Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and friends,

Thank you for joining us today, and I would especially like to thank our host—His Excellency, the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Relations, Mr. Eduardo dos Santos, the General Coordinator of International Actions Against Hunger, Mr. Milton Rondo, and the Director of the UN Information Centre in Rio, Mr. Giancarlo Summa, representing the UN Resident Coordinator.

It is a great pleasure to be visiting Brazil again. Brazil supports our work at the UN through its tangible commitment in so many ways and continues to show its leadership as a humanitarian donor; as co-convenor of the Dialogue on Humanitarian Partnership; as a contributor to peacekeeping; and as an influential and committed player in the field of food security, preparedness and disaster risk reduction. Brazil’s contributions to international humanitarian action have increased steadily over the past several years. Last year, Brazil recorded its highest financial contribution to humanitarian response—US$54 million or 107 million reais.

Today, I would also like to remember, on behalf of the whole UN family, Brazil’s sacrifice in the cause of peace of one of its finest sons, Sergio Vieira de Mello, one of my predecessors running the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. He is remembered with great warmth, for having been at its helm in times of great change and challenge for the humanitarian world.

This visit is an opportunity to develop the important partnership we have with Brazil and this region; a region that is growing in global economic and political importance; a region with the ability to deliver humanitarian aid to the millions of people who find themselves stricken by disaster or conflict each year. Unfortunately, natural and man-made disasters are increasing in intensity. Last year, I visited each of the three countries featured in the film we just saw—Niger, Jordan (and indeed Syria), Myanmar, and many others. I can attest to the severity of people’s needs there. The conditions I see and the stories I hear during each of these visits are harrowing and repeated many times over—people driven from their homes, impoverished and endangered by natural disaster or conflict; people whose livelihoods have disappeared because of the impact of climate change; people who can no longer keep their children or their parents nourished and healthy. The names, the
The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.

faces, the languages are not the same but the human tragedy is—ordinary, women, men and children desperate for stability and for security.

As part of our worldwide system of emergency relief coordination, in each major crisis aid organizations, governments, the UN and civil society in a country come together to find out what the needs are, how to best address them and who will do what. These plans give us an overview of the cost of addressing each major crisis in the world. These annual “Consolidated Appeals” are the culmination of months of work.

So what do we need for this year? Taking all the appeals around the world together, we aim to help at least 57 million people in 24 countries. To do so, these plans require $10.4 billion. It’s a lot of money which we raise mainly through voluntary contributions from governments and private donors around the world. There is no guaranteed source of funding for this work. We continuously appeal to public and private donors to contribute to do the work that we do. Each year, donors give billions of dollars, reais, euros, yen, and other in-kind and financial support to humanitarian action around the world. Last year, we raised $5.6 billion dollars, about 63 per cent of what we needed. We can always do more—feed more people, provide more health care, educate more children, clear more landmines and supply more tents. The gap in worldwide humanitarian funding is keeping some people malnourished, cold, ill and untreated, insecure, dependent—and some of them die as a result. Most of them are far away from this great capital city, in this great country. But on our globalised planet, we are all world players on a world stage, in small ways as well as large, and the small ways can be critically important for people whose lives, health and safety may depend on just a few reais.

I would like to pay tribute to the communities, civil-society organizations, businesses, and local and national governments, which are the first responders to any crisis and most important providers of help throughout a disaster response. Around the world, many countries that struggled to find the means to build response, capacities commensurate to the hazards they face, have managed to take great strides towards self-reliance in disaster management, to the point that some offer material support to other countries when needed. Many Latin American countries including Brazil are at the forefront in this regard. Brazil has shown leadership in establishing solid national policies and programmes in disaster risk reduction, preparedness and disaster management.

International humanitarian organizations can only complement and support the action of national governments and affected communities. And we are very pleased to see that the circle of international humanitarian organizations is widening—an ever-greater range of partners from many parts of the world are joining international humanitarian response—very evident in the Horn of Africa famine response in 2011, where many Middle Eastern aid organizations operated, and recently in the response of the Association of South-East Asian Nations to typhoon Bopha in the Philippines. We saw a similar strong response for the Haiti earthquake, where alongside many Latin American countries, Brazil played an important role in support of the humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts, and where Brazil again paid a high price, losing Luiz Carlos da Costa, who was the Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti and 18 military personnel who were part of the MINUSTAH contingent.
I am very conscious that in many cases, humanitarian needs persist and increase because political solutions remain elusive. Some need engagement at policy and diplomatic levels to control the root causes that lead to suffering, privation and mortality. This is an area in which any State can play a positive role, even if it cannot at the moment offer material support for humanitarian action abroad. As needs deepen around the world, we will all continue to have a role to play whether politically, operationally or financially, or a combination of all. We will continue to need your leadership and support—because every one of those 57 million people needs our help.

Thank you Brazil and thank you so much Secretary General dos Santos for organizing this event and giving me an opportunity to speak to all of you today.

Thank you.