

Brazil Has Reason to Smile, Says Lula

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Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva devoted today's edition of his biweekly radio program, "Breakfast with the President," to commemorating Brazilian Independence Day. According to Lula, the Brazilian nation will celebrate the Seventh of September at a moment when the Brazilian economy shows signs of sustainable growth, beyond what was expected during the first months of the year.

"We shall commemorate Independence Day in the certainty that it is not enough to be independent constitutionally; it is necessary to possess economic, technological, and scientific independence. "And we are proving this, that through the growth in our exports, the growth in new jobs, and the growth of the Brazilian economy, we are marching towards political, economic, and social independence," he emphasized.

In the President's assessment, September 7 is a date that should be remembered not only by members of the armed forces or federal government officials, but by society as a whole. Lula said that Brazilians should take pride in the country's flag, because it represents the "greatest symbol" of the nation. "I believe that a nation will be much more of a nation, much more productive, and much happier, if people believe in the nation's values, if they are content with their families, their neighborhoods, and their cities, and if people believe in the things that are happening in the country," he said.

Lula praised the example of Brazilian athletes who exalt the country's flag at all kinds of sporting events. "It is beautiful to see, because it means that the individual is appreciating his or her country and admiring it all the more. So I wanted to tell the Brazilian people that we have reasons to spare to commemorate Brazilian Independence Day with a big smile," he affirmed.

The President also used the program to commemorate the "Citizen Soldier" project, which plans to train 30 thousand recruits throughout the country by the end of the year. According to Lula, the country will celebrate its independence with a further incentive for young members of the Armed Forces. "In addition to their normal year of military service, they will learn a profession, so that when they leave the Armed Forces, they will be prepared for the job market, with the chance of getting a more dignified job, with a better salary," he pointed out.

"Let's see whether we can, each year, create opportunities so that young people from peripheral areas, who have less opportunity, who never learned a profession, who in many cases dropped out of school, reacquire the desire to study and maintain the hope that their job will appear," he affirmed. The federal government estimates that 60 thousand young people will be qualified through the "Citizen Soldier" program by the end of 2006.

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