

## **High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2022**

### **Statement by H.E. Mr. Célio Faria Júnior, Chief-Minister of the Secretariat of Government Federative Republic of Brazil**

On behalf of the Brazilian government, I greet the participants of this High Level Political Forum, held under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. I particularly welcome the theme of this 2022 edition, “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, fully in line with the Brazilian Government's objective of promoting sustainable development as an integral part of the efforts to overcome the cycle of this disease.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, official actions have represented an investment of more than USD 110 billion in our Unified Health System (SUS, as we know it). In the process of financial execution of these resources, the Brazilian Government prioritized policies that promote integration between the federal government, states and municipalities. Indeed, with the objective of mitigating the effects of the Coronavirus on the Brazilian population, the public structure of the SUS, which was already one of the largest in the world, was significantly expanded not only with regard to specialized care but also with regard to the primary care of patients throughout the national territory.

As for prevention, the Federal Government acquired more than 650 million doses of vaccines, helping more than 85% of the Brazilian population to complete the primary vaccination series. We have advanced in the application of booster doses in order to guarantee unimpeded and free access to this important preventive policy for Brazilians. With all the effort to protection and health security, in the last year we reduced the number of deaths by 90%. As part of our policy of providing fair and equitable access to vaccines, we have donated 5.6 million doses internationally and contributed more than USD 86 million to the WHO's efforts to expand global vaccination coverage against COVID-19.

With the objective of offering protection to the most needy, resources were allocated through the Federative Program to Combat COVID, in the following categories: i) Emergency Aid for people in situations of vulnerability; and ii) Financial Aid to the States, Federal District and municipalities. In financial terms, the BRL 504.02 billion (USD 101.13 billion) allocated to Emergency Aid in 2020 and BRL 102.49 billion (USD 20.56 billion) in 2021 corresponded, respectively, to 15.85% and 2.80% of public spending in the last two years.

Once the most acute phase of the pandemic was over, the Brazilian Government instituted “Auxílio Brasil” (Brazil Aid), starting from BRL 400.00 (approximately USD 77.00), which, as of May of this year, began to be paid on a permanent basis. It is estimated that this program serves approximately 18 million Brazilians and generates an annual disbursement of BRL 90 billion (USD 18.05 billion). In the countryside, the Rural Productive Inclusion Aid stands out, on a complementary basis to the “Auxílio Brasil” and which provides for the payment of BRL 200 (approximately USD 38.00) monthly, for up to 36 months, to families that have family farmers in their composition. This incentive can be added not only to “Auxílio Brasil”, but also to other financial benefits received by the most vulnerable.

In terms of education, on May 24, the National Policy for the Recovery of Learning in Basic Education was launched, with the aim of reducing truancy and school dropout rates, aggravated by the pandemic, and developing teaching and learning strategies to improve school performance. This is an initiative in line with the content of the debates in the latest edition of the World Education Forum (London, May 2022).

Currently, more than 48 million students are enrolled in basic education, which includes early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, vocational education, youth and adult education and special education. The Federal Government participates in the dialogue with the Education Departments of the States, municipalities and the Federal District, in the process of joining the Integrated Monitoring, Execution and Control System of the Ministry of Education – SIMEC.

Another initiative in favor of raising the quality of education to achieve the goals of the National Education Plan for Elementary Education refers to the “Brasil na Escola” (Brazil at School) program, instituted in March 2021. It is structured around three axes: i) technical and financial support to schools, with investment forecast of BRL 50 million (USD 9.685 million) in two years, benefiting around 1 million students from 5 thousand elementary schools; ii) appreciation of good practices, to receive BRL 200 million (USD 38.740 million) in two years, to be distributed to 10 thousand schools; and iii) innovation, including seminars, forums and studies on Elementary Education, as well as the selection of schools to promote innovative projects. The idea is to serve, in principle, 54 schools, selected by public notice, which may receive up to BRL 100,000 (USD 19,370) per year, for 5 years.

The 33.24% increase in the minimum wage for public school teachers, from BRL 2,886 (USD 512.52) to BRL 3,845 (USD 682.83) demonstrates the priority given to education in Brazil and is the largest salary elevation since 2008, when the so-called “Lei do Piso” established a minimum wage for all teachers. More than 1.7 million teachers from the public network of states, municipalities and the Federal District were benefited.

On a complementary basis to the reinforcement of basic education, the First Opportunity and Reinsertion in Employment Program (Priore) is being implemented, aimed at guaranteeing the entry into the labor market of people aged between 18 and 29, in relation to the first job with a formal contract, as well as for people over 55 who have not been formally employed for more than 12 months, promoting a reduction in the unemployment rate of this public. Hiring in the Priore modality can be done for 36 months from the publication of the law, with the contract being valid for a maximum period of 24 months. The program also establishes lower rates for payment of the Severance Indemnity Fund (FGTS) and the payment of the Productive Inclusion Bonus (BIP) to the employee hired through this program.

We are aware of the effects of the pandemic, which has paralyzed countries' economies and led to the first global rise in extreme poverty in nearly 30 years, as well as disrupted schooling for more than a billion children worldwide - millions of whom have yet to return and may never do so. Given this scenario, the Brazilian government has prioritized basic education and the employability of young people as part of the strategy to resume economic growth. We are certain that, in this year 2022, the Brazilian economy will show a positive growth rate.

Finally, we are fully aware that our development challenges are shared, they go beyond the ability of any nation to solve them. The debates in this Forum are an integral part of the multilateral system, which, I am sure, will be increasingly able to integrate initiatives that contribute to overcoming the difficulties imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Brazil is ready to share its experience of expanding the health system, expanding national production capacities for vaccines and medicines and dialoguing in favor of identifying forms of cooperation to boost investment promotion, technology and knowledge transfer. With the right amount of flexibility and long-term vision, we are confident that the scientific advances achieved will allow the development of even safer, more effective and affordable vaccines and medicines that guarantee more protection against new variants of the Coronavirus. In this way, we will be able to contribute to the effective overcoming, on a global basis, of the pandemic.