



16 April 2010

**His Excellence Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva,  
President of Brazil**

Dear President Lula -

My name is Hugh 'Rio' O'Connor - 'Rio' because in Portuguese it sounds like my name said in English, since the Portuguese speakers cannot make anything of H-u-g-h (haga-ou-gay-haga). I spent some very happy months from 2002 - 04 in your wonderful country, looking to establish a business to export domestic furniture to Australia where I live. I loved the Brazilians for their warmth and their friendliness, and I would love to return some day.

I write to you on a subject that I consider very important for all Brazilians - the name of their country. When I was in Brazil that I heard children were being taught at school that Brazil comes from 'brassa' the name of a certain tree type with red or brass coloured wood. I don't believe that that is true.

Brazil was claimed for Portugal by Cabral; this Portuguese explorer commanded a fleet of Portuguese ships, with Portuguese navigators and crews. Portugal - and the north of Spain - was, and it is still, strongly Celtic, and in those days had strong trade and cultural connections with my native Celtic Ireland. There we have a legend of people of a Celtic 'alternative universe' named HiBrasil (in Gaelic, *Uí Breasil*), a land hidden in fog except for one day every seven years. In marine navigation maps of the 14th and 15th centuries, call 'portolans', appears an island to the west of Ireland clearly named 'Brazil.'

Cabral's Celtic sailors and navigators surely knew of this, both of the Celtic myth and the portolans. Although the first names officially given to Brazil were *Vera Cruz* and *Santa Cruz*, Brazil was clearly the first European settlers' popular choice of name.

I hope that you, Sr President, will use your position to correct the wrong history of the naming of your wonderful country, and ensure that your school children are taught their real history.

Please, forgive my Portuguese – so far I have learnt to speak neither a lot, nor well. Thank you for your attention, and best wishes from

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hugh O'Connor'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

**Hugh O'Connor**