also a growing player in debates on the environment and climate. As well as setting medium-term decarbonization and energy transition targets at home, the country promotes a sustainable development discourse, including in its foreign policy—for example, by highlighting the goal of making the trade, logistics and infrastructure projects that form the New Silk Road greener. Today, China is the largest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG), and historically responsible for 12% of total accumulated global emissions. However, recent years have seen rapid progress in the generation of renewable

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2 To see the Summit's declaration, visit: Asean. *Chairman's Statement of the 40<sup>TH</sup> and 41<sup>ST</sup> ASEAN Summits*. Cambodia, November 11, 2022. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/01-Chairmans-Statement-of-the-40th-and-41st-ASEAN-Summits-rev.pdf>.

energy and it is expected that the targets for increasing solar and wind power generation will be met by 2025, five years earlier than planned.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to bilateral relations, which range from trade to cooperation in science, technology and innovation, Brazil and China interact on climate, biodiversity and sustainability issues within the framework of global governance bodies. Both countries are signatories and were important players in the negotiation of key frameworks, such as the Kyoto Agreement, the Rio-92 Conventions (on climate, biodiversity and desertification), the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Kunming-Montreal Agreement, signed in 2022 during the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. In the climate regime, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, the two countries were part of the creation of the BASIC group (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) in 2009 to coordinate positions during the negotiations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In order to address the role of China in the climate agenda, including within the scope of the bilateral relationship with Brazil, in addition to this introduction and the conclusion, this chapter is divided into four sections: first, the context of climate vulnerability in China is briefly presented; then, the process of recent construction of the country's environmental policy is discussed, with emphasis on its national and international commitments to tackle the effects of climate change. Next, Chinese investments in Brazil and their priority areas are analyzed. Finally, concrete possibilities for building a bilateral relationship with sustainability at its core are presented.

### **Climate vulnerability of the People's Republic of China**

China's Blue Book on Climate Change, released in August 2021, presents evidence that human influence is causing changes in the country's climate system. The publication points to a finding, shared by scientists in other countries, that the effects of global warming are worsening in

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3 Hawkins, Amy, and Rachel Cheung. "China on Course to Hit Wind and Solar Power Target Five Years Ahead of Time." *The Guardian*, June 29, 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/29/china-wind-solar-power-global-renewable-energy-leader>.



China. In 2020, the average global temperature was 1.2°C higher than in pre-industrial times, making it one of the three hottest years since complete meteorological records began. From 1951 to 2020, the average annual rate of surface temperature increase in China was 0.26°C every ten years, which is significantly higher than the global average over the same period (0.15°C every decade).<sup>4</sup> In this sense, China is a sensitive and significantly impacted area by global climate change. From 1991 to 2020, the average value of China's climate risk index<sup>5</sup> (6.8) increased by 58% compared to the average value from 1961-1990 (4.3).<sup>6</sup>

Like the rest of the world, China is bound to suffer even more from the consequences of climate change in the coming decades, including floods and droughts. Projections indicate that some of the country's coastal cities, such as Shanghai, could become submerged if the average global temperature continues to rise. Around 43 million people in China live on land that could be underwater by the end of the century if the average global temperature rises by 2°C.<sup>7</sup> China's vulnerability to climate change is being tested by extreme weather conditions, from heat waves to heavy rains, despite its efforts to build infrastructure and policies to increase climate resilience.

Water imbalances in the country, including droughts and floods, are causing power outages, often offset by increased use of coal, water rationing and reducing agricultural activity to emergency levels, which has been an ongoing trend every year. Although water levels in the Yangji River basin, the largest in Eurasia and which irrigates China's most fertile regions, increased in 2023, it is uncertain whether this is a short- or long-

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4 Junfeng, Li. 做好碳达峰碳中和工作，迎接低排放发展的新时代 [Carbon Peak and Carbon Neutrality for a New Era of Low-Emission Development]. *National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation* (NCSC), August 21, 2021. [http://www.ncsc.org.cn/yjcg/zlyj/202108/t20210821\\_858587.shtml](http://www.ncsc.org.cn/yjcg/zlyj/202108/t20210821_858587.shtml).

5 The climate risk index is a measure that assesses the degree of exposure and vulnerability of a given socio-ecological system to the impacts of climate change. The aim of the index is to provide information for decision-making and the implementation of public policies and strategies for adapting to climate change.

6 More information in the official document: China. "Responding to Climate Change: China's Policies and Actions." *The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China*, October 2021. <http://www.ncsc.org.cn/yjcg/cbw/202111/P020211117406748792288.pdf>.

7 Maizland, Lindsay. "China's Fight Against Climate Change and Environmental Degradation." *Council on Foreign Relations*, May 19, 2021. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-climate-change-policies-environmental-degradation>.

term trend. Heat waves, such as those that impacted southern China in May 2023, causing record temperatures in Shanghai and Chengdu, could cause further drops in water levels, which would again threaten agricultural productivity.

The year 2023 brought several extreme weather events to Chinese territory. At the same time as it reached its lowest temperature ever recorded,  $-53^{\circ}\text{C}$  in the far north of the country,<sup>8</sup> due to an unusual cold snap, less than six months later the record for maximum temperature was broken, with northwest China enduring temperatures of more than  $52^{\circ}\text{C}$ .<sup>9</sup> This year's heat waves in China heralded another El Niño weather cycle, posing challenges for water, food and energy provision. The Yunnan province, for example, which relies heavily on hydropower, is facing an energy crisis due to droughts, which results in a significant gap between supply and demand, leading to energy consumption limitations for companies in the Guangdong province, the largest electricity consumer in the country.<sup>10</sup>

This challenging scenario of global climate emergency has led China, since 2006, to draft various policies (with bold targets to achieve net-zero emissions) aimed at building a more sustainable path for the country's economic growth. Since President Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, he has pointed to the need to build a socialist ecological civilization with Chinese characteristics (中国社会主义生态文明), i.e. the vision of a green future that permeates various areas of Chinese public policy at the domestic level, but which also guides the country's actions in multilateral climate forums.

Based on this vision, the Chinese president believes that China's fast-growing character can be overcome by an approach marked by "high-quality growth," which emphasizes environmental concerns and aims to ensure greater harmony between development and sustainability

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8 "Cidade mais fria da China atinge  $-53^{\circ}\text{C}$ ." *Estadão*, January 24, 2023. <https://www.estadao.com.br/internacional/cidade-mais-fria-da-china-atinge-53c-e-registra-menor-temperatura-da-sua-historia-npri/>.

9 "China logs  $52.2^{\circ}\text{C}$  as extreme weather rewrites records." *Reuters*, July 17, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-logs-522-celsius-extreme-weather-rewrites-records-2023-07-17/>.

10 Watt, Jarrod, Jasmine Tse, Holly Chik, Ji Siqi, and Echo Xie. "China, Climate Change and El Niño: An Emerging Food, Water and Power Crisis." *South China Morning Post*, June 16, 2023. <https://www.scmp.com/video/china/3224300/china-climate-change-and-el-nino-emerging-food-water-and-power-crisis>.

demands. The idea of a socialist ecological civilization with Chinese characteristics can also be seen as a way of projecting historical and cultural capital and contesting dominant narratives, challenging, in particular, the possibility of coexistence between the capitalist economic model and pro-climate policies. The next section looks at the policies that China has been adopting to deal with the effects of climate change, as part of its process of building an ecological or ecosocialist civilization.

### **Chinese government policies and commitments to face climate change**

During the 1990s, China began to build political and institutional structures to deal with environmental and climate challenges. First, between 1992 and 2006, it developed a set of policies and programmes aimed at combating pollution and promoting energy conservation, i.e. reducing energy consumption by encouraging energy efficiency. Initially, the main concern in China was related to air quality due to the high levels of atmospheric pollution and, in addition to policies and programmes, various laws and regulations were also passed to achieve improvements in this area.<sup>11</sup> Although tackling the effects of climate change was not yet the focus of these initiatives, some progress was made in that period, such as the creation of the National Coordination Committee on Climate Change in 1998.<sup>12</sup>

As of the 11th Five-Year Plan (FYP),<sup>13</sup> covering the period between 2006 and 2010, important actions in the climate change mitigation strategy began to be taken. The term “climate change” was first mentioned in the FYP at a time when the Chinese government made an ambitious commitment to reduce energy intensity by 20% (energy consumption per

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11 To cite a few: Law on Prevention and Control of Air Pollution, revised in 1995; Air Quality National Standard (1996); Emission Standard of Air Pollutants for Thermal Power Plants (2003); and Law on Environmental Impact Assessment (2003).

12 Barbi, Fabiana. “Governing Climate Change in China and Brazil: Mitigation Strategies.” *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 21, no. 1 (2016): 357-370.

13 The five-year plans are the Chinese policy model for medium-term social and economic development. In other words, they are government plans drawn up by the Chinese state that provide guidelines, strategies and national development policies for the country over a five-year period. They were first drafted in 1953, four years after the founding of the People’s Republic of China.

unit of GDP) from 2005 to 2010. A 19% reduction in energy intensity was achieved before the end of the 11th FYP, focusing on the 1,000 largest energy-consuming industries, which accounted for almost half of industrial consumption in 2004.<sup>14</sup>

After the 11th FYP, a specific institutional framework related to climate change began to be established. The creation of government agencies; accountability systems aimed at reducing carbon intensity; climate change studies; specific legislation; and the strengthening of governance systems and mechanisms to deal with this challenge were some of the main actions taken.<sup>15</sup> Within this new governance structure,<sup>16</sup> the first National Climate Change Program of 2007 stands out, which in turn gave rise to the National Leading Group to Address Climate Change (NLGACC). Made up of officials from government ministries and departments and with the involvement of different sectors of society, these new institutional arrangements linked to the energy economy and environmental pollution, such as the NLGACC, have begun to reach the level of the provinces and autonomous regions of the government, spreading throughout the country.<sup>17</sup>

The 12th Five-Year Plan, covering the period from 2011 to 2015, set the goal of a 16% reduction in energy intensity and introduced targets for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which were adopted by all provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities), as well as seeking to increase non-fossil energy sources to 11.4% of total energy use. In order to achieve the goal of reducing national carbon intensity from 40% to 45% by 2020 compared to 2005 levels, proposed by the Chinese government at the Copenhagen Conference (2009), the 12th FYP set an intermediate target of reducing

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14 See Junfeng, Li. 做好碳达峰碳中和工作，迎接低排放发展的新时代 [Carbon Peak and Carbon Neutrality for a New Era of Low-Emission Development]. *National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation* (NCSC), August 21, 2021. [http://www.ncsc.org.cn/yjcg/zlyj/202108/t20210821\\_858587.shtml](http://www.ncsc.org.cn/yjcg/zlyj/202108/t20210821_858587.shtml).

15 See Barbi, Fabiana. "Governing Climate Change in China and Brazil: Mitigation Strategies." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 21, no. 1 (2016): 357-370.

16 It is important to note that the key institution in formulating strategies to combat climate change is the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), which is responsible for issues ranging from economic planning to the implementation of climate policies, through the Climate Change Department.

17 See Barbi 2016, and Junfeng 2021.

polluting gas emissions by 17% by 2015.<sup>18</sup> By the end of the 12th FYP, the carbon intensity reduction target had been exceeded, leading to 21.8% less intensive use of this polluting gas.<sup>19</sup> The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CCP), held in 2012, brought new guidelines to efforts to combat global warming, which became the highest priority in the governance of the state, from then on guided by Xi Jinping's thinking on building an ecological civilization.

The 13th FYP, covering the period between 2016 and 2020, reiterated efforts to change the energy matrix. A new target was set of 15% renewable energy in the energy matrix by 2020 and 20% by 2030; increased use of wind energy; development and leadership in renewable energy research; and a reduction in the participation of foreign companies in national energy companies.<sup>20</sup> At the international level, and more specifically during the general debate of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 22, 2020, President Xi Jinping announced that China would expand the ambition of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), striving to peak CO<sub>2</sub> emissions before 2030 and aiming to achieve carbon neutrality before 2060.<sup>21</sup>

The 14th FYP, which covers the period between 2021 and 2025 and is therefore the current Five-Year Plan, contains a series of climate and energy targets for 2025. Among the main decisions and targets set are: reducing carbon intensity<sup>22</sup> by 18% compared to 2020 levels; reducing energy intensity by 13.5% compared to 2020 levels; increasing forest cover

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18 Moreira, Helena Margarido, and Wagner Costa Ribeiro. "A China na ordem ambiental internacional das mudanças climáticas." *Estudos Avançados* 30, no. 87 (May-August 2016). Accessed June 6, 2023. <https://www.scielo.br/j/ea/a/6tpjw55ssj3rQhv9SJLymC/abstract/?lang=pt>.

19 "China com boas perspectivas de redução das emissões de gases de efeito estufa até 2020." *Diário do Povo*, November 6, 2017. <http://portuguese.people.com.cn/n3/2017/1106/c309806-9289186.html>.

20 Estevo, Jefferson dos Santos. "A China no âmbito da mudança climática. Negociações exteriores e políticas domésticas." *Desafios* 32, no. 1 (January 2020): 1-27. Accessed June 17, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.12804/revistas.urosario.edu.co/desafios/a.7682>.

21 For more information, see: Junfeng, Li. 做好碳达峰碳中和工作，迎接低排放发展的新时代 [Carbon Peak and Carbon Neutrality for a New Era of Low-Emission Development]. *National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation* (NCSC), August 21, 2021. [http://www.ncsc.org.cn/yjcg/zlyj/202108/t20210821\\_858587.shtml](http://www.ncsc.org.cn/yjcg/zlyj/202108/t20210821_858587.shtml).

22 It is a way of assessing the efficiency of carbon emissions from an activity or process, taking into account the amount of emissions in relation to production or use. It can be used to assess the carbon footprint of a company, product or service, and is an important indicator for the transition to a low-carbon economy.

to 24.1%; and increasing the share of non-fossil sources in the energy matrix to around 20%.<sup>23</sup>

Although China's coal consumption has been increasing again since 2017, the growth rate of average annual carbon emissions has been decreasing, falling from 12.7% in the period of the 10th FYP (2001-2005) to 1.7% during the 13th FYP (2016-2020).<sup>24</sup> The most recent data indicates that coal supplied around 55% of China's total energy consumption in 2021, down from 56% in 2020 and 70% in 2001.

Oil and other liquid derivatives are the second largest fuel source, accounting for 19% of the country's energy consumption in 2021. Although China has diversified its energy supplies and replaced some of its use of oil and coal with cleaner-burning fuels in recent years, hydroelectric sources (8%), natural gas (9%), nuclear power (2%), and non-hydro renewables (7%) represent relatively small shares of China's energy mix.<sup>25</sup> Despite the decline in coal consumption between 2001 and 2021, consumption of natural gas, nuclear power and renewable energy increased steadily over the period.

In addition to the FYPs, other events involving China related to the climate agenda have taken place in recent years. In April 2021, during a visit to Shanghai by John Kerry, Joe Biden's climate envoy, the two countries agreed to make more ambitious pledges to comply with the Paris Agreement. A few days later, President Xi Jinping took part in the (virtual) Climate Summit organized by the USA.<sup>26</sup> China, together with Canada, also led the negotiations at the United Nations Conference on Biological Diversity (COP15), which ended in December 2022 with the historic Kunming-Montreal Agreement to guide global action in favor of nature until 2030. The framework's strategic plan includes concrete measures to halt and reverse the loss of nature, including protecting 30% of the planet and 30% of degraded ecosystems by 2030, and also includes

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23 See Junfeng 2021.

24 See Junfeng 2021.

25 United States of America. "Country Analysis Executive Summary: China." *US Energy Information Administration*, 2022. Accessed August 4, 2023. <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/CHN>.

26 Volcovici, Valerie, and Jeff Mason. "Biden's Climate Envoy Kerry to Hold Talks with China, South Korea." *Reuters*, April 13, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/kerry-heads-shanghai-climate-talks-ahead-earth-day-2021-04-13/>.

proposals to increase funding for developing countries, which represented a major stumbling block during the negotiations.<sup>27</sup>

It is worth considering that the Chinese government is increasingly being urged for greater sustainability around the Belt and Road Initiative, launched in 2013. By May 2023, a total of 148 states and 32 international organizations had signed cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding as part of the initiative, which aims to interconnect countries through infrastructure, trade and services, among other dimensions of physical and digital connectivity that have environmental risks.

As a result, concerns have arisen about the fact that even when China makes progress in decarbonizing certain sectors domestically, it externalizes greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts to other developing countries through the Belt and Road Initiative, since this is not accounted for in China's climate and socio-environmental footprint. The Chinese government then began to promote the idea of the Green Belt and Road Initiative (Green BRI), including through green financing and the International Green Development Coalition (BRIGC), led by China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment. In addition to making the infrastructure and other investments of the initiative greener, the coalition aims to facilitate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the countries that are part of it.

At the regional level, China and ASEAN have been cooperating on various fronts to tackle climate change and promote sustainable development, notably through environmental protection, renewable energy and climate change initiatives. In November 2007, China proposed the creation of the ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Center (CAEC) and the development of a cooperation strategy at the 11th ASEAN-China Summit. In 2009, this articulation was concretized through the ASEAN-China Strategy on Environmental Cooperation and later renewed in 2016 (2016-2020 and 2009-2015), establishing objectives, principles and priority areas for cooperation (environmental protection,

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27 See declaration at: United Nations. *Convenio sobre la Diversidad Biológica*. Canada, December 18, 2022. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/2c37/244c/133052cdb1ff4d5556ffac94/cop-15-l-25-es.pdf>.



sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, climate change and disaster risk reduction). As a result of this cooperation, the China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Center (CAECC) was established in 2011 to serve as a designated focal point for facilitating policy dialogue and promoting environmental technologies, joint policy studies and partnership building.<sup>28</sup>

Beyond the regional aspect, China's greater emphasis on climate change at the international level, especially since the early 2000s, is marked by a foreign policy discourse that emphasizes solidarity with vulnerable countries and active participation in climate negotiations and the construction of global norms and standards in this area. This stance responds to domestic pressures, related to the urgency of guaranteeing a healthy environment for its population, but is also driven by economic interests and the need to build a positive global image.<sup>29</sup>

The commitment by China to achieve decarbonization and zero coal use in three decades is ambitious, but also challenging.<sup>30</sup> For it to succeed, it will be necessary to implement significant changes in production models, bilateral trade transactions and also investments, which will need to be aligned with a transition strategy towards a low-carbon economy.

As the world's second largest economy and the largest trading partner for dozens of countries, the necessary changes in export patterns and financial investments for China to achieve its decarbonization goals could have significant impacts on a number of countries. In the case of Brazil, it could be negatively impacted in economic terms by a possible reduction in Chinese demand for crude oil and other products with a high carbon footprint. On the other hand, there is scope for strengthening bilateral cooperation in areas such as the development of green infrastructure and

28 "ASEAN, China to formulate environmental cooperation plan." *Asean*, June 16, 2016. <https://asean.org/asean-china-to-formulate-environmental-cooperation-plan/>.

29 See: Moreira, Helena Margarido, and Wagner Costa Ribeiro. "A China na ordem ambiental internacional das mudanças climáticas." *Estudos Avançados* 30, no. 87 (May-August 2016). Accessed June 6, 2023. <https://www.scielo.br/j/ea/a/6tpjwS5ssj3rQhv9SJLymC/abstract/?lang=pt>; and Estevo, Jefferson dos Santos. "A China no âmbito da mudança climática. Negociações exteriores e políticas domésticas." *Desafios* 32, no. 1 (January 2020): 1-27. Accessed June 17, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.12804/revistas.urosario.edu.co/desafios/a.7682>.

30 Stanway, David. "China's CO2 emissions fall but policies still not aligned with long-term goals." *Reuters*, November 21, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/chinas-co2-emissions-down-since-2021-still-not-peak-report-2022-11-21/>.



industries, renewable energies and the sharing of green technologies.<sup>31</sup> The priority areas and opportunities for bilateral relations with Brazil on a sustainable basis are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

### **Priority areas for Chinese investment in Brazil: history and prospects**

Brazil and China have strong potential to explore the sustainability arena in a strategic and lasting way, based on new logics of cooperation and development perspectives, both in their bilateral relations and in multilateral forums. It is worth noting that, in 2009, China became Brazil's largest trading partner, overtaking the USA and the European Union, and has remained in this position ever since. Brazil, in turn, has been on the list of China's top ten partners for over a decade and is one of the main destinations for Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI). The occurrence of trade cooperation agreements between the countries has intensified since 2007. Between 2007 and 2020, Chinese companies invested US\$ 66 billion in Latin America. In this period, Brazil was the destination of 47% of Chinese investments in the region, and the main sectors benefiting were electricity (48%) and oil and gas extraction (28%), according to data from the Brazil-China Business Council (CEBC).<sup>32</sup>

In addition to the rapidly growing investment and trade ties that have marked the Sino-Brazilian partnership since the beginning of the century, China has also played an important role in providing loans to Brazil for more than a decade. Since 2007, Chinese banks have provided more than US\$ 31 billion in loans to Brazil, which has become the second largest Chinese borrower in Latin America, behind Venezuela. Notably, around 90% of this amount has gone to the energy sector.

Brazil is an attractive market for Chinese investment due to its wide access to natural resources, such as agricultural and energy commodities,

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31 Brazil. "Brazil-China Joint Statement on Combating Climate Change. Press release n. 134." *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, April 14, 2023. <https://www.gov.br/mre/en/contact-us/press-area/press-releases/brazil-china-joint-statement-on-combating-climate-change>.

32 Cariello, Tulio. *Investimentos chineses no Brasil: 2021, um ano de retomada. Conselho Empresarial Brasil-China*. Rio de Janeiro, 2022. Accessed August 15, 2023. <https://www.cebc.org.br/2022/08/31/estudo-inedito-investimentos-chineses-no-brasil-2021/>.

and competitive returns in key sectors, such as infrastructure and energy. In this scenario, as the main consumer of agricultural products exported by Brazil, which have a strong association with deforestation, China also plays a role in the scenario of ecological social devastation in the Brazilian Cerrado and Amazon regions—and is therefore an essential player in efforts to fight environmental crimes and develop a more sustainable vision for these biomes.<sup>33</sup>

China is also a leader in areas of great strategic importance for the future of the digital economy, such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, blockchain and cloud computing. The country also has expertise in smart cities, mobility, e-commerce, technology parks, waste management and health and distance education. Thus, in addition to economic cooperation, the innovation sector has strong potential to be explored given the Chinese government's large investments and political incentives for science and technology.

In this sense, China and Brazil should think about how to take advantage of opportunities and add more technological content and added value to Sino-Brazilian cooperation. Cooperation in technology and innovation could, for example, lead to the improvement of Brazilian production capacity, including in the area of agriculture, which would benefit from gains in precision and connectivity associated with innovations in artificial intelligence and robotics that China has mastered. On the subject of technology, it is worth noting that there is already a successful experience in the space sector with the China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite (CBERS) program, which was created in 1988 and has already put a series of satellites into orbit,<sup>34</sup> providing data and images that make it possible to monitor deforestation, natural disasters and the expansion of agriculture.

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33 Vieira, Flávia, Adriana Abdenur, and João Alves. "China in the Brazilian Amazon: examining the relationship between the growth in commodity exports and deforestation. Policy brief 01." *Plataforma Cipó*, October 2022. [https://plataformacipo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/policy-brief-01-20221020\\_EN.pdf](https://plataformacipo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/policy-brief-01-20221020_EN.pdf).

34 During President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's visit to China in April 2023, an agreement was signed for the construction of CBERS-6, to be developed by the National Institute for Space Research (INPE), which is responsible for the project in Brazil. CBERS-6 is expected to be launched in 2028 from a base in China. CBERS-6 will feature Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), which allows data to be generated in all weather conditions and through clouds. The technology promises to improve monitoring of the Amazon and complement data from other satellites.

At the interface between the environment, energy, infrastructure and technology, and considering that the areas of potential focus for Chinese-Brazilian cooperation (including environmental protection, the development of new energy sources, the production of electric vehicles and the digital economy) are among the Chinese government's priorities in the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), in what ways is it possible to build a bilateral relationship on a sustainable basis? This will be discussed in the next section.

### **Brazil and China: opportunities for sustainable relations**

Although Brazil has had a strategic partnership with the People's Republic of China since 1993, long-term planning is necessary. There are several reasons for Brazil and China to cooperate in a broader, more diversified and lasting way on the issues of climate, environment, biodiversity and sustainable development. Firstly, both aim to implement an ecological transition, although the concept has different contours in the two countries: in Brazil, the biggest source of GHG emissions is deforestation, while in China it is the use of coal—more specifically, from coal-fired power plants, steel boilers and coal mining itself. By taking advantage not only of each other's respective ecological transition demands, but also of their "strengths," such as China's high level of development in low-carbon technologies and Brazil's significant natural energy assets, it is possible to map out and plan cooperation that supports the implementation of structural changes in the economies and societies of Brazil and China.

Secondly, one of the points of convergence and possibility in Chinese-Brazilian cooperation based on sustainability is the need to prevent environmental crimes and other socio-environmental violations associated with trade between the two countries. This involves making agriculture, livestock and mining—the main sources of the products Brazil exports—more sustainable. To this end, it is important to strengthen the channels of dialogue, coordination, exchange of knowledge and technical cooperation between Brazil and China, the largest importer of these commodities.

In concrete terms, the two countries could act to encourage the multilateral negotiation of mechanisms and requirements that guarantee the traceability and sustainability of production chains and, at the same time, do not cause trade distortions and comply with the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In addition to the WTO itself, discussions and political articulations on the construction of multilateral rules to build supply chains free of socio-environmental illicit activities could be preliminarily advanced with the other Latin American countries within the framework of the China-CELAC Forum (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States).

For Chinese diplomacy, which is working to increase its credentials as a major player in global climate governance, contributing to positive outcomes in sustainable trade will be an important asset. It is no coincidence that Brazil and China have pledged to “engage collaboratively in support of eliminating global illegal logging and deforestation through effectively enforcing their respective laws on banning illegal imports and exports”.<sup>35</sup>

Thirdly, although Brazil is not yet part of the Belt and Road Initiative, there are convergences between the vision of development promoted by the current government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2023-2026) and the opportunities generated by the initiative, especially with regard to infrastructure. As the Brazilian government has already pointed out, the infrastructure deficit represents a significant bottleneck for boosting development and well-being in Brazil, something that Chinese know-how and investment could help to overcome.

At the same time, organized civil society, especially in socio-environmentally sensitive regions such as the Amazon and the Cerrado, demands that robust mechanisms and requirements be created to prevent the construction of ports, railroads, highways and roads—as well as any equipment for generating and transmitting energy—from damaging local populations and ecosystems, either through the destruction of nature and the loss of biodiversity, or through forced displacement and the

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35 Brazil. “Brazil-China Joint Statement on Combating Climate Change. Press release n. 134.” *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, April 14, 2023. <https://www.gov.br/mre/en/contact-us/press-area/press-releases/brazil-china-joint-statement-on-combating-climate-change>.

formation of pockets of poverty. China, as a key player in the financing and implementation of infrastructure projects, can become an important partner in the search for new technologies and methodologies to ensure their socio-environmental sustainability.

Steps have been taken to strengthen the sustainable component of the Chinese-Brazilian relationship. During Brazil's most recent presidential visit to China, in April 2023, several agreements were signed (such as the aforementioned sharing of technology under the CBERS program, whose new satellite will enable better monitoring of Brazil's forest cover). Most of the agreements (20 from the private sector and 15 from the government) signal a considerable expansion, diversification and strengthening of bilateral relations beyond investments aimed at increasing the export of Brazilian commodities. In addition, there were important political signals on issues such as the use of local currencies in commercial transactions between the two countries and the strengthening of South-South cooperation, including the promotion of low-carbon agriculture, energy transition and green infrastructure projects.

The visit was also an opportunity to strengthen cooperation in tackling common challenges, such as fighting poverty and promoting food security, which are of paramount importance to both nations. In addition, it indicated the potential for China to become a partner in Brazil's efforts to reindustrialize its economy.<sup>36</sup> In concrete terms, this reindustrialization process could involve encouraging direct investment, cooperation and the transfer of technology from China to expand Brazil's production chains of equipment for solar, wind and bioenergy projects and more advanced technologies, such as the production of electric vehicles. This could be done through agreements that encourage cooperation between Brazilian and Chinese universities, companies and technology centers, in order to guarantee a scenario of innovation and specialized human capital.

Another important development achieved in Beijing in April 2023 was the signing of a joint declaration on combating climate change.<sup>37</sup> Although

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36 Folly, Maiara, and João Cumarú. "New Era for Sino-Brazilian Ties." *China Daily*, May 5, 2023. <https://www.chinadailyhk.com/article/329383>.

37 See full statement at: Brazil. "Brazil-China Joint Statement on Combating Climate Change. Press release n. 134." *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, April 14, 2023. <https://www.gov.br/mre/en/contact-us/press-area/press-releases/brazil-china-joint-statement-on-combating-climate-change>.

it still needs to be translated into concrete policies, this is a significant step forward, as it demonstrates political interest in elevating the Brazil-China partnership in promoting global environmental protection. On the multilateral front, the declaration encouraged developed countries to honour their unfulfilled climate finance obligations and emphasized the desire of both nations to promote South-South cooperation, including with the Group of 77 (G77) and China, to advance the implementation of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

The declaration also signals some areas that could receive greater priority in bilateral relations, such as the transition to a sustainable, low-carbon global economy; smart cities; green infrastructure; development of green industries; renewable energies, including access and support for isolated communities; electric mobility; innovation, research and development of green technologies; and green finance and investment. These initiatives could be advanced within the scope of the also announced Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change in the Committee of the Sino-Brazilian High-Level Commission for Coordination and Cooperation (COSBAN). When the substantial weight of their economies and their position as one of the most biodiverse countries in the world are taken into account, prioritizing climate and environmental issues in bilateral relations between Brazil and China would not only contribute to the well-being of the planet, but would also increase the influence of both countries in an international context in which climate responsibility has become a geopolitical asset.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of the climate challenges faced by China, with an emphasis on water and energy security. From there, the chapter has presented the measures adopted by the country to deal with these challenges from the domestic point of view, through the targets set in its five-year plans; in the regional context, especially through ASEAN; and also at the multilateral level, within the United Nations. The chapter has shown that, despite the progress made by China since the 2000s, especially with regard to the adoption of regulations, targets and policies

aimed at promoting the decarbonization of its economy, the challenge of making Brazil's relationship with China more sustainable remains.

From this perspective, the chapter has highlighted the importance of mitigating socio-environmental risks of joint initiatives in the area of infrastructure and also from the point of view of trade relations, considering that China is the largest exporter of Brazilian commodities and has a strong association with deforestation in sensitive biomes such as the Amazon and the Cerrado. The importance of exploring opportunities for cooperation in the area of science and technology has also been emphasized, with priority given to issues such as environmental monitoring, low carbon agriculture, renewable energies and green infrastructures.

In this sense, the chapter has looked at the opportunities generated by President Lula's state visit to China, where dozens of bilateral agreements were signed, including a joint declaration on combating climate change. Finally, it comes to the conclusion that giving centrality to the climate and environment agenda in Brazil-China relations could generate benefits not only for the Brazilian and Chinese populations and biomes, but for the planet as a whole.

## Chapter 10

# Cooperation between Brazil, the United States and the European Union on Climate and the Environment: Opportunities and Challenges

Maiara Folly

After four years of a foreign policy that breached several of its diplomatic traditions and constitutional principles, Brazil is under the leadership of a new progressive government, headed by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who is in his third term as head of state. Lula's return to the presidency comes at a time of great geopolitical complexities, precisely when multilateralism faces a profound crisis of legitimacy, with widespread erosion of the cooperative global order based on respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations (UN).

The world can still feel the impacts of Donald Trump's ascension to the presidency of the United States of America (USA) in 2016, which marked the beginning of a phase of criticism of the UN and the other multilateral institutions that make up the global governance system. This rhetoric, which includes the science and climate change skepticism, persists and continues to be disseminated by governments and extreme right-wing groups in various parts of the world, from Asia to Europe, Africa and Latin America.

Even with the change in the federal administration in the United States in January 2021, disputes between the USA and China have continued to escalate. At the same time, the war in Ukraine, which in July 2024 will complete two years and a half shows no signs of coming to an end. Added to this is rising inflation and a cost of living crisis affecting various regions, including Europe, which, in addition to the effects of the war on its continent, also has to deal with the political and economic



consequences of the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union (EU), known as Brexit.

The result has been an increase in inequalities within and between countries, which requires that Brazil's strategy to strengthen the global fight against climate change be comprehensive and incorporate not only South-South cooperation, a topic covered in depth in Chapter 5 of this book, but also a resumption of relations with industrialized countries. These include the USA and the EU, which have strong diplomatic clout and make up the group that brings together the world's largest economies, the G20, whose presidency—as discussed in Chapter 3 of this book—was assumed by Brazil for the first time in December 2023.

Not least because of their historical responsibilities related to the considerable accumulation of polluting gas emissions from the start of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, through the colonial period to the Cold War and up to the present day, both Europe and the United States must play a central role in efforts to address climate change, including with regard to climate finance. With this in mind, this chapter analyzes the opportunities and challenges for cooperation between Brazil, the United States and the European Union in the areas of climate and the environment.

In addition to this introduction and the final considerations, the chapter contains three sections. The first and second provide a brief historical overview of relations between Brazil and the USA and Europe, respectively. The third section, in turn, addresses the current political-economic conjunctures in the USA and the EU in the context of the ecological transition and the challenges and opportunities they present for the relationship between Brazil and these two actors in the area of climate and the environment. This section also provides recommendations for deepening the Brazil-USA-EU partnership for global sustainability.

### **Historical overview of Brazil-United States relations**

Throughout history, relations between Washington and Brasilia have been complex, varying between periods of greater rapprochement and alignment and moments of pragmatic distancing. In the early 1960s, Brazil

sought to open up its economy to international trade and consolidate its democracy. Between 1961 and 1964, during the administrations of Jânio Quadros and João Goulart, the country implemented the so-called Independent Foreign Policy (PEI), which was characterized by efforts to adopt an independent position in the face of the division of the global order into two ideological poles.<sup>1</sup>

With the military coup of 1964, PEI was interrupted, ushering in a period of strong alignment with the USA, which was reflected in the severing of relations with Cuba and the sending of Brazilian soldiers to take part in the Inter-American Peace Force in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.<sup>2</sup> In the 1970s, especially during Azeredo da Silveira's period at the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1974-1979), Brazil adopted the so-called "responsible pragmatism", "giving priority to autonomously defined national interests, rejecting an aprioristic automatic alignment with the Western World" (Souto Maior, 2018, 203).<sup>3</sup> It is argued that the diplomacy of the period:

freed the country from the alienation of the policy of ideological borders and automatic alignment with the United States to which previous military governments had regrettably subjected it, establishing an independent foreign policy, pragmatically at the service of national interests (Jaguaribe quoted in Souto Maior, 2018, 203-204).<sup>4</sup>

This stance contributed to Brazil becoming the first country in 1975 to recognize Angola's independence and, consequently, the government

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1 Freitas, Auxília G. "Autonomia e pragmatismo: a Política Externa Independente e o pragmatismo responsável e ecumênico." *Anais do V Encontro Internacional UFES/Paris-Est*, 2016. Accessed September 23, 2023. <https://periodicos.ufes.br/ufesupem/article/view/11750>.

2 Souto Maior, Luiz A. P. "Brasil-Estados Unidos: desafios de um relacionamento assimétrico." *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 44, no. 1 (2001): 55-68. Accessed September 23, 2023. <https://www.scielo.br/j/rbpi/a/8K3Py3Ccnwq7fjmxNfNC4Hst/>.

3 Souto Maior, Luiz A. P. "O 'Pragmatismo Responsável'". In *O Pragmatismo Responsável na visão da Diplomacia e da Academia*, edited by Sérgio Eduardo Moreira Lima. Brasília: FUNAG, 2018, 203-244. <https://funag.gov.br/loja/download/1233-o-pragmatismo-responsavel.pdf>.

4 Souto Maior, Luiz A. P. "O 'Pragmatismo Responsável'". In *O Pragmatismo Responsável na visão da Diplomacia e da Academia*, edited by Sérgio Eduardo Moreira Lima. Brasília: FUNAG, 2018, 203-244. <https://funag.gov.br/loja/download/1233-o-pragmatismo-responsavel.pdf>. Our translation.

formed by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), a Marxist-oriented national liberation movement at the time supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba.<sup>5</sup> This did not, however, mean a rupture with the USA. On the contrary, Brazilian diplomacy maintained a privileged channel of dialogue with the United States, with frequent contacts between Chancellor Azeredo da Silveira and US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.<sup>6</sup> This relationship even culminated in the signing, in 1976, of a Brazil-US Memorandum of Understanding on Consultations on Issues of Common Interest, “which determined that the two countries would hold six-monthly consultations on problems relating to foreign policy or any specific issue that might be raised by one of the parties” (Moraes Mesplé, 2018, 449).<sup>7</sup>

In the 1980s, the US government under President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) adopted a more aggressive stance to contain the deterioration of US influence in Latin America and the Caribbean during the previous decade. To this end, interventionist measures were intensified to contain revolutionary movements and governments in countries such as Grenada, Nicaragua and Cuba. Brazil was not immune to political and economic pressure from the USA, which imposed limitations on the Brazilian strategy of diversifying partnerships.<sup>8</sup>

The post-Cold War era brought Brazil and the US closer together. Although initiatives such as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), one of the priorities of US foreign policy, failed to materialize, not least because of resistance from countries like Brazil, which were fearful of an overly asymmetrical relationship with the USA, the 1990s

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5 Moraes Mesplé. “Nota biográfica sobre Antonio Francisco Azeredo da Silveira.” In *O Pragmatismo Responsável na visão da Diplomacia e da Academia*, edited by Sérgio Eduardo Moreira Lima. Brasília: FUNAG, 2018, 437-453. <https://funag.gov.br/loja/download/1233-o-pragmatismo-responsavel.pdf>.

6 Moreira Lima, Sérgio Eduardo. “O Pragmatismo Responsável: o caso de Angola”. In *O Pragmatismo Responsável na visão da Diplomacia e da Academia*, edited by Sérgio Eduardo Moreira Lima. Brasília: FUNAG, 2018, 281-311. <https://funag.gov.br/loja/download/1233-o-pragmatismo-responsavel.pdf>.

7 Moraes Mesplé. “Nota biográfica sobre Antonio Francisco Azeredo da Silveira.” In *O Pragmatismo Responsável na visão da Diplomacia e da Academia*, edited by Sérgio Eduardo Moreira Lima. Brasília: FUNAG, 2018, 437-453. <https://funag.gov.br/loja/download/1233-o-pragmatismo-responsavel.pdf>.

8 Jaeger, Bruna Coelho, and Pedro Vinícius Brites. “O Brasil e a Grande Estratégia dos EUA: aspectos históricos conjunturais.” *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de Defesa* 6, no. 1 (2019): 217-240. Accessed September 25, 2023. <https://rbed.abedef.org/rbed/article/view/75080>.

witnessed a deepening of political and economic relations between Brasília and Washington.<sup>9</sup> As a result, issues such as human rights and the environment, which had previously been a source of tension due to the environmentally retrograde and politically authoritarian system that prevailed in Brazil during the military regime (1964-1985), began to gain more traction in bilateral relations.

The 2000s were also marked by closer and more pragmatic relations between Brazil and the USA, which meant a diversification of partnerships in areas such as trade, investment, energy, defense, science and technology, innovation, space cooperation, education, and culture, among others.<sup>10</sup> In that decade, the issue of environmental protection gained even greater weight in bilateral relations. Environmental concerns were, for example, on the agenda of President George W. Bush's visit to Brazil in 2005, during President Lula's first term in office (2003-2006).<sup>11</sup> Two years later, on another visit by the US president to Brazil, during Lula's second term (2007-2010), the two countries intensified their dialog on sustainable energies, with the signing of a memorandum of understanding aimed at intensifying technical cooperation to advance biofuel research and development.<sup>12</sup>

In 2015, during President Dilma Rousseff's second term in office (2011-2014 and 2015-2016), Brazil and the US issued a Joint Statement on Climate Change, which gave rise the following year to the High-Level United States-Brazil Climate Change Working Group (CCWG). The CCWG became responsible for implementing joint actions in the areas

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9 Jaeger, Bruna Coelho, and Pedro Vinícius Brites. "O Brasil e a Grande Estratégia dos EUA: aspectos históricos conjunturais." *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de Defesa* 6, no. 1 (2019): 217-240. Accessed September 25, 2023. <https://rbed.azedef.org/rbed/article/view/75080>.

10 Brazil. "Visita do Ministro Antonio de Aguiar Patriota aos Estados Unidos—Washington, 23 e 24 de fevereiro de 2011." *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, February 22, 2011. [https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/canais\\_atendimento/imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/visita-do-ministro-antonio-de-aguiar-patriota-aos-estados-unidos-washington-23-e-24-de-fevereiro-de-2011](https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/canais_atendimento/imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/visita-do-ministro-antonio-de-aguiar-patriota-aos-estados-unidos-washington-23-e-24-de-fevereiro-de-2011).

11 "Bush chega a Brasília neste sábado." *Agência Senado*, November 4, 2005. <https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/materias/2005/11/04/bush-chega-a-brasilia-neste-sabado>.

12 The full document can be found at: <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/mar/81607.htm>.

of sustainable land use and deforestation prevention, renewable energy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, among others.<sup>13</sup>

However, this agenda lost momentum during the presidencies of Donald Trump (2017-2021) and Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022), two presidents who denied climate change and introduced a series of measures and policies that went against environmental protection. Trump withdrew the US from the Paris Agreement, while the Bolsonaro administration was marked by the institutional weakening of Brazilian environmental agencies and high rates of deforestation in the Amazon and other biomes, a topic covered in depth in Chapter 2 of this book.

With the inauguration of Joe Biden in 2021 and, more specifically, after the start of President Lula's third term in January 2023, climate and environmental issues have taken center stage in bilateral relations. In a meeting with Brazil's Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Marina Silva, during the visit of US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry to Brasilia in February 2023, the reactivation of the CCWG was announced.<sup>14</sup> Its main objective is to resume cooperation initiatives and projects in the areas of combating deforestation and environmental degradation, strengthening bioeconomy, encouraging the implementation of clean energy, reinforcing adaptation actions and promoting low-carbon agricultural practices, as well as potentially expanding the work agenda to new priority areas for both countries. In April 2023, during the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate convened by the United States, the country also announced its intention to allocate, subject to

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13 Brazil. "Brazil-United States Joint Declaration on Climate Change." *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, June 30, 2015. <https://www.gov.br/mre/en/contact-us/press-area/press-releases/u-s-brazil-joint-statement-on-climate-change-washington-d-c-june-30-2015>.

14 More information at: Lacerda, Pedro. "Governo retoma grupo de trabalho para combate a mudanças climáticas." *Agência Brasil*, February 28, 2023. <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2023-02/governo-retoma-grupo-de-trabalho-para-combate-mudancas-climaticas>; Estados Unidos Da América. "Informativo: Cooperação Ambiental EUA-Brasil." *Embaixada e Consulados dos EUA no Brasil*, February 10, 2023. <https://br.usembassy.gov/pt/cooperacao-ambiental-eua-brasil-2/>; and Caprioli, Gabriel. "Comunicado de Brasil e EUA firma intenção dos americanos de integrar Fundo Amazônia, mas não cita valores." *Valor Econômico*, February 10, 2023. <https://valor.globo.com/politica/noticia/2023/02/10/comunicado-de-brasil-e-eua-firma-intencao-dos-americanos-de-integrar-fundo-amazonia-mas-nao-cita-valores.ghtml>.

congressional approval, US\$ 500 million to the Amazon Fund over the next five years.<sup>15</sup>

The time is therefore opportune to deepen Brazil-US cooperation on climate and the environment. This will be the subject of the third section of this chapter, which, after the following section provides a brief history of bilateral cooperation between Brazil and the European Union, will address the opportunities and challenges for cooperation between Brazil and these two industrialized actors on issues aimed at promoting sustainability at a domestic and global level.

### **Historical overview of Brazil-European Union relations**

Brazil and the European Economic Community (EEC) established diplomatic relations in 1960, three years after the signing of the Treaty of Rome, which created the regional organization. A year after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the EEC became the European Union (EU). Also in 1992, during the government of Fernando Collor de Mello (1990-1992), a Framework Cooperation Agreement was signed between Brazil and the European bloc with guidelines for deepening partnerships in areas including trade, investment, science and technology, intellectual property, health, transportation, culture, social development, the fight against drugs, fishing, mining, energy, the environment, the agricultural, forestry and rural sectors, among others. Despite not mentioning climate explicitly, the text of the agreement, which was promulgated in Brazil through Presidential Decree No. 1,721 of 1995, has ten mentions of the environment. In addition to recognizing the importance of reconciling the protection of nature with the imperative of promoting sustainable economic and social development, the agreement establishes the commitment of the signatory parties to pay special attention, in their cooperation actions, to the protection of ecosystems, such as tropical forests.<sup>16</sup>

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15 Amâncio, Thiago. "EUA anunciam US\$ 500 milhões para Fundo Amazônia nos próximos 5 anos." *Folha de S. Paulo*, April 20, 2023. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ambiente/2023/04/eua-vao-anunciar-us-500-milhoes-para-fundo-amazonia-nos-proximos-5-anos.shtml>.

16 Decree 1.721 is available at: [https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/decreto/1995/D1721.htm](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/decreto/1995/D1721.htm).

Also in 1995, during the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration (1995-2002), the Interregional Framework Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and its member states and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) was signed and enacted in 1999. With the main aim of deepening trade relations between the parties, the interregional mechanism, which specifies environmental protection as one of the sectors covered by economic cooperation, gave rise to negotiations, which continue to this day, for the creation of an EU-MERCOSUR free trade area.<sup>17</sup>

In the 2000s, and more specifically in 2004, during Lula's first term in office, Brazil and the European Union signed an Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, which deepened and specified some of the objectives provided for in the 1992 Framework Agreement. This new cooperative framework did not mention climate issues either, but it did specify biotechnology and the sustainable management and use of environmental resources as one of the areas of mutual interest for deepening joint scientific research activities.<sup>18</sup>

In July 2007, during Lula's second term in office, Brazil and the EU sealed a commitment to establish a strategic partnership. On that occasion, they launched a statement announcing their commitment to promoting joint strategies to tackle global challenges, especially on issues of peace and security, democracy and human rights, climate change, biodiversity, energy security, sustainable development and the fight against poverty.<sup>19</sup> In inaugurating their strategic partnership, Brazil and the EU also pledged to strengthen the global climate regime, with an emphasis on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

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17 Information on the MERCOSUR agreement is available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/PT/legal-content/summary/interregional-framework-cooperation-agreement-between-the-european-community-and-mercosur.html>.

18 Decree No. 6.112 of 2007, which promulgates the aforementioned Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement of 2004, is available at: [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_ato2007-2010/2007/decreto/d6112.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2007/decreto/d6112.htm).

19 This 2007 joint statement is available at: [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/er/95167.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/er/95167.pdf).



Since then, the two players have held summits at the highest political level, involving heads of government and state. Since 2007, seven Brazil-EU Summits have been held, four of them during Lula's first two terms in office and the last three, in 2011, 2013 and 2014, during Dilma Rousseff's administration.<sup>20</sup> All seven joint statements issued after the summits mentioned the issue of climate change and, in particular, the commitments and objectives of the UNFCCC. The themes of environmental protection and sustainable development and, more specifically, the protection of biodiversity and forests were also present in all seven declarations.<sup>21</sup>

In 2011, both actors committed to promoting sustainable forest management and exchanging experiences on best practices and measures to "prevent and combat illicit trafficking in forest products, including timber, wildlife and other biological and genetic resources."<sup>22</sup> That same year, Brazil and the EU declared their intention to explore opportunities for triangular cooperation with States Parties to the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (ACT), the subject of Chapter 7 of this book) on issues of interest to the sustainable development of the Amazon region. In 2013, in the joint declaration following the 6th Brazil-EU Summit, the Amazon biome

20 For a timeline of Brazil's bilateral relations with the European Union, visit: <https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/assuntos/relacoes-bilaterais/todos-os-paises/uniao-europeia>.

21 The summit statements are available here: Brazil and European Union. *1st Brazil-EU Summit. Joint Statement*. Lisbon, July 4, 2007. [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/er/95167.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/er/95167.pdf); Brazil and European Union. *II Brazil-EU Summit. Joint Statement and Joint Action Plan*. Rio de Janeiro, December 22, 2008. <https://intranet.eulacfoundation.org/en/system/files/II%20Brazil-European%20Union%20Summit%2C%20Joint%20Statement%2C%20Rio%20de%20Janeiro%2C%2022%20December%202008.pdf>; Brazil and European Union. *III Brazil-EU Summit. Joint Statement*. Stockholm, October 6, 2009. <https://intranet.eulacfoundation.org/en/system/files/III%20European%20Union-Brazil%20Summit%2C%20Joint%20Statement%2C%20Stockholm%2C%206%20October%202009.pdf>; Brazil and European Union. *IV Brazil-EU Summit. Joint Statement*. Brasília, July 14, 2010. [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/115812.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/115812.pdf); Brazil and European Union. *5th Brazil-EU Summit. Joint Statement*. Brussels, October 4, 2014 <https://intranet.eulacfoundation.org/en/system/files/V%20European%20Union-Brazil%20Summit%2C%20Joint%20Statement%2C%20Brussels%2C%204%20October%202011.pdf>; Brazil and European Union. *VI Brazil-EU Summit. Joint Statement*. Brasília, January 24, 2013. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/dmer/dv/vi\\_brazil\\_eu\\_summit/\\_vi\\_brazil\\_eu\\_summit\\_en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/dmer/dv/vi_brazil_eu_summit/_vi_brazil_eu_summit_en.pdf); Brazil and European Union. *VII Brazil-EU Summit. Joint Statement*. Brussels, February 24, 2014. <https://intranet.eulacfoundation.org/en/system/files/VII%20EU-Brazil%20Summit%2C%20Joint%20Statement%2C%20Brussels%2024%20February%202014.pdf>.

22 Brazil and European Union. *V European Union-Brazil Summit Joint Statement*. Brussels, October 4, 2011. <https://intranet.eulacfoundation.org/en/system/files/V%20European%20Union-Brazil%20Summit%2C%20Joint%20Statement%2C%20Brussels%2C%204%20October%202011.pdf>.



was mentioned explicitly once again, in recognition of the significant reduction in deforestation rates achieved by Brazil at the time.

With the political crisis sparked by the opening of the impeachment process against President Dilma Rousseff, which ended in August 2016, no new editions of the Brazil-EU high-level summit were held. After the inauguration of Jair Bolsonaro in 2019, relations with Europe were further weakened. Although the agreement between MERCOSUR and the EU was finalized within the first five months of the then new administration, the European countries proposed a side letter to the agreement, bringing additional environmental safeguards to govern trade between the two blocs, with provision for sanctions in the event of non-compliance with climate obligations. In his first months in office, President Lula strongly criticized the side letter, stating that “strategic partners should have a partnership of mutual trust, not distrust and sanctions” and promising to deliver a more balanced counterproposal.<sup>23</sup>

In September 2023, the response of MERCOSUR to the additional environmental demands of the EU became public. Among other measures, the South American countries proposed a compensation mechanism. In other words, if MERCOSUR considers that unilateral European regulations could reduce the concessions and trade openings provided for in the scope of the agreement, the bloc could take measures to compensate for this distortion. The counterproposal also rejects the application of sanctions and announces willingness to negotiate a joint instrument on trade and sustainable development, provided that it takes into account the domestic legislation of the parties in the light of different national circumstances. MERCOSUR also stated that the agreement with the EU should involve cooperation activities, including the necessary financing, to: (i) enable vulnerable sectors to take advantage of the benefits of the agreement; (ii) assist producers and exporters willing to comply with

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23 Boadle, Anthony. “EU Chief Sees Mercosur Deal this Year, Lula Fears Environmental Sanctions.” *Reuters*, June 12, 2023. [https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/eu-chief-sees-mercocor-deal-this-year-lula-fears-environmental-sanctions-2023-06-12/#:~:text=EU%20chief%20sees%20Mercosur%20deal%20this%20year%2C%20Lula%20fears%20environmental%20sanctions,-By%20Anthony%20Boadle&text=BRASILIA%2C%20June%2012%20\(Reuters\),the%20year%20at%20the%20latest](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/eu-chief-sees-mercocor-deal-this-year-lula-fears-environmental-sanctions-2023-06-12/#:~:text=EU%20chief%20sees%20Mercosur%20deal%20this%20year%2C%20Lula%20fears%20environmental%20sanctions,-By%20Anthony%20Boadle&text=BRASILIA%2C%20June%2012%20(Reuters),the%20year%20at%20the%20latest).

import requirements; (iii) promote sustainable production initiatives, in accordance with national legislation.<sup>24</sup>

On 14 September, the EU confirmed that it had received the document. The same day, a virtual meeting was held with negotiators from the two blocs to discuss the next steps, with the aim of concluding the negotiations by the end of that year.<sup>25</sup> Despite public statements in favor of finalizing the agreement by European Union officials and Brazilian authorities,<sup>26</sup> this scenario has become unlikely in the short term, especially when considering other points of divergence, such as the concessions made in 2019 on opening up the public procurement market, which Brazil is seeking to revise. Further complexifying the matter, French President Emmanuel Macron declared to be against the agreement,<sup>27</sup> and there are also possible political changes in view of the fact that elections to the European Parliament and the European Commission are scheduled for June 2024. Such electoral process will take place amidst a context of strong protests by European farmers, who complain about the economic impacts related to EU environmental requirements and also point to risks related to loss of competitiveness in face of the potential opening to new markets, such as MERCOSUR countries.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the obstacles to finalizing the EU-MERCOSUR trade agreement, largely due to environmental aspects, Brazil-EU cooperation on climate and the environment has gained momentum on other

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24 Moreira, Assis. "A íntegra da resposta do Mercosul à UE para concluir o acordo." *Valor Econômico*, September 16, 2023. <https://valor.globo.com/opiniao/assis-moreira/coluna/a-integra-da-resposta-do-mercossul-a-ue-para-concluir-o-acordo.ghtml>.

25 "EU Has Received Mercosur's Counter-Proposal on Environmental Requirements in Trade Agreement." *Agence Europe*, September 16, 2023. <https://agenceurope.eu/en/bulletin/article/13251/3>.

26 More information at: Orte, Paola de. "Lula se diz otimista com acordo Mercosul-UE e prevê enviar resposta do Brasil em até três semanas." *Valor Econômico*, July 19, 2023. <https://valor.globo.com/brasil/noticia/2023/07/19/brasil-vai-enviar-resposta-sobre-acordo-mercossul-ue-em-at-trs-semanas-diz-lula.ghtml>; and Verdélio, Andrea. "Lula Demands Clarity from Europeans on Mercosur Deal." *Agência Brasil*, September 11, 2023. <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/en/internacional/noticia/2023-09/lula-demands-clarity-europeans-mercossur-deal>.

27 Amaral, Ana Carolina, and Ivan Finotti. "Macron diz que é contra acordo entre União Europeia e Mercosul." *Folha de S. Paulo*, December 2, 2023. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2023/12/macron-diz-que-e-contra-acordo-entre-uniao-europeia-e-mercossul.shtml>.

28 Murray, Shona. "Protestos dos agricultores poderão travar acordo UE-Mercosul." *Euronews*, January 30, 2024. <https://pt.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/01/30/protestos-dos-agricultores-podera-travar-acordo-ue-mercossul#:~:text=A%20vaga%20de%20protestos%20dos,o%20Uruguai%20e%20o%20Paraguai>.

fronts. For example, like US President Joe Biden, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen also used the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate Change in April 2023 to announce the willingness of the EU to donate to the Amazon Fund. The possibilities and challenges for cooperation between Brazil, the US and the EU on climate and the environment in the current context will be discussed in the next section.

### **Opportunities and challenges for Brazil, US and EU cooperation on climate and the environment**

Since taking over the US presidency, Joe Biden has sought to introduce a series of measures to ensure both domestic progress in climate adaptation and mitigation and the strengthening of the United States' global leadership on the issue. Internationally, in addition to active participation during the UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties (COPs), the USA has launched its own initiatives to stimulate climate ambition, such as the Leaders' Summit on Climate<sup>29</sup> and different editions of the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate Change.<sup>30</sup>

Domestically, one of the main proposals of the Biden administration to encourage a transition to a low-carbon economy in the United States concerns the US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Initially, the bill was strongly resisted, especially by the more conservative wing of the Republican Party, which is traditionally skeptical of measures to tackle climate change. In August 2022, after undergoing adjustments in Congress, the bill was signed by Biden and the IRA became law.

In general terms, the IRA seeks to contain inflation and invest in domestic renewable energy production in order to achieve the goal of reducing emissions of polluting gases by around 40% by 2030, compared to 2005 levels. It is estimated that, over a period of 10 years, the IRA will generate revenues of around US\$ 740 billion, which should be

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29 More information at: United States of America. *Leaders Summit on Climate*. U.S. Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/leaders-summit-on-climate/>.

30 United States of America. "FACT SHEET: President Biden to Catalyze Global Climate Action through the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate." *The White House*, April 20, 2023. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/04/20/fact-sheet-president-biden-to-catalyze-global-climate-action-through-the-major-economies-forum-on-energy-and-climate/>.

converted into investments, loans, tax incentives and subsidies for the implementation of energy and climate programmes.<sup>31</sup>

Since it was passed, the IRA has provoked strong reactions from US allies, especially European nations, who see the legislation as a protectionist measure aimed at developing the US green industry, including through subsidies for the production of wind turbines, solar panels, batteries and electric vehicles with mandatory use of domestic components,<sup>32</sup> to the detriment of their trading partners' industries. For Europe, the IRA also violates the international trade rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO).<sup>33</sup> However, despite numerous expressions of disagreement, including, for example, as part of visits to Washington by the French and German economy ministers, at the time of writing this chapter the US had taken no significant steps to address European concerns.

In response, in February 2023, the EU announced the Green Deal Industrial Plan, which also provides for major investments to boost the productivity of the European clean technology industry. Even so, the initiative is quite different from the IRA: it does not provide for massive tax incentives or requirements on the use of domestic components in the production of renewable technologies, focusing instead on carbon taxation through measures such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).<sup>34</sup>

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31 European Union. "EU's response to the US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)." *European Parliament*, February 6, 2023. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL\\_IDA\(2023\)740087#:~:text=So%20far%2C%20the%20EU%20has,effects%20on%20the%20EU%20economy.](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL_IDA(2023)740087#:~:text=So%20far%2C%20the%20EU%20has,effects%20on%20the%20EU%20economy.)

32 For example, in order to be eligible for government subsidies, 55% of the components used in electric vehicle charging stations need to be of domestic origin. For solar panel installation projects, 40% of the components must be produced in factories in the USA. For wind turbines, 20% domestic components are required. From 2026 and 2027 respectively, the requirements increase to 55% for solar panels and wind turbines. Find out more at: Chen, Peng. "US to Require 55% Federal-Funded EV Charger Components Locally Made by July 2024." *DIGITIMES Asia*, February 16, 2023. <https://www.digitimes.com/news/a20230216VL203.html?chid=10;and> <https://www.utilitydive.com/news/irs-guidance-renewable-energy-made-in-us/650228/#:~:text=For%20project%20components%20considered%20%E2%80%9Cmanufactured,minimum%20domestic%20content%20requirement%20for.>

33 Amaro, Silvia. "EU says it has serious concerns about Biden's Inflation Reduction Act." *CNBC*, November 7, 2022. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/07/us-inflation-reduction-act-eu-raises-concerns-risks-wto-dispute.html#>.

34 Lenain, Patrick. "Inflation Reduction Act vs. Green Deal: Transatlantic Divergences on the Energy Transition." *Council on Economic Policies (CEP)*, March 20, 2023. <https://www.cepweb.org/inflation-reduction-act-vs-green-deal-transatlantic-divergences-on-the-energy-transition/>.

The Industrial Plan is part of a broader attempt to advance the European Green Deal,<sup>35</sup> introduced by the Commission in November 2019, which encompasses a wide range of policies and actions aimed at combating climate change, protecting biodiversity, promoting the circular economy and ensuring a just transition to carbon neutrality by 2050. In essence, the Pact has established a series of targets to achieve the so-called “green transformation.” These targets include reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, increasing the use of renewable energies, promoting energy efficiency, protecting and restoring natural ecosystems, as well as promoting research and innovation in clean technologies.<sup>36</sup>

As part of this framework for promoting more sustainable practices, in April 2023 the European Parliament approved the EU Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR),<sup>37</sup> which came into force on 29 June 2023.<sup>38</sup> This law aims to ensure that the import of commodities (specifically: palm oil, cattle, soy, coffee, cocoa, rubber, wood and their derivatives, such as beef, hides, leather, chocolate and charcoal) into the European market is not associated with deforestation and other environmental illicit activities and complies with the traceability and due diligence steps designated by the legislation.

It is therefore worth reflecting on the challenges and opportunities that this green transition in the United States and the European Union represent for Brazil. From a multilateral point of view, Brazilian diplomacy advocates strengthening efforts to boost the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the provisions agreed within the scope of the UNFCCC and its COPs. As discussed in Chapter 3, the country also calls for the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions, especially the

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35 European Union. “The European Green Deal.” *EUR-Lex*, 2019. Accessed April 6, 2023. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1576150542719&uri=COM%3A2019%3A640%3AFIN>.

36 More information at: “El Pacto Verde Europeo, una Hoja de Ruta para Impulsar la Economía Sostenible.” *Ihobe*, July 20, 2020. <https://www.ihobe.eus/actualidad/pacto-verde-europeo-una-hoja-ruta-para-impulsar-economia-sostenible>.

37 This law is based on the EU Timber Regulation of 2013, which will be repealed by the new law of 2023. See: European Union. “Timber Regulation.” *European Commission*. Accessed April 11, 2023. [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/forests/deforestation/illegal-logging/timber-regulation\\_es?etrans=pt](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/forests/deforestation/illegal-logging/timber-regulation_es?etrans=pt).

38 See: European Union. “Parliament adopts new law to fight global deforestation.” *European Parliament News*, April 19, 2023. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230414IPR80129/parliament-adopts-new-law-to-fight-global-deforestation#:~:text=The%20deal%20with%20EU%20countries,5>.

International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to give developing countries a greater voice, including greater financial support so that they can promote sustainable development and climate action in their own territories.

In this sense, since taking office for the third time, Lula's speeches have emphasized the moral and historical responsibility that actors such as the USA and the EU have not only to reduce their own emissions, which they have sought to do within the scope of the IRA and the European Green Deal, but above all to provide robust resources to help developing countries finance their ecological transition. Speaking during his visit to Paris in June 2023 to take part in the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact, Lula emphasized that rich countries must finance environmental protection, arguing that they must:

make rich countries responsible for financing developing countries that have forest reserves. [...] In fact, the people who have polluted the planet in the last 200 years are the ones who did the Industrial Revolution. And, for this, they must pay the historical debt they have with planet Earth.<sup>39</sup>

Lula and representatives of his government have also strongly criticized the European Union's Anti-Deforestation Law. In March 2023, the Ambassador of the Brazilian Mission to the EU stated that "Brazil has repeatedly expressed to the European institutions its views on the unilateral, punitive and discriminatory aspects of the regulation."<sup>40</sup> A more subtle manifestation against legislation such as that of the EU was made in the Brazil-China Joint Statement on combating climate change (discussed in Chapter 9 of this book), which "rejects unilateralism and green trade barriers."<sup>41</sup> The statement approved at the 15th BRICS Summit

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39 "Lula calls for rich countries to fund forest protection." *Agência Brasil*, June 23, 2023. <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/en/internacional/noticia/2023-06/lula-calls-rich-countries-fund-forest-protection>.

40 Source and more information at: "How Partnerships Complement the EU Deforestation Regulation." *FERN*, March 9, 2023. [https://www.fern.org/publications-insight/how-partnerships-complement-the-eu-deforestation-regulation-2628-1/?utm\\_source=Fern+Global+List&utm\\_campaign=47b463e1d0-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_4\\_10\\_2019\\_9\\_12\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a3733965c2-47b463e1d0-380382257](https://www.fern.org/publications-insight/how-partnerships-complement-the-eu-deforestation-regulation-2628-1/?utm_source=Fern+Global+List&utm_campaign=47b463e1d0-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_4_10_2019_9_12_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a3733965c2-47b463e1d0-380382257).

41 Brazil. "Brazil-China Joint Statement on Combating Climate Change. Press release n. 134." *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, April 14, 2023. <https://www.gov.br/mre/en/contact-us/press-area/press-releases/brazil-china-joint-statement-on-combating-climate-change>.

in August 2023 reinforced the position that the Brazilian government had already been defending:

We oppose trade barriers including those under the pretext of tackling climate change imposed by certain developed countries and reiterate our commitment to enhancing coordination on these issues. We underline that measures taken to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss must be WTO-consistent and must not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade and should not create unnecessary obstacles to international trade. Any such measure must be guided by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), in the light of different national circumstances. We express our concern at any WTO inconsistent discriminatory measure that will distort international trade, risk new trade barriers and shift burden of addressing climate change and biodiversity loss to BRICS members and developing countries.<sup>42</sup>

Despite these points of disagreement, especially with regard to the imposition of trade restrictions based on environmental criteria, something that the US is also considering implementing through the FOREST Act (Fostering Overseas Rule of Law and Environmentally Sound Trade Act of 2021),<sup>43</sup> a proposal for legislation still pending approval that seeks to introduce requirements similar to the EUDR, the climate interests of Brazil, the EU and the US converge in some other respects. This must be exploited in order to make progress on the environmental and climate agenda in relations with these partners.

For example, in a joint bilateral statement following the Brazilian president's visit to Washington in February 2023, Lula and Biden

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42 BRICS. "Declaração de Joanesburgo II (original English version)." Sandton, August 23, 2023. *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, August 24, 2023. [https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/canais\\_atendimento/imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/declaracao-de-joanesburgo-ii-sandton-gauteng-africa-do-sul-23-de-agosto-de-2023](https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/canais_atendimento/imprensa/notas-a-imprensa/declaracao-de-joanesburgo-ii-sandton-gauteng-africa-do-sul-23-de-agosto-de-2023).

43 United States of America. "S.2950—FOREST Act of 2021." *Congress.gov*. Accessed April 25, 2023. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2950/text>.



determined the reactivation of the high-level climate change working group, the aforementioned CCWG, and showed their determination to cooperate bilaterally and multilaterally, including within the framework of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, in tackling climate change and promoting sustainable development and energy transition. The USA also signaled an intention to work with the US Congress to secure authorization for the allocation of resources for programmes to protect and conserve the Brazilian Amazon, including initial support for the Amazon Fund.<sup>44</sup> On the margins of the General Debate of the 78th Session of the General Assembly in September 2023, Biden and Lula launched a US-Brazil Partnership for Workers' Rights, one of the central objectives of which is to promote the rights of this group and create opportunities for decent work in the context of a just transition to clean energy.<sup>45</sup>

The president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, on the occasion of her visit to Brasilia in June 2023, not only highlighted her commitment to contribute 20 million euros to the Amazon Fund, but also promised more robust financial contributions to other initiatives to combat deforestation in the region. In addition, he endorsed Brazil's bid to host COP30 in Belém and announced a pilot project involving investments of 2 billion euros to support the production of green hydrogen in Brazil and promote the energy efficiency of Brazilian industry more widely.<sup>46</sup>

Previously, the EU had also shown interest in developing a “strategic partnership” on critical minerals needed for the green and digital transitions.<sup>47</sup> The objective is in line with the proposal of the EU Critical

44 Brazil and United States of America. “Joint statement following the meeting between President Biden and President Lula.” *Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, February 10, 2023. <https://www.gov.br/mre/en/contact-us/press-area/press-releases/joint-statement-following-the-meeting-between-president-biden-and-president-lula>.

45 Brazil and United States of America. “Joint U.S.-Brazil Statement on the Partnership for Workers' Rights.” *The White House*, September 20, 2023. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/20/joint-u-s-brazil-statement-on-the-partnership-for-workers-rights/#:~:text=Our%20Administrations%20affirm%20our%20mutual,to%20our%20most%20advanced%20technologies>.

46 Brazil and European Union. “Statement by President von der Leyen at the Joint Press Conference with Brazilian President Lula da Silva.” *European Commission*, June 12, 2023. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT\\_23\\_3210](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_23_3210).

47 Moreira, Assis. “UE busca parceria com o Brasil em matérias-primas críticas.” *Valor Econômico*, March 10, 2023. <https://valor.globo.com/opiniao/assis-moreira/coluna/ue-busca-parceria-com-o-brasil-em-materias-primas-estrategicas.ghtml>.



Raw Materials Act, which aims for stability in the bloc's supply chain, including ensuring that no more than 65% of the European Union's annual consumption of each strategic input, at any stage of processing, comes from a single third country.<sup>48</sup>

Brazil is the world's largest producer of niobium (92%), used in technologies such as capacitors and supercomputers, as well as concentrating 13% of global production of bauxite, used to make aluminum; 8% of natural graphite, used for batteries and iron production; and 9% of tantalum, which is used for superalloys and capacitors for electronic devices.<sup>49</sup> Like Europe, the USA has also expressed interest in intensifying cooperation with Brazil in the area of critical minerals, such as lithium, cobalt and niobium, in order to reduce its dependence on these commodities and also strengthen its competitiveness in these sectors, where China has a strong presence in global and regional terms, including in Latin America.<sup>50</sup>

On the Brazilian side, authorities have emphasized a willingness to increase cooperation with Europe and the USA in this area, although they signal expectations of equal partnerships. In other words, it is emphasized that projects related to the energy transition in Brazil must be mutually beneficial and avoid repeating past mistakes, in which investments in renewable energies did not lead to technology transfer and, in many cases, were accompanied by precarious working conditions. In other words, both the political elites and Brazilian society are less willing to act as mere providers of raw materials and hope to enter into less unequal partnerships.<sup>51</sup>

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48 European Union. "Critical Raw Materials: Ensuring Secure and Sustainable Supply Chains for EU's Green and Digital Future." *European Commission*, March 16, 2023. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_23\\_1661](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1661).

49 Moreira, Assis. "EUA vão investir em mina brasileira." *Valor Econômico*, November 16, 2022. <https://valor.globo.com/brasil/noticia/2022/11/16/eua-vao-investir-em-mina-brasileira.ghtml>.

50 Moreira, Assis. "EUA vão investir em mina brasileira." *Valor Econômico*, November 16, 2022. <https://valor.globo.com/brasil/noticia/2022/11/16/eua-vao-investir-em-mina-brasileira.ghtml>.

51 Folly, Maiara, and Marília Closs. "Lula's New Government: Prospects for Brazilian Foreign Policy and Relations with the EU. Policy brief." *Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS); Plataforma CIPÓ*, July 2023. <https://feps-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Lulas-new-government.pdf>.

In order to do this, it would be necessary to boost cooperation in science and technology, a central theme of the aforementioned Brazil-EU Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement of 2007, often mentioned in joint statements between Brazil and the US, and which could therefore be strengthened within the framework of the reactivated CCWG. Based on these existing frameworks and through new partnerships, it would be possible to foster joint projects involving Brazilian, American and European research centers and universities, either bilaterally or even through triangular cooperation initiatives. Measures like this, centered on the exchange of scientific and technological knowledge, could lay the foundations for Brazilian companies not only to participate in the extraction of raw materials, but also to be able to develop value-added green technologies produced from these critical minerals.

Another relevant issue for these three players concerns agriculture, since Brazil, the USA and the EU are among the largest agricultural producers in the world, and this sector continues to be responsible for a substantial part of GHG emissions on both sides of the Atlantic. In this sense, it would be of common benefit to promote an exchange of good practices to strengthen joint initiatives for low-carbon agriculture<sup>52</sup> and policies to reduce methane emissions, in line with the Global Methane Pact, signed by Brazil, the USA and the EU at COP26, introduced in Glasgow in 2021, and today endorsed by more than 150 countries.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, the promotion of production chains free of deforestation, other environmental crimes and human rights violations is also a mutually beneficial issue for Brazil, which has made a voluntary commitment to zero deforestation in all biomes by 2030,<sup>54</sup> as well as for the USA and the

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52 See: Augusto, Pasquale. "Fávaro, Haddad e Marina Silva alinham diretrizes do Plano Safra 2023/2024, com foco na baixa emissão de carbono." *Money Times*, April 19, 2023. <https://www.moneytimes.com.br/ministros-favaro-haddad-marina-silva-plano-safra-foco-emissao-carbono/>; and <https://www.gov.br/agricultura/pt-br/assuntos/sustentabilidade/agricultura-de-baixa-emissao-de-carbono/publicacoes/abc-english.pdf>.

53 For more information, see: European Union and United States of America. "Global Methane Pledge: From Moment to Momentum. Fact sheet." *U.S. Department of State*, November 17, 2022. <https://www.state.gov/global-methane-pledge-from-moment-to-momentum/#:~:text=Uniting%20importers%20and%20exporters%20to,working%20towards%20the%20creation%20of>.

54 Cristaldo, Heloisa. "Governo instala comissão para zerar desmatamento no Brasil até 2030." *Agência Brasil*, February 8, 2023. <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/politica/noticia/2023-02/governo-instala-comissao->

EU. The three signed, for example, the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forest and Land Use, launched at COP26 and through which the signatory countries, now more than 140, also voluntarily commit to taking measures to halt the reversal of forest loss and land degradation by 2030.<sup>55</sup>

With regard to the European regulation that establishes requirements to prevent the import of products associated with deforestation (EUDR), whose similar provisions the US is also considering adopting within the scope of the FOREST Act, the Brazilian government's resistance to the legislation demonstrates that, in order for the EUDR requirements to actually be able to fulfill the objective of curbing deforestation associated with international trade, it will be essential to promote dialogue and cooperation between producing countries, such as Brazil, and major importers, such as the US and the EU. Thus, in order to gain political trust while promoting compliance with due diligence requirements, major commodity importing countries should first provide positive incentives and financial support to help producing countries implement and/or improve their own national traceability systems and domestic policies aimed at preventing and combating deforestation.

Secondly, to overcome the challenges related to the scarcity of resources, especially on the part of small producers, actors such as the US and the EU should establish programmes specifically aimed at supporting cooperatives, rural workers' associations, local extractive communities and family farmers. In this way, these small producers would be able to comply with external due diligence requirements and would not be further excluded from international markets.

Lastly, as well as being of interest to Brazil, the USA and the EU, guaranteeing production chains free of deforestation and environmental crimes in general would make a major contribution to global efforts to combat climate change and halt and reverse biodiversity loss. In this

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para-zerar-desmatamento-no-brasil-ate-2030#:~:text=Zerar%20o%20desmatamento%20em%20 todos,quarta%2Dfeira%20(8).

55 See: United Kingdom. "Lideranças mundiais lançam a parceria dos Líderes Florestais e Climáticos para agilizar contenção e reversão de perda florestal e degradação de terras até 2030." *Gov.UK*, November 7, 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/world-leaders-launch-forests-and-climate-leaders-partnership-to-accelerate-momentum-to-halt-and-reverse-forest-loss-and-land-degradation-by-2030.pt>.

sense, achieving progress in this area would represent an important step towards meeting the objectives of the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as well as the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, respectively.

Therefore, considering the weight of their diplomacy, Brazil, the USA and the EU should work together to establish rigorous, multilaterally agreed socio-environmental criteria and requirements to guarantee the sustainability of global production chains. They should also seek to encourage the engagement of other countries, both developing and developed, so that any global framework for sustainable trade takes into account different national circumstances and capacities and complies with WTO rules, which aim for open, fair and undistorted international trade between nations.

The G20, under Brazil's presidency from December 2023, could be a space for overcoming disagreements and building consensus that paves the way for Brazil, the United States and the European Union to work together to build multilateral solutions to promote sustainability. This not only concerns trade and international finance, but also the global fight against climate change and the loss of biodiversity as a whole.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that diplomatic relations between Brazil, the USA and the EU are long-standing and diverse, in the sense that they cover a wide range of issues and priority areas. In the case of the United States, especially during the Cold War, relations with Brazil were complex, oscillating between strong alignment and a responsible pragmatism that sought greater independence amid the division of the world into two poles of power. With the end of the authoritarian military dictatorship (1964-1985), human rights and environmental protection issues gained momentum in Brazilian foreign policy, both multilaterally and in bilateral relations with key players.

As a result, the 1990s and 2000s saw a strengthening of bilateral cooperation between Brazil and the USA and Brazil and the EU in the areas of climate and the environment. In the case of Europe, the chapter has

shown that components relevant to the environmental and climate agenda have been present in the Brazil-EU relationship since the 1990s, when a Framework Cooperation Agreement was signed, containing measures to deepen partnerships in areas such as mining, energy, the environment, the agricultural, forestry and rural sectors, among others. Environmental issues were also incorporated into the scope of the Interregional Framework Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and its Member States and MERCOSUR, signed in 1995, and the Brazil-EU Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement. The latter was signed in 2004 and specifies biotechnology and the management and sustainable use of environmental resources as areas of mutual interest for furthering joint scientific research activities.

As for the case of the US, the chapter has cited examples of enhanced cooperation between Brazil and the United States in renewable energies, which culminated in the signing, back in 2007, of a memorandum of understanding aimed at intensifying technical cooperation in biofuels, and also the creation of a Brazil-United States High-Level Climate Change Working Group, the CCWG, in 2015.

The chapter has also addressed the main measures currently adopted by the USA and the EU to encourage a green transition in their respective economies. The US Inflation Reduction Act, the IRA, has been shown to focus on the development of the US green industry through high subsidies and practices considered protectionist, creating competitiveness challenges for non-US companies. In Europe, the European Green Deal, aimed at boosting climate neutrality on the continent, and the wide range of policies, carbon taxes, regulations and socio-environmental requirements of extraterritorial application that accompany it have been criticized by the diplomacy of developing countries, which fear the risk of trade distortions. Brazil has vocally protested, for example, against the anti-deforestation law of the EU, the EUDR, which Brasilia considers to be unilateral, discriminatory and punitive.

Despite these challenges, the chapter has shown that there is room to advance a mutually beneficial partnership between Brazil and the USA, as well as with the EU. To this end, it was argued that it is necessary

for cooperation projects to be built on equal footing, allowing Brazilian actors to benefit, for example, from the transfer of US and European technologies so that the country is able to develop value-added green technologies, such as electric vehicles, and not merely act as a provider of critical minerals for the energy transition.

With regard to efforts to free production chains from deforestation, the chapter has argued that it is necessary for large importing countries, such as the USA and the EU, to offer positive incentives and financial assistance to producing nations, such as Brazil, to advance their own domestic policies to combat deforestation and other environmental crimes. It has also argued in favor of developed nations providing financial support to small producers so that they are able to make the necessary adaptations to comply with external sustainability and due diligence requirements and do not run the risk of being further excluded from international markets.

The chapter concludes by encouraging the strengthening of the leadership of Brazil, the United States and the European Union in the construction of fair multilateral solutions to promote sustainability, not only with regard to international trade, but to the global fight against climate change and biodiversity loss more broadly. As demonstrated, important steps have already been taken—and there are opportunities and challenges to be explored in order to consolidate climate, environment and development at the heart of the BFP agenda with these two important players.



## Chapter II

# Final Reflections: Brazilian Foreign Policy and the Triad of *Climate, Development and Democracy*

Maiara Folly

The environmental and climate agenda has complex social, political and economic dimensions. Brazil and the world are at a crossroads. Climate change, with its planetary impacts, is causing vulnerabilities which, in turn, require assertive, ambitious and innovative actions and policies. If the millennium began with the *recognition* that environmental problems are global, its third decade points to the *urgency of effective actions* that guide the present and the long term.<sup>1</sup> With this in mind, this book has attempted to summarize and analyse Brazilian foreign policy (BFP) in different multilateral forums and regions, with an emphasis on its actions in the areas of climate and development.

The historical framework in which this book is written should be borne in mind not only because of the urgency of addressing climate change, but also because of the serious setback experienced between 2018 and 2022 in terms of the BFP and of Brazil's environmental and climate policies. The chapters of this book were designed to cover different themes and regions of the globe, in an attempt to guide the resumption of a Brazilian foreign policy based on the leadership and credibility that the country once had and needs to regain—at this time, with a focus on climate and the environment—in the international system. As demonstrated throughout the book, in the face of this crossroads, international cooperation and the construction of fair, democratic and effective global governance will be indispensable.

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1 Teixeira, Izabella, and Ana Toni. "A crise ambiental-climática e os desafios da contemporaneidade: o Brasil e sua política ambiental." *CEBRI-Revista* 1, no. 1 (January-March 2022). Accessed September 28, 2023. <https://cebri.org/revista/br/artigo/21/a-crise-ambiental-climatica-e-os-desafios-da-contemporaneidade-o-brasil-e-sua-politica-ambiental>.



Chapter 1, “A Transforming Global Order, Geopolitical Turbulence and Climate Change: Challenges and Possibilities for Brazilian Foreign Policy”, aimed to present elements of the international political conjuncture that are important for thinking about the BFP in climate and to discuss the central potentialities for Brazil in the current global order. The chapter pointed out that the current situation is marked by profound transformations, such as growing multipolarity, with the consolidation of new poles of power—albeit at the same time as the reappearance of old geopolitical rivalries and the outbreak and prolongation of armed conflicts. Recent years have also shown that the increase in inequality and poverty across the globe has been accompanied by the rise of the extreme right and de-democratization in various territories, including in Latin America. It is against this backdrop that the ever-increasing impacts of climate change can be seen. The climate issue, far from being an isolated threat, is aggravated by these other challenges.

At the same time, it was pointed out that global governance mechanisms have proved ineffective in dealing with this scenario: the responses of the United Nations (UN) member states have fallen short of the urgency imposed by the socio-environmental and climate challenges, and current climate governance has not been able to quickly and effectively boost the coalitions and multilateral political arrangements needed to promote international cooperation and climate action. In addition, the current governance framework has been unable to ensure robust climate finance, especially for developing nations, and has failed to guarantee that commitments signed by states at international level are actually fulfilled. This goes hand in hand with the crisis of legitimacy of multilateralism, which, for various reasons, undermines the possibilities for action by international organizations.

After four years of a foreign policy that dismantled its own fundamental principles, such as the defense of peace and human rights and cooperation between peoples, Brazil lost credibility and space in the international arena. In view of the scenario discussed, Chapter 1 pointed out general guidelines for the reconstruction of a proud and active foreign policy, but with climate and the environment as central elements. The chapter discussed key points, such as the need for an

innovative and proactive BFP, as well as a more ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) with greater transparency and societal participation in its design. However, the chapter pointed out that this must be accompanied by the reconstruction of domestic elements, such as reversing the institutional dismantling of environmental and climate policies promoted by the administration of former president Jair Bolsonaro, revitalizing scrapped federal agencies, combating deforestation and a solid policy to tackle environmental crimes in Brazil.

Chapter 2, “A Just, Sovereign and Equitable Transition: Formulating a Concept to Guide Brazilian Foreign Policy”, argued that the concept of *just, sovereign and equitable transition* can be useful for guiding both national and international climate and environmental policies. After all, at a time when social policies and the democratic rule of law are being rebuilt, it is important that the goals and objectives linked to climate and the environment are connected to issues of social justice, combating inequalities and building a dignified and fair life. In the case of Brazil, there are three central agendas, which were the focus of the chapter: energy and mining; agriculture and food sovereignty; and industrialization and green technologies.

With regard to energy and mining, the chapter showed that in the last four years (2019-2022), Brazil has experienced a rise in emissions in the energy sector, with an increase in fossil energy production, and that even the list of renewable energies, especially hydroelectricity and biofuels, presents challenges in socio-environmental terms. At the same time, the inadequacy of legal instruments and energy planning undermines the scenario. As a result, it was argued that it is important for Brazil to move towards the democratization of energy, expanding renewable energy sources in its matrix, diversifying and decentralizing it, in a process that also seeks to avoid job insecurity.

For the agriculture and food agenda, the chapter discussed the complexity of the Brazilian scenario, in which agribusiness is one of the main economic stakeholders, along with all the socio-environmental and climate impacts that this entails. With the dismantling of policies aimed at family farming and food security and the centralization of resources

directed at agribusiness, the chapter concluded that today's context demands a responsible policy for sovereign and sustainable agriculture. Finally, the chapter addressed the issue of widespread deindustrialization in Brazil, which accelerated in 2015, and argued that Brazil's (new) industrialization process should avoid falling into the traps of the past, aim to develop sustainable sciences and technologies, observe urgent social demands such as basic sanitation and health, and rely on key players such as the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES).

Chapter 3, "Climate and Finance: The Role of the G20 and the Bretton Woods Institutions", discussed the role of the G20 and the Bretton Woods institutions in the climate and environment agenda for the BFP. The text pointed out that the key institutions of global governance fall short of the leadership needed to accelerate a global and just transition. It also showed that the Bretton Woods institutions, whose design dates back to the post-war period, are clearly outdated and therefore not suited to the contemporary challenges of the global order. As a result, and without access to the appropriate amount of financial resources needed to adapt to climate change, countries, especially in the Global South, tend not to be able to adjust to the new times. The text also pointed out that some of the gaps are being covered by bilateral partnerships, promoted mainly by China, and that the reforms of these organizations, mainly the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, are on the agenda, but have proved insufficient.

In addition, the chapter argued that, despite the progress made in incorporating climate issues into its agenda, the G20 has still not managed to drive substantive actions to hasten the global fight against climate change and biodiversity loss. The text showed, for example, that there is a lack of political will to move forward on issues such as mobilizing efforts and funding to comply with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and, more specifically, the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, approved in 2015 and 2022, respectively. In view of this, the chapter presented possible ways of strengthening financial institutions to better provide means of promoting the implementation of these frameworks, as well as

pointing out opportunities for Brazilian foreign policy, especially in view of Brazil's presidency of the G20 throughout 2024.

Chapter 4, "Brazilian Foreign Policy: From Rio-92 to COP30", discussed the role of Brazil as a global leader in environmental conferences and UN conferences on climate, biodiversity and desertification. The text pointed out the historically proactive role of BFP in the environmental agenda and highlighted Brazil's participation at key moments, such as the 1972 Stockholm Conference, Eco-92 and Rio+20. It also pointed out the importance of the BFP in developing fundamental concepts for the global environmental and climate agenda, such as the concepts of sustainable development and common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR).

The chapter then presented how Brazil has acted at the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) on climate, specifically pointing out the challenges and possibilities for COP30, which is to be held in Belém do Pará in 2025, ten years after the Paris Agreement. The importance of a more robust Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and the inclusion of climate justice at the heart of international strategy were also highlighted. Furthermore, it was pointed out that Brazil can and should advocate more strongly for the climate agenda to go beyond mitigation, stressing that it only makes sense to develop climate policies taking development and social inclusion into account.

Chapter 5, "South-South Cooperation on Climate and the Environment: The Role of IBSA, BRICS and BASIC", discussed Brazil's initiatives in the field of international cooperation, focusing on the so-called South-South cooperation and variable geometry coalition arrangements, with special emphasis on BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) and BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China). The text retraced the history of International Development Cooperation and South-South Cooperation, including pointing out how the latter arose to reduce asymmetrical relations and dependency on the former. It then provided a history of South-South cooperation in the BFP and Brazil's role in important moments in the construction and evolution of international climate

governance, such as the Stockholm Conference, the signing of the Kyoto Protocol and Eco-92.

The chapter then noted that, since the first Lula administration (2003-2006), Brazil began to play a more prominent international role, including in environmental agendas. The creation of IBSA in 2003 was described as an important step for South-South cooperation in the BFP—and the group's agendas related to the environment and climate, especially renewable energies, were highlighted. The work of the BRICS was also discussed, with emphasis on issues such as sustainable development and the role of the New Development Bank in this area. Finally, the text analyzed the performance of BASIC in multilateral and negotiating spaces and emphasized the importance of this grouping in mobilizing the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR). The text signaled measures that would be important to deepen the climate and environment agendas in these arrangements, such as strengthening working groups, expanding cooperation projects in areas such as renewable energy and green infrastructure, and making efforts to expand South-South cooperation projects aimed at climate mitigation and adaptation.

Chapter 6, “Brazilian Foreign Policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean: Paths for the (Re)construction of Sustainable and Sovereign Regional Integration”, discussed the BFP for the region, signaling opportunities and challenges for the climate and environmental agenda. The chapter began with an analysis of the Latin American and Caribbean scenario in terms of the multilateral regional agenda in general, and then presented the political conjuncture in relation to socio-environmental and climate agendas specifically. It was pointed out that Latin America and the Caribbean have not only gone through a period of dismantling of their institutional and cooperation architecture, with the emptying of organizations such as the UNASUR (Union of South American Nations), but also a context of intensifying socio-environmental conflicts.

The chapter identified three central agendas for the BFP on climate and environment for Latin America and the Caribbean: energy (including energy infrastructure), critical minerals and deforestation. With regard to energy, the chapter pointed out the difficulty of making

progress on a just energy transition agenda in the region, since many countries depend energetically and economically on fossil fuels. On the critical minerals' agenda, it pointed out not only the harmfulness of maintaining a predatory pattern of extraction, but also the challenges of the current situation in view of the exponential increase in global demand for minerals, such as lithium, for the energy transition. Finally, the connection between deforestation and environmental crimes and the primary-export economic structure in the region was discussed.

Against this backdrop, the chapter stressed that today the regional structure for cooperation and promoting dialogue is not capable of ensuring that the necessary steps are taken to combat climate change and environmental degradation in the Latin American and Caribbean region. The main mechanisms are empty and out of date with regard to the agenda. In addition, it was emphasized that it is important to take a critical look at the policies adopted in the past so that mistakes on socio-environmental issues are not repeated. For this reason, important steps were pointed out for the BFP to strengthen the agenda, such as reorienting (including institutionally and conceptually) the regional integration agenda.

Chapter 7, "Pan-Amazon Cooperation: The Role of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) and Brazil", analyzed cooperative arrangements between the countries of the Amazon, with an emphasis on the ACTO and Brazil's role in such mechanisms. The chapter illustrated the historical evolution of pan-Amazon cooperation, highlighting its importance not only for tackling existing challenges in the Amazon region, such as environmental and cross-border crimes, but also for building a positive agenda. This agenda should encourage the sharing of knowledge, expertise and (human and financial) resources to develop economic alternatives that reconcile environmental preservation and social inclusion.

Finally, the chapter argued that ACTO, the only international organization with headquarters in Brazil, should play a central role in revitalizing the regional agenda for sustainable development in the Amazon. It was also argued that the implementation of the commitments

made in the Belém Declaration, approved at the IV Meeting of Presidents of States Parties to the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, the so-called Amazon Summit, can play an important role in fostering international cooperation to avoid the point of no return for the biome and that Brazil should take a leading role in this process.

Chapter 8, “Brazilian Foreign Policy towards Africa and the Middle East on Climate and the Environment: Challenges and Possibilities”, highlighted the importance that Africa and the Middle East have historically played in the BFP, albeit with pendular relations—at times with greater and at others with less proximity. After providing a historical overview of the BFP for Africa and the Middle East, the chapter argued that it is necessary not only to return to successful policies of the past, but to move forward critically, updating policies *for* and *with* Africa and the Middle East in a qualified manner, especially with regard to the climate and environment agendas.

It was argued that the current political moment, with the re-creation in January 2023 of the Secretariat for Africa and the Middle East at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, should be used to advance South-South dialogues, policies and partnerships on a more structured, sustainable and lasting basis. It was concluded that this effort could even strengthen Brazil’s ambitions to consolidate a foreign policy capable of contributing to a more just and sustainable global order, with a greater role for the Global South.

Chapter 9, “New Frontiers in Brazil’s Foreign Affairs: The Climate and Environment Agenda in Relations with China”, focused on Brazil’s main trading partner, China, without neglecting Asian integration mechanisms such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Belt and Road initiative—the New Silk Road. It is worth bearing in mind the importance of China not only in terms of trade and the economy, but also considering its expanding role in the environmental and climate agenda. Brazil’s importance to China cannot be overlooked either, as our country is one of its top ten partners and is among the main destinations for Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI).

With regard to climate change, the chapter highlighted that, although the Asian country is the main emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG), China has been working on the issue at domestic, bilateral and multilateral levels, aware of the challenges and vulnerabilities that the climate emergency imposes on the world and, in particular, on its territory and population. In this sense, the chapter provides an overview of different Chinese instruments relating to climate and the environment, highlighting that actions in terms of mitigation have gained greater relevance since the 11th Five-Year Plan (FYP). In the current FYP, there are a series of decisions and targets to be met by 2025. Despite this, some challenges and possible contradictions have also been pointed out. With regard to China's energy matrix, for example, despite the progress made in terms of decarbonization at the domestic level, China is still dependent on coal and oil and often ends up outsourcing GHG emissions and other socio-environmental and climate impacts to third countries.

The fact is that China has been a regional and global protagonist in climate negotiations and global governance and, considering Brazil's history and the current opportunity from Lula's third term, there is more and more room to strengthen the Chinese-Brazilian relationship on this front. Bilaterally, the chapter pointed out that although Brazil-China trade can have negative socio-environmental impacts, there is room to expand cooperation in favor of sustainability, such as in the areas of green infrastructure and renewable energies. In addition, China could become an important partner in global efforts to build standards to guarantee production chains free of socio-environmental illicit practices. Another area highlighted by the chapter concerns cooperation in innovation, science and technology, and it was also pointed out that issues such as social inclusion, combating poverty and promoting food security—agendas that are dear to both nations—can be strengthened with greater cooperation between the two countries on the environmental and climate agenda.

Chapter 10, "Cooperation between Brazil, the United States and the European Union on Climate and the Environment: Opportunities and Challenges", presented a history of diplomatic relations between Brazil, the United States of America (USA) and the European Union (EU), with an



emphasis on the relevant components to the environmental and climate agenda. The chapter also covered the main measures currently adopted by the USA and the EU to encourage a green transition in their respective economies. It highlighted the US Inflation Reduction Act, which focuses on developing the US green industry through high subsidies and practices that can create competitiveness challenges for non-US companies. The chapter also looked at the European Green Deal and the wide range of policies, carbon taxes, regulations and socio-environmental requirements of extraterritorial application that accompany it, which in turn have been criticized by Brazilian diplomacy and developing countries, who fear trade distortion risks.

Despite these challenges, the chapter showed that there is room to advance a mutually beneficial partnership between Brazil and the USA, as well as with the European bloc. To this end, it was argued that cooperation projects need to be built on equal footing, allowing Brazilian actors to benefit, for example, from the transfer of US and European technologies so that the country is able to develop value-added green technologies, such as electric vehicles, and not merely act as a supplier of critical minerals for the energy transition.

In general, this book has sought to point out ways to build a Brazilian foreign policy that will help build a Brazil and, ultimately, a world that is environmentally sustainable and socially just. The return to credibility and leadership of the BFP is extremely necessary because, as the chapters have shown, the planet faces a crossroads at which complex environmental, climatic and geopolitical challenges converge, and the lack of solidarity, action and coordinated policies to tackle climate change impose existential challenges.

In the case of Brazil, the most biodiverse country in the world, there is no more room for setbacks like those seen during the Bolsonaro administration, whose anti-environmental policies and threats to human rights and, more broadly, democracy, have not only caused unprecedented socio-environmental damage but have also isolated the country internationally. The challenges Brazil has faced in recent years, which have also been observed in the United States, Europe and other

countries and regions where the far right has been in power or has gained political strength, demonstrate that respect for *democracy* and democratic principles must be at the heart of a strategy to promote sustainability, both domestically and from the perspective of international relations.

From a domestic point of view, a democratic order requires the full existence of the rule of law and due process of law, the guarantee of political and civil rights, independent judiciary, free and regular elections in which the entire population can exercise their right to free and informed voting, freedom of the press, protection of minorities and respect for other constitutional precepts and guarantees,<sup>2</sup> which, in the Brazilian case, include the right to an ecologically balanced environment. If, on the one hand, the maintenance of democracy provides the necessary conditions for the preservation of the environment and the rights of the peoples and communities that protect and depend on it to prevail internally, on the other hand, the democratization of international relations is also necessary for tackling climate change globally.

And for the global order to be more democratic, it is necessary to guarantee broad respect for international law, the UN Charter and the sovereign equality of all states, but also to strengthen multilateralism—which presupposes that the institutions that make up global governance are fairer and more representative of the population, economic and political distribution of the current international order.<sup>3</sup> As President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva pointed out at the opening of the 58th UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 2003, “every nation committed to democracy in the domestic sphere should take care to ensure that decision-making processes are transparent, legitimate, and representative in the international sphere as well.”<sup>4</sup>

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2 Patriota, Antonio. “Democratizar as Relações Internacionais: ordem internacional, multilateralismo e princípios democráticos.” *CEBRI-Revista* 1, no. 3 (2022). Accessed October 8, 2023. <https://cebri.org/revista/br/artigo/41/democratizar-as-relacoes-internacionais>.

3 Patriota, Antonio. “Democratizar as Relações Internacionais: ordem internacional, multilateralismo e princípios democráticos.” *CEBRI-Revista* 1, no. 3 (2022). Accessed October 8, 2023. <https://cebri.org/revista/br/artigo/41/democratizar-as-relacoes-internacionais>.

4 The opening speech of the 58th UNGA Session, held in 2003 in New York, is available in English at: <http://undocs.org/en/A/58/PV.7>. This passage from the speech can be found in the aforementioned article by Patriota (2022).

As Ambassador and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Patriota argues, the defense of democracy as an organizing principle of the international system is not something obvious. On the contrary, it is difficult to identify actors who consistently defend and apply democratic values at home and abroad.

Just as the domestic democratic order presupposes the indiscriminate application of the law to all citizens, regardless of their economic or political status, it is natural to assume that, in the international order, the law is not observed selectively. This postulate, although unanimously accepted, is also frequently disregarded.<sup>5</sup>

Patriota also recalls that the UN Charter was drafted before international awareness of the importance of the environmental agenda, but that the pressure for democratizing reforms of the multilateral system offers a way for multilateralism to overcome its immobility and be able to establish the consensus needed to mobilize governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, the media and youth to tackle contemporary challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. For the former Chancellor:

The preservation of the planet and human civilization on Earth are powerful unifying themes in this sense, which can become a counterpoint to ideological clashes or arms races that induce fragmentation or even the collapse of international cooperation.<sup>6</sup>

From a climate point of view, the practical implementation of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) can be a driver not only for strengthening multilateralism and international cooperation, but also for this necessary process of democratization of

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5 For more on the application of the democratic principle to the international order, see: Patriota, Antonio. "Democratizar as Relações Internacionais: ordem internacional, multilateralismo e princípios democráticos." *CEBRI-Revista 1*, no. 3 (2022). Accessed October 8, 2023. <https://cebri.org/revista/br/artigo/41/democratizar-as-relacoes-internacionais>.

6 Patriota, Antonio. "Democratizar as Relações Internacionais: ordem internacional, multilateralismo e princípios democráticos." *CEBRI-Revista 1*, no. 3 (2022). Accessed October 8, 2023. <https://cebri.org/revista/br/artigo/41/democratizar-as-relacoes-internacionais>.

the global order and its governance institutions. This is because the concept determines that efforts to protect the environment and mitigate and adapt to climate change must be made on the basis of *equity* and in accordance with the respective national capacities. Therefore, developed countries must take the lead in combating climate change and its effects, and must consider the specific needs of developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, the more developed nations, which have historical responsibilities due to their high GHG emission rates accumulated over time, must guarantee climate justice. In other words, they must help developing countries to be compensated for the losses and damage they already suffer as a result of the impacts of climate change, as well as supporting them to mitigate and adapt to these adverse effects. In turn, this progress can only be achieved through global governance based on democratic and representative decision-making processes, which not only allow the adequate participation of the nations of the Global South, but are also capable of inducing developed nations, including major powers, to promote a green transition at a global level that is just, equitable and truly “leaves no one behind.”

We, the authors of this book, believe that without international cooperation to guarantee the full exercise of an ecologically balanced climate, sustainable development and democracy, in its internal and international dimensions, it will not be possible to reconcile the fight against climate change with overcoming inequalities within countries and between nations in the Global North and South. This is why identifying pathways for Brazilian foreign policy to play a leading role in building a more democratic, environmentally responsible and socially just Brazil, global governance and world was the goal that inspired and guided the writing of this book.

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7 Brazil. “Compromissos estabelecidos na Convenção-Quadro das Nações Unidas sobre Mudança do Clima (UNFCCC).” *Ministério do Meio Ambiente*. Accessed October 8, 2023. <https://antigo.mma.gov.br/component/k2/item/15142-contribui%C3%A7%C3%B5es-para-o-documento-base.html#:~:text=O%20princ%C3%ADpio%20das%20responsabilidades%20comuns%2C%20por%C3%A9m%20diferenciadas%2C%20afirma%20que%20as,conformidade%20com%20suas%20respectivas%20capacidades>.



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Plataforma CIPÓ is an independent, women-led think tank dedicated to issues of climate, sustainable development and international relations, with a focus on perspectives from Latin American and Global South. CIPÓ supports local and national governments, international organizations and civil society and private sector entities in developing effective responses to the emerging challenges of the climate crisis.

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