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Our Daily Bread: Brazil and the European Union in the Struggle for Food Security

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Brazil and Development

Development is a subject of particular interest for Brazil, and it has been incorporated as a perennial priority in its domestic and foreign policies. Brazilian diplomacy has been constantly engaged in the pursuit of national development since the country became a Republic, in 1889, prioritising, above all, bilateral agreements so as to leverage economic development, and also seeking multilateral solutions to palliate afflictions linked to underdevelopment.

It was against this backdrop that Itamaraty (the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) included development as the principal objective in many of its international efforts. Especially since the 1930s, already in a domestic context of political and economic transformation, Brazil applied for increased international support of its development by negotiating bilateral agreements with the United States and European countries. In the following decades, the UN was used as a natural arena by Brazil – and other cooperating countries from the so-called Third World – to petition for concessions and advantages. Especially noteworthy were the actions of the Group of 77 (G77), the pressure applied within the UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) and within the UN General Assembly.

Brazil's inclusion on the generalised scheme of preferences lists, and the fact that it is a beneficiary of technical and financial cooperation from developed countries, are natural outcomes of the country's approach to petitioning. However, over the years, the country has "graduated", being thus no longer eligible for its place and benefits on the lists; it was even excluded from the European Union's Generalised Scheme of Preferences list (GSP) in 2014.

Efforts towards international development cooperation, especially in health and combating hunger, have become a striking feature of Brazilian diplomacy in recent years. This is made possible due to Brazil's improved international standing and its willingness to take on increasing responsibilities for issues on the international agenda.

In Brazil's view of things, social development goes beyond economic growth and improved trade flows. It involves health, justice, food, education and housing. This conception of social development has, to a certain extent, spilled over into the international arena; as such, ex-Minister of Foreign Relations Celso Amorim's definition of the Brazilian government's policy of *non-indifference* can be employed as a counterpart to the idea of non-intervention. Non-indifference to inequalities and injustices in the modern world makes Brazil an active and cooperative country both domestically and abroad, in the case of countries that are in need of aid. According to Kofi Annan and Amartya Sen, freedom and development only exist when everyone, regardless of race, nationality or belief, is not deprived of their liberty. Embracing this idea, the Brazilian state considers that the international community has a duty to do everything in its power to promote the development of all peoples.

Development and Security: A Necessary Relationship for Brazil

Brazil further understands development as a path to the promotion and maintenance of peace and stability. In fact, the country's engagement in multilateral activities furthering security typically combines initiatives for the promotion of development as well as the alleviation of hunger and poverty. Its participation in the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has been emblematic in this regard. Exercising military command of the mission from the outset[1], Brazil has managed to combine the actions of its troops with a range of collaborative projects towards the development of the Caribbean country, both on a bilateral basis and through triangular cooperation mechanisms.

Alongside peacebuilding activities, such as the disarmament of rival factions in the conflict-ridden areas of Port-au-Prince, incentives were provided for the development of economic activities to alleviate poverty. This work included the production of biofuel, as well as infrastructure projects, such as the building of boreholes and repairing of roads and bridges.

Haiti also received resources from the IBSA Fund so as to combat hunger and poverty, and was equally the focus of some of the triangular cooperation agreements spearheaded by Brazil. One example of these agreements is the joint project with Germany

[1] MINUSTAH was established by resolution 1542 of the Security Council in April 2004.

in the area of food security, dedicated to the transfer of technology, products and services in order to reduce food shortages and increase the sustainability of local chains of food production.

The European Union and the Commitment to Development Cooperation

The European Union has a long tradition of actions in favour of development. Historic initiatives include the preferential mechanisms established in favour of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP)[2] and the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) established in the 1970s. This development cooperation was seen as a moral obligation on the part of the former colonial powers due to years of exploitation of colonial territories. Equally worthy of mention are the large sums of money mobilised for the purpose of official development assistance (ODA) and loans offered by the European Investment Bank.

In the last two decades, supranational issues – such as concerns regarding international migration, drug trafficking, epidemics such as HIV/AIDS and more recently Ebola, in addition to terrorism – have impelled developed countries to increase their interest in international development cooperation (DEGNBOL-Martinussen; Engberg-Pedersen, 2003). The security of States has come to depend on matters related to development; it has become apparent to rich countries that improving the conditions of the poorest would lead to medium and long term benefits for all. Thus, cooperation is not only undertaken for altruistic motives, butbenefits both sides (Axworthy, 2001).

Europe's activities in this domain are compatible with the multilateral efforts of the United Nations towards promoting development. Some policies worth highlighting are the UN actions in favour of social development[3] and the launch and promotion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), agreed upon at the Millennium Summit in New York,in the year 2000.

In recent years, the European Union's collaboration on initiatives for promoting food security, especially in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has been particularly emblematic of the EU's attempts towards international social development. Despite the progress made in recent decades, the last UN hunger report (State of Food Insecurity in the World-SOFI) estimates that there are still some 800 million people worldwide suffering from hunger. Moreover, an even greater number remain without access to healthy food. In recent years, there has even been an increasing number of food crises caused by conflict, natural disasters, increasing climate change or volatility of food prices.

According to the World Bank report (2007, p. 3), nutrition is the greatest challenge facing developing countries as regards meeting the MDGs launched in 2000.

[2] The ACP mechanism has been consolidated through several treaties such as Yaoundé (1963), Lomé (1975) and Cotonou (2000).

[3] Of note is the UN Conference on Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995

Human Security and Food Security

Amartya Sen (1999) describes development as a process of expanding the real freedoms enjoyed by individuals. Focussed on human freedom, he sees development as something beyond indicators such as GDP and level of industrialisation. Social opportunities, political and civil rights, transparency and security also play a part when calculating human freedom. As such, these considerations must also enter into development calculations. Development requires the removal of that which curtails freedom, which, according to Sen, is poverty and tyranny.

Sen continues by further pointing out that, at times, the lack of substantive freedoms relates directly to material poverty. He lists emblematic examples of these curtailed freedoms such as hunger, lack of health and education infrastructure. Education, health, civil liberties and political rights would, as per this theory, be constituent parts – and not just drivers – of development (Sen, 1999, p.5).

Since the end of the Cold War, concerns relating to individuals have become essential in the study of international relations, given that States, ascentral and unitary actors, cannot accountfor all the problems faced by humanity. Thus, the concept of human security was highlighted for the first time by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994.

According to the UNDP, it is necessary to be concerned about the individuals who seek security in their daily lives:

¨For most people, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than the dread of a cataclysmic world event. Will they and their families have enough to eat? Will they lose their jobs? Will their streets and neighbourhoods be safe from crime? Will they be tortured by a repressive state? Will they become a victim of violence because of their gender? Will their religion or ethnic origin target them for persecution? In the final analysis, human security is a child who did not die, a disease that does not spread, the job that was not cut, ethnic tension that did not explode into violence, a dissident who was not silenced. Human security is not a concern about weapons – it is a concern for human and dignified life.¨ (UNDP, 1994, p. 229)

The UNDP lists four attributes regarding the concept of human security: (1) universal concern (threats common to all); (2) interdependent components (knowing no borders); (3) preventive interventions with better results; and (4) focus on individuals.

The UNDP's definition also represents a shift from the traditional view of security. It seeks to ensure it not through arms, but rather through sustainable human development in seven areas: economic security, food security, medical security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security (UNDP, 1994).

In 2003, the Commission on Human Security, chaired by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen submitted a report to the UN calling for a new security framework focussed on

individuals. The report argues that security is an interconnected concept, comprising many factors, such as the current global flows of goods, services, finance, and people (COMMISSION ON HUMAN SECURITY, 2003).

Close to the UNDP's definition, Roland Paris (2011) makes a distinction between the different niches of human security: economic security, food security, environmental security, health security, personal security, community security and political security. These areas addressed together would guarantee a reality in which individuals have security, freedom and dignity, and equal opportunity to achieve their full human potential.

The most frequent criticism of this concept stems from its scope as it encompasses everything without prioritising one aspect or other of security, and seems difficult to put into practice (PARIS, 2011). However, as noted by Smith (2005), this is not a valid criticism and is often used by those who have an interest in keeping the concept of security restricted to issues related to military power alone.

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's own personal interest, coupled with the rise of new agendas in the 1990s[4], made the expansion of security into human security possible. However, until now, no real consensus as to what would constitute the focus of these studies has been reached, apart from the fact that the individual is its central object. There are still considerable methodological and conceptual misunderstandings about the real meaning of human security (Hampson, 2008).

The first concept of human security was based on the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. As well as based on the obligation of the international community to protect and promote those rights (Hampson, 2008). The second concept was humanitarian: concerning the efforts to combat genocide, war crimes and weapons used against civilians and non-combatants. Here, however, a broader definition of human security is used, which includes, amongst others, economic, social and environmental concerns inasmuch as they affect the well-being of individuals.

The goal of human security, according to Alkire (2002), is to safeguard human life from invasive threats without impeding long-term prosperity. Literature on human security advocates that order and security should not be based on considerations pertaining to sovereignty and states alone. On the contrary, the individual is at the centre of analysis, and the security of the individual is seen as the key to global security[5] (Hampson, 2008, p. 234).

A threat to international security would be any event or process that leads to numerous deaths or to a reduction in life chances, and/or that undermines the State as the primary unit of the international system. Such threats include, but are not limited to, poverty, epidemics and environmental degradation (UNGA, 2004).

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[4] Such as the rights of women and children, refugees; including rightsagainst racial discrimination, among others.

[5] **Globalisation** contributes to the focus of the studies, as expanding trade and economic networks also increases inequalities between the richest and the poorest (Hampson, 2008, p. 235).

Caroline Thomas goes as far to say that "poverty and insecurity are in many ways synonymous," as they refer to a human condition characterised by the absence of fundamental rights such as adequate food, health, housing and education, with the expectation that this situation will continue as is. The importance of the fight against poverty to human security is confirmed by the fact that the number of deaths caused by poverty is higher than the number resulting from armed conflicts (Thomas, 2008).

Putting the individual at the heart of the concept of security means States and institutions need to prioritise the protection of the individual via measures such as ensuring food security. At least as long as there is a general risk of food insecurity in the world. This necessity can be seen in the MDGs, which sets the goal of a 50% reduction in poverty and hunger by 2015 (Thomas, 2008).

Traditionally, the concept of security was considered as belonging to the realm of high politics, while issues related to development such as health, food and education, were of low politics. Social crises began to be seen as potential security issues when epidemics, hunger, migration, mass unemployment and xenophobic ideologies came to represent a threat to regional and global stability. However, traditional security methods were not enough to end world poverty, which is the cause of many of these crises (WILKIN, 2002).

The origin of the concept of food security is debated by several authors, such as Renato Maluf and Francisco Menezes (2000); an accurate conclusion as to how and when the concept arose, however, has not been reached. In 1974, the first World Food Conference on food security was organised by the FAO, in which this issue was presented via the necessity for countries to become self-reliant in food production (mainly agricultural).

In 1974, the concept of food security was used as a concern for geopolitical instability; the solution was food self-sufficiency. Already in the 1980s, Amartya Sen suggested that the problem of hunger was not related to food production in itself, but to a problem in access. However, it was not until the 1990s that "access", "nutritious food" and "preferences" began to appear in UN language, more specifically in the FAO. The rise in commodity prices in the years 2007/2008 changed again the method in which hunger was analysed, shifting to a framework of sustainability (RICHARDSON; NUNES, 2015).

Currently, food security does not only mean the supply of food and that the food must be of quality and healthy (without chemical components harmful to human health), but also that future production capacity must be sustainable. This also includes the development ofany given local population's skills so as to guard against the risk of becoming dependent on foreign aid for food.

Paul Maluf and Menezes (2000, p. 4):

"Food and nutrition security is the guarantee of the right for all to access quality food, in sufficient quantities and on a permanent basis, based on healthy eating practices and respecting the cultural characteristics of each people, manifested in the act of eating. This condition cannot compromise access to other essential needs, even the future food system must be undertaken on a sustainable basis. It is the responsibility of nation States to ensure this right, and they should do so via mandatory collaboration with civil society, inasmuch as it is possible."

Public food security policies should aim at integration between urban and rural areas for better utilisation of production, and access to and availability of food. Along these lines, Albuquerque explains (2013, p 172.):

"In addition to the institutional scope, in which it was until then circumscribed, the issue of food security began to reverberate with growing concern in view of the transitioning world order. Population growth; rapid urbanisation in areas such as Africa and Asia, increased life expectancy, rise of millions of people to the consumer class, environmental and agricultural crises, are, amongst others, some explanatory factors as to why the issue has ceased to be more than just the echo of isolated voices in specialised UN system agencies (such as the FAO), and has become one of the central and most discussed themes of the twenty-first century."

Besides being represented in practices carried out in the domestic arena of States, food security has also been made into an instrumentality in the scope of inter-state cooperation, whether North-South or South-South. The spill-over of domestic policy into inter-state relations, through cooperation, occurs without constraints, when analysing this perspective (ALBUQUERQUE, 2013, emphasis added). Added to this is the fact that the FAO is today the specialised UN agency with the largest budget. This indicates that the issue of food has gained legitimacy and international scope, mobilising the principal actors of international relations (Albuquerque, 2013).

The definition of food security, according to Ben Richardson and John Nunes (2015), is not a mere technical exercise, but a political contestation, in which actors with different agendas, resources and skills struggle to shape outcomes.

The Brazilian concept of food security has been developed over time, culminating in the Organic Law of 2006, which defines food and nutritional security (FNS) as "the realisation of everyone's right to regular and ongoing access to quality food in sufficient quantities, without compromising access to other essential needs, being based on eating practices that promote health, that respect cultural diversity and that are environmentally, culturally, economically and socially sustainable (Law no. 11 346, 15/09/2006, § 3).

Brazil and the European Union: A Strategic Partnership

Brazil and the European Union[6] are united by their historical, cultural, political, economic and social ties, which culminated in the establishment of a strategic partnership at the 1st Bilateral Summit in Lisbon 2007. The strategic partnership concept confirms the broadly shared objectives, principles and visions of the world such as multilateralism, multipolarity, the rule of law, human rights, democracy, and the peaceful settlement of disputes, amongst others.

There is equally broad bilateral cooperation, with more than 30 sector dialogues in progress in areas such as peace and security, trade, investment, regulation, services, energy, the information society, sustainable development, climate change, education[7] and culture.

There has also been growing engagement in the exchange of experiences on how to address common challenges and ailments facing developing countries. Brazil and the European Union have, in fact, occupied a central position in multilateral initiatives aimed at alleviating hunger and poverty in the world.

Brazil and the European Union in Favour of Food Security

The increase in the number of discussion fora on food security, and the number of countries participating in them shows the growing concern there is on this issue. The exchange of successful experiences regarding food security and nutrition, such as school meals coupled with family farming, facilitates the creation and operation of international social institutions, providing governance without the need for a supranational authority.

Brazil has joined forces with regional neighbours who share social proposals, hoping to reform the lack of representativeness in the current international system and thereby gain greater international clout, which in turn is thought will improve in equality and the lives of their respective citizens. Increasing one's degree of influence in the international order contributes towards social gain, such as by ensuring food security and combating poverty, but also towards political gain, as has been seen with the election of Brazilian representatives in important international organisations. This allows Brazil a greater voice on the issues that are priorities on the country's agenda.

Maluf, Santarelli and Prado consider that Brazil has been recognised as a reference "on public policies to eradicate hunger and fight against poverty articulated in the international awards received by President Lula, official documents of international organisations such as the FAO and the World Bank, and also within the framework of non-governmental organisations" (MALUF; SANTARELLI; PRADO, 2014, p. 19).

6 Brazil was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community in 1960.

7 About half of the Science without Borders scholars chooses EU countries as a destination.

According to Fraundorfer (2013), ActionAid also claims that the Brazilian approach in the fight against hunger in the form of the Zero Hunger Programme was the most successful strategy applied in the developing world. Echoing these statements, Balaban (2012, p.4) adds:

"Brazil has a lot to offer in terms of international cooperation. Not just in financial terms but in technology, human resources, knowledge, and, above all; solidarity and experience in cooperation. The Brazilian experience in school meals with its multi-sectorial aspect means that community participation, buying locally from family farmers, and management and monitoring methods, can contribute to intensifying discussions in the country about the building of a sustainable national program with healthy eating and quality food."

Brazil has exported its expertise in initiatives for combating hunger and promoting food security to several countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. Of particular note is the National School Nutrition Programme (PNAE). In fact, the PNAE, which has achieved worldwide renown as a success story of sustainable school meal programmes, has paved the way for Brazil to enter into international agreements with the FAO and World Food Programme (WFP) (ENDF, 2014).

The PNAE guidelines, which are since largely utilised by the FAO in similar projects implemented in other countries, are the following: (I) to employ healthy and adequate nutrition, which comprises the use of a variety of foods, insurance, respect for culture, traditions and healthy eating habits (emphasis added), contributes to the growth and development of students and improves school performance, in accordance to age, sex, physical activity and health status; (II) to include food and nutritional education in the process of teaching and learning, addressing the theme of food and nutrition and the development of healthy practices; (III) to decentralise the actions and articulate in collaboration with the different levels of government; (IV) to support sustainable development, with incentives for the acquisition of diverse foodstuffs, produced locally and preferably on family farms and with family entrepreneurs, giving priority to the traditional indigenous communities and remaining former quilombo[8] communities (BRASIL, 2009, emphasis added).

Since 2006, the key achievement of the PNAE has been the requirement of the presence of nutritionists as technical managers and technical staff in all of its executing units. This allowed for other qualitative improvements in the programme (FNDE, 2014). The responsibilities of nutritionists within the PNAE range from the analysis of the nutritional profile of students served, to the elaboration of menus and shopping lists, to carrying out school curriculum educational activities regarding food and nutrition (PEIXINHO, 2013). In Brazil, the school meals programme started within the scope of a broader set of public policies to combat hunger and poverty. Until the arrival at the PNAE's current successful form, experiences alreadyshowed the promising ability of the programme to not only fight hunger and malnutrition of students, but also to function as a means for income redistribution, helping to support smallholder farmers.

[8] These are isolated communities that once sheltered runaway slaves.

As observed by researcher Balaban (2012, p 3),

"The school meals program brings together three themes: education, food and nutritional security, and productive inclusion. Besides being a means of maintaining children in school, reducing short-term hunger, helping in cognitive and psychosocial development, and besides allowing for the escape from the cycle of poverty and disease, in the long term it is also a factor that will bring about a decrease in spending on public health, as participants tend to adopt healthy eating habits, which will make them less susceptible to disease from poor nutrition. "

Based on the Brazilian initiative, other programmes and regional actions related to the reduction of hunger and poverty have emerged and gained importance. Among them, the Latin America and Caribbean Without Hunger Initiative 2025 is worthy of mention (IALCSH, or ALCSH in its Spanish acronym). It was launched in 2005, under the FAO umbrella, with Brazil as a key partner.

It should be remembered that more than 49 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean suffer from hunger, of which a high proportion are children under five and women. Malnutrition is considered a serious, near-endemic public health problem in these countries, for which a solution is still lacking. Although Brazil maintains a long history of relations with Latin American and Caribbean countries, since the mid-1980s these relations started to take on closer and more dynamic forms of cooperation through integration at various levels: economic, social, political and cultural (MALUF; PRADO, 2015).

The initiative to eradicate hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2025 includes focussing on capacity-building measures; improving the profile of the actors in the fight against hunger in the agendas of both governments and international organisations at the national, regional and global levels; and monitoring the food security situation in the targeted countries, aided by national governments, private sector actors and civil society (FAO 2007; Fraundorfer, 2013).

To carry out the projects proposed by the initiative, the Brazilian government and FAO launched in 2008, the Brazil-FAO Fund. The Fund is coordinated by the regional office, located in Chile, and used for implementing programmes in four areas: humanitarian assistance, school meals, strengthening civil society, and consolidation of the aquaculture network in the Americas (Fraundorfer, 2013).

As early as 2009, the FAO established the Latin America without Hunger Initiative as a strategic framework for all FAO projects in Latin America to combat hunger and poverty, linking the Brazil-FAO Fund to the Spain-FAO Fund, created in 2006, to deal with food security issues, family agriculture and rural development (Fraundorfer, 2013). The first major project carried out under theLatin America without Hunger Initiative was with Spanish cooperation in the form of the project Apoyo a la Iniciativa 2025. This is a reaffirmation of the interest Brazil and European Union countries share with regard to food security.

In July 2015, the European Union and FAO signed a new partnership agreement to promote food and nutrition security, sustainable agriculture and resilience in some 35 countries. EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, said:

"This initiative will be crucial to support partner countries and regional organizations in pulling together the political, technical and financial means towards the common goal of reducing food and nutrition insecurity. It will also contribute to strengthening the partnership between the European Union and FAO." (FAO, 2015)[9]

Regarding the new partnership with the European Union, the Director-General of the FAO said:

"This new phase in our partnership with the European Union will greatly strengthen FAO's capacity to work with governments to help them to acquire data and information they need to develop and implement effective policies to address the root causes of hunger and create resilience to shock and crises."(FAO, 2015)[10]

The EU's contribution to these initiatives falls within the framework of the "Global Public Goods and Challenges" (GPGC) programme included in the EU budget for development aid (Development Cooperation Instrument, or the DCI). It is worth noting that the EU is a major FAO donor and joined the Organisation as a member in 1991, having signed a strategic partnership in 2004 in order to consolidate and further the working relationship.

It is thus clear that the EU's commitment to food security and combating hunger coincides with Brazil's commitment on this issue. This opens up space for the bilateral partnership between the EU and Brazil to advance, along with the several other topics already covered within the strategic partnership. In fact, on March 19, 2015 the 7th EU-Brazil Joint Steering Committee Meeting was held at the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Meeting participants included representatives of the Ministries of Science, Technology and Innovation (MCTI) and Foreign Affairs (MRE). Food and nutrition security was flagged as a new field for EU-Brazil cooperation.

At the summit representatives of the European Commission expressed interest in working with Brazil on sustainable agriculture. Moreover, the director of the Regional Actions Department for Social Inclusion (DEARE) of the MCTI, Osório Coelho, proposed cooperation in food waste reduction and rural and urban agroecology.

The cooperation promoted by the European Union and Brazil through the FAO is evidence of both parties' commitment to multilateralism and to improving food security in developing countries and least developed countries (LDC) with a view to producing a more just and inclusive international order – and, consequently, a more stable

9 http://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail-events/pt/c/316317/ Accessed August 7th2015.

10 http://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail-events/pt/c/316317/ Accessed August 7th 2015.

and equitable one. Both actors historically recognise the profound interrelationship between security and development, as well as the importance of food securityas both driver and integrant part of human security. The future of the strategic partnership between Brazil and the European Union would suggest a strengthening of the mechanisms of bilateral and triangular development cooperation, with the inclusion of food and nutrition security as key tenets of and towards human development.

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