

**Speech given by Ambassador Ruy Pereira at the Opening Ceremony of the 12th
Brazilian Cotton Congress (CBA) - August 27, 2019.**

1. Your Excellency Mr. Antonio Carlos de Souza Lima Neto, Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply of the State of Goiás; Your Excellency Mr. José Mario, Federal Congressman, on behalf of the National Conference of Agriculture (CNA); Mr. Milton Garbugio, President of the Brazilian Association of Cotton Producers (ABRAPA), ladies and gentlemen,

2. I would like to start by thanking the members of this opening table for granting me the honor of participating in this dialogue session, a gathering between the various stakeholders engaged in cotton production, with a view to further debate on the future and strengthening of the sector. I would especially like to thank ABRAPA, in the person of its president, my dear friend Milton Garbugio, for its commitment and tireless dedication in working to create opportunities for cotton production in Brazil and to strengthen the tools for the growth and innovation of the cotton sector in Brazil over the last two decades. I would also like to add that ABRAPA's work also extends beyond the Brazilian borders, reaching other countries.

3. For the Brazilian Cooperation Agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - and here I would like to convey the greetings of Chancellor Ernesto Araújo to all of you, wishing a successful event - this Congress is of great importance. The experiences and initiatives featured in the three days of learning, exchange and debate will contribute to identifying common challenges and innovative solutions between Brazil and the cotton-producing countries of Africa and Latin America, in order to improve policies and actions of our countries in the cotton sector.

4. The Cotton Congress is also a great opportunity to present to Brazilian society the results of Brazil's technical cooperation with other countries in the sector, to strengthen partnerships between producer associations and research institutes in Africa and Latin America and to discuss ways to strengthen the use of this natural fiber *vis-a-vis* synthetic ones, which benefits not only cotton farmers in partner countries (who are generally family farmers), but also Brazilian producers. After all, nowadays we shall focus on sustainability, and in this case there is no doubt that cotton is the best solution.

5. In fact, cotton is one of the most important agricultural goods in the world, responsible for generating employment and income and improving food security for millions of families, especially in developing countries, whose economy and agricultural production depend on this commodity. Since it directly and indirectly affects significant portions of the population, the sector occupies a strategic position in the economic and social development policies, besides being strategic in the national poverty reduction programs of several partner countries of Brazil in Africa and Latin America.

6. Ladies and gentlemen,

The cotton sector is faced with challenges both at the international and national levels. In the international market, prices are characterized by strong fluctuations in the short

term and a downward trend in the long term. Prices are also subject to harmful distortions caused by subsidies practiced by developed countries. In domestic markets, including countries such as Brazil, where there have been strong investments in the sector, the production and commercialization of the commodity and its by-products are threatened, among other factors, by market competition with yarns and fabrics that are not sustainable.

7. In this context, I would like to highlight the importance of Brazilian technical cooperation to address these challenges, especially through technology and innovation. Thanks to cooperation projects, other countries can adopt Brazilian varieties of cotton, contributing to evaluate and value the resistance of our seeds under different conditions, in addition to contributing to the expansion of international trade. Brazil's technical cooperation also helps to preventively diagnose pests and avoid them from reaching Brazilian plantations.

8. In addition to serving as an observatory of the behavior of Brazilian technologies abroad, the sharing of important phytotechnology information on no-till planting, genetic breeding and integrated management of cotton crop pests, provides valuable, very useful, knowledge to partners about the traditional systems of cotton cultivation, with efficient and practical uses of intercropped and crop-rotation production systems.

9. Therefore, it is worth noting that Brazil also benefits greatly from international technical cooperation projects in the cotton sector. Aside from playing a leading role and being a source of agricultural development initiatives, Brazil is also increasing its knowledge of technologies and good practices related to the production and use of cotton and its by-products. Cotton projects are also a vivid and positive example of the advantages of having Brazil as a technical cooperation partner in the countries of Africa and Latin America, as well as in multilateral fora. The participation of representatives of more than twenty countries from Africa and Latin America in this 12th edition of the Brazilian Cotton Congress is an example of this. I kindly ask you, ladies and gentlemen, to give them a round of applause as a warm welcome in this city and state that historically receives visitors from abroad with kindness and hospitality, a tradition that dates back to the proclamation of the Republic. Welcome, dear friends from Africa and Latin America.

10. Similarly to what has taken place in cotton production, Brazilian technical cooperation projects have prospered thanks to joint initiatives by the public and private sectors. The CBA is also a demonstration of the leadership and protagonism of the national private sector in the global production of cotton and its by-products. And, at this point, I must, with honesty and pride, reiterate to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, and especially to EMBRAPA, the gratitude and loyalty of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency. Both, the Ministry and Embrapa, are assets of Brazil and of our people. Both are very valuable partners, which we greatly appreciate. Thank you very much!

11. Finally, taking into account South-South Cooperation's focus on capacity-building, aimed at achieving autonomy for the conception and implementation of local solutions, which are suitable for the challenges towards a continuous innovation in the sector, I am certain that Brazilian South-South Cooperation is an important tool to overcome the current and future challenges of the national cotton industry. I know that we have and will continue to have dynamism, a vision of the future and the irreplaceable support of

the private sector, which I honor here in the person of my friend Milton Garbugio, president of ABRAPA, whom I congratulate once again for the Association's twentieth anniversary. I ask you all to bear in mind that Brazil's South-South cooperation is an important instrument for overcoming challenges and fostering political, economic, social and cultural ties of all kinds between Brazil and partner countries around the world, to the benefit of our peoples. At last, seizing this opportunity to do some advertisement, I would like to invite all of you to visit ABC's stand, located right at the beginning of the entrance hall of this convention center. Thank you very much!