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BRAZIL

XIII Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

H. E. Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota

Permanent Representative

Mission of Brazil to the UN

May 20, 2014

(Agenda item 4)

André
Mr. Chairman;

Over eight hundred thousand Brazilians identify themselves as members of more than three hundred different peoples. They speak no less than two hundred and seventy different languages.

For Brazil, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is an important reference for meeting the aspirations of such a large and diverse group. Since its adoption, the challenge for national governments has been to translate its provisions into domestic legislation, policies and concrete actions.

The Brazilian Constitution of 1988 and subsequent legislation are consistent with the key provisions of the Declaration. Our main task is to ensure these directives are translated into tangible results in areas such as political participation and representation, land rights, healthcare, education and culture.

In line with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Art. 18), the Brazilian government promotes the participation of indigenous peoples in the design and implementation of public policies that affect them. To this effect, a National Indigenous Policy Commission (CNPI) was instituted in 2006, with the participation of 20 indigenous peoples' representatives, as well as officials from key government agencies. An Inter-ministerial Working Group has also been created to draft specific regulations to implement the provisions of ILO Convention 169 about prior informed consent of indigenous peoples with regard to policies and projects that affect them. Indigenous peoples also participate actively in the design and implementation of healthcare and education policies in Brazil.

André

There are 688 indigenous territories in Brazil, covering an area of almost 1.1 million square kilometers, or more than 12% of the national territory. This is the world's largest amount of indigenous lands. Having been established according to anthropological studies, these lands correspond to the ancestral territories of most Brazilian indigenous peoples, especially in the Amazon biome and surrounding areas. Despite this achievement, two challenges remain. The first is to consolidate these territories and to prevent the intrusion of non-indigenous persons in these areas. The second is to settle some indigenous lands in more densely populated regions of the country.

Consistently with the Declaration (Art. 24), Brazil has a National Healthcare Policy for Indigenous Peoples. A sizeable administrative structure was put in place to manage this policy, structured in 34 different districts. Special attention is paid to traditional healing knowledge, medicines and practices, as well as to the epidemiological profile and other distinctive characteristics of different peoples. This policy is drafted and implemented with significant participation of indigenous peoples, from the District Councils to the national level. Five National Conferences for Indigenous Healthcare (CNSI) have already taken place, the latest of which in 2013, with the participation of 30.000 persons at all levels, including indigenous representatives, healthcare professionals and the Minister of Health.

Abiding by constitutional provisions, Brazil has an education policy specifically designed for indigenous peoples, based on respect for their cultural and linguistic diversity. This policy is developed and implemented with the participation of indigenous peoples at all levels, from the National Commission for Indigenous Education (CNEEI) to the ~~the~~ 44 "ethnic-educational territories" into which the country is divided. The Ministry of Education also has specific programmes for training indigenous teachers, and for producing teaching materials in several indigenous languages. The government also offers scholarships to indigenous students, and, recently enacted legislation, has established a quota system for indigenous students in public universities.

In the same vein, Brazil also has policies for promoting and protecting indigenous peoples' cultures. The Ministry of Culture has held two National Forums^a for Indigenous Culture, the second one ~~as recently as~~ in 2013, with significant participation of indigenous representatives. The National Foundation for Indigenous Peoples (FUNAI) also has specific policies for protecting the cultural identity of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and in initial contact.

I believe demonstrate its commitment to
All these policies ~~show~~ how seriously Brazil takes the full implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Thank you.