Brazil

At a special seminar on youth employment, organized by the Government of Brazil with the support of the ILO, in Salvador, Brazil, 24th September 2003, Mr. Jaques Wagner, the Brazilian minister of Labour, announced that Brazil commitment to volunteer as a Lead Country of the Youth Employment Network.

This decision was officially communicated through a letter from President Lula of Brazil to Juan Somavia, Director General of the International Labour Organization.

Mr. Wagner and Mr. Somavia furthermore signed an agreement to work together on tackling youth unemployment in Brazil. The ILO is providing support, through a technical co-operation project, for Brazil’s Primeiro Emprego (First Employment) programme

This work will complement the activities of the other YEN core institutions; the World Bank and the United Nations, who are also supporting the Government in its expansion of Primeiro Emprego.

Launched by President Lula in June 2003, Primeiro Emprego aims to create 260,000 jobs for youths aged 16 to 24, and to benefit at least 600,000 with vocational training courses and assistance in setting up micro-businesses or co-operatives. The two-year plan establishes special government assistance of 200 reais for small businesses, as well as support for big employers who create jobs for people in that age group.

Primeiro Emprego can be seen as Brazil’s de facto National Action Plan on youth employment as called for in the UN GA Resolution on Promoting Youth Employment.

A Pact for Youth Employment

60 youth participants from across the country attended the September 2003 seminar on youth employment in Salvador, to discuss employment challenges facing young people today in Brazil. They ranged from the unemployed, to job-seekers, to entrepreneurs (see photos right).

The Primeiro Emprego in consultation with the ILO and World Bank offices have followed up on this commitment to youth through the proposed creation of a National Pact for Youth Employment, to be led by youth leaders from a variety of youth movements and organizations, with the support of the Brazilian Government, the private sector, civil society and donors. The Pact is to promote a series of local, state and national conferences, which will culminate with a civil-society engagement at all levels of the Primeiro Emprego Program, from policy conception to the program evaluation. Aims of these of these conferences range from the strengthening of pre-existing Regional Youth Centers as mechanisms for the implimentation of youth employment programmes, to promoting youth issues and employment opportunities in the agendas of candidates from all parties in the 2004 mayoral election.
Consórcios Sociais da Juventud
Together with the Ministry of Labour and the Government’s Primeiro Emprego Team, the World Bank and the ILO have brought together more than 60 NGOs from six metropolitan areas to build a common training and placement plan for the most disadvantaged youth in the region, with priority to Afro-Brazilians, disabled, young women, rural workers and indigenous youth. The first Consórcio (or grouping) met at the end of 2003 in the presence of Ministers Wagner and Cristovam Buarque (Education).

ILO Quilombos project
The ILO is developing an employability programme targeted specifically at young black women and men from 5 Quilombos. The quilombolas or remanescentes do quilombo are communities that represent the remaining members of the run-away slave communities from the colonial period in Brazil. The term quilombo refers to the land or territory. Living primarily from subsistence agriculture and fishing, they have largely remained marginalized from the larger society, are extremely poor, and have had little or no access to health, education, land regularization or other services.

5 Quilombos have now been selected in consultation with the National Commission of Quilombos and the Special Secretary for Racial Integration (SEPRIR) who has ministerial status. The project was positively received at a recent national meeting of Rural Black Communities, which brought together 300 participants in Recife.

Ethos Institute and the ILO
With the institutional support of the ILO, the Ethos Institute on Social Responsibility has launched a national campaign for the promotion of apprenticeships. This campaign calls on national entrepreneurs to fully implement the provisions of the Apprenticeship Law, as a means of fostering youth employability and youth employment. Using this work on youth employment as an entry point, this collaboration is now being broadened to support a national campaign on decent work and the Millennium Goals.

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