

**Statement by the Minister of State of Education of
The Federative Republic of Brazil
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**General Debate of the 34th General Conference of
UNESCO
Paris, UNESCO, Plenary Session, 18 October 2007**

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to begin by stressing that the Eighth Millennium Development Goal - the global partnership for development - has so far been the least discussed or implemented one. However, such partnership is essential for the fulfillment of the seven other goals, and it cannot be carried out solely by the poor countries. The Eighth Goal requires the commitment of the richest countries to assist the poorest so that they can overcome the structural obstacles that keep them trapped in poverty.

Brazil is engaged, despite its economic constraints, in the construction of important partnerships within the scope of South-South cooperation. South America, Portuguese-speaking countries and many other countries of Latin America and Africa have benefited from Brazilian cooperation which is, above all, solidary.

UNESCO, for its moral weight and its vocation, must play a central role in supporting the Eighth Millennium Development Goal by building world-wide partnerships for technical and financial international cooperation within its fields of competence.

In the field of Education, I wish to stress first a conceptual element. Brazil considers Education as a public

good, and not as a market item, subject to the rules of market and profit.

President Lula da Silva launched, a few months ago, the Education Development Plan, a landmark set of measures which deals in a systemic way with the educational challenges facing Brazil at all levels. The Plan is based on the principle that education constitutes a responsibility of the State, but it is also a social effort to be carried out beyond the school, in the family, the community and all other spaces of social interaction, especially in the workplace. In this sense, education requires strong mobilization and social awareness, as well as solid mechanisms for *accountability*, in order to contribute to the national development strategy.

This systemic vision of our Plan allowed us to overcome the "false oppositions" between education levels: that it is not possible to develop basic education only without taking into consideration higher education, nor separate scientific education from professional training. One of the most relevant aspects of the Plan is the support to the teachers, including in terms of salary.

As I said, Brazil is pledged to strengthening international cooperation in education, South-South - particularly in the context of the Education for All Program and of the E-9 countries - as well as triangular North-South-South cooperation. We support the South-South Cooperation Fund recently established, to which we are making an initial contribution of forty thousand dollars. We also support with enthusiasm cooperation with "*Fast Track Initiative*" donors.

However it is not enough to mobilize additional resources. It is fundamental to make available to UNESCO, international agencies and bilateral mechanisms of cooperation a pool of projects based on the best educational practices deployed in our countries. In this sense, Brazil intends to organize, next year, an international seminar for the presentation and sharing of successful large scale programs already implemented in Brazil as well as in other developing countries in areas such as educational financing, scholarships, quality assessment, school nourishment, free distribution of text books and teachers' training. Our intention is to consolidate a *portfolio* of best practices which will set new bases for international cooperation, founded on consolidated programs at the national scale that can be reproduced as public policies in other developing countries.

With regard to higher education, Brazil supports with enthusiasm the efforts made by IESALC in Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the perspective that universities constitute agents for transformation of the educational system as a whole. Brazil has financially supported several IESALC projects.

In the domain of literacy and adult and youth education, Brazil will be honored to host the VI International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) in May 2009.

In the field of the Culture, Brazil actively participates in the international effort in support of national policies for the promotion and conservation of cultural manifestations embodied in the material and

intangible heritage, in harmony with the Convention on Cultural Diversity. Brazil is committed to the economic valuation of cultural industries by means of tax incentives and recognizes its role in economic development. On the other hand, more than a mere instrument of growth, culture is an end in itself, in view of its importance for the affirmation of national, regional and civilizational identity. Given its national formation, with its secular experience of ethnic-cultural *métissage*, Brazil rejects the so-called "conflict of civilizations" and defends with vehemence the dialogue among civilizations.

In the field of Science and Technology, Brazil is reducing the gap between scientific research and its application in the productive system. In this sense, I signed, with President Lula, a law for tax incentives to the national production of science and technology on the basis of public-private partnerships. Moreover, Brazil has duplicated, in four years, its centers for technological and professional education. At present Brazil occupies the 15th place among countries world-wide in scientific production, with a growth four times above world average. Soon we will be among the top ten countries with higher production of science and technology.

The model of international cooperation developed by Brazil in this area is peculiar. *Brain drain* and *tied aid* do not interest us. We want to contribute for the endogenous creation of capacities in the developing world. By means of local formation of human resources, Brazil is assisting countries in Latin America and Africa to consolidate their own programs of graduate studies and research.

In the field of communication, Brazil will hold, next November, in Rio De Janeiro, the II Internet Governance Forum, where the main partners in the construction of knowledge society are expected to adopt by consensus important elements conducive thereto.

I should underline the strong expansion of distance education in Brazil, specially in the realm of the Open University of Brazil.

I wish to conclude by underlining also the role of UNESCO. In Brazil's point of view, we must avoid the dispersion of resources and efforts in a array of projects of limited reach without systemic vision, of interest only to bureaucratic circles and consultants but of scarce value for the benefited countries.

Brazil is of the view that UNESCO should dedicate itself to more structural interventions, in support of national systems, helping countries to form people capable of planning and elaborating national development policies with a broad vision of the role of the State.

Brazil reiterates its support to innovative mechanisms of cooperation, such as the conversion of foreign debt for investments in education.

UNESCO must strengthen international technical cooperation, making available a pool of projects based on the best national practices. Brazil is taking the first step, as I already stated, and therefore reiterates the invitation to the members and partners of UNESCO to present their own best practices next year in my country.