Open letter to the PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

The Brazilian business sector’s outlook for the next 4 years in office
To the Honorable Candidates for the Presidency of the Republic,

The Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development (CEBDS) is a non-profit civil association that promotes sustainable development by working alongside governments and civil society, as well as publicizing the latest concepts and practices on the subject. It is currently comprised of over 80 business groups doing business in Brazil, whose revenues are roughly 47% of the Brazilian GDP and generate 1.1 million jobs.

Since 2014, CEBDS has been advising presidential candidates on sustainability and providing solutions that can yield greater competitiveness and prosperity within their four years in office. We introduced the “CEBDS Agenda – For a Sustainable Country” during the last two presidential elections, a project devised by leaders of major business groups. We are continuing these endeavors in 2022.

CEBDS is using this open letter to provide the Brazilian business sector’s outlook on the country’s development, including points that can’t be ignored as part of a strategic plan to position Brazil as a major player in the new global green economy.

It is clearly no longer possible to support development that is not environmentally correct, socially just and economically viable. In the current model, protecting the environment and ensuring human rights are, in most cases, neglected by economic development. This has an effect on present generations, and will also be felt by future generations to an even deeper degree. This is the case with the climate emergency, which is caused by factors such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation and the disposal of solid waste.

Adopting sustainable practices yields environmental and social advantages and is beneficial for business. Any movement in the opposite direction means loss of competitiveness, commercial reprisals and losses to the domestic economy, affecting job creation and income.

The world is moving towards a greener, cleaner, and more inclusive economy that is mindful of human rights. Brazil has the potential to spearhead this agenda – and benefit from it.
countries with the highest potential to spearhead this agenda – and benefit from it. We have a unique opportunity to drive social injustice reduction, inclusion and prosperity based on low carbon activities that do not deplete our natural resources while creating high-quality jobs and attracting investments.

Sustainable development must guide every single government – it’s not a partisan agenda, but one for the State and all of Brazilian society. The first step on this journey is to honor the commitments already made by the country, domestically and internationally. In this sense, CEBDS highlights the following commitments made by Brazil that need to be observed:

- The duty to respect, protect and guarantee human rights, promoting them in all sectors of society (Brazilian Federal Constitution);
- Eliminating illegal deforestation by 2028 (UN Climate Conference – COP 26);
- Reducing 50% of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, compared to 2005 levels, and neutralizing the emission by 2050 (UN Climate Conference – COP 26);
- Reversing forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while encouraging sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation (COP 26 – Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use);
- Reducing 30% of methane emissions by 2030, compared to 2020 levels (COP 26 – Global Methane Pledge);
- Meeting the targets to be established at the COP15 on Biodiversity;
- Universalizing basic sanitation services by 2033 and ensuring the proper final disposal of solid waste by 2024 (update of the Legal Framework for Sanitation – Brazilian Federal Law 14,026/2020).

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It’s important not to lose sight of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations, which are split into 169 targets that are hoped to be achieved by 2030, as well as the UN’s parameters on Business and Human Rights, which suggest the need to develop specific regulations and adopt the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

In light of the country’s potential to lead the green economy and the urgency of change, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is of the utmost importance that the government plans of the candidates running for the Presidency of the Republic consider the commitments that have been made, with a clear specification of the measures that will be adopted to achieve them. As such, CEBDS proposes the 12 lines of action below to fulfill the commitments that Brazil has already made.

**THE 12 PROPOSALS FROM THE BUSINESS SECTOR**

1. To reduce illegal deforestation by 15% per year in 2023 and 2024, and by 40% per year in 2025 and 2026, based on 2022 rates – this measure is crucial for the success of the country’s climate commitment and for appreciating those who act in accordance with the law;

2. To develop an action plan to put the Glasgow Leaders Declaration on Forests and Land Use into effect, including measures to help reforest 18 million hectares of forests by 2030 and restore 30 million hectares of degraded pastureland;

3. To create a national regulated carbon market, including a registration system for offsetting greenhouse gas emissions, and incentivize a voluntary carbon market – observing international standards and practices – thereby ensuring the competitiveness of our industry and placing a value on the agroforestry solutions that our country offers;

4. To develop an action plan aimed at reducing methane emissions, taking all existing emission sources in the country into account, and establishing guidelines that encourage this reduction, including the use of energy in the form of biofuels, such as biogas;

5. To promote food systems with sustainable agricultural practices that are inclusive and traceable, and that will increase productivity, reduce losses and waste and regenerate landscapes, as well as help in the eradication of hunger;

IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT PLANS OF THE CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC CONSIDER THE COMMITMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE, WITH A CLEAR SPECIFICATION OF THE MEASURES THAT WILL BE ADOPTED TO ACHIEVE THEM.
6. To devise a plan to reduce social inequalities that centers on generating employment and income, recovering the educational shortfall exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, expanding the health care network and securing fundamental rights, as well as combating discrimination against minority and vulnerable social groups and promoting inclusion;

7. To establish procedures towards applying the rules of prior, free and informed consultation of Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, ensuring respect for this right and legal security for economic activities in these areas with the consent of traditional populations;

8. To develop and implement, within the first year of office, a strategic energy transition plan featuring short, medium and long-term measures focused on the expansion of renewable energies, energy efficiency, encouragement and promotion of the hybrid mobility – by combining the electrification of vehicles with the use of biofuels –, digitization of the electric sector, and consumer empowerment;

9. To ratify the targets that may come to be defined through an agreement at the COP15 on Biodiversity and implement the national strategy and action plan for their fulfillment;

10. To bolster environmental licensing and prepare the relevant authorities, ensuring the technical accuracy that is essential to the principle of prevention and precaution of socio-environmental damage and, at the same time, ensuring increased agility in the processes;

11. To do away with landfills and provide an environmentally friendly way to dispose of solid waste by 2024, while driving the advancement of basic sanitation in an effort to universalize the service by 2033, ensuring that 99% of the Brazilian population has access to potable water and 90% has access to sewage collection and treatment;

12. To create a favorable environment for technological innovation by fortifying legal frameworks and leading the country on the path of competitiveness and the new economic era.

These proposals – which really should be approached in a comprehensive manner, despite being listed individually – are intended to help motivate the Brazilian government to assume a leading role in transitioning to sustainable development, which reduces inequalities and provides competitive conditions for the Brazilian business sector in a way that is environmentally and socially responsible. These are initiatives that will help the country take advantage of the opportunities created by the shifting the global economy, generating new businesses as well as high quality jobs and income.

It is equally important that the federal government coordinate its public policies with state and municipal governments, in an atmosphere involving cooperation between federative units.

In addition, the significance of making Brazil a reliable country should not be overlooked, one which favors open communication and transparent information, free from corruption, with legal security and responsible practices that comply with international requirements, such as those required by the Organization for the Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

On behalf of the business sector, the CEBDS is available to candidates in order to assist in constructing their proposals.

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President of CEBDS