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‘BRAZIL IS KNOWN AS A MAGIC WORD’

– *Your Excellency, it is clear that Brazil’s key priority is to balance its role as a regional power with that of a global player, which depends largely on its array of soft power assets and middle power diplomacy. In recent years, Brazil has pursued a more ambitious foreign policy that aims to expand the country’s presence in global economic negotiations, multilateral institutions, and regional affairs. From your point of view, what are the means of achieving this goal, considering the challenges the world is facing today?*

– Brazil has been a global player for decades, with economic and political interests that go well beyond the South American region. For instance, the initial formation of our economy was linked to our role as a large exporter of agricultural products, from coffee to sugar and latex, which were sold primarily to Europe and North America. Today, we are one of the world’s top 10 economies and we have a much more diversified trade profile. Almost 50 percent of all our foreign trade is with developing countries from all over the world, including those in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. We are in a particularly favourable position to interact freely and without prejudice with all of these countries because of our mixed and multicultural origins: We are a melting pot society. We are also a peaceful country and we believe that negotiations and multilateralism are the best tools to move into the future in a way that is beneficial to everyone. We want to contribute to this process more and more. This will continue to be true in the coming decades, as other developing countries play a more important political and economic role in the world.

– *Relations with the U.S. and the European Union have been reshaped. China and India are now key international partners. Besides, there is a conscious fostering of South-South multilateralism and unprecedented presence of these countries in South America. What vectors of international cooperation should Ukraine pay attention to, bearing in mind the Brazilian diplomatic experience?*

– The key to make the most of international cooperation opportunities is to use the country’s existing strengths, while also expanding to new sectors and partnering with new regions. Ukraine has a very developed economy in many areas, such as aerospace technology, agribusiness, information technology, logistics, etc. This is partially because of its history, but it is also because it has many dynamic and forward-looking entrepreneurs. In addition, the strategic location and size of the country provide advantages for increasing its penetration in different regions

of the world. Ukraine can also rely on the fact that it is well-regarded and respected not only among EU countries but also in Asia as well as North and Latin America.

– *On 18 March 2021, the Biden administration confirmed that it was finalising a plan to send 2.5 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to Mexico, just as the U.S. government seeks help from its southern neighbour in managing a record rate of migration through Central America. This might be an iconic example of the country using coronavirus vaccine diplomacy to advance a policy objective other than public health. Can such diplomacy be a tool which allows Brazil to achieve its important goals? Why?*

– The COVID-19 pandemic that has been affecting the world since early 2020 must be tackled with solidarity, from a humanitarian perspective, without leaving room for politics. Brazil believes that countries that have a surplus of vaccines should share them with less developed ones so that they can tame this disease as soon as possible and prevent it from destroying lives all over the world. In the long run, this will be beneficial to all countries, as the virus can continue spreading and mutating in poorer regions of the world. In this context, Brazil has already offered to share some of the vaccines we are producing with neighbouring countries.

– *Ukraine and Brazil work closely together in the humanitarian field. A number of relevant agreements have been signed between universities of our countries. For instance, the National Pedagogical Drahomanov University has concluded an agreement with the University of Paraná UNICENTRO, according to which the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian studies began to be remotely taught at the latter. What are the prospects for the development of bilateral relations in this area and how relevant are they?*

– After coming to Kyiv, I was pleased to discover that, in spite of the distance and differences between Brazil and Ukraine, there was a solid and natural interest between both countries. In Brazil, much of this is the work of the Ukrainian diaspora, which is particularly present in the south of the country. I believe that the interest in the Ukrainian language and history in Brazil matches the renewed interest in this topic in Ukraine. Many people want to learn more about their origins and identity. Part of this cooperation between educational institutions also happens naturally and organically, by their own initiative, without requiring an active participation of the government. This is a very positive sign. We fully support such agreements and believe that they bring our countries and societies closer.

– *In 2012, the Ukrainian community held a number of cultural and artistic festivals in the cities of Brazil, and in 2019, the Ukrainian band DakhaBrakha took part in the Rock in Rio international festival in Rio de Janeiro. There are also Ukrainian schools, folk groups, and creative cooperatives in the country. From your standpoint, will the number of joint Ukrainian-Brazilian cultural initiatives increase with the adaptation of international relations to the online format? What are the prospects for the development of cultural diplomacy between our countries?*

– The current year – 2021 – is very important for our bilateral relations, as we are celebrating the 130th anniversary since the beginning of the migration of Ukrainian families to Brazil. Today, the Ukrainian diaspora in Brazil is estimated to be around 500,000 people, who are completely integrated in the Brazilian life. The Embassy of Brazil in Kyiv, with the support of different institutions from both countries, is organizing a number of online events to celebrate this important milestone, including film screenings, virtual round tables, lectures, and even a cooking class. While it is not always a substitute for human contact, we see the growing use of online tools for cultural events as an opportunity, as it allows us to receive contributions from experts and artists from all over the world and reach a wider audience.

– *There is a representative office of the Ukrainian company Motor Sich JSC in Brazil. Are there any examples of successful work of other Ukrainian enterprises operating in Brazil or joint ventures? Which fields of economic cooperation between our countries are the most effective and what areas should entrepreneurs of both countries pay attention to?*

– We still have few success stories of cooperation between Brazilian and Ukrainian companies. Recently, a large Brazilian IT company has opened a branch in Kyiv, motivated by the fast growth of this sector in the country. In Brazil, an insulin factory will soon be built by a Ukrainian company, which is the result of a successful partnership that has now lasted for many years. There is, however, much room for further growth. The embassy is working with partners in Brazil and Ukraine to connect the business communities of both countries and help them to find areas where they could work together. From my perspective, some sectors seem particularly promising, such as agribusiness, bilateral investments, and health.

The space cooperation agreement signed with Brazil at the beginning of the 21st century is proof that Ukraine is increasingly interested in developing relations with countries in all regions of the world, including Latin America. I believe that this trend will intensify in the coming years, as the volume of Ukrainian trade with China and other regions of the world has already increased. The trade between Ukraine and Brazil is also recovering after the crisis of 2014–2015, and we hope that it to continue growing, despite a slight decrease in 2020. Our governments are working together to identify new areas for trade and investment diversification.

– *The most ambitious bilateral initiative of the last decade, Cyclone-4, carried out by the binational venture Alcantara Cyclone Space, ended with a failure. What were the reasons behind Brazil's decision to unilaterally denounce the agreement? Will the project be resumed?*

– Alcantara Cyclone Space was unfortunately marred by a combination of mistakes and mishaps, which ultimately led to the cancellation of Cyclone-4. This, however, was not to the detriment of the relations between Ukraine and



Brazil, and both sides are working hard and with a positive approach to settle the final remaining details of the project. Even more importantly, there is a clear will to develop the cooperation in this strategic field, in a way that is more well-adapted to the current needs of the space market. For instance, we feel that it is important today to include the private sector more actively in such initiatives. We want to make the most of the capabilities of our aerospace industries, and both space agencies are currently looking into possible opportunities.

– *Your Excellency, you took your post in Ukraine last year. Were there any challenges you had to adjust your activity to?*

– The only difficulty I faced in at the beginning was the scarce knowledge of Ukrainian, so I started learning it, and now I can read many words! It was a great experience to get acquainted with this beautiful language. From a personal point of view, the challenges imply understanding the culture and finding connections with my colleagues in the Ukrainian authorities. Brazil has a great advantage: Everybody loves our country, it is known as a magic word. When you say, ‘I am from Brazil’, you can hear many people say ‘welcome’. I love meeting and communicating with Ukrainian people. I also love going to supermarkets and seeing people meet me with smiles. I gladly tell them *dobryi den* and discover that they are very forthcoming!

– *What advice would you give Ukrainians for them to better discover Brazil?*

– Wherever you go in Brazil, especially the southern part, you feel at home. We are a nation of immigrants. That is why multiculturalism is one of our country’s inherent features. One can find different international cuisines in our

cities, architectural styles, and a symbiosis of cultures. We even have Ukrainian food cooked in the Brazilian style, as many Ukrainians came to Brazil some 130 years ago.

– *During this period, have you managed to explore Ukraine to the full extent? What places have you already visited?*

– I have been to Kharkiv, Dnipro, Odesa, Lviv, Mohyliv-Podilskyi, and Ternopil. However, this is only the beginning. I travel around Ukraine by my own car and, I have to admit it, it is great pleasure for me to do it. Besides, Ukrainian roads are getting better and better. I guess that the best way to explore the country is to see it with your own eyes. See, taste, and smell. That is why I try to visit Ukraine as much as I can. I was enthralled to discover that your country preserves so many medieval castles, particularly the Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi fortress, which is the second largest in Eastern Europe. If you visit my Facebook page, you can see the many places and events I had a chance to visit that are related to Ukraine and its culture. I have tried Ukrainian cheese and savoured local wine, which is one of the best in the world. Now I can say with certainty that popularising this country is one of my hobbies.

– *What are the most vivid cultural similarities between Brazil and Ukraine?*

– What our countries have in common is the love to culture, music, art, and good food. We both are creative, since in cities across our countries we can see amazing murals, various modern designs, and other beautiful expressions of art. This is a great thing to enjoy.

– *What are the prospects for the development of cultural diplomacy between our countries? Are there any projects planned in the near future?*

As I have previously said, this year, the embassy has dedicated much attention to the anniversary of the Ukrainian migration to Brazil, which is a great and important celebration for us. Moreover, the agenda includes lots of online events, film debates, and webinars up to the end of the year. As we expect the pandemic situation to get better, on 7 September, we are planning to organise Brazil's Independence Day celebration at the National Philharmonic of Ukraine, featuring, in particular, the performance of a Brazilian saxophonist, whose grandparents came from Ukraine, and the exhibition of Sidnei Tendler, a Brazilian poet, architect, and painter, whose father, grandparents, and aunts came from Mohyliv-Podilskyi. In this manner, this year is dedicated to 'Ukraine in Brazil' in commemoration of what Ukrainians have brought to Brazil in terms of culture, dreams, and souls. Conversely, next year will be dedicated to 'Brazil in Ukraine', where we will get acquainted with outstanding Brazilian musicians spreading Brazilian cultural motives in Ukraine. Music is one of the best cultural expressions because music has no language barriers. Despite the fact that one may not understand the words, the mood and message of the song is clear, which is more important. That is why we pay particular attention to music within the cultural diplomacy activities of the embassy.

– *Climate security remains a problem for the world and Brazil, in particular. We all remember the horrendous fires in the Amazon area. The hazard is immense and ubiquitous, especially considering the illegal logging. What is an efficient way to tackle the environmental problem?*

– This is a very complicated issue, firstly, because the Amazon region is not only Brazilian. It also covers territories of other countries, such as Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Surinam, Guyana, and France (French Guiana). Every year the dry season causes natural fires and, as it has already been mentioned, we face the hazard of illegal logging. First of all, it bears mentioning that the fire seasons are regular, which has been observed for hundreds of years and they will continue, as it is the way nature renews itself. Each year the effect of fires is different, sometimes reaching immense proportions, as reported in 2019. Secondly, considering the fact that Brazil does not make use of the logs and they go to Europe, we face the urgent need to reverse this trend. In this respect, Brazil has become one of the first countries to efficiently tackle the climate issue. During the first Leaders' Climate Summit, in which I personally took part, Brazil strongly advocated for nature preservation efforts. We have already unrolled a planting campaign to decrease deforestation and surged investments in relevant technology. Yet the problem of forests concerns not only the said countries of Latin America. It is a fairly global issue, and we see similar concerns around the world. If we move to Africa, we can see forests at the same latitude. These areas undergo much more horrendous illegal activities, yet they have so far not received the same focus as the Amazon. Moving forward to Asia, one can also





spot forests, which are not shielded from climate hazards. Yet all we can hear in the media is criticism towards Brazil, which is not constructive and serves somebody's ulterior motives. The point is not to castigate each other but to work together to find solutions to better control the problem. It is the responsibility of each country to understand the risks it faces in terms of climate protection and not to avoid taking action. Turning back to the issue, after all, Brazil needs to save rainforests, as it is important in terms of ensuring that agricultural business functions for the sake of economic development. There is a strong link between them. The more protected the Amazon is, the more fertile the soil is, which brings abundant harvest and increases our exports. That is why we aim to preserve the nature intact to our advantage. This concerns not only the forests in Brazil. We have to take care of the Amazon region in Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, and forests in other countries on different continents. We are all responsible of taking care of our Earth.