

# 'Intelligent insertion' worldwide

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**JORGE FAURIE** is a career diplomat and prior to being appointed Minister, he served as Argentina's ambassador to France and ambassador to Portugal. He has held different positions at the Argentine embassies in Chile, Brazil, Romania, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Venezuela. Among other posts, he served as chief of protocol during the government of former President Carlos Menem, chief of staff of the Secretary of Foreign Relations from 1997 to 1998, and director of Mercosur at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1992 to 1994. He is a lawyer by training.

Argentinian foreign policy is driven by the principle of "intelligent insertion" on the global stage. This principle targets, together with other Government initiatives, the primary goal set out by President Mauricio Macri's administration: to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of Argentinians.

This goal is the fundamental motivation behind the persistent work of the Foreign Ministry, in coordination with the other ministries and the representations our country has abroad.

"Intelligent insertion" is, for us, an insertion into global affairs which generates opportunities. Ours is an open foreign policy focused on our interests which - without ideological constraints but committed to democracy, human rights and multilateralism - will consolidate Argentina's presence in the world, capitalise on our relations with countries in which opportunities exist, increase our access to potential markets and achieve deeper access to those already in existence.

It is essential to emphasise that "intelligent insertion" does not mean maintaining exclusive links. Having a productive relationship with one country does not mean not doing so with others. In an interdependent and constantly evolving world, establishing exclusive partnerships would lead to increasing our vulnerability.

It is not a matter of obtaining deeper links with either Latin America or with Asia, with either the European Union or with the United States, with either China or with Russia: it is a matter of obtaining deeper links with each and every one of them and with new, future partners. That is why after more than two years along a road towards "intelligent insertion", today we are in commercial negotiations with almost 50 per cent of global GNP.

Of course, one pillar of this intelligent insertion is the international relaunch of Mercosur. Together with the other members, we are approaching not only the EU, but also Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, the EFTA and the ASEAN. Negotiations with the EU have received new stimulus during our pro tempore presidency and we desire a prompt settlement of this agreement with a market of 500 million inhabitants and principal source of FDI in the world.

Regionally, we have established dialogue with the Pacific Alliance so that both blocs will be engines for unprecedented integration. After years of competition,

we are agreeing a specific roadmap including the facilitation of trade, customs cooperation, commercial promotion and physical integration.

In turn, we are strengthening the Economic Complementation Agreements we have with Chile, Colombia and Mexico. We are recovering a mature relationship with the United States, which has opened up numerous commercial possibilities - we were reincorporated into the Generalised System of Preferences last December and so we will be increasing our exportable supply. On the other side of the globe, 28 Argentinian fishing companies have now been authorised to export to Russia and the plant-health requirements have been agreed for exporting fruit. Similarly, based on our complementary qualities, we are strengthening links with Gulf and Maghreb countries as well as with Israel and Egypt.

We also have the challenge of further bettering our relationship with the emerging economies and powers of Asia. China is a key partner for us and the relationship between President Macri and President Xi Jinping has improved considerably. Additionally, we are agreeing the extension of the admission of beef, goat and sheep meat to this market. We are reopening our embassy in Singapore, one of Asia's strongest economies, and that country has again authorised the importing of Argentinian foods with Halal certification. In addition, Indonesia has recognised Argentinian safety controls for 17 fresh products, and our country is now one of a select group with recognition of their food safety systems.

With Japan, in the last two years, reciprocal visits by President Shinzo Abe to Buenos Aires and President Macri to Tokyo have been completed, the leaders having ratified the strategic relationship. We have advanced into the final stage of a bilateral investment treaty and an agreement to avoid double taxation. Recently, a Japanese business delegation carried out a trade mission to Argentina to explore investment possibilities in the coming years.

These are just some examples among the many and varied contacts with whom we are maintaining dialogue seeking to generate tangible results, without subordinating our national interest to prejudices of an ideological nature which would deny our people potential benefits.

But interpreting Argentinian "intelligent insertion" requires an understanding of the dynamics of the

international system. In a scenario beset by multiple uncertainties, we have proposed taking on a participative and constructive role. It is in that spirit that we are chairing the G20 throughout 2018, to coordinate policies in the face of the world's principal challenges.

Argentina leads the G20 under the motto: "Building consensus for fair and sustainable development". Our vision is determined by what we are: a developing country, extensive and diverse, which is undergoing a fundamental move towards increasing integration with the world. We strive to further dialogue and build bridges between different visions, aware that commitments made at a multilateral level have led to more robust agreements and to a more consistent basis for international cooperation and the strengthening of the rule of law.

We have put forward three priorities for the G20 this year: the future of work, infrastructure for development and a sustainable food future.

The future of work consists of finding ways to release the potential of people while taking advantage of technological advances, thereby driving growth and productivity. Here, education has a fundamental role. We have created the Education Working Group, and the members of the G20 were called to a joint Ministerial Meeting of Employment and Education Ministers, focusing on the development of skills for an inclusive employment future.

Investment in infrastructure can also drive growth and productivity, whilst simultaneously promoting inclusion by offering the physical and digital access necessary to make the most of the opportunities provided by the current industrial revolution. Last March, the Finance Ministers of the G20 and the Governors of the Central Banks approved a "Roadmap towards Infrastructure as an Asset Class". The objective is to build towards an instrument covering the financing of infrastructure with greater standardisation of contracts and improved risk mitigation, while taking into consideration the specific conditions of each country.

A sustainable food future is essential for promoting stability and guaranteeing better living conditions for all. The Agriculture Ministers of the G20, at their meeting in Buenos Aires, undertook to achieve the objectives of eradicating hunger and developing sustainable agriculture, with a view to achieving a future in which everyone will have access to sufficient safe and nutritional food for active and healthy living.

We have also established a new focus on gender for the G20. The Argentine presidency has driven a strategy of integration

of the gender perspective into the whole of the agenda: instead of dealing with the matter in just one area, all working groups incorporated the gender perspective into each of their areas, with a view to putting an end to inequality between men and women.

Through its presidency of the G20, Argentina seeks to be the voice of Latin America, putting the concerns and potential of our region on the global agenda. In addition we wish to make a substantive contribution: ten years ago, the leaders of the member countries decided that the G20 could no longer focus exclusively on the financial question. They raised the level of seniority, extended the agenda, and organised the first meeting of leaders in Washington.

At that time, everything seemed to indicate that we were heading towards a global crisis. But international cooperation, particularly at the G20, allowed it to be avoided, mitigating its effects based on coordination of policies. Currently there is no way of remaining isolated. Globalisation cannot be avoided by political decisions and challenges of a global nature can only be tackled jointly. For this very reason, we need to rediscover the importance of finding space for common understanding.

We were able to achieve a consensus on many delicate matters and we are in the final phase of the process. Ten years ago, the merely technical vision would not have been sufficient to avoid the crisis. It was the political element which made the difference. We are working hard to find that element again and include everybody, with a view to fulfilling the objective of not leaving anybody behind.

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Jorge Faurie at the first meeting of Sherpas, G20 Argentina

