

Remarks by President Obama to the People of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro

Boa tarde, todo o povo brasileiro. Since the moment we arrived, the people of this nation have shown my family the warmth and generosity of the Brazilian spirit. Obrigado.

Yesterday, I met with your wonderful new President, Dilma Rousseff, and talked about how we can strengthen the partnership between our governments. But today, I want to speak directly to the Brazilian people about how we can strengthen the friendship between our nations. I've come here to share some ideas because I want to speak of the values that we share, the hopes that we have in common.

The journeys of the United States of America and Brazil began in similar ways. From overseas, the Americas were discovered by men who sought a New World, and settled by pioneers who pushed westward. We became colonies claimed by distant crowns, but soon declared our independence. The United States was the first nation to recognize Brazil's independence.

In Brazil, you fought against two decades of dictatorships for the right to be heard and the right to be free from fear. But those days have passed. Brazil today is a flourishing democracy; a place where people are free to speak their mind and choose their leaders.

Over the last decade, the progress made by the Brazilian people has inspired the world. Millions have been lifted from poverty. In the global community, you've gone from relying on the help of other nations, to now helping fight poverty and disease wherever they exist. You play an important role in the global institutions that protect our common security and promote our common prosperity.

Our countries have not always agreed on everything. But as you confront the many challenges you still face at home and as abroad, let us stand together as equal partners, joined in a spirit of mutual interest and mutual respect, committed to the progress that I know that we can make together.

Together we can advance our common prosperity. As two of the world's largest economies, we worked side by side during the financial crisis to restore growth and confidence. And to keep our economies growing, we know what's necessary in both of our nations.

In a global economy, the United States and Brazil should expand trade, expand investment, so that we create new jobs and new opportunities in both of our nations.

Together, we can promote energy security and protect our planet. As two nations that are committed to greener economies, we know that the ultimate solution to our energy challenges lies in clean and renewable power. And that's why the United States and Brazil are creating new energy partnerships: to share technologies, create new jobs, and leave our children a cleaner, safer world.

Together, our two nations can also help defend our citizens' security. We're working together to stop narco-trafficking that has destroyed too many lives in this hemisphere. From Africa to Haiti, we are working side by side to combat the hunger, disease, and corruption that can rot a society and rob human beings of dignity and opportunity.

In these and other efforts to promote peace and prosperity throughout the world, the United States and Brazil are partners not just because we share history, not just because we're in the same hemisphere, not just because we share ties of commerce and culture, but also because we share certain enduring values and ideals.

We both believe in the power and promise of democracy. We believe that no other form of government is more effective at promoting growth and prosperity that reaches every human being. To those who argue otherwise, I say let them look at the example of Brazil.

The millions in this country who have climbed out of poverty into the middle class could not do have done so in a closed economy controlled by the state. You're prospering as a free people with open markets. You're proving that the goal of social justice and social inclusion can be best achieved through freedom: that democracy is the greatest partner of human progress.

We all seek to be free. We all seek to be heard. We all yearn to live without fear or discrimination. We all yearn to choose how we are governed. And we all want to shape our own destiny. These are not American ideals or Brazilian ideals. These are universal rights, and we must support them everywhere.

Today, we are seeing the struggle for these rights unfold across the Middle East and North Africa, from Tunisia and Egypt to Libya. Across the region, we've seen young people rise up — a new generation demanding the right to determine their own future.

No one can say for certain how this change will end, but I do know that change is not something that we should fear. When young people insist that the history is on the move, the burdens of the past can be washed away. When men and women peacefully claim their human rights, our own common humanity is improved. Wherever the light of freedom is lit, the world becomes a brighter place.

That is the example of Brazil. Brazil, a country that shows that a dictatorship can become a thriving democracy. Brazil, a country that shows democracy delivers both freedom and opportunity to its people. Brazil, a country that shows how a call for change that starts in the streets can transform a city, transform a country, transform the world.

Our two nations face many challenges. On the road ahead, we will certainly encounter many obstacles. But in the end, it is our history that gives us hope for a better tomorrow. It is the knowledge that the men and women who came before us have triumphed over greater trials than these, that we live in places where ordinary people have done extraordinary things.

It's that sense of possibility, that sense of optimism that first drew pioneers to this New World. It's what binds our nations together as partners in this new century. It's why we believe, in the words of Paul Coelho, one of your most famous writers: "With the strength of our love and our will, we can change our destiny, as well as the destiny of many others."

Muito obrigado. And may God bless our two nations.