

BRAZIL'S AFRICA POLICY: CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES

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Abstract

Brazilian foreign policy has been on an upward swing since the turn of the century. Africa, both ideologically and strategically gained a high priority status in Itamaraty's larger foreign policy framework when Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva came to power in 2003. The trade relations boomed, and diplomatic presence improved considerably in the first-decade of this century. However, since last couple of years, there has been a policy paralysis from the Brazilian administration vis-à-vis its African policy. The ongoing economic and political turmoil have made foreign policy a lesser priority for Brasilia. Brazil being a regional power with global ambitions, cannot ignore Africa and the diplomatic progress that it has made since the early 2000s. This paper discusses the current state of affairs between Brazil and Africa and the need for a policy revival in Africa to protect and nurture Brasilia's long-term regional and global interests.

Keywords: Brazil, Africa, foreign policy

1. Introduction

If domestic reality is an indication for any foreign policy to succeed or struggle, in contemporary International Relations (IR), there is no better example than Brazil. Currently Brazilian foreign policy is at all-time low since the return of democracy in the 1980s. Brazil neither enjoys a global clout-it had a decade back-nor does it show the same passion for the causes it had championed during the last decade of this century. Rumors surround Brazil's presence in the BRICS with many debating the imminent pullout from it, a much talked about multilateral arrangement that it had molded, along the lines of South-South Cooperation (SSC) with India, China and Russia (Vieira & Menezes, 2016). A decade ago, Brazilian foreign policy was one among the exciting ones globally. Within the developing world, for the kind of sophistication Brazil put in place, it looked like finally, Brazil has emerged as a major power in the global arena. Brazil's foreign policy vis-à-vis Africa was one of the key additions necessary in terms of its international presence in the 2000s.

Brazil not only improved its African presence, both Brazil and Africa enjoyed very productive and mutually benefitting partnership for a good number of years. At a time when Brazil's politico-economic conditions are far from better and Africa also struggles to meet its growth targets, there is need for Brazil-Africa relations' revival is more than ever. From a Brazilian foreign policy viewpoint, Africa remains significant for many reasons. This paper is an endeavor to evaluate Brazil-Africa relations in the current context.

The Brazil-Africa relations have spanned across many centuries. The intercontinental Atlantic slave trade that began in the Sixteenth century marked the beginning of a distinct relationship that now stands at a crossroad. These two landmasses that sit on both the sides of the Atlantic, one a continental size republic and another a continent itself have a lot in common today. The African presence is very much prevalent in Brazil's social landscape. Be it, cultural (music, religion, literature and cuisine), genetic or linguistic, African footprint is very potent and solid in Brazil (Olorunjoba, 2015). Today, Brazil has the largest population of African descent outside Africa (Telles & Lim, 1998). Whereas, on the eastern side of the Atlantic, Africa shares very close economic and diplomatic relations with Brazil today. On issues pertaining to globalization, international politics, reforms in global governance institutions and so on, both share similar views. Brazil-Africa relation is grown exponentially in the last two decades. Notwithstanding the cultural and historical dimensions, it took a very longtime for Brazil to make its presence felt on the eastern side of the Atlantic. After a steadfast growth for almost two decades, this relationship now stands at an interval where it needs a new strategy and path to move ahead. The ensuing political and economic downturn that Brazil itself is engaging and a global mood that is far from good, pose an inordinate challenge for Brazil to maintain the progress it has made vis-à-vis Africa. This paper intends to evaluate the evolution of Brazilian foreign policy towards Africa, its current state, and, how Brazil could refashion its African policy to make it more conversant with its own regional goals and global aspirations.

2. Emergence of Brazil's Modern Foreign Policy

Brazilian foreign policy witnessed an upward trend during the first decade of this century, during which Brazil would significantly diversify its foreign policy with more global presence and diplomatic engagements. From early 2000s Brazil has articulated its engagements with the international organizations like UN, WTO, IBRD and on global issues like climate change, trade, agriculture, nuclear nonproliferation, peacekeeping etc. Brazil has made tangible efforts to find itself a place in a newly emerged multipolar global order. Brazil has been very active and vocal with multilateral arrangements and ideas like BASIC, Outreach Five, IBSA, BRICS, G4 or G20, all designed to challenge the existing global order centered on Western dominance. Since 2000s, two geographical regions that witnessed consistent Brazilian diplomatic presence often have been Africa and Asia. After centuries of conspicuous neglect and inaction, Africa attracted both Brazil's imagination and foreign policy presence. From those years when Africa only featured in Brazilian scheme of things while providing symbolic solidarity and allegiance for 'Southern sentiments' through causes like Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and G-77, the new millennium would see Africa gaining much attention and priority in Brazilian foreign policy framework. A pluralistic and diverse foreign policy with greater participation, more resources, and more areas covered, would become Itamaraty's reinvented foreign policy agenda. This shift towards a more comprehensive and pluralistic foreign policy brought Brazil closer to Africa than ever.

Brazil's Africa policy got a much-needed impetus under the Lula administration. Lula's African policy is widely regarded as the rebirth of Brazilian Atlantic policy for the kind of attention and resource Brazil invested in Africa and the results it bore (Saraiva, 2010). Under Lula, Brazil resumed a new chapter in its Atlantic Policy, thanks to a favorable economic climate propelled by the commodity boom in the early 2000s. Moreover, the ideological leanings of Workers' Party (PT), made it a natural fit for Brazil to include 'Third-Worldism' in its foreign policy agenda. However, in general Brazilian foreign policy is facing a crisis now. The political and economic turmoil in the Republic is seriously affecting its ties with Africa. Notwithstanding a domestic political and economic anathema or a global ambivalence, Brazil has to maintain its African ties. Africa offers much more than a market for Brazilian goods and raw material for Brazilian industries. Africa plays a very weighty role in Brazil's larger foreign policy framework. Africa can emerge as the trump card for Brazil for fulfilling its global ambitions, which it has been cherishing since the birth of the Republic in 1889.

3. Brazil and Africa: A History of Distastefulness

There is a long history shared between Brazil and the African continent. But that history remains very problematic for the kind of relationship they shared for more than three-centuries. For this period, Brazil had been connected to Africa by a single requirement, i.e., continuous arrival of African slaves. Human lives were uprooted from Africa and sold in the Americas as commodities. Brazil was the largest recipient of African slaves in the Atlantic slave trade. It received almost four million slaves, four times more than what the United States received (Freitas, 2016). And it took Brazil many decades much more than other states in the Americas to abolish this inhuman practice. Brazil abolished slavery only in 1888 and it was the last country to do so in the entire Americas (Bourcier, 2012). Today, Brazil's black and coloured population, together, outnumber the white (Phillips, 2011). This makes Brazil the country with largest African descent population outside Africa and only second to Nigeria globally (Freitas, 2016). Two popular cultural events, both Samba and Carnival have its roots embedded in Brazil's African population (Darlington, 2013). Brazilian intelligentsia often argues that slavery is part of Brazil's colonial history and the Republic has nothing to do with this uncomfortable past. However, slavery was the by-product of colonialism and only colonizers practiced and benefitted from it is widely known. In the post-colonial history, one would not see Brazil doing much to integrate its black population to the mainstream national identity. Despite the strong colonial linkages Brazil had with Africa, it would take absolutely no efforts to develop ties with Africa. This was an unwritten state policy for much of the Twentieth-century. Even after WWII, this embitterment continued. The Brazilian elites sought ways to undermine the role of black population in the creation of national identity and for instance they removed Africa related topics from school curriculum (Stuenkel, 2012). Scholars argued that it would take many decades more, for Brazil, to realize the material and ideational significance of Africa in its overall foreign policy framework. And, early Twenty-first century would witness a considerable move towards the same.

Brazilian foreign policy has been on an evolutionary trajectory since the beginning of the Twentieth century. Baron of Rio Branco, Brazil's foremost foreign policy architect and popularly father of Brazilian foreign policy, in the early 1900s, sketched Brazil's foreign policy priorities, strategies and objectives, which the subsequent administrations followed without many alterations. It was under Baron's leadership (1902-12), Itamaraty consolidated Brazil's foreign policy

priorities. Close approximation with its 'northern neighbour', peaceful settlement of disputes with bordering states, respect for international law, non-interference in the domestic matters of other nations, strong relations with other global powers and use of diplomacy were the main pillars of foreign policy outlined by Rio Branco (Burns E. B., 1967). African states in the early Twentieth-century, either remained on the margins of global politics or on the verges of decolonization, never attracted Brazilian policymakers' curiosity, hence remained a 'distant destination' for Brazil. Despite having a lot in common; similar colonial past, issues pertaining to social and economic development, economic exploitation by the rich and the industrialized nations from the North, relations remained tepid for most of the century. This policy ambivalence towards Africa stemmed from a mindset that domestic intelligentsia have had towards Africa. Since the very birth of the Republic, Brazilian polity and the elite have believed in identifying and portraying Brazil as a 'white nation' (Skidmore, 1993). This racial superiority, embedded in their intellectual discourse and policy formulation made the state to ally more with the 'racially superior' nations, basically the US and other major European powers. Hence, despite being geographically closer and culturally intertwined, Brazil was least interested in developing any sort of alliances with the Continent.

Notwithstanding Brazil's adherence to the core foreign policy principle charted by Rio Branco, its foreign policy has been that of a pragmatic player, identifying better opportunities globally, rather than just responding to domestic politics (Trinkunas, 2014). Brazil's 'strategic neutrality', to assist Argentina during the event of Falkland Crisis, 1982 gives a glimpse of Brasilia's pragmatic mindset to changing regional and global scenarios later. The Brazilian imagination was partially attracted to certain developments that were unfolding post WWII. Decolonization and the emergence of fairly inexperienced states in Asia and Africa and US' preoccupation in the reconstruction of Europe opened up some space for Brazil to experiment its independent foreign policy. Brazil being relatively industrialized and had modestly practiced statecraft, looked better positioned to take a prominent role in the developing world. In the early 1960s two presidents, Jânio Quadros and João Goulart, both tried to engage with countries from Africa and Asia (Burns E. B., 1967). However, domestic economic and political conditions, dilemma over Cold War geopolitics, and US' hegemonic presence in the hemisphere, all made Brazil's African bonhomie and Third-World activism mere gestures in its international policy. Thus, very limited actions followed in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s which included Itamaraty's symbolic solidarity with causes like G77 and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). In the 1990s, under the changed political scenario locally and regionally, Brazil sought a more comprehensive and pluralistic foreign policy under Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Africa got some attention here. However, under Cardoso Brazil's foreign policy ambitions outweighed its material capabilities. Multipronged economic predicaments like hyperinflation and disturbing foreign debt scenario backpedaled Brazil's international ambitions, albeit a stable political situation in the 1990s. Cardoso's successor, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva would take advantage of everything available at his disposal later and Africa would finally arrive in Brazil's expansive foreign policy design with more priority and engagements.

4. Lula and Rebirth of Atlantic Policy

Since Rio Branco era, Brazilian foreign policy has been evolved over a number of rational and strategic calculations. The insecurity and territorial vulnerability being a continental state, surrounded by all Spanish republics persuaded Brazil to ally with the US in the early Twentieth-century. An improved domestic scenario and changed geopolitical atmosphere later would prod

Brazil to upgrade its foreign policy. There has been one inherent desire in the foreign policy rubric and that remained elusive most of the time: an independent foreign policy free from any external influence. To achieve this ambitious yet difficult foreign policy goal, Brazil at various intervals, nuanced numerous tactics. The three divisions within this autonomy projects were: distance, participation and diversification (Vigevani & Capaluni, 2007). Lula's foreign policy falls under the third stage of this autonomy seeking endeavor, i.e., autonomy through diversification. Under Cardoso, Brazil had expanded its foreign policy base through South American integration and had incorporated South-South Cooperation to its foreign policy priorities albeit with limited progress. Under a better domestic and global scenario, Lula diversified it, by adding more non-traditional partners like China, Asia-Pacific, Africa, Eastern Europe, Middle East and with more ideas like peacekeeping, human rights, democracy etc. Two-terms under Lula would see Africa getting more Brazilian attention and diplomatic presence.

Celso Lafer, Brazil's former external affairs minister argued that Brazil is a country that embraces a foreign policy of continuity with change (Lafer, 2002). One cannot see any serious ruptures in Brazilian foreign policy that spanned over a century. Brazil had always used the resources at its disposal, be it a favorable global political climate or a conducive domestic economic situation to advance its plans in the region and globally. It has been a gradual evolution that elevated the status of Africa in Brazil's international relations campaigns from late Twentieth-century to early Twenty-first-century. Much of the efforts that brought Africa to the centre of Itamaraty's foreign policy plans in the early 2000s go back to the Cardoso era. This, when coincided with Worker's Party (PT) ideological predilections and Lula's personality, turned out to be a foreign policy breakthrough for Brazil. This also gives some explanation for the current policy disorder that Brazil is in now and its consequences on Brasilia's Africa Policy. An Atlantic policy that groomed under a sound economic and political climate now looked a little off-track, thanks to the political and economic chaos that Brazil is in now. Brazil gives the best explanation for the interconnectedness and complexity of domestic politics, economy and international relations. For Brasilia, the significance of the revival of a foreign policy that is wedded between domestic and international components of economy and politics will be explained in the later part of this paper.

There have been political and economic drivers that drove Brazil to foster strong economic and political ties with Africa in the early 2000s under Lula. Politically, countries like India, Brazil, China and South Africa, all from the developing world, with varying degrees, shared some resentment against the West and its domination on international institutions of governance. The decline of the US and its allies economically and politically when coincided well with the economic revival of countries in Asia, Africa and South America, the power asymmetry at the global institutions looked more visible and distressing. Brazil and Lula demanded a restructuring of institutes of global governance to make it more democratic and to reflect the realities of a new global order. From a Brazilian foreign policy view point, Africa, if brought along together, carried more political weight and legitimacy for Brazil's case internationally. The modest economic conditions of Africa gave Lula the much-needed impetus to strengthen the ties that was long overdue. However, if it was not for the economic growth that Brazil was in the 2000s predicated on the commodity boom and an ever-growing and expansive Chinese economy, Brazilian policy vis-à-vis would have had a different story to tell.

The emergence of Africa as a priority area in Lula's foreign policy produced very tangible results in the first decade of this century. First of all, Brazil improved its diplomatic presence in Africa, a necessary thing to do to support a sustainable and comprehensive foreign policy. From a modest 17 embassies, Brazil under Lula improved its tally to 37, a very high presence for a developing country (Brazil ranks fourth behind the US, China and Russia). On 13 different occasions, President Lula visited 29 different countries in Africa (Stolte, 2013). This figure was more than all his predecessors' visits put together to the continent. His Foreign Minister Celso Amorim made 67 official visits to 34 African countries during his time with the government (Stuenkel, 2012). In return, Brazil received 47 visits of African kings, presidents, and prime ministers from 27 nations (Stuenkel, 2012). Out of 34 African embassies in Brasilia, 18 were inaugurated during the same period (Muggah & Thompson, 2015). These figures show the growing importance that Africa enjoyed in Brazil's foreign policy and how Africa also valued its close approximation with Brazil. On the commerce front, from 2000 to 2011, the inter-regional trade posted a six-fold increase, from US\$4.2 billion to US\$27.6 (Stolte, 2013). On the front of multilateral partnerships, cooperation was sought with Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Union (AU), (Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries) etc. The formation of India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) and later BRICS would enhance Brazil's commitment in Africa. Notwithstanding this sudden spurt in engagements and its immediate success, the current state of affairs in IBSA and BRICS and other multilateral forums of cooperation between Brazil and Africa give a different picture of Brazilian foreign policy and its relations with Africa.

5. African Dimensions in Brazilian Foreign Policy

Brazilian foreign policy was on a sound track until the end of the two-term administration of Lula. This when computed to the previous two-terms of Cardoso, gave Brazilian foreign policy the direction and reputation that it had been seeking for almost a century. The decade and half of regional and global rise of Brazil as a responsible and capable power would soon take on a different temper and mood. The succeeding administrations of both Dilma Rousseff and Michel Temer would not only downsize Brazil's diplomatic engagements, additionally they would show little enthusiasm for foreign policy (Malamud, 2017). Dilma, despite being a protégé of Lula with the same ideological moorings just could not command the same personal charisma or interest like her predecessor. Michel Temer and his centre-left administration have paid greater attention to dismantling the Lula legacy and Workers' Party's (PT) influence in the government and local politics (Watts, 2016).

It appears that there is policy paralysis in Itamaraty now. Michel Temer's initial decision to skip G-20 Summit in Germany itself shows the indifferent nature of the pursuance of foreign policy by the present government. Though he changed this decision later and traveled to Germany for the Summit, it only shows the lassitude that has gripped Itamaraty recently. Brazil-Africa relations remain a mere shadow of their previous robustness and vibrancy. This also brings forth the other challenges faced by contemporary Brazilian foreign policy. A critical examination reveals that the Brazilian foreign policy's trajectory in a permissible international system, combined with the economic robustness and personal charisma were the driving force for Brasilia since the fall of Berlin Wall (Malamud, 2017). In the absence of such a satisfactory and acceptable regional and

global ecosystem, the cracks in the machinery related to foreign policy making, articulating and implementing such policies in Brazil are in the open. The current political chaos and leadership crisis, economic anathema and global geopolitical uncertainty, all explain why Brazil-Africa relations remain cold and dry.

The global scenario remains inappropriate for either Brazil or for Africa at the moment to regain its political and economic status. Both appear to be politically volatile and economically stagnant when compared to the previous decade. If major economies like Brazil and Venezuela are in deep crisis in South America, on the other side, major stakeholders like South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Egypt, Libya all look vulnerable at many fronts (security, economy and politics). Owing to these new geopolitical realities, it may not be possible for Brazil to reinvent a foreign policy akin to the maturity and ambitions that drove Itamaraty's foreign policy agendas a decade before vis-à-vis IBSA, BRICS, BASIC and SSC. However, Brazil, under no circumstances, domestic, regional and global, should 'abandon' Africa. Africa still can make meaningful contributions to Itamaraty's larger foreign policy goals. For that, Brazil could utilize the good offices and practices that it made in Africa in the early 2000s, giving the African policy an institutional backing. The natural historical links established between Brazil and Africa centuries back will act as a buffer while accepting the new global realities.

The efforts that Brazil took under the auspices of BNDES (Brazilian Development Bank), EMBRAPA (Brazilian Agricultural Research Cooperation), FIOCRUZ (Oswaldo Cruz Foundation) and ABC (Brazilian Cooperation Agency) since the beginning of the century were instrumental in developing ties with CPLP (Community of Portuguese Language Countries) countries and other major players from sub-Saharan Africa. Though Brazilian imports consist of mainly oil and other natural resources from resource rich countries like Nigeria, Angola, South Africa and Libya, one cannot discount its engagements with various other African countries on a variety of issues. Under the aegis of South-South Cooperation, Brazil has engaged with Africa on issues like public health, agriculture, energy, food security, education etc. For example, EMBRAPA had opened an Africa office in Ghana in 2006 to assist and coordinate projects in the field of tropical agriculture and biofuel (Stolte, 2013). In 2008, FIOCRUZ opened an office of its biomedical research and public health institute in Mozambique in order to share and spread its expertise and knowledge in the field of health (Stolte, 2013). These engagements when associated with other positive gestures like debt relief for African nations, provided Brasilia with a 'friendly' and 'trustworthy' image to Africa (Brazil 'to write off' almost \$900m of African debt, 2013). Contradicting these, there have been allegations that Brazil is just another country like the US, China and India that intends to explore and extract Africa's abundant natural resource base (Stolte, 2012). However, many of these tie-ups which are of noncommercial nature will help refute these allegations and help Brazil in projecting itself as a mutual partner for Africa.

Presidential diplomacy in Brazilian foreign policy was very active and productive under Lula (Hirst, 2009). The Brazilian presidents had often independently conducted foreign policies despite the presence of a well constituted foreign ministry. This was evident from the period of Getulio Vargas onwards. This presidential overstepping on the foreign policy decision-making had its own benefits and consequences. The quagmire that Brazilian foreign policy is in today in connection to Africa is caused as much by a weak leadership as it is by other economic and geopolitical factors. The conspicuous absence of Brazilian leadership in the Colombian FARC negotiations shows a policy paralysis has gripped Brazil in formulating its foreign ties. The noted decline of the

Itamaraty needs serious collective reforms to bring back Brazil to the centre table of international politics. Giving a robust institutional foundation for Itamaraty's operations in Africa can be the solution that can be forwarded if Brazil wants to sustain its presence in Africa. However, the internal dynamics of the Itamaraty along with the absence of sustained finances makes it not only powerless but completely ineffective to molding the future external policies of the country. Under Dilma Rousseff, Itamaraty saw its budget getting sliced to half (Stuenkel, 2014). Until recently, Itamaraty remained one of the most sophisticated and well-oiled foreign ministries in the world. Institutional capacity has to be reinstated. Currently Brazil has the fourth largest diplomatic presence in Africa with embassies in 37 state capitals. Unless Itamaraty allocates sufficient resources and personnel, there is no way Brazil can guarantee its productive presence in Africa.

Africa is a continent rich with resources albeit its poor showing in the world politics and economic activities. If it was the human and natural resources in Africa that faced extreme exploitation under the European powers during the initial stages of colonialism, its natural resources were targeted later. Post-colonial Africa suffered heavily under the British and the US' imperialism. Various scholars argue that what China is doing in Africa is another form of imperialism, often called neo-imperialism. Brasilia has to keep itself updated with the changed contours of economics and politics in Africa. Since the turn of the millennium Africa has witnessed periods of stable economic growth and as per IMF and World Bank reports, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) will remain one of the fastest growing regions in the world even if it suffers from a dropping commodity prices and an uncertain global economic situation (Zamfir, 2016). This provides ample and justifiable reasons from the African side that gives hope for Brazilian investors and allows the Brazilian goods to retain their markets despite ensuing global meltdown. Africa still remains significant for Brasilia's regional and global interests notwithstanding its economic potential. With 1.2 billion population and 54 states, it today has a role to play in the global decision-making process. Brazil needs the backing of Africa in its efforts reform existing international organizations to make them more democratic and valid. These group of developing nations that enjoyed very little or no say in the functioning of international organizations when they were formed in the aftermath of WWII, today enjoys more command and influence than ever. With regard to its Africa Policy, Brazil should develop a policy predicated on cultural, economic and strategic relations. This when synced with tangible realities like geographical proximity and historical linkages, will provide Brazil an uneven advantage among its peers.

6. Conclusion

Brazilian foreign policy needs a revival and for the Itamaraty it is more important to reestablish its ties with Africa more than ever. The economic and political climate in Brazil may not be conducive enough to regenerate its relations across the Atlantic Ocean, but its significance remains undeniable. After decades of political and economic haphazardness, and many failed efforts to put itself in the global stage and at the centre of regional affairs, Brazil since the turn of the century, has shown its capacity to lead the region and play a significant role globally. Unlike previous attempts at the same, which all lacked a good foundation or economic capital, Brazil in spite of the ensuing domestic mayhem, still have a modest institutional foundation and no dearth for ideas. The way forward is only through the policy ideals that Brazil has been painstakingly adhering to since 1990s: South-South Cooperation, South American integration and close ties with

rising powers like India, China, and South Africa etc. Here Africa remains more significant for Brazil's international endeavors.

Brazilian outreach to Africa at the time of commodity boom has also stirred a new story; like China and India, Brazil is just another country to extract and exploit the abundant natural resources that Africa is bestowed with. The noncommercial and nonexploitative developmental assistance and partnerships Brasilia has with several relatively smaller states in the region can save Brazil's image against such accusations. But Brazil could ignore this for many reasons and through its actions obviously. Unlike India and China, Brazil is awash with natural resources. Secondly the kind of partnership that Brazil has been developing in Africa since last couple of decades has been that of developing partner than just a trading partner. Compared to China, Brazil has a better image in Africa. There is a growing apprehension in Africa against China, thanks to the asymmetrical economic relation it has with many African countries (Morgan & Nicholson, 2016). Brasilia can capitalize on this. Sub-Saharan Africa still remains an untapped area for Brazil. Despite the recent economic revival this region is witnessing, most countries are falling behind in various socioeconomic indicators like health, literacy, urban infrastructure. Brazil with modest sophistication and experience could be a partner to these countries, thus could improve its presence in the continent. State enterprises like EMBRAPA, FIOCRUZ, SENAI and BNDES could be used to engage in these regions. Even South Africa with modest socioeconomic indicators Africa lags behind Brazil in many areas.

At a time when the 'Pink Tide' and its leftist, socialist variants of politics have reached an impasse or lost its appeal in Latin America (a natural platform for the developing world countries from Asia, Africa and South America to come together) and when the US and other European powers ignore Brasilia or prioritize its engagements with other players in the region, Brazil must preserve and foster its African ties. Since economic situations remain highly volatile regionally and globally, owing to swings in economic, political and security scenarios (regionally and globally) a relationship predicated heavily on economic resources would not be a way forward. And, when Lula's return to Palácio do Planalto (the official workplace of the President of Brazil) and the revival of Itamaraty's Africa policy remains highly unlikely and uncertain for obvious other reasons, institutionalization of Brazil-Africa relations built on social, cultural, ideational and developmental proclivities would be more sustainable. According to Lula, Brazil has a historic debt to pay in Africa (Saraiva, 2010). Brazil has a moral obligation to heal that century of neglect. And it is also the way forward for Brazil. After all, both continents were once part of a single landmass called Gondwanaland.

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