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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF **THE** RECOMMENDATIONS **AND** DECISIONS
ADOPTED BY **THE** GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS **TENTH** SPECIAL SESSIONDEVELOPMENT **AND** INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATIONPROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS
OF MANKINDLetter dated 27 April 1989 from the Permanent Representative of
Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the address by His Excellency Mr. **José Sarney**, President of the Federative Republic of **Brazil**, at the Sixth Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, held at Brasilia on 30 and 31 March 1989, with the request that it be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 63, 66, 83 and 86 of the preliminary list.

(**Signed**) Paulo NOGUEIRA-BATISTA
Permanent Representative of Brazil
to the United Nations

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ANNEX

Address by the President of Brazil at the Sixth Ministerial Meeting
on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean

It is with a deeply fraternal feeling, which increasingly unites our peoples, that I preside over the inaugural session of the Sixth Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Brazilian Government.

Firstly, I would like to record Brazil's gratitude, and I believe to be conveying the feeling of every country here represented, for the dynamic and constructive work that UNEP has been developing under the direction of Mr. Mostafa Tolba, who unfortunately was not able to be with us today.

I acknowledge the presence of my dear friend Mr. Enrique Iglesias, President of the Inter-American Development Bank, who with talent and creativity has performed outstanding tasks not only as part of official duties for his country but also for international organisations.

Nowadays, environmental problems are one of the main issues on the international agenda and will indeed be the most passionate issue in the future. It is a question of the survival of the Earth.

Suddenly, man, who thought natural resources were inexhaustible and Earth unattainable by death, realised that the world is threatened by increasing levels of deterioration in the atmosphere, soils, rivers and oceans; and that it is necessary to mobilise national and international resources in order to confront these problems in their different forms.

There is a rising awareness that nature may head a rebellion against life, thus creating an "anti-existence".

How did we get onto this path?

Who destroyed the planet's green cover?

Who created and developed the civilisation of gases?

Who has depleted natural resources, in order to improve patterns of well-being?

In this course of ultimate delusion, the underdeveloped countries were to contribute with the deadliest pollution of all, that of poverty and of all forms of exploitation of which they were the victims over the centuries, the enslaving, inhuman and cruel pollution of colonization.

Since the Stockholm Conference in 1972, there have been successive initiatives aimed at organising and improving international co-operation with a view to environmental protection. Together with other Latin American and Caribbean

countries, Brasil has contributed positively to **this** endeavour, a contribution I do not hesitate to qualify as **a very positive one**.

In environmental matters, as in all major international issues, **it is necessary to bear in mind the differences that separate the core of developed countries from the majority of the nations that are still prey to basic shortages. We cannot deny the deep connection between ecological problems and the unfair world economic and social order.**

For a **great** portion of mankind, underdevelopment lies at the root of all problems. Poverty *and* deterioration of the physical environment are elements of a vicious cycle that condemns millions of people to live in conditions inconsistent with human dignity.

The major barrier to the solution of environmental problems lies in the inequity of the appalling current disparities, in the wide gap between the wealthy and the poor, in the deterioration of the terms of **exchange**, in the increasing protectionism of the industrialised countries and in the unbearable burden of external debt, which has transformed developing countries into net capital exporters.

The crucial focus of international co-operative efforts in environment protection and improvement must thus be precisely upon the creation of an international economic framework that fosters the eradication of unemployment and poverty rather than their perpetuation. On the other hand, the new modalities for credit concessions to our countries adopted by international financial institutions endanger national efforts to achieve development and actually imply a reduction in resources harmful to the environmental cause itself.

One may rightfully expect, however; a positive approach, in which the international organisations' actions will favour the acceptance of resources for the financing of environmental protection projects on a concessional basis. Furthermore, as an essential part of the international co-operative effort, free access to new technologies for environmental preservation should be granted to developing countries at no commercial cost,

The legitimate environmental concern of such noble inspiration cannot be left in the hands of commercial interests, whose agents have no other intention than simply to make out of environmental protection a new and productive source of profit. Nor can it be used as an excuse for a historic regression to a new colonial system to be determined by organizations rather than nations, in a return to the interventionist period.

Brasil is aware of the gravity of environmental problems and will not spare any effort to reconcile its fundamental needs for economic and social development with the purpose of protecting its environment. Determined to prevent and remedy environmental deterioration in its own territory, Brazil is concerned with the state of the environment on a large scale.

We are convinced that the seriousness of the environmental problems facing the world is mainly a consequence of the patterns of industrialisation and consumption prevailing in developed countries. This fact is at the origin of the accelerated exhaustion of the planet's natural resources and of the increasing emissions of pollutants into the atmosphere both in absolute and relative terms. As is starting to be universally acknowledged, the industrialized nations have a fundamental duty to reverse the process of environment deterioration. These countries possess not only the financial means to face the problem but also the resources effectively to promote a substantial reduction in the emission of pollutant elements into the atmosphere, either through the reduction of their superfluous and irrational levels of fossil fuel consumption or through the development of resources of alternative energy.

Actually the industrialisation and integration of new areas of activity into the economies of developing countries represent only marginal and irrelevant additions to the present levels of pollution in the atmosphere. The reckless deposit of toxic wastes into the environment and the attempt to transfer these wastes to developing countries is what worries us the most. Those attempts were utterly condemned at the First Meeting of States of the Zone of Peace and Co-operation in the South Atlantic, held at Rio de Janeiro in July of last year.

From the international debate on environmental issues, we cannot furthermore omit the conclusion reached by the World Commission on Environment and Development that the existence of huge arsenals of nuclear weaponry and other means of mass destruction constitute the major threat to the preservation of the environment and even to the survival of mankind.

On the other hand, it is worrisome that the international debate on environment has been relying on a certain dose of emotionalism. And this tends to misstate the meaning and the direction that international co-operation must follow in order to solve problems. The debate's emotional tone sometimes takes on an accusatory, manichean and demagogical character that does nothing to promote the environmental cause.

Peruasion gives in to attempts at intimidation and to explicit or veiled threats aimed at bringing into question the principle of state sovereignty, in an attempt to force unacceptable conditions upon States.

Like all Latin American and Caribbean countries represented here, Brazil moulded its national identity through emancipation from colonial bondage. To our peoples, sovereignty and freedom are absolute values that cannot be renounced. As an independent and sovereign country, Brazil values and promotes co-operation as a fundamental tool in its international relations. We cannot accept mechanisms that impose the will of the stronger on the weaker, the richer on the poorer, the more developed on the less advanced.

The self-determination of the peoples and the sovereign equality of States are two capital principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Under the aegis of the latter, the process of decolonization - unfortunately still incomplete - was

set in motion after the Second World War. And the sacredness of the Charter is the best guarantee that this process will not be reversed.

Brazil has never overlooked the environmental issue and has constantly updated procedures and taken new initiatives. We have just recently launched a new programme called "Our Nature", which represents a new and greater effort to update the diagnosis of the environmental situation and proposes an array of recommendations that originated from six working groups established to launch the programme.

The recommendations point to the urgency of a vast array of measures: to formulate a national plan for the protection of the environment that will support the multi-annual government plan; to restructure the governmental system of environment protection and preservation) to create new forest reserves and Indian areas; to review, organize and accelerate the Brazilian legislation on the environment, including questions related to the use of chemical and mining processes; and to review and ensure the strict application of tax incentives, official credits and public incentives in the Amazon.

Additional measures to support the performance of the programme will also be adopted, such as measures to accelerate the implementation of the land reform in the country; to intensify economic activity in the Central Western Region; to formulate an integrated programme to support a more dynamic judicial system and public safety in the Amazon; to study the feasibility of a unified structure of territorial monitoring; and to study the feasibility of establishing a fund to channel internal and external resources that might be used in environmental protection projects.

During the last session of the United Nations General Assembly, Brazil offered to host the second United Nations conference on the environment, which will take place in the context of the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the historic Stockholm Conference. The conference should be an effective landmark for the promotion of international co-operation for the protection of the environment. Brazil expects to receive the support of all Latin American and Caribbean countries represented here, so that its offer may be accepted by the United Nations and the conference may be held in our region.

I would like to point out the effort that the eight Amazon countries are making in order to promote the harmonious development of their rich natural heritage. Adopted only three weeks ago at a ministerial meeting of the Treaty for Amazonian Co-operation, the Declaration of San Francisco de Quito includes an important chapter on environmental protection.

The Declaration rejects unequivocally any external interference on this matter and expresses the firm intention of the member States to widen and strengthen the mechanisms for co-operation committed to the protection of the environment in the Amazon region.

We are all aware of our responsibilities in preserving our great physical heritage. This duty is ours, however. Lessons cannot be given to us by those who

point out the path that should not be followed. We want to **set examples**. This is our duty and we will never be able to renounce what **it has cost us so much to** achieve : sovereign freedom.

The present **ministerial meeting on the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, which Brazil has the honour to host, is a hallmark of co-operation**, I trust **the results of this meeting's deliberations** will faithfully translate the spirit that **inspires us** and I thus wish you fruitful and profitable **work**.