

# Brazil's Emergence

An Interview with The Honorable Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Former President of Brazil

**EDITORS' NOTE** *Fernando Henrique Cardoso was President of the Federative Republic of Brazil from January 1995 to January 2003. Elected Senator in 1982, he was a founding member of the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB). Cardoso served as Minister of Foreign Relations from 1992 to 1993 and Minister of Finance from 1993 to 1994. He is now Chairman of the Club of Madrid and Co-Chairman of the Inter-American Dialogue. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of The Rockefeller Foundation and of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. Cardoso serves as a professor-at-large at Brown University and is the holder of the "Cultures of the South" chair at the Library of Congress.*



Fernando Henrique Cardoso

I did not fathom the depth of the transformation derived not only from economic stabilization but also from political democratization, and from the social policies initiated in my government and deepened in subsequent administrations.

**You have stated that Brazil has major issues that it needs to address, among them energy, education, infrastructure development, and the environment. Would you provide an overview of your vision for what needs to be done in**

**these areas to ensure Brazil's continued leadership?**



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In the field of education, we need to go through an authentic revolution regarding the reshaping of the school curricula, teacher training programs, effective learning of basic skills, and the extension of the number of hours that students stay at school, especially at the elementary level. The same applies to higher education, which should give greater priority to the acquisition of scientific knowledge relevant to the challenges of daily life and work in a complex society.

In the field of infrastructure, we need to overcome, once and for all, the ideological bias against privatization, which curtails the amount of resources available for investment and downplays the management capacities of the private sector.

We have also to make a final decision regarding the role of ethanol in our energy matrix in order to define a consistent policy to promote its use. In addition, we need greater clarity about Petrobras' financial viability regarding pre-salt oil drilling. We must also achieve greater transparency regarding the public/private relationship, without the recurring inconsistencies in the treatment of capital, with government either deciding to be the only investor or opting for lukewarm forms of partnership with the private sector. The same goes for the modalities of exploring hydroelectric energy that remains unclear to this day. In the environmental field, these clarifications will also serve the purpose of creating the conditions for a low intensity carbon economy.

**What were the main issues that you wanted to highlight with your most recent book, *A soma e o resto*, which was published in 2011, and have you been happy with the way the book has been received?**

The last book that I published – “The sum total and what is left” – is an open and candid conversation with someone who has reached 80 years of age and, released from any concerns related to the functions he has exercised or to his academic status, delves into controversial themes such as narcotic drugs, the fear of death, and the value of friendship. In this book, I also share my understanding of the great challenges facing today's world in the aftermath of the informational revolution and the balances or imbalances coming from the shift of economic power towards Asia: Will the West be capable of responding to this trend? Which position will be occupied by Brazilians, inhabitants of the farthest shores of the West, in this changing world? All this and more is dealt with in a colloquial and straightforward language. The book has been on the top 10 best-seller lists in Brazil since its recent publication.

**The world is facing many challenges and leadership is needed to address them. How do you define what makes a successful leader?**

The key attributes of a leader are having a vision for the future, the courage to take risks, the ability to stay the course and persevere, and the capacity to nurture trust and persuade others to follow.

**What do you miss the most about being President?**

The inability to continue being an active and direct agent of change in Brazil. ●

**Should Brazil be considered an emerging nation or has it already emerged?**

The Brazilian economy has indeed emerged; Brazilian society, not yet. Brazil needs to substantially improve its cultural development to ensure quality education for all, social development to ensure basic health care to all, and juridical development to improve public safety as well as full and speedy access to Justice services by all.

**How has Brazil's role in the global economy evolved in recent years?**

Among the so-called emerging countries, only China can be compared to Brazil in terms of development performance. We are the first or second major global exporter of 7 out of the 10 main mineral and food commodities. We have expanded our industrial basis and are well advanced in the service sector, especially regarding the use of new information technologies.

**You have been a major figure in the growth and success that Brazil has achieved. Are you surprised at how quickly this has happened and what challenges does such massive growth bring?**

Yes, I was surprised at the rapid pace of change that Brazil has achieved. During my mandates as President, I stressed time and again that Brazil was no longer an underdeveloped country, even though it remained a socially unjust nation. I also underlined that we should no longer be seen as ‘a country of the future’, insofar as the future was already upon us. But