

Speech by Ambassador Sérgio E. Moreira Lima, President of Funag, at the opening of Wilton Park-Funag seminar “Improving the impact of development projects in Sub-Saharan Africa, through increased UK/Brazil cooperation and partnership”. Brasília, November 17, 2016, 9:30AM.

Your Excellencies, Heads of diplomatic missions, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to welcome all participants to the Funag -Wilton Park Seminar on “improving the impact of development projects in Sub-Saharan Africa through increased Brazil-UK cooperation and partnership”. It gives me, indeed, great pleasure to be here with Mr. Richard Burge, Wilton Park Chief Executive, and his team to enhance, with this seminar, the implementation of our Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation and Partnership in convening international discussion events that I signed in February 2014 in Brasilia with British Ambassador, Alex Ellis.

I should express my gratitude to every one of you for accepting our invitation and joining us in this initiative. Allow me a special word of appreciation to our friends at Wilton Park and the British Embassy, as well as our colleagues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in particular to the Director of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), Ambassador João Almino de Souza Filho, to the Undersecretary General for Africa and the Middle East, Ambassador Fernando José Marroni de Abreu, and to the Director of the Department for Africa, Ambassador Luís Henrique Sobreira Lopes, for preparing the ground and providing the foundations on which to build this joint project.

Why the United Kingdom? Why Brazil? Why Sub-Saharan Africa? Many reasons can be found to answer those questions, either historically or economically. The UK has been at the forefront of both domestic and international development since the Industrial Revolution, in the middle of

the 18<sup>th</sup> century, showing the way and the path towards innovation, technological progress, industrialization and modernization. Why Brazil? We take pride in stating that Brazil has been a pioneer in tropical agriculture by demonstrating, scientifically and empirically, that a dynamic and competitive industry can be established in warm climates. Indeed an impressive success story in food production that could show the way to other developing countries, in Africa and elsewhere, to a comparable performance in food security.

Why Sub-Saharan Africa? I am glad to acknowledge that, according to the latest FAO estimates, global hunger reduction continues, but the numbers are still challenging. About 795 million people between 2014 and 2016 are estimated to be chronically undernourished, just over one in every nine people, 216 million fewer than in 1990–92. In the same period, the prevalence of undernourishment has fallen from 18.6 to 10.9 percent globally, and from 23.3 to 12.9 percent in developing countries. Yet, despite overall progress, marked differences across regions persist. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest prevalence of undernourishment. Around one in four people in the region remains undernourished, according to FAO.

Brazil most probably has the agricultural and agro-industrial responses to a number of Sub-Saharan qualms and worries, and the UK certainly has many of the scientific and knowledge tools that those countries need to get their development programs to a new level of technological progress.

In fact, both the United Kingdom and Brazil have been providing development assistance and cooperation for decades in a number of different ways to many countries. Given the somewhat distinct approaches to cooperation by the UK and Brazil – the former a conventional approach

as a Development Assistance Committee member, and the latter, a horizontal partner – what value and impact could a more collaborative and integrated style of cooperation through partnership have to countries in Sub-Saharan Africa? Where is the space for African agencies and partners? How, despite those differences between our two systems of development cooperation, can our countries establish a common ground taking into account a joint approach to the current and future development of Sub-Saharan countries, combining British knowledge and Brazilian specific responses to other developing economies?

London is still, if not the most important, one of the biggest financial centers in the world, with a known expertise in development projects, technical consultancy for investment opportunities and skilled people in all sorts of financial and economic undertakings. Besides, the UK is a traditional and important center of biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and chemical innovation.

In its turn, Brazil represents, as I said, one of the most formidable efforts in a tropical environment to create a competitive agriculture. I believe that Brazil and the UK, together, have the expertise, the experience, and the will required to help overcome many of the current challenges faced by Sub-Saharan African countries. I am convinced that, after this meeting, we can devise concrete projects to continue this first joint examination of both side's conceptions and approaches to development cooperation. We could endeavor to either establish a common platform for the future or encourage the necessary efforts to overcome the challenges that are at the core of this joint meeting.

How could a mixed, modern approach towards socially responsible, inclusive, and sustainable development best combine perspectives of upper-middle-income countries, developed countries, and the important voices of the cooperation partners and recipients of aid and assistance? Which new

policies, strategies and partnerships could evolve between the UK and Brazil that might deliver additional and more effective development impacts for Sub-Saharan African countries? I am certain that our cooperation experts and diplomats are perfectly able to try to find adequate responses and concrete measures to help the most in-need region in the world to attain common food security objectives.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges that countries across Africa require more focused and scaled-up assistance, in order to ensure that they are supported in the protection of the most vulnerable and in the search for a more universal achievement of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

I am convinced that, based on the experience acquired with the Millennium Development Goals, in which process Brazil was able to attain most of the objectives well before the agreed deadline, both the United Kingdom and Brazil are perfectly capable of building upon the expertise accumulated since then to help the target countries in their own efforts to attain those new goals, that are perhaps more ambitious, and certainly more socially inclusive and gender comprehensive.

Can we develop new approaches to very old problems, some of them seemingly intractable? Those problems are in different health field and require, human capabilities, professional training, productive responses to unemployment, technical solutions to sectorial problems, or even macro and microeconomic public policies devised with human development indicators as their main focus. With this aspiration in mind, I invite all of you to start concentrating our energies and dedicating our best efforts to our common mission in this seminar. Thank you.

I now give the floor to British Ambassador to Brazil, Alexander Ellis.