



The Hon. Michel Temer

**EDITORS' NOTE** Michel Temer assumed his current post in 2010. He was born in São Paulo and attended the traditional School of Law, University of São Paulo (USP). He received a doctorate from the Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP). Temer directed the course of the graduate School of Law at PUC-SP and taught at the Faculty of Law of ITU. In 1983, he was invited by Governor Franco Montoro to occupy the State Attorney General position. He took over the Secretariat of Public Security of São Paulo in 1984. He left office in 1986 to run for Congress by constituting the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB). He was elected and after the period of the Constituent Assembly, he was reappointed to the position of federal deputy five times by the same party. He reassumed the Secretariat of Public Security of São Paulo in 1992. He occupied the chair of the House of Representatives in 1997, 1999, and 2009 and served as the interim President of the Republic twice: from the 27th to the 31st of January 1998 and June 15, 1999. In 2001, he was elected National President of the PMDB. In 2009, he was appointed by the Inter-Parliamentary Advisory Department (DIAP) as the most influential parliamentarian in Congress. Temer is the author of the books *Constitution and Policy*, *Federal Territories in Brazilian Constitutions* and *Your Rights in the Constitution*, and *Elements of Constitutional Law*.

**Would you highlight the current state of the Brazilian economy? What has made the country so strong?**

The Brazilian economy has shown great dynamism, despite a serious international

# A Land of Opportunity

An Interview with The Honorable Michel Temer, Vice President, Brazil

crisis. We have full employment and sustainable growth. The main reason for this development cycle is the union of economic stability and social inclusion for more than 40 million Brazilians in the consumer market. Social programs in Brazil generate income for the poorest. That income is reversed in consumption and the high demand triggers the production of industry, the service sector, and trade. Our companies become stronger in exploiting the internal market whereas others seek new markets and international partnerships. Brazil's economic base is diversified and solid, and has allowed us to go through past crises relatively unscathed.

**Brazil is still referred to as an emerging market. Has it already emerged?**

Brazil is the sixth largest world economy and the consumer market encompasses 200 million people. Past years' inclusion has rendered us a great opportunity for investment. In addition to having mineral-rich soil and developed agriculture, we have started the qualification process for our research and expanded opportunities to our students and researchers in science and technology. The strength of our economy is being transformed into a social force. This path leads to the consolidation of our regional leadership, where we seek a balanced development with partners who also benefit from this process. Therefore, we can say that the Brazilian market has already emerged, but we still need to make improvements in social aspects for our people to gain the benefits of our economic consistency.

**What do foreign investors need to know about opportunities in Brazil?**

Brazil is a land of opportunity. We have a big market, democratic stability, solid institutions, a peaceful tradition in international relations, and we have had consistent development over the past 12 years. During this period, our public policies drew 40 million people out of

poverty into the middle class. It is a real social revolution, silent but effective. This aspect brings huge business opportunity.

In addition, our government has a comprehensive infrastructure project. The Plan for Growth Acceleration doubled government investment in infrastructure and opened up possibilities for partnerships in major projects that will total \$494 billion from 2011 to 2014.

I also have to emphasize the natural richness of Brazil. The discovery of oil in the pré-sal or "beneath the salt" brought a great perspective on production through partnerships with foreign companies, as we have seen in the last auction of blocks conducted by the Brazilian government. We are making Brazil increasingly cheaper for the entrepreneur. We have unburdened the labor hiring process in several sectors, reduced the cost of electricity, and lowered taxes for strategic productive sectors. We will also modernize our ports, opening this sector to private investors.

**Would you highlight your innovation initiatives and why this is so important for Brazil's future?**

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Brazil will not have a prominent role if we do not make the country an ideal location for innovation. Our goal is to increase competitiveness in all sectors of the economy. For this reason, we announced a technological innovation plan in March with an investment of \$16 billion. We have created the Brazilian Research and Industrial Innovation Corporation (Embrapii) to promote scientific cooperation. As a result of this amalgam, we can prepare for a promising future, following the example of another company by which Embrapii was inspired: the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa), which revolutionized Brazilian agriculture. It has become a reference for the training of producers and professionals in the sector, the development of crop species adapted to different Brazilian regions and climates, and several technologies that have been exported to other countries, such as those in Africa.

**Education is a priority for the Administration. Would you highlight efforts in improving the education system in Brazil?**

As we invest in innovation, we need to have highly skilled labor to address the ongoing changes in various sectors of the economy. We are increasing the vacancies for technical education, which is focused on qualification. In 2011, we created the National Access to Vocational Training and Employment Programme (Pronatec), accumulating nearly five million registrations so far.

In addition to the creation of public universities, government incentives for the admission of low-income students to private

universities are remarkable. Since 2001, more than one million students have benefited from this program. We have also created Science Without Borders, which provides scholarships for undergraduate and post-graduate studies in 39 countries. Our goal is to have 100,000 scholarships in top universities all over the world.

**What is your view on the current state of the U.S.-Brazil relationship?**

Relations between Brazil and the United States need to be reinvigorated. In economic relations, the U.S. is still the main destination for Brazilian exports. The U.S. economic recovery has important repercussions for our country. Our relations go beyond the economy. We have historical ties because of common interests, such as the defense of democracy and individual freedom, which are values we share.

**You recently opened the venue for the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil. Would you provide an overview of the venue and the preparations for the event?**

The Brazilian government is engaged in preparing for the World Cup 2014. The opening of the new stadiums have been the symbol of the success of this work. We see very beautiful and modern stadiums that fit perfectly with the Brazilian taste for good football and joy. I have no doubt that Brazil will promote a great celebration in the World Cup matches.

**What is your vision for the impact that the Rio 2016 Olympic Games will have on Brazil?**

The Olympic Games in Rio is an opportunity for our people to celebrate world peace and the games symbolize the struggle to overcome our differences and limits. Therefore, we have federal programs focused on promoting sports. We also believe that within these practices we can discover new talents in several modalities, as we consistently do with football and volleyball. The world will enjoy one of the most beautiful cities in the world, Rio de Janeiro, and get to know one of the most welcoming peoples.

**What attracted you to politics and how do you define your responsibilities as Vice President of Brazil?**

The mission of the Vice President is to represent his country in the best way possible and assist the President in meeting commitments to the Brazilian people, who need economic growth and social development.

**What do you enjoy the most about your role as Vice President?**

I have often played the role of government representative to several international events. I like this role as well as the one to assist the President in negotiations with the National Congress, where I served 24 years as a Congressman and three terms as the President of the Chamber of Deputies. ●

*Vice President Temer with U.S. President Barack Obama*