

Brazilian President Lula unveils anti-poverty, hunger alliance at G20

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Rio de Janeiro, November 18 (RHC)-- Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has opened the Group of 20 Summit in Brazil by unveiling a global alliance aimed at tackling poverty and hunger.

In his opening speech on Monday, Lula emphasised that these challenges stem from political choices. He also highlighted the widespread impact of climate change, calling on world leaders to take decisive action.

The initiative was signed by 81 countries, including 18 of the 19 G20 countries, as well as the European Union and the African Union. The only G20 country not to sign on was Argentina, which is currently led by far-right President Javier Milei.

A Brazilian Foreign Ministry source has told the news agency AFP that some countries were seeking to renegotiate the draft summit communique. “For Brazil and other countries, the text is already finalised, but some countries want to open up some points on wars and climate,” the source said.

The gathering of the world’s leading economic powers at Rio de Janeiro’s Museum of Modern Art on Monday and Tuesday is being held amid the Middle East and Ukraine wars, and around two weeks after Donald Trump’s victory in the United States presidential election.

Brazil’s left-wing president has been using his hosting duties to promote issues close to his heart, including fighting hunger and climate change and taxing the super-rich. But the wars that have bitterly divided G20 members are also set to feature prominently in the discussions.

“Ukraine is not going to be an item on the formal agenda,” said Al Jazeera’s diplomatic editor James Bays, reporting from Rio de Janeiro, noting that Ukraine had not been one of the 19 guest countries invited to attend. “But around the discussions in the margins of the meeting, where all the important business gets done, it’s going to be one of the key agenda items.”

“The G20 is not the ‘friends of the U.S.’. It has countries that are competitors and adversaries of the United States, including Russia itself,” Bays added.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has an international arrest warrant against him issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) over alleged war crimes in Ukraine, is the summit’s most notable absentee – despite earlier reassurances by Lula that he would not be arrested if he were to attend. Putin is being represented by Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

U.S. President Biden is attending the G20 summit, which will be his last. His reported decision on Sunday to allow Ukraine to use long-range U.S. missiles against targets inside Russia – a significant policy shift – has loomed over the first day, and could lead European allies to reassess their positions.

Russia’s foreign ministry stated that such an action would fundamentally alter the nature of the war and prompt “an adequate and tangible” response from Moscow.

Professor Vinicius Rodrigues Vieira of the Armando Alvares Penteado Foundation said that developing nations within the G20 are likely to aim to keep the Russia-Ukraine war off the official agenda. “They won’t want any tension with Russia by [addressing] any potential outcome that will be decided starting next year, under the mediation of President Trump,” he told Al Jazeera.

The get-together caps a farewell diplomatic tour by Biden, which took him to Lima for a meeting of Asia-Pacific trading partners, and then to the Amazon in the first such visit by a sitting U.S. president. Biden, who has looked to burnish his legacy as time runs down on his presidency, insisted in the Amazon that his climate record would survive another Trump mandate.

Trump has promised to withdraw from the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, which has a goal of limiting global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels this century.

G20 leaders are also under pressure to try to rescue United Nations climate talks in Azerbaijan, which have been stuck on the issue of greater climate finance for developing countries.

Delegates at the stalled COP29 Climate Change Conference in Azerbaijan are looking to the G20 to break an impasse over how to raise \$1 trillion a year for developing countries to cope with climate change, as rich countries want fast-developing economies like China and the Gulf states to also put their hands in their pockets.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for G20 members, who account for 80 percent of global emissions, to show “leadership” to facilitate a deal.

Security is tight for the gathering, which comes days after a failed bomb attack on Brazil’s Supreme Court in Brasilia by a suspected far-right extremist, who killed himself in the process.

Also at the summit on Monday, China’s President Xi Jinping announced an initiative with Brazil, South Africa, and the African Union to funnel sci-tech innovations to the Global South, according to Chinese state media. The initiative comes as the US and its allies have cooperated to stop the export of high-end semiconductors to China, and Chinese technology firms like Huawei have been forced out of markets in North America and Europe.

[SOURCE: teleSUR]

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