



***Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office  
and other International Organizations in Geneva***

*Ch. Louis-Dunant, 15*

*1202 – Geneva / Switzerland*

*Phone: (+41) (0)22 332 50 00 / Fax: (+41) (0)22 910 07 51*

*E-mail: mission.brazil@delbrasgen.org*

**Human Rights Council  
10<sup>th</sup> Session – Item 5  
Geneva, 23 March 2009**

**INTERVENTION BY BRAZIL**

Mister President,

My delegation would like to seize this opportunity to make some comments on the content of the study under preparation by the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, concerning the right to education. Brazil welcomes this initiative and expects the study to provide meaningful inputs into the preparation of the National Conference on Indigenous Peoples Education, to be held in September 2009. The National Conference will be preceded by a series of local, regional and national preparatory meetings already launched in December 2008 and which will draw the participation of indigenous representatives from all over the country.

Much has been done to promote access to education to indigenous peoples in Brazil. Specific legislation and programs have been enacted and implemented. Those laws and programs value and reflect the cultural diversity of indigenous groups, including the use of their native languages

and the respect for their traditions and systems of knowledge. Data from the 2006 School Census show that enrolment of indigenous children in basic education increased 48.7 percent between 2002 and 2006, from 117,171 to 174,255 students. This growth rate in enrolment of nearly 10 percent a year is the highest among all population segments in the country.

Despite the progress achieved in recent years, the provision of education for indigenous communities is, nonetheless, far from comprehensive in terms of coverage at the national level. That is why we consider a thoroughly inclusive and participatory approach, as the one culminating in the holding of the National Conference on Indigenous Peoples Education, to be paramount if we wish to establish an educational policy which is answerable to indigenous peoples needs and which truly reflects their differentiated circumstances and expectations.

The quality of indigenous education is also in the government's agenda. In the last ten years, 9,100 indigenous teachers have been trained, covering nearly all states. Brazil has seven public universities that offer intercultural graduate programs. In 2005, the Program in Support of Indigenous Higher Education and Intercultural Bachelor's Degree Programs-PROLIND was also introduced. One of its goals is to extend support to public universities in the 2007-2010 triennial for the training of 4,000 additional indigenous teachers.

Mr. President,

The 1988 Federal Constitution represented a milestone in terms of redefining the rights of the indigenous peoples, including to their cultural identity. Accordingly, indigenous educational programs purport to realise their right to intercultural, bilingual/multilingual and community education, consistent with the requests of those groups.

Providing indigenous peoples better access to education, in response to requests and priorities set up by themselves and in respect for their own traditions and systems of values and knowledge, is a challenge that we are committed to face.

We, Brazilians take pride in our multifaceted origin. Our social manifestations have been marked by a constantly evolving and mutually reinforcing process of dialogue, interaction and exchange amongst cultures. Diversity is not something alien to us, but an essential part, a cornerstone upon which is based our very identity. Indigenous peoples have the right to nurture and to express their cultural manifestations without losing the respect of others or being excluded from other choices in life. Education should be a means to value and to promote such diversity and the opportunities of dialogue and mutual learning that it entails.

Thank you Mister President.