“One of those things that amazes me is what I have just seen after the invitation of my friend Fernando Cardoso. I have been reading about the acid soils of the “cerrado”. After nine years I have visited them again.

And why am I amazed? Simply because such soils had a low level of productivity and had never been cultivated before. Nature causes disasters as well, taking out most of the soil’s nutrients like calcium, magnesium and other fertilizing elements.

You have altered these negative aspects of nature and this is what amazes me.

On this trip, I have been seeing not only virgin soils or reclaimed soils of the “cerrado”, but I have seen land that had been used for grazing for several decades, feeding cattle, and that has now gone back to rotation cultivation in order to increase yields and under no-till to reduce erosion.

You have been pioneers on both aspects and I admire what you have accomplished!

This [accomplishment] makes me feel gratified when I read about world food requirements within the next three decades. Of course, being 90 years old, there is not much for me to consider in terms of the next 30 years because I will not be present.

But you young people and you gentlemen younger than me, you will see many of these changes.

This [referring to a projected slide] is a Brazilian “cerrado” picture that I often present in other countries, showing what is being done in Brazil, reclaiming the “cerrado” for cultivation.”