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**INTERVENTION BY AMBASSADOR MARIA NAZARETH FARANI AZEVÊDO  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL TO THE UN OFFICE IN GENEVA**

Thank you Mr. President,

Brazil wishes to take the opportunity of the General Debate under item 5 to make a few remarks regarding the activities of the Special Rapporteur and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which we fully support.

We wish to reiterate that Brazil welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur, based on his visit to our country, from 14 to 25 August 2008. We remain committed to the spirit of dialogue and cooperation that underlines Brazil's relationship with the United Nations human rights system and our standing invitation to UN special procedures.

His report focused on achievements, as well as challenges, in the fulfillment of human rights of the indigenous peoples, in areas such as combating poverty and hunger, education and health, as well as the need to fully consult with indigenous communities in projects of development and infrastructures.

The establishment of the CNPI – National Commission of Indigenous Policies, is an important step to strengthen dialogue and full participation of the indigenous people in Brazil.

I also wish to refer to the activities of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We welcome the focus of the Mechanism on the right to education.

The right to high quality, laic and cross-cultural education is guaranteed in the Brazilian Federal Constitution. Additional legislation prescribes the guidelines for indigenous education. Moreover, the Ministry of Education's National Coordination on Indigenous Education has been active for almost 20 years.

There are currently 2.5 thousands indigenous schools in Brazil in 24 States of the Federation, attended by 177 thousand students. Between 2002 and 2007 the number of indigenous students grew at a rate of 45%. In the case of secondary education, there was a growth of over 600%.

Brazil adopts a model of intercultural and bilingual education with cross-cultural curricula aimed at strengthening the culture, language, native teaching and learning processes and social organization as a whole.

More than 90% of the 10 thousand teachers at the indigenous schools of Brazil are themselves indigenous. That is a token of the efforts made for self-determination and respect for the native culture. Moreover, it is an important means of regular income for indigenous communities.

For the first time in Brazil, the General Coordinator of Indigenous Education of the Ministry of Education is himself indigenous. That means indigenous peoples

themselves occupy most positions from the teaching posts at the local level to the highest-ranking position in the Federal level, concerning indigenous education. This policy favors control over cross-cultural education by indigenous communities and strengthens their participation in educational programs and policies, and hence self-determination.

In regard to higher education, the Brazilian Federal Government created affirmative action programs to facilitate access by indigenous students to public universities across the country. It is worthy of note that the best universities in Brazil are public and totally free of charge for all students. The two main programs, "Diversity at the University" and "University for All", are aimed at indigenous peoples and Brazilians of African descent, among other groups.

To conclude, it is important to mention the First National Conference in Indigenous Education, held this month in Brazil. The event had been an important demand from the indigenous movement in Brazil. It was preceded by meetings at the local level, followed by 18 regional meetings to discuss the main challenges of indigenous education nowadays in Brazil. The outcome document of this conference will serve as a base to improve the quality and availability of education to indigenous children and youth, as well as to provide better funding and infrastructure for intercultural education for all indigenous peoples of Brazil.

Mr. President,

The continued dialogue with the Special Rapporteur and the Expert Mechanism will enable Brazil to further develop its policies. We remain open for a fruitful exchange of views and experience on the rights of indigenous peoples.

I thank you Mr. President.