



The Brazil-Africa Cooperation Programme on Social Development aims at promoting technical assistance from the Brazilian Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger to African countries in the development of social policies and programmes. It is an initiative financed by the British Department for International Development and supported by the International Policy Centre For Inclusive Growth.

Social Policies in a Period of Crisis

Patrus Ananias

To those who ask me how much longer social policies will be needed, I answer that such policies are here to stay. Even in more advanced societies, there will always be a vulnerable sector in every population. They are people, families and even entire communities that, by force of random circumstance, have seen their living conditions deteriorate and are in need of aid from the state.

In Brazil, we began to structure our social promotion and protection network only recently, and we still have a long journey ahead of us. The absence of a policy that sought to protect the poorest and fight inequality throughout our history left us with a huge social debt, so now we are making great efforts to reverse this situation. Indeed, that is why the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS) was created in February 2004, with a structure devoted exclusively to reaching the poorest people in the country. The positive results are visible and have been confirmed by studies and research.

In order to cope successfully with this debt, MDS must be permanent. Our programmes may change and our actions can be improved to adapt to regional demands or even new challenges. But social policies, which now have the status of public policy, must continue. Social assistance must be consistent with the constitutional stipulation that it is at the same level as health and welfare in the three-pillar scheme of social security. In the area of food security and nutrition, it should be aligned with the principle that the right to food is a precondition for living and therefore a basic right that must be guaranteed by the state.

However, in order to ensure the creation of a permanent ministry in such a way as to consolidate an institutionalised system of

social promotion and protection, it is crucial to adapt and adjust the ministry's structure. With operations in all 5,563 municipalities and the Federal District, benefiting about 68 million people (some 37 per cent of the population), MDS needs resources to enhance social management mechanisms in order to guarantee the efficiency and effectiveness of our policies. We must have well defined target groups and the results of our policies must be well monitored by effective channels of evaluation and control, thereby producing reliable indicators that accurately portray our real circumstances.

In this context, two very important projects are being discussed in Congress: draft law 3428/08 on the administrative restructuring of MDS, with the creation of 164 positions in the structure of the ministry; and a draft law calling for the creation of a public career in social policy development, among other career changes in public service.

The purpose of both projects is to create adequate conditions to ensure the proper distribution of public resources in the social arena, and to improve control, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. And once we recognise the importance of working in the interests of the social promotion of the poorest, we must have qualified people to do that job, people who are ready to assist the beneficiaries of our policies.

Investing in the management of these policies is a matter of coherence, and it will certainly bring greater efficiency to the investments in this field. This is precisely investment in the social development of our people. The results, as we know, return to society as a whole in the form of social justice, leading to a more sustainable and secure development.

If social policies are vital in normal periods, they are even more indispensable in times like this, as we currently suffer the effects of the international crisis generated at the heart of the capitalist system, a crisis that threatens the economies of other developing countries, such as Brazil. Social policies play an important role in alleviating the effects of the crisis, protecting the most vulnerable by boosting the purchasing power of the poorest and consequently heating the domestic economy.



Cooperation Programmes in Progress

Apart from its cooperation with Africa, the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger will also provide assistance to Haiti with the implementation of two initiatives: the cisterns programme and the food acquisition programme.

The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC-MRE) organised a technical mission to Haiti in early February. The aim was to support the Haitian government in developing a public policy targeted at poor rural families, with a view to facilitating access to food and potable water. The vast majority of Haiti's population still depends on subsistence agriculture.

As regards Latin America, Peru will organise a working group to integrate its social programmes into a single system, following the example of Brazil's social protection system. This was the result of a two-day official visit to Peru by MDS Minister Patrus Ananias earlier this year. He joined President Alán García in a working meeting with Peruvian authorities, and visited programmes in metropolitan Lima area and in the countryside.



Minister Patrus Ananias in San Juan de Miraflores.

Minister Patrus Ananias visits peruvian social programmes in San Juan de Miraflores, Metropolitan Region of Lima/Roberta Caldo /MDS.

Exchange Experiences with Partner Countries

On 6 March, Brazil hosted a Nigerian delegation and officials presented Brazil's programmes in the areas of conditional cash transfers and food security. The Nigerians were interested in learning more about the Bolsa Família and the programme of low-budget restaurants.

The mission visited several ministries and, apart from the presidency's Civilian Household, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Planning also attended to the Nigerian delegation. Crispim Moreira, Secretary of Food and Nutritional Security, concluded the visit by expressing his availability and enthusiasm to exchange experiences: "We already have

cooperation agreements with several countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa. We are also open to do so with Nigeria."

Egypt is also interested in learning more about Brazil's social programmes and in encouraging an exchange of knowledge. Hence on 10 March the Egyptian government arranged an event on technical cooperation in Cairo, where the debate centred on funding mechanisms for programmes, information systems and databases, and monitoring and evaluation. The event was sponsored by Egypt's Ministry of Social Solidarity, which is responsible for designing a new cash transfer scheme in the country.





New Partnership between Brazil and the International Labour Organisation

On 24 March, the Brazilian government and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) engaged in a new partnership of South-South cooperation. This new agreement is based on a horizontal cooperation strategy to promote decent work and social justice.

The partnership, a triangular arrangement involving the ILO, the Brazilian government and other developing countries, seeks to foster decent work in Latin America and Africa. It also reinforces Brazil's commitment to South-South cooperation.

Brazilian Government Conducts Survey on Children and Adolescents Living in Shelters

The Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger, in partnership with the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), will implement a National Survey of Children and Youth Living in Shelters. The first step is to identify the network of shelters and programmes of host families throughout the country. At this stage, electronic forms will be available to allow local and state authorities to report on the existing services for children and adolescents left by their families, or for children who have been taken from their families as a safety measure and been included in these facilities.

After identifying the hosting services, Fiocruz will organise visits to shelters and host family programmes, and will use questionnaires to gather information about children and institutions. The field staff, who will receive specific training with the support and participation of the Ministry of Social Development, will be composed of social workers or psychologists, as well as students in these fields.

The Lobby for the Right to Food in Brazil

At the top of the agenda for the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger is approval of the proposal for a constitutional amendment to modify Article 6 of the Constitution, so as to include the human right to adequate food. "We must include the right to food into the scheme of fundamental rights," said Minister Patrus Ananias. "It must be a permanent right, not something that depends only on people's goodwill. We need a legal norm."

Two amendment proposals on the inclusion of the right to food in the constitution are currently in Congress. Minister Ananias has reaffirmed that the poor cannot pay the burden of the global financial crisis and has advocated achievement of the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations.



Brazil Participates in the Conditional Cash Transfer Seminar in Morocco

Professional training for the beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família Programme, which is being promoted by the Federal Government, was one of the topics presented at a workshop on “Social Security and Conditional Cash Transfers”, organised by the World Bank in Rabat, Morocco, in February. Besides the Sector Training Plan for beneficiaries of Bolsa Família (Bolsa Família Planseq), attention was paid to the cross-sectoral work of the Brazilian social protection system and the experience of shared management linking the local, state and federal levels.

The Brazilian representative, Claudia Baddini, coordinator in the National Secretariat on Citizenship Income in the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS), presented the initiative to promote the integration of programme beneficiaries into the labour market. The aim of the meeting was to stimulate regional discussion on cash transfers and to contribute to the debate on the alternatives developed by the Mexico, Colombia and Brazil.

Through the National Secretariat of Social Assistance, MDS runs the Programme for the Eradication of Child Labour (PETI), the Programme for Integral Attention to the Family (PAIF) and PROJOVEM Adolescente. In addition, MDS provides funds for the maintenance and implementation of the Social Assistance Reference Centres (CRAS) and Specialised Social Assistance Reference Centres (CREAS).

The CREAS initiative offers services related to children and adolescents who are subject



Inauguration of Low-budget Restaurant in Irajá - Rio de Janeiro - March 13th, Bruno Spada/MDS.

to violence, abuse and sexual exploitation; guidance and specialised support to individuals and families that are victims of violence; and monitoring of adolescents who are under supervised freedom and engaged in community service. Another relevant programme is the Continuous Cash Benefit for the elderly.

The National Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition is responsible for programmes such as the Food Acquisition Programme (PAA), low-budget restaurants, and cisterns that benefit the low-income rural population affected by uninterrupted droughts in the country's semi-arid region.

IPC-IG's Work on South-South Learning

The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) has created a new area of South-South learning. The proposal is to develop new tools for the design, monitoring and evaluation of South-South cooperation programmes and to facilitate the exchange of successful policies in the area of social protection. This new area

also surveys the capacity of countries to deliver cooperation, and highlights successful social protection policies in low-income countries. The idea is to facilitate South-South exchange in the Centre's different research agendas, with a particular focus on social protection and conditional cash transfer programmes.





Social Protection and South-South Cooperation Resources

Relevant Events:

Technical Seminar on Extension of Social Security

International Social Security Association (ISSA),

12–13 May 2009

Lusaka, Zambia

Organised by the ISSA Liaison Office for Southern Africa

More: <<http://www.issa.int/aiss/News-Events/Events/Technical-Seminar-on-Extension-of-Social-Security>>

Related Publications:

Griffith-Jones, S. and J. A. Ocampo (2009). 'The Financial Crisis and Its Impact on Developing Countries,' UNDP Working Paper. Available at:

http://content.undp.org/go/cms-service/download/asset/?asset_id=1722333

Documents related to the Multi-Year Expert Meeting on International Cooperation:

South-South Cooperation and Regional Integration, organised by the

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD),

Geneva, 4–5 February 2009, are available at:

<http://www.unctad.org/Templates/meeting.asp?intltemID=2068&lang=1&m=15860>

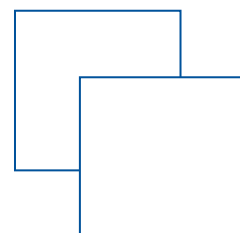
UNCTAD (2009). Report of the Multi-Year Expert Meeting on International Cooperation: South-South Cooperation and Regional Integration on Its First Session.

Geneva, UNCTAD. Available at:

http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ciimem2d3_en.pdf

Brazilian Approach to South-South Cooperation at the Meeting:

<http://www.unctad.org/sections/wcmu/docs/Brazil.pdf>



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