



BRAZIL

**STATEMENT BY H. E. AMBASSADOR LUIZ ALBERTO FIGUEIREDO MACHADO,
MINISTER OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF BRAZIL,
AT THE MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
IN ENDING VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBT PEOPLE
IN THE MARGINS OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, 26 September 2013

(check against delivery)

His Excellency Frans Timmermans, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, through whom I also greet other distinguished Ministers and High-level authorities,

Her Excellency Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Esteemed Representatives of Civil Society,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Frans Timmermans, for holding this meeting and for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Navi Pillay, for her remarks.

Unfortunately, no country can claim to be free from the scourge of violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.

Brazil is no exception.

This is why Brazil has been and remains fully committed to elaborating and implementing - through a participatory and gradual approach - innovative measures to halt and prevent such kind of violence and intolerance.

To achieve that goal, no effort is to be spared – both domestically and internationally.

In fact, both fronts are firmly connected.

Brazil's initiatives abroad do not reflect only the goals we want to meet at the national level; they also reveal our intention to help build a future where all members of the human family can live free from violence and discrimination.

We have made significant achievements so far.

Brazil was the first country to hold, in June 2008, a National Conference on the Promotion of the Rights of LGBT People.

Since that same year, the Government has provided transsexual individuals with free access to sex reassignment surgery at the public health system.

In 2010, the national census recorded for the first time the number of self-declared LGBT couples in Brazil.

In 2011, a National Council to Fight Discrimination against LGBT Persons was established and a second National Conference held. This illustrates the important role the Brazilian Government attaches to civil society to ensure the effectiveness of initiatives to guarantee the human rights of LGBT people.

Also in 2011, the Brazilian Supreme Court determined the legality of same sex unions, which allowed for the recognition of same sex marriage.

Another important step was the creation, last July, of the National System for Promoting the Rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transsexuals and Combating Violence Against Them. The system is expected to improve data collection and the coordination of efforts to prevent violence motivated by homo, lesbo and transphobia, in a transparent and participatory manner.

These national examples find parallels in initiatives launched or supported by Brazil in international fora.

Brazil was the first country to introduce a resolution on "Human Rights and Sexual Orientation" before the UN Commission on Human Rights, in 2003. The initiative, though withdrawn, paved the way for further developments at the regional and international levels.

In 2007, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay co-sponsored the launching, at the UN, of the Yogyakarta Principles.

One year later, the Organization of American States adopted a resolution sponsored by Brazil on the prevention of violence against LGBT people.

We also worked extensively, together with South Africa, Norway and other partners, to achieve the majority required to adopt Human Rights Council resolution 17/19, titled "Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity". The need to keep momentum around this important breakthrough prompted Brazil to host a Regional Seminar in Brasilia, in April this year. The event was followed by similar initiatives in Katmandu, Paris and Oslo.

Distinguished Representatives,

We have made important achievements over the past few years. As we endorse this historic ministerial declaration, I also see that we are stronger and more united to face the challenges still ahead of us.

In charting the future of our cooperation, Brazil believes that we should avoid the temptations of confrontation. We must take an inclusive and constructive approach that encourages countries of every region to join us in promoting our cause. To that end, our endeavor must be universal, non-discriminatory, non-selective and non-politicized. In addition, we need a strategy of constant mobilization and persuasion. I am convinced that perseverance and focus will surely bring us significant results.

In concluding, allow me to reiterate Brazil's firm support to efforts aimed at ensuring to all human beings the right to live free from violence and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. To that end, we will continue to engage in dialogue and cooperation at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. Our commitment in this matter is firm and will remain so.

Thank you.