



**Inauguration de l'Ambassade du Luxembourg au Brésil
par S.E.M. Jean Asselborn, Ministre des Affaires étrangères et européennes**

Discours

Dear Under-Secretary-General, Ambassador Magalhães,

Thank you for your warm words.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests,

Boa tarde senhoras e senhores, é um imenso prazer estar aqui hoje!

Dear Luxembourgers and Brazilians,

I am delighted to be here in Brasilia today, to inaugurate the Embassy of Luxembourg together with Ambassador Magalhães, representing the Itamaraty, in the presence of so many distinguished guests. I would especially like to welcome Ms. Márcia Rollemberg, the first lady of the Federal District and spouse of the Governor of the Federal District, as well as my friend the Head of the EU Delegation, Ambassador João Gomes Cravinho, who was a good colleague in the Council of the European Union from 2005 to 2011, and whom I also met during my last visit to India in 2015. I welcome all the Ambassadors and representatives of the diplomatic community present here today.

Today, we mark a historic moment in the relationship between Luxembourg and Brazil. This Embassy is the first Embassy of Luxembourg with a resident Ambassador in Latin America, and the first Embassy of Luxembourg in South America, which speaks to the importance and value we attach to our relations with Brazil. Indeed, we are not gathered here simply to celebrate the opening of a building. Rather, this building represents the solid and strong relationship between our two nations.

Our diplomatic ties were formally established in 1911, and our history is rich in bilateral contacts. When I look around me, I see among you many who continue this century-old cooperation between our two countries:

- Descendants of Luxembourg immigrants from the 19th century, Brazilians proud of their heritage and some even of their double nationality;

From the late 1820s, Luxembourgers settled in the states of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Parana, establishing what are today the cities of Rio Negro and Luiz Alves, among others. Luxembourgers also settled in the state of Espirito Santo, where they founded the village of Luxemburgo in what is today the city of Santa Leopoldina, and later in the area around Belo Horizonte in Minas Gerais. Today, we find several thousands of descendants of Luxembourg immigrants in Brazil. They cherish their dual heritage, and many of them have reclaimed their Luxembourg citizenship by way of proving that they have a direct ancestor who was a Luxembourg citizen on or after 1 January 1900.

- I also see among us the descendants of Luxembourg engineers and technicians, who brought their expertise and helped build Brazil's steel industry, thereby contributing to this country's economic development, from the 1920s. Indeed Luxembourg's steel giant ARBED, now ArcelorMittal, has from those early days been a great investor in BelgoMineira, which has become a major player in Latin America under Luxembourg leadership.
- Let me also welcome representatives of Luxembourg companies that are active in Brazil today, bringing innovation in the steel industry, communication, space technology and many other sectors. We have here today representatives not only from ArcelorMittal, but also from SES, our world-leading satellite operator, which has just launched its first Brazilian

satellite, SES-14, on 25th January this year, the largest satellite built by SES by the way. I would also like to welcome the representative from Paul Wurth, a Luxembourg firm bringing new technologies in the fields of steel and ecology to Brazil since 1977. Finally, let me mention Cargolux, Europe's largest all-cargo carrier, which has served the Brazilian market since 2002, and, today, considers Brazil its most important market in South America.

After these words of welcome, I would also like to express my gratitude. First, I wish to thank our 4 honorary consuls, their predecessors and their teams, who have been helping Luxembourgers here in Brazil long before we opened this Embassy. Let me in particular thank Mrs. Marie-Christine Meyers from Rio de Janeiro, Mr. Jan Eichbaum from São Paulo, Mrs. Tania Bian and her husband Emile Bian from Porto Alegre, as well as our former consul François Moyen from Belo Horizonte, who could not be with us today.

I also want to give very special thanks to our Belgian colleagues, Ambassador Dirk Loncke and his team, for their wonderful hospitality and for all their help in providing the provisional offices occupied by Ambassador Carlo Krieger since September 2017.

Thank you to our Brazilian friends for coming tonight. I would like to use this opportunity to encourage you to work ever more closely with us. There are not many countries in the world with whom Luxembourg shares so many personal and historic ties.

On the political level, our relations are excellent and we cooperate closely in international fora, in particular at the United Nations. This cooperation is based on the shared values of democracy, human rights, rule of law, and on our shared commitment to a rules-based international order. We are currently negotiating an EU Mercosul agreement, which should open our countries and our markets to one another for the benefit of our citizens.

Today, Brazil is the first trade partner of Luxembourg in Latin America, and we witness an increasing interest of Brazilian investors in Luxembourg. Under the able leadership of Ambassador Carlo Krieger, our Embassy here will provide an open door for those who would like to take this relationship further.

Let us celebrate today the inauguration of this Embassy, which is a testimony to our

close ties. Let us raise our glasses to the friendship between Brazil and Luxembourg, to the well-being of the peoples of Brazil and of Luxembourg and all of you who are sharing this moment with us.

Dear guests, it gives me great pleasure to formally declare the Embassy of Luxembourg in Brazil open.