

Participation of civil society in Rio+20 is a priority

Accessibility and mobility will be ensured in all venues of the event, which takes place in June this year



RIO+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Ensuring suitable venues for national and international civil society to actively participate in the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) is one of the priorities of the National Organization Committee (Comitê Nacional de Organização - CNO). Side events, internet access, booths for organizations, measures to facilitate transport and mobility, and buildings with accessibility for people with disabilities are some of the conditions created for thousands of civil society representatives to register and participate in the event.

"The participation of civil society is a priority for the National Committee. It is very important to ensure the presence of people at the Rio+20, including for influencing government decisions. The Brazilian government and the UN want to secure the widest possible participation," said the national secretary of the CNO, Laudemar Aguiar. The Secretary also noted that Brazil has historically included civil society participants in the official delegation as well.

Venues - For the first time ever there will be more than one venue for individuals and organizations, in places like the Jacarepaguá Car Race Track, the HSBC Arena and others near Rio-Centro, where representatives of the 193 UN Member States will be

working. All venues will be provided with access to the internet. Also as regards connectivity, the Committee will facilitate and encourage the transmission of information through social networks for young people to follow the Conference, even from afar.

The CNO also highlights actions to ensure accessibility and mobility in all venues of the event. "It will be a truly inclusive Conference with the participation of everyone, and

people with disabilities can not be excluded. With regard to transportation, we are taking into account the needs of people with motor, visual and hearing impairments," said Aguiar. These actions will be planned and implemented in partnership with the National Secretariat for Human Rights, the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities.

The concern is in line with the guidelines of the UN system, which identifies and makes room for the so-called "major groups", which are non-governmental organizations, business groups, indigenous communities, local authorities, farmers' organizations, groups of children and young people, workers and trade unions, women's entities and the science and technology community. +

Rio+20 Conference will take place in June

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development will be held in Rio de Janeiro from 13 to 22 June 2012, renewing the political commitment to sustainable development through the assessment of progress and gaps in imple-

menting previous decisions. The Conference will focus on two main topics: green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and institutional framework for sustainable development. +

How to participate?

Organizations: Participation in Rio +20 is conditional on the organization's registering with the UN. There is a list of organizations with a consultative status before ECOSOC - Economic and Social Council. Organizations that participated in other conferences are automatically registered. The registration of official delegations, civil society and media representatives is the responsibility of the UN.

Individuals: Anyone can send suggestions, disseminate information and issue opinions by sending an email in any of the UN official languages (Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, French, English, Russian) to uncsd2012@un.org. ■

INTERVIEW

Antonio de Aguiar Patriota
Minister of External Relations

“Rio+20 should be the beginning of a period of action, in which social players are increasingly important for the concrete promotion of sustainable development”

In an interview to Em Questão magazine, the Minister of External Relations, Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, stressed the importance of civil society participation for the success of Rio+20

EQ: What is at stake in Rio+20?

AAP: Rio+20 represents a call to collective responsibility in view of the challenges facing the international community in the environmental, economic and social areas. Brazil understands that real progress should be achieved in four fronts: 1) the definitive recognition of poverty eradication as an essential element for achieving sustainable development, with an emphasis on its human dimension; 2) the full consideration of the concept of sustainable development in decision making by actors in the economic, social and environmental spheres, with a view to generating synergy, coordination and integration among these three dimensions; 3) the strengthening of multilateralism and the adjustment of the structures of the United Nations and other international institutions to the challenge of sustainable development; and 4) to reflect, in the global governance framework, the international reorganization in progress, with due attention to the role of emerging countries.

EQ: What are the expectations of the Brazilian government in holding such an important event?

AAP: The Brazilian Government expects to achieve positive results at international, national and civil society levels. In the multilateral arena, the goal is to define concrete directions for the long term, by indicating the path to global growth in the context of sustainable devel-

opment. On a national scale, the aim is to stimulate the internal debate required for the country to play a leading role in implementing and creating sustainable development solutions in the coming years. The Brazilian Government understands that increased participation of civil society is one of the core elements for promoting progress towards sustainable development. In this sense, just as Rio-92 was a milestone in raising awareness about the importance of sustainability, Rio+20 should mark the beginning of a period of action in which social players will be increasingly important for promoting concrete sustainable development.

EQ: What should be expected from developed countries?

AAP: Developed countries have a huge debt to the developing world in the area of sustainable development. At Rio+20 we should focus on ensuring that more developed nations meet the commitments undertaken in the past. A key issue for the poorest countries: At Rio+10 (Johannesburg Summit), developed countries pledged to transfer an average of 0.7% of their GDP to help poor nations achieve the agreed goals. However, the levels of support since then not only have failed to reach that stage, but have also experienced a decrease in recent years.

EQ: How has Brazil been participating in international debates on sustainable development?

AAP: Brazil has been in the center of international debates on the topic

since at least 1971. Back then, the country was one of the first voices to bring to environmental discussions the inseparable dimensions of economic and social development. Brazil subsequently worked hard to ensure that the universal acceptance of the concept of sustainable development and the interrelation among the social, economic and environmental dimensions would be one of the main outcomes of Rio-92. We have shown, therefore, leadership capacity in consolidating and strengthening the concept of sustainable development. In addition, the country can be considered the synthesis of sustainable development in recent decades. Brazil was one of the few nations, if not the only one, to simultaneously grow economically, combat poverty and reduce social inequalities, cut down deforestation and maintain a clean energy matrix. It is up to the country now to defend this double legacy - its historical leading role in multilateral discussions and the example of domestic policies that have generated positive results. At Rio+20 we will defend that there is no single recipe for sustainable development, but rather many paths according to the specific realities of each country or region. We will reinforce the conviction that encouraging sustainable development has never been more important. If it was already a consensus 20 years ago, it has become indispensable in a context of increasing global warming, which requires urgent responses on a worldwide scale, with a sense of collective long-term responsibility. ■

Brazil coordinated developing countries at COP-17

Action enabled commitment to start negotiations in 2013

Brazil participated in the 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC-COP-17) and the 7th Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP-7) held in Durban, South Africa, from November 28 to December 11, 2011. The Brazilian delegation took part in the negotiations that defined a broad and diverse set of long-term cooperative actions and the beginning, early in 2013, of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, as well as in the launch of the negotiation process to invigorate and raise the level of ambition of the regime in the future through the so-called "Durban Platform for Enhanced Action."

At the Conference, the Brazilian delegation participated in simultaneous negotiations and meetings. In several topics, Brazil coordinated the G-77, the negotiating group that brings together more than 130 developing countries. Thus, besides defending domestic interests, Brazil took on the responsibility of speaking on behalf of the developing world as a whole. It is a challenge, particularly considering the diversity of views that need to be harmonized in the search for consensus.

Outcomes – The trademark of Brazil's performance is present in the various aspects of the outcome of Durban and throughout the negotiation process leading to COP-17 and included meetings in Bangkok, Bonn and Panama. With regard to long-term cooperative actions, Brazil coordinated the G-77, for example, in the negotiation of new instruments and processes for the international presentation of information on mitigation actions

undertaken by developed and developing countries. By itself, the topic translated into seven different documents with attachments. All seven documents reflect ideas put forward by Brazil, ensuring rules that contribute to increased transparency, without disregarding the differences in capacity between developed and developing countries.

Kyoto Protocol - Brazil coordinated the G-77 in the negotiations on the future of the Kyoto Protocol. Since early 2011, the Brazilian delegation has proposed and led efforts to bring together developing countries and the European Union, creating the critical mass of support required to ensure the second commitment period, despite the announcement by Canada, Japan and Russia that they would not accept commitments in the new phase. Brazil also encouraged further consideration on the topic within BA-

SIC, the group in which it participates together with South Africa, India and China. Doubts about the future of the Kyoto Protocol undermined confidence in multilateral rules and in the very model of a regime based on internationally agreed standards. Brazilian participation was instrumental in reversing this situation.

In the final moments of COP-17/CMP-7, the entire "package" negotiated depended on the decision about the Durban Platform and more specifically on the choice of a common language regarding the nature of the outcome of negotiations to be started next year. Brazil, which had worked with developed and developing countries in the search for balanced formulations for the decision, also contributed to the final text: the reference to "legally binding agreed outcome", endowed with sufficient flexibility to be accepted by all. +

Low Carbon Agriculture provides US\$ 3.15 billion

To disseminate a new sustainable agriculture that reduces global warming and the release of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the government established the Low Carbon Emission Agriculture Plan, containing initiatives with targets and results to be met by 2020. The ABC Program, for example, is a line of credit to finance farmers who want to adopt production systems that contribute to mitigating greenhouse gases. The program has already provided R\$ 3.15 billion in the Agriculture and Livestock Plan 2011/2012, with interest rates of 5.5% and payback period of up to 15 years.

Execution of the Plan includes training technicians and producers; transferring technology, research and development; and promoting land and environmental regularization. Credit lines have also been set up to foster sustainable production

as well as the production and distribution of forest tree seedlings, the provision of inputs to family farmers and the contracting of technical assistance.

The Ministry of Agriculture conducts various training activities. In 2011, 3,000 technicians from several states attended courses and seminars. Training will prepare more technicians to develop projects using low carbon emission technologies, thus ensuring them access to agricultural credit provided by the ABC Plan, putting into practice the proposed technologies and promoting an increasingly sustainable agriculture. During the meetings, partners are identified to collaborate in developing the State ABC Plan. The goal is for each location to have a specific strategy and for rural producers to be ensured access to training by the end of 2012 as well. ■

Renewable energy sources account for 86% of the matrix

Hydro power and bioenergy are among priorities

Brazil has set targets to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases while maintaining the current cycle of economic development. This commitment involves keeping the Brazilian energy matrix as one of the cleanest in the industrialized world. In Brazil, 86% of the electricity comes from renewable sources (80% hydro and 6% biomass and wind). Worldwide, the average share of hydro power stands at 16%.

By strengthening energy planning tools, the Brazilian government is capable of maintaining this profile, as the State has resumed its responsibility to increase the supply of energy in order to meet public interest - with environmental preservation and economic and social development.

Studies of the hydroelectric inventory have been resumed and energy auctions are now being promoted on a regular and systematic basis, with a view to me-

eting the needs of the regulated market. New projects are also being monitored more closely through the Growth Acceleration Program, ensuring the implementation of key projects to meet energy demand in Brazil.

Investments of R\$ 1,080 billion are planned for the next ten years: 22% in the area of electricity and 15% in the area of bioenergy. These investments represent 2.6% of GDP accumulated in the period, or 12.1% of accumulated investments. +

Light for All assists more than 14 million Brazilians

The Light for All Program was introduced by the Federal Government in November 2003, with the aim of bringing electricity to two million Brazilian households which, at the time, had no access to a reliable and permanent source of electricity. The initial goal, which was achieved in May 2009, meant lifting out of darkness about 10 million people living in rural and predominantly poor areas throughout the country.

In September 2011 the Light for All had already benefited 2.8 million families, representing a universe estimated at 14.2 million people. Electricity connection is free of charge and each household is provided with three light bulbs and two outlets.

The goals have been expanded to address a phenomenon caused in part by the Light for All itself: people who had left their places of origin

in search of better living conditions began to return to the municipalities benefited by the Program.

About 682,000 people are estimated to have returned to their regions of origin by 2011, reversing the migration flow to large urban areas.

The Light for All has also helped local economies, since 79.3% of affected families have purchased a TV set and 73.3% now have a refrigerator at home. In addition, 24.1% of households served with electricity have bought an electric water pump for irrigation.

A survey conducted by the Ministry of Mines and Energy in 2009 shows that household income has increased for 35.6% of beneficiaries after the arrival of electricity in their homes. Over 90% of respondents reported improvements in their living conditions. ■

Support for innovation strengthens sustainability

Strategy includes the new Brazilian Industrial Research and Innovation Company

In the contemporary world scene, innovation is recognized as a fundamental instrument for sustainable development, economic growth, employment and income generation, and democratization of a nation's opportunities. In Brazil, the Productive Development Policy (Política de Desenvolvimento Produtivo - PDP), the Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation for National Development (Plano de Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação para o Desenvolvi-

mento Nacional - PACTI 2007-2010) and the National Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (Estratégia Nacional de Ciência Tecnologia e Inovação - ENCTI) currently underway identify innovation as one of the key factors for the sustainable strengthening of Brazil's position in the international arena.

Grant - Part of the relative success of the recent increase in private investment in R&D results from a set of fostering instruments that offer resources for credit, grants, and reimbursable and non-reimbursable investments, according to the possibilities provided for in the Innovation Law of December 2004, the Law of Common Goods of November 2005 and the Information Technology Law among other initiatives. The scope of more traditional actions has therefore been expanded, as

has the range of access options for all types of company.

Embrapii - The Brazilian Industrial Research and Innovation Company (Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa e Inovação Industrial - Embrapii), an initiative compatible with the growing culture of innovation in the everyday world of entrepreneurs, governments and the national scientific and technological community has been recently established for the purpose of ensuring the sustainability of Brazilian growth.

Embrapii intends to contribute to filling a gap in institutional coordination between the public and private sector, especially in the industrial segment, with the main perspective of promoting innovation in companies by exploring the decentralizing presence and established competence of existing technology institutes. ■

Deforestation in the Amazon down 78% since 2004

Country is close to bringing forward the target of reducing carbon emissions

As a result of the fall in deforestation rates in the Amazon over the past seven years, Brazil is close to bringing forward the carbon emissions reduction target set for 2020, according to the National Policy on Climate Change. In eight years, the rate of deforestation fell significantly, from 27,772 sq. km in 2004 to 6,238 sq. km in 2011 - a reduction of 78%.

The Brazilian government began monitoring the Amazon forest cover in 1988. In the latest study period, from August 2010 to July 2011, the estimated reduction was up 11% over the same previous period. This historical level is the result of the implementation of the Plan of Action for Preventing and Controlling Deforestation in the Legal Amazon (Plano de Ação para Prevenção e Controle do Desmatamento na Amazônia Legal - PPCDAm) in 2004. The government operates seamlessly in the PPCDAm, prioritizing areas with higher deforestation rates and bringing together the efforts of 14 ministries, under the coordination of the Office of the President's Chief of Staff.

The government is currently reviewing the Plan for the period 2012-2015. Advances in monitoring systems have been planned through the incorporation of new knowledge to the experience already acquired. Both real-time recording by the Deter System, which serves to guide illegal logging inspection and control actions, and PRODES will be improved. Today they already are a world reference among countries with tropical forests that carry out monitoring based on the analysis of satellite images. The PPCDAm aims to reduce deforestation by some 80% over the average recorded in the period 1996-2005, according to the National Policy on Climate Change. Actions to fight deforestation

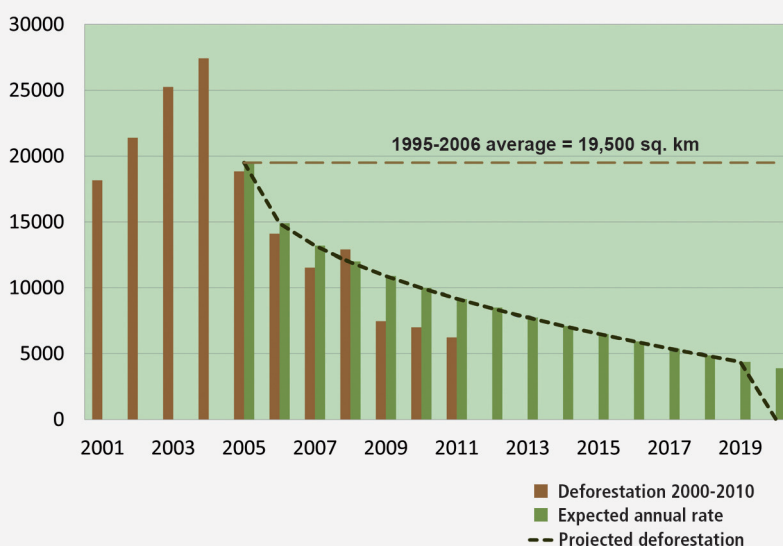
in the Legal Amazon involve mainly IBAMA, the Federal Police, the National Force and the Army.

Arco Verde – The federal government has established a deforestation control front to assist municipalities with the highest deforestation rates, in addition to actions to curb the activity. The operation dubbed Arco Verde (Green Arch) followed operation Arco de Fogo (Fire Arch), which focused on hindering illegal logging.

Operation Arco Verde – Terra Legal (Green Arch-Legal Land) encompassed 43 municipalities, which

together accounted for 53% of the total deforested area in the biome. The proposal has been to intervene in predatory economic models by encouraging sustainable practices. The task force traveled 25,000 kilometers providing sustainable alternatives. A process of awareness was introduced with the presence of the State to curb and prevent the action of illegal loggers. Operation Arco Verde assisted forest dwellers in the benefited municipalities by providing basic services such as vital records and social and labor assistance, and starting land regularization processes. +

Commitment to Reduce Deforestation in the Amazon undertaken at COP-15



Source: Inpe

Amazon Fund approved 23 projects with investments worth R\$ 441 million

In order to raise funds to encourage forest conservation, the establishment of the Amazon Fund was authorized on 1 August 2008, with the central aim of promoting projects to prevent and combat deforestation and foster the conservation and sustainable use of forests in the Amazon biome. Twenty three projects worth R\$ 441 million had been approved by the end of 2011.

Management of the Fund rests with the Brazilian Bank of Economic and Social Development (Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social - BN-

DES). Amazon Fund resources are used in the form of non-reimbursable loans.

In addition to being the largest biodiversity reserve on Earth, the Amazon region is also the largest Brazilian biome in extension, encompassing almost half the national territory, with 4.2 million sq. km covering five Brazilian states in their entirety (Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Pará and Roraima), much of Rondônia (98.8%), more than half of Mato Grosso (54%), and part of Maranhão (34%) and Tocantins (9%). ■

Income distribution leverages the economy

Heated labor market and investment in infrastructure also accelerate production

Over the last decade, the growth rate in the per capita income of the poorest 10% was nearly four times that of the richest 10%. While the per capita income of those on the top of the social pyramid grew 1.3% per year, those on the base of the pyramid experienced a 5.1% increase in their per capita income over the same period. Due to better income distribution, since 2003 the new Brazilian middle class has increased by 29 million people. The fall in the Gini index (see chart) is proof of the success of social and productive inclusion programs.

To maintain steady economic growth with social inclusion, Brazil operates based on public policies focused on three major areas: labor market expansion, income redistribution and investment in infrastructure.

The country created 2.3 million formal jobs in 2011. The constant rise since 2003 has kept the unemployment rate below 6%. Coupled with

the appreciation of the minimum wage, which boasted a real increase of 65.96% over the last ten years, the heated labor market is one of the main factors that have helped build a broad middle class in the country. The offer of opportunities with policies of assistance to small family farmers and urban entrepreneurs has been combined with social programs to reduce inequalities. In 2011 alone, the Family Grant (Bolsa Família) program, for example, transferred R\$ 167 billion to 13.3 million families - 19.4% above the R\$ 13.4 billion of 2010, showing that the investment is not only permanent but also strong.

Eradicating poverty - The success of the income supplementation system enables the country to face the challenge of eradicating extreme poverty by the end of 2014. The Brazil without Extreme Poverty (Brasil sem Miséria) Plan takes into account a scenario of continued employment and economic activity for productive inclusion in urban and rural areas to occur.

According to the projections of the Ministry of Finance, permanent productive investment and strong household consumption will sustain the growth foreseen by the Plan for 2012. Development will continue to be based on domestic demand, which

has been the main driver of economic growth during the current period of international crisis.

PAC - Brazil has been solving historical infrastructure and basic sanitation problems while encouraging and strengthening the economy and social inclusion. The budget execution of the second phase of the Growth Acceleration Program (Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento - PAC 2) totaled R\$ 143.6 billion on September 30, 2011. This amount represents 15% of the funds foreseen for the period 2011-2014 and shows a 66% increase between June and September. By September 2011, PAC 2 had reached a payment volume 22% higher than that of the same period in 2010.

Investment in the economy occurs without increasing the public debt. On the contrary, despite the financial crisis public debt is declining relative to GDP. For example, the Gross General Government Debt fell from 63.4% in September 2009 to 55.4% of GDP in October 2011. The Public Sector Net Debt, in turn, fell from 43.3% to 38.2% over the same period.

Consumption in Brazil today is driven not only by incentive to production, but also by credit. From the 2008 crisis to date, the credit-to-GDP ratio has increased from 40.5% to 46.4%. ■

Green Grant benefits 16,000 families in the Amazon

Income compensation is R\$ 300 per quarter

In 2011 the federal government introduced the Green Grant (Bolsa Verde), one of the world's largest income transfer programs with environmental preservation, on the agenda of development with environmental preservation. The program aims to benefit 73,000 families who live and work in conservation units and surrounding areas, environmentally differentiated settlements, indigenous lands, and riverine and traditional communities, who contribute to the conservation of biodiversity in Brazil. The funds are transferred in the form of payment

for services provided in the conservation of the ecosystems where these families live and work.

In January 2012 the program had already benefited 16,000 families in the Legal Amazon. Its consolidation as a public income distribution policy is innovative and improves the living conditions of communities that draw their livelihoods from biodiversity.

Beneficiaries have a monthly income less than 70 reais and must meet requirements demonstrating that they are actually contributing to environmental preservation. All are beneficiaries of Family Grant, the largest government program of income distribution to populations at socio-economic risk. The income supplementation paid for the provision of environmental services is R\$ 300 per quarter. ■



Green Grant improves the living conditions of communities that draw their livelihoods from biodiversity

Photo: Secom/Presidency of the Republic

27.9 million people were lifted out of poverty between 2003 and 2009

Overcoming poverty is a prerequisite for sustainable development

When the United Nations (UN) established the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 11 years ago, Brazil and other 188 countries assented to halve hunger and extreme poverty by 2015. In 2009, a new UN study showed that Brazil has not only met but also exceeded the MDG target to reduce extreme poverty and hunger. Between 2003 and 2009, 27.9 million people were lifted out of poverty and 35.7 million rose to higher social classes. The recipe for these results: economic growth with social inclusion.

Overcoming poverty is a prerequisite for sustainable development. It is based on both this approach and the successful social inclusion experience that Brazil will bring together in Rio de Janeiro, in June 2012, heads of state to discuss the future of the planet during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20.

Global Socio-environmental Protection - The document with the various proposals prepared by the Brazilian Committee for Rio+20 suggests the development of a Global Socio-environmental Protection Program. This program aims to increase income to eradicate extreme poverty across the world and promote structuring actions to ensure environmental quality, food security, adequate housing and access to clean water for all. The Global Socio-environmental Protection Program, when implemented, would lead the entire international multilateral framework to operate with a view to facilitating access to technologies, financial resources, infrastructure and training, so that all people on Earth can enjoy a minimum quantity and quality of food and water as well as a healthy environment. +



Photo: Ana Nascimento/MD5

One of the goals of Brazil without Poverty in rural areas is to increase by four-fold the number of family farmers assisted by the Food Acquisition Program (Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos - PAA).

Brazil's goal is to lift 16.2 million out of extreme poverty

The Brazilian government has been working along this line. Under the Brazil without Poverty Plan, actions are being developed simultaneously to guarantee income (Family Grant Program) and promote food security (Food Acquisition Program) and water safety (Cisterns Program).

In addition to the Global Environmental Protection Program, the Brazilian document proposes that the Millennium Development Goals should evolve to incorporate the so-called Sustainable Development Goals. The proposals also include adopting new development indicators that incorporate elements of sustainability and the Global Pact for Sustainable Production and Consumption, which includes sustainable government procurement.

In 2011 the federal government took the challenge of ensuring that public social inclusion policies would benefit the 16.2 million Brazilians who still live in extreme poverty with monthly incomes up to R\$ 70 per person, according to data from the 2010 Census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística - IBGE). This population has both a face and an address: most live in the Northeast - 59% or 9.6 million people, are young - 51% are 19 years old or younger and 40% are 14 years old or younger. Slightly more than half

of these 16 million people live in urban centers and the remainder in rural areas.

Launched in June, the Brazil without Poverty Plan (BSM in the Portuguese acronym), which involves various agencies under the coordination of the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, has a three-pronged approach: income security, access to public services and productive inclusion. The bill establishing the Unified Social Assistance System (Sistema Único de Assistência Social - SUAS) was passed in July 2011 and represented the consolidation, through a legal framework, of the policies, actions and guidelines developed over the past six years.

Soon after, the states began to announce their own programs to overcome extreme poverty. The federal government has signed regional agreements with the governors of 26 states and the Federal District.

As a result of the BSM, eight states - Amapá, Espírito Santo, Goiás, Mato Grosso, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, Rondônia and São Paulo, plus the Federal District are now integrating their income transfer programs into the Family Grant. Consequently, 3.5 million people will have an increase in Family Grant benefits, which will raise the income of the poorest families. In six months, the plan exceeded all targets set for 2011. ■

Dialogue with society is a trademark of the federal government

Tables and conferences as instruments of social participation

Building the foundation of both strong and consolidated relationships with social movements and an ongoing dialogue with civil society organizations are trademarks of the federal government. According to Minister Gilberto Carvalho, from the General Secretariat of the Presidency of Brazil, "relations between civil society and government are necessarily tense, with fair claims. Although limited by budgetary and institutional constraints, among others, the government seeks to meet these demands to the fullest." As the minister has put it, "let us not fool ourselves by mistaking good dialogue for the actual satisfaction of these movements. But we bet on the continuity and strengthening of this dialogue. The government is dynamic and in the course of four years it will make important achievements for both social movements and society. Our challenge for 2012 is precisely making these relationships more stable and organic and ensuring an increasingly clear, fraternal and transparent dialogue."

According to the minister, among the many actions taken by the General Secretariat, special mention should be made of the permanent dialogue and negotiation tables. The Dialogue Table to Improve Working Conditions in the Sugar Cane sector, which started in the previous administration was resumed in 2011, and the companies that have joined the National Commitment, i.e., that have agreed to implement measures that will benefit about 500,000 workers throughout the country, are already being audited.

Among the tables established in 2011 is Civil Construction, which has led to the National Tripartite Commitment to Improve



Photo: Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger

Participants vote on a proposal during the 8th National Social Assistance Conference

Working Conditions in the Construction Industry. This voluntary membership agreement seeks to agree on appropriate conditions for workers, from recruitment and selection and professional training to labor health and safety, besides the right of workers to be organized by workplace at construction sites.

With the Permanent Dialogue Table formed by the six Central Trade Unions, the General Secretariat discussed topics such as social security, cost-of-living adjustment for retirees and minimum wage among others.

Rural movements — With rural movements the dialogue took place both during the entities' demonstrations in Brasília - March of the Daisies, National Journey of Fight for Family Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, and Cry of the Earth among others, as well as in relation to more structuring issues such as small farmers' debt.

The Dialogue Table of the Platform of Urban and Rural Energy Workers was established to meet the demands of social and workers' movements in the energy sector by discussing topics like energy security, alternative energy production models and the risk of outsourcing for the industry. The Negotiation Table on Urban Housing was also established in 2011

with the aim to discuss the unified agenda of the housing movement and open a permanent channel of dialogue between the federal government and social movements involved in the issue.

Conferences - A total of 123 national conferences were held between 1941 and 2011. Of these, 82 conferences in 40 sectoral areas took place between 2002 and 2011 and were preceded by preparatory meetings at the local, regional and state level, mobilizing nearly 7 million people in the discussion of public policy proposals. +

CDES mobilizes society

The Council for Economic and Social Development debate the issue of sustainable development since 2010. Meeting national and international cooperation with other councils and similar institutions resulted in the document Agreement for Sustainable Development.

The contribution of the CDES and 72 other institutions that have signed the document - social organizations, environmental, academic, business and workers - were sent to the Ministries of Environment and Foreign Affairs. ■

MASTHEAD

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATION:

JORGE DUARTE

EDITOR:

FLÁVIO GONÇALVES

REPORTERS:

MÁRCIO VENCIGUERRA, DANIELA SILVA

E RICARDO PENG

DIAGRAMATION: EDUARDO GOULART

CONTACT:

EMQUESTAO@PLANALTO.GOV.BR

ESPLANADA DOS MINISTÉRIOS

BLOCO "A" - SALA 631

BRASÍLIA - DF - BRAZIL

POSTAL CODE: 70054-906

TEL. +55 (61) 3411-4928 / 3411-4818

TO RECEIVE **EM QUESTÃO**
BY E-MAIL (IN PORTUGUESE),
SEND A MESSAGE TO

emquestao@planalto.gov.br

WRITE **'INCLUIR'**
ON THE SUBJECT FIELD

