

**Climate change and its possible security implications**  
**Comments from Brazil**  
**(20 July 2009)**

1. Brazil welcomes the opportunity to present views on the possible security implications of climate change, to be reflected in the Secretary-General's report to the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, as mandated in General Assembly resolution 63/281.

I. On the concept of security

2. The consensual definition of security encompasses the protection against direct threats to the territorial integrity of a State. Recently, the concept has been extended beyond the traditional concern with military security. But applying the concept of security to distinct conceptual areas contributes to increasing imprecision, especially because the existence of a direct link between a single cause and a threat to security is extremely difficult to determine.

3. An “all-inclusive” concept of security, albeit potentially useful for identifying the extensive array of needs that should be attended to, becomes all but ineffective as an analytical and policy tool, as it practically does not allow for the establishment of a hierarchy of priorities.

II. On possible security implications of climate change

4. In the context of the possible security implications of climate change, it is important to distinguish between a potential “national emergency” and “a threat to national security”. Threats not deliberately inflicted by an external or internal agent fit into the first but not the latter category.

5. All countries are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. But adaptive capacity is directly related to the level of social and economic development, as pointed out in the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

6. The IPCC also indicates that, even if the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere were to be stabilized at the current levels, thermal expansion alone of the world's oceans would trigger sea-level rise for the next centuries.

7. Among the most threatened by these adverse impacts are small island developing states (SIDS). Their vulnerability, as that of many developing countries, stems from the lack of adequate resources, technology, capacity and knowledge for improving adaptive capacity to climate-change related phenomena such as sea-level rise.

8. Brazil acknowledges the interdependence and indivisibility of the concepts of development, security and human rights, as stated in, *inter alia*, Principle 25 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. Because the relationship is one of interdependence, attempts to shift the focus

of the debate from development to security do not contribute to addressing the matter in its full scope and complexity.

9. There is a clear link between climate change and development, established by sound scientific research. There is also a clear link between development and security. There is no direct linkage, however, between climate change and security.

10. To determine whether a given environment impact gives rise directly to consequences which might represent a threat to security remains a very complex task, as even in the case of traditional threats to security it is difficult to determine a single cause or contributing factor.

### III. On the need for proactive action

11. In that scenario, it is imperative to act proactively to forestall further adverse impacts of climate change and to prevent the already verifiable ones from triggering extreme events. To that end, strategies are needed in the short, medium and long term. The negotiating process under the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol are paramount in that respect. Sustainable development is, more than ever, an imperative to enhance adaptative capacity.

12. Significant commitments to cut emissions are needed on the part of developed countries. Likewise, adequate incentives for developing countries to engage in nationally appropriate mitigation efforts should be established. Innovative mechanisms for financing adaptation should be sought and commitments duly fulfilled.

13. Technology for a low-carbon development is another *sine qua non* condition for enhancing resilience and averting humanitarian emergencies that might become a contributing factor for insecurity. If the impacts of climate change are to be staved off, clean technologies must be urgently be shared to enable vulnerable countries to cope and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change.

14. Co-operation is needed at all levels to attain these goals. It is the purpose of the United Nations, pursuant to its objectives laid out in the Charter, to achieve international co-operation in solving this pressing international development challenge and strengthening universal peace.