

The Brazilian government welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, about her visit to Brasil from 7 to 17 March 2016. Her comments and recommendations will greatly contribute to our efforts to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples in our country.

While we recognize many of the shortfalls pointed out by the Report, we would also like to note that some important developments have taken place between the visit of former Special Rapporteur James Anaya in 2008 and that of Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, as shown in our written comments to the report.

As regards the overall institutional framework, it is worth noting the convening in Brazil, in 2015, of the National Conference for Indigenous Policy. As one of the key outcomes of the Conference, the National Council for Indigenous Policy was established in 2016 to be the main forum for discussing and defining policies for indigenous peoples. Another key institution is the National Council for Human Rights, established in 2014, which has a Working Group on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the South of Brazil.

In a recent official speech, the Minister of Justice and Citizenship stated his commitment to strengthening the National Foundation for Indigenous Peoples (FUNAI). He noted that an additional two hundred permanent staff are being hired and said he will work to increase the Foundation's budgeted next year. He said none of the land demarcation measures taken by the previous administration was or will be revoked. More than that, he said land demarcation is one of his two priorities in this domain, together with the security of indigenous communities.

There are nowadays 462 demarcated indigenous lands, covering over 12% of Brazil's territory, or 1.04 million square kilometers, an area larger than France, Germany and the Benelux countries combined. Between 2008 and 2016, 35 new indigenous lands have been demarcated, covering an area of 91 thousand square kilometers, roughly equivalent to the territory of Portugal.

As mentioned earlier, a key priority of the Brazilian government is the protection of indigenous individuals and peoples against any sort of violence. To this effect, the Federal government has been joining forces with State-level authorities to prevent and address instances of violence against indigenous peoples and individuals. One important initiative in this context is the National Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, which was established in 2007 and now offers protection to 101 indigenous leaders, corresponding to 28% of all persons enrolled in the program. It is also worth noting that the National Security Force and the Federal Police have been mobilized several times in recent years to protect indigenous peoples and individuals in instances of violence, especially in cases of land disputes.

Established in 2009, Secretariat for Continued Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI), headed by a Vice Minister of Education, is responsible for

providing bilingual, culturally appropriate basic education to the children and youth of Brazil's three hundred-plus indigenous peoples, who speak more than two hundred languages. There are over 3 thousand indigenous schools in Brazil, employing over 18 thousand teachers, more than 10 thousand of which are indigenous, who cater for nearly 240 thousand students. In addition, around 38% Brazilian indigenous children and youth live in cities and often attend regular public schools. Over 22 thousand indigenous students are now attending Brazilian universities and this number is increasing rapidly. Two key factors for this growth are the establishment of a quota system in 2012 and of a scholarship program in 2013.

In 2010, the Special Secretariat for Indigenous Healthcare (SESAI) was established, headed by a Vice-Minister of Health. Since then, the total staff increased by 50% and the number of doctors grew by nearly 80%. SESAI also has an integrated policy in the area of mental health, with multidisciplinary teams which include over 100 psychologists. One of the main priorities in this area is the prevention of suicide among indigenous youth.

In 2012, the National Policy for Environmental and Territorial Management of Indigenous Lands (PNGATI) was launched. Nine projects for the design and implementation of Territorial and Environmental Plans, worth more than US\$ 24 million, are already being sponsored by the Amazon Fund. Other sustainability projects in indigenous lands, worth more than US\$ 36 million, have been financed by the Amazon Fund since 2008.

Strict sustainability standards are also applied to the licensing and implementation of large infrastructure projects that may affect indigenous lands. The São Luiz hydroelectric project in the Tapajós River is a case in point. After consultations with leaders of the Munduruku people, and bearing in mind statements by FUNAI and the Federal Prosecution Service, the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources concluded that the project violated constitutional provisions and refused to license it. Following this decision, the Minister of Mines and Energy stated that the current administration has no intention to resume studies about hydroelectric projects in that region.

Despite what has been achieved so far, a lot still needs to be done to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples in Brazil. We remain open to discuss this issue further with the Special Rapporteur and all other relevant stakeholders.