

Brazil's Family Planning Offers Condoms to 13 Year Olds

Contributed by Juliana Andrade
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Saying this will guarantee the sexual and reproductive health rights of the population, yesterday, Brazil's Ministry of Health launched the National Policy of Sexual Rights and Reproductive Rights. The new policy contains 14 proposals for family planning to be implemented between 2005 and 2007.

The main lines of action are enlarging the offer of reversible birth control methods, the so-called non-surgical ones, expanding access to voluntary surgical sterilization, and introducing assisted human reproduction into the Brazilian public health system, known as the Federal Health System (SUS).

The policy was drafted in conjunction with the Ministries of Education, Justice, Agrarian Development, and Social Development and Hunger Alleviation, as well as the Special Secretariats for Women's Policies, for the Promotion of Racial Equality, and for Human Rights.

During the official ceremony kicking off the campaign, the Minister of Health, Humberto Costa, emphasized that the Brazilian government will also employ educational means, distributing technical manuals and introductory booklets to those responsible for administering government policies, health professionals, and the general population.

Another measure is aimed at expanding the School Health and Prevention program, implemented in 2004 in a partnership with the Ministry of Education.

The idea is to strengthen the qualification and ongoing education of fundamental and secondary school teachers in activities involving the prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, HIV/AIDS among them, and teen pregnancy.

The project makes condoms available to public school students in the 13-24 age group.

According to the Minister, condoms are only distributed after the school includes themes related to sexual education in its teaching plans and the matter is debated by parents, students, and the school community.

"Our biggest and main concern is with prevention," Costa underlined.

Translation: David Silberstein
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