

Institute of Regional Studies

34 West, Khalid Plaza, 4th Floor, Jinnah Avenue,
Blue Area, Islamabad, PAKISTAN, 44000

Roundtable with Ambassador of Brazil at IRS

ISLAMABAD July 16, 2019



The [Institute of Regional Studies \(IRS\)](#) organized a roundtable titled “[Brazil’s Role in the South Asian Region.](#)” The Ambassador of Brazil to Pakistan H.E. Mr Claudio Lins was the main speaker at the roundtable conference.

During his talk, Mr Lins briefed the audience about the salient features of the Brazilian political system and its economy. He shared that with a total area of around 8.5 million square kilometres, Brazil was territorially the sixth largest country of the world. Mr Lins shared that besides the federal district of its capital Brasilia, Brazil was administratively divided into 27 states. He further stated that Brazil got its independence in 1822 and its National Day was coming up on September 7. According to Mr Lins, the literacy rate of the 204 million population of Brazil was 92 per cent.

Mr Lins was of the view that Brasilia was similar to Islamabad because it was also developed in the 1960s as the capital of the country. He shared that there were 1.5 million Muslims in Brazil and that Brazil was home to 115 mosques, according to 2015 estimates. Mr Lins fondly recalled that the footballs used in the World Cup in Brazil in 2014 were made in Pakistan. He added that to further deepen sports ties between Brazil and Pakistan, Brazilian football legends Ronaldinho and Kaka had visited Pakistan twice. Mr Lins shared that besides football, the Brazilian martial arts form called Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu was also gaining international fame. Mr Lins added that a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu master had come to Pakistan owing to the sport’s popularity in the country and will be visiting Pakistan again this year. Mr Lins was of the view that Brazil was a tolerant and multicultural society.

Talking about Brazil’s relations with Asian countries, Mr Lins said that Brazil’s relations with Asian countries were primarily economic. Giving the example of Brazil’s relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, Mr Lins said that those relations were 90 per cent about trade and only 10 per cent about political relations. He added that Brazil did not have any international political ambitions in Asia and even in its home region of South America. “We have peaceful relations with all our neighbours,” he said. He appreciated the role of Mercosur, the regional trade organization of South American countries, in promoting regional trade. Mr Lins added that Brazil was mostly exporting agricultural products to Asian countries. He shared that Singapore was in the process of negotiating a trade agreement with Mercosur, which could make it the first Asian country to reach a trade agreement with the regional trade organization of South America. Mr Lins shared that Brazil’s top trading partners in 2018 were China (\$98 billion worth of trade), US (\$57 billion worth of trade), Argentina (\$26

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billion worth of trade), ASEAN \$19 billion worth of trade), and Germany (\$15 billion worth of trade). Mr Lins added that India was an important trade partner of Brazil in South Asia.

Shedding light on the role of Brazil in the international association of five emerging national economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, called BRICS—an acronym derived from the first letters of its five-member states—Mr Lins shared that BRICS countries were working towards improvement of international governance, especially in the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He shared that BRICS countries had established the New Development Bank with its headquarters in Shanghai to work with other international financial institutions for promoting projects aimed at renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean transportation, sustainable water management, and sewage treatment. Mr Lins further shared that BRICS had created the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement to provide protection against global liquidity pressures. He added that it was seen as a competitor to the IMF and was a symbol of increasing South-South cooperation.

Responding to a question about how to achieve economic progress, Mr Lins was of the view that fiscal reform was the key to economic progress. He appreciated the recent steps taken by the Government of Pakistan for improving its tax revenue. Responding to another question, Mr Lins stated that while Brazil was an agrarian country and needed lands for production of crops, deforestation in the Amazon was a major concern as well. Therefore, he stated, policymakers in Brazil had to balance the need for agricultural productivity with environmental protection because Brazil had also suffered because of climate change.

President IRS Dr Rukhsana Qamber thanked Mr Lins for his talk on Brazil's role in South Asia. She added that Brazil was the first country in South America to recognize Pakistan. She hailed the role of the Embassy of Brazil in Islamabad in promoting economic and cultural cooperation between Pakistan and Brazil. Dr Qamber shared that besides offering capoeira classes on its compound to Pakistanis, the Embassy had also sponsored the visit of football players from Lyari area of Karachi to Brazil. She appreciated the progress Brazil has made in education.

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Among others, the roundtable was attended by Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Pakistan H.E. Mr Noordeen Muhamed Shaheid, Mr Akhilesh Singh from the Indian High Commission, Dr Esther Park of the Gandhara Art and Culture Association, Executive Director of the Centre for Culture and Development Dr Nadeem Omar Tarar, Senior Associate of the Institute of Policy Studies Brig (Retd) Said Nazir Ahmad, Ms Sehrish from the Embassy of Argentina, Mr Ahmed Rizwan from the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Mr Aatir Mahboob from the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Mr. Rasheed Khalid from The News, Writer and Researcher Mr Atle Hetland, President of the English Speaking Union (ESU) Mr Khalid Malik, Prof Mehr Dad, as well as researchers from IRS.