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IN TROUBLED TIMES

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EMBASSY OF ARGENTINA, WASHINGTON, D.C.

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G20 in India 2023.

THE G20 IS EVEN MORE NECESSARY IN TROUBLED TIMES

By Jorge Argüello, Ambassador of Argentina in the United States and Argentine Sherpa at the G20. Published on Perfil.

A decade and a half after the inception of the G20 Leaders Summits, such as the one to be held on September 9 and 10 in India, what can be said about this forum of developed and emerging countries is what is rightly

repeated regarding the UN: sometimes it disappoints us, but things would have been worse without it.

Although the Group of 20 emerged at the end of the 1990s as a ministerial space to coordinate countries of systemic relevance facing global crises, its leap in the institutional hierarchy in the face of the global shock of 2008 gave way to a multilateral experience that has endured and



Once again, I share with you the latest edition of our Embassy Newsletter. This edition includes an article about the growth of the G20 as a channel for strengthening multilateralism and becoming a diplomatic variant for alleviating crisis situations.

In this edition we also include an article on the meeting between a group of 51 agricultural producers and Mark Jekanovski, Chairman of the World Agricultural Outlook Board of USDA.

Finally, an article on the conversations of BMW executives with the National Secretary of Energy, Flavia Royón, focused on electromobility, lithium demand and mining exploitation.

Jorge Argüello
Ambassador to the United States

THE BALI SUMMIT POSED A KEY
CONCLUSION FOR THE G20:
WORLD ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
CANNOT BE ISOLATED FROM
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matured, despite everything.

These statements are the result of my personal diplomatic experience that allowed me to be a witness to the emergence of the Group of 20 leaders 15 years ago in Washington. And participate even more actively as Argentine Sherpa since 2020, in a historic period marked by unique challenges for the entire planet, from the pandemic to an unprecedented global economic slowdown, and the largest European armed conflict since World War II.

History. Since COVID-19 altered the world, the G20 has held meetings and summits that, like the rest of humanity, pushed it into a virtual realm, posing an additional challenge for a diplomatic space in which personal relationships play a very important role, a more significant one than is usually assigned.

This health emergency gave the G20 an excellent opportunity to prove itself as a unique multilateral forum in which developed and emerging countries ended up broadening their agenda beyond economics and finance, to incorporate other challenges that demand coordinated global responses, like health.

Thus, at the Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the G20 recognized the need to guarantee all humanity an affordable and equitable access to a COVID-19 vaccine,

seen as a “global public good”. We stated that a unique opportunity was opening up to give global governance the conditions for development and inclusion that the situation called for.

As part of the G20, Argentina demanded a “Global Solidarity Pact” to address the pandemic, adding to the group the value of solidarity to that of cooperation. And while geopolitical interests negatively altered vaccine production and distribution, financial and supportive responses to mechanisms like Covax mitigated what without a global coordination, would have had an important impact.

The following year, in Rome, the Final Declaration channeled the political will for changes in times of pandemic and global economic emergency, but these initiatives navigated in a sea of conflicting interests, with mixed results.

The G20, that represents 80% of global GDP and 60% of the world’s population, was no longer just talking about finance: it discussed, and when it could, arrived at a consensus on issues related to energy, health, development, agriculture, education, employment, tourism and migration.

Still pending, however, was closing ranks in the group on how to deal with global warming, one of the strongest disappointments of the G20 as a cooperation mechanism, when facing the obvious worsening of the climate crisis and the droughts and floods that highlighted its worst consequences.

In 2022, like the rest of the multilateral organizations and forums, the G20 was shocked by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the war it unleashed when the global economy was just recovering. Therefore, it had to start dealing with a double crisis: food and energy with a great economic and social impact. National geopolitical interests put the G20 in the biggest bind since its inception.

It was valid, then, to wonder if the G20 would continue

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being relevant when responding to multiple global challenges, or if it would fall into irrelevance, or even be dissolved, after having established itself almost as a single instance of developed and emerging countries; one more representative, pluralistic and diverse for cooperation that, suddenly, and after being put to the test by the pandemic, began to seem unattainable.

The presidency of Indonesia in 2022, which would be followed by those of India in 2023 and of Brazil in 2024, opened an unprecedented continuity of emerging countries at the forefront of the forum that could finally shift the world's attention to the needs of the Global South countries.

The Bali Summit posed a key conclusion for the G20: world economic affairs cannot be isolated from shocks to international security or geopolitical tensions.

The emerging countries stepped forward. As per the agenda, the G20 has been growing in intense activities, of which the Leaders' Summit is only the tip of the iceberg.

The search for consensus and cooperation in the forum is a process that requires dozens of ministerial meetings and meetings of Central Bank governors, working groups and experts, as well as other engagement groups every year.

All this reflects the growing role of the emerging countries, and the need for coordination has already proven to be

urgent in the context of the post-pandemic and the war in Europe.

On the other hand, emerging countries still need a system of internal agreements within this space. Their latest efforts seem to be bearing fruit in terms of increased participation: the African Union is very close to becoming a permanent member of the G20, as well as the European Union (EU). In turn, the expansion of BRICS illustrates the way to strengthen all the options of the Global South.

This is the first time that the G20 will have a troika composed exclusively of emerging countries (Indonesia, India and Brazil): a unique possibility to coordinate their own interests and priorities vis-à-vis the rest of the forum, when the world is immersed in a polycrisis that could lead to a "two-speed" global economy.

It will be difficult to reach a consensus in India on how to resolve the situation in Ukraine. It will also not be easy to find a fully coordinated response from developed and emerging countries to the climate crisis, especially because of the difficulty of financing the most vulnerable countries, which bear less responsibility for the problem and with fewer resources to deal with it. Added to this is the growing global dispute over the control of technologies.

However, after all these years of participating in every debate that has arisen in this relevant group of countries, I am among those who remain convinced that the Group of 20 has enriched the possibilities of multilateralism when it appeared weaker and seen in perspective towards the future, it will continue to be proven as a diplomatic variant that alleviated the worst consequences that this beginning of the century had in store for humanity, and can spare us from others to come. ■

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS VISIT THE EMBASSY TO HOLD A DIALOGUE ABOUT THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

A group of 51 Argentine agricultural producers representing several of the country's provinces visited the Argentine Embassy on Friday, September 1, to discuss crop conditions and yield estimates in the United States and learn about the bilateral agricultural agenda between Argentina and the United States.

This event was opened by the Embassy's Deputy Chief of Mission, Adrián Nador, who welcomed the Argentine delegation and expressed his appreciation for the significant contribution that the agricultural sector makes to the national economy, year after year, particularly at such a difficult time for the sector after an unprecedented drought in our country.

Then Dr. Mark Jekanovski, Chairman of the World Agricultural

Outlook Board of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) gave a technical presentation. Dr. Jekanovski is responsible for the USDA's monthly publication of World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE). In his presentation, Dr. Jekanovski described the current state of soybean, corn, and wheat crops in the United States, the effect weather has on these crops, and explained the process he uses at USDA to prepare and publish this report, which he described as the main federal economic indicator that impacts financial markets; thus, it must meet precision standards. He stressed that it must also be timely, secure and without any political interference. On behalf of the USDA, Mr. Tim O'Neil, Oilseed Analyst at the Foreign Agricultural Service, also participated.

He was followed by Engineer Cecilia Marincioni, who is

Mark Jekanovski at the Embassy of Argentina.



WE MAINTAIN A POSITIVE
BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP
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in charge of the Agricultural Office of Argentina in the United States. She gave a presentation on the bilateral agricultural relationship, and was accompanied by Minister Juan Cortelletti, Head of the Economic and Trade Section of this embassy. Ms. Marincioni highlighted that we maintain a positive bilateral relationship based on cooperation on issues of mutual interest, such as the sustainable intensification of production, the adoption of new production technologies (i.e., biotechnology, gene editing, cloning, etc.), the commitment to food security, the challenges of climate change, and the strengthening of multilateralism.

In addition, she described the United States food market and the opportunities it offers to Argentine producers, as it is a large, growing market, highly dependent on imports, and with a high added value. Some existing market barriers were also highlighted, such as sanitary and phytosanitary barriers, tariffs, trade defense measures, and food safety requirements, as well as the work carried out at this Embassy to be able to counteract, when feasible, the effects of these measures. ■



Secretary of Energy, Flavia Royón, ambassador Jorge Argüello (Ctr. R.) and a delegation of BMW Group executives.

A MEETING ON E-MOBILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MINING

On September 6, a delegation of BMW Group executives held a working meeting with the Secretary of Energy, Flavia Royón, and the Argentine Ambassador to the United States, Jorge Argüello, focused on the automobile company's electromobility objectives, its demand for lithium Argentina and the sustainability of mining operations.

The company presented a sustainability and impact analysis undertaken jointly by researchers at the University of Alaska Anchorage and the University of Massachusetts Amherst, who carried out an exhaustive study of the hydrological and environmental impact of the lithium extraction process by Livent in the province of Catamarca.

The meeting took place at the Ministry of Energy in Buenos Aires and was attended by senior representatives

of the German company, such as Claudia Becker, Senior Expert on Sustainable Supply Chain Management at BMW; Guillermo Areas, Head of Government Relations and External Affairs for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Ivana Dip, CEO de BMW Argentina, among others.

The conversation focused on the mineral exploitation method used by the Livent company in Catamarca, which aims to reduce the impact on both the environment and local communities. Likewise, the growing worldwide demand for lithium and the expansion of the Argentine supply of this critical mineral through large investments in the sector were also addressed.

BMW signed a contract with Livent for approximately \$300 million under which this company supplies lithium directly

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to battery cell manufacturers. Aiming to expand the e-mobility of its production, it is expected that by 2030 at least half of BMW's global sales will come from fully electric vehicles. ■