

Minister Paints Rosy Brazil for Workers

Contributed by Érica Sato
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This year's real minimum wage increase of 8.5% and the generation of 2.5 million formal jobs in two years and four months of the Lula's administration are good reasons for workers to celebrate on this May 1st.

This is the opinion of the Minister of Labor and Employment, Ricardo Berzoini. He participated on the Central Workers' Union's (CUT) Labor Day celebrations.

According to Berzoini, the government has made progress. "Adding up jobs, family agriculture, urban family economy, informal and public jobs, we can estimate that at least 4.5 million Brazilians that were not working, now are," he said.

Berzoini said that the union movement reconquered its dialogue with the government, which made it stronger, a movement that demands government action and stimulates the thinking of new solutions for the country's problems.

When talking about shortening the workweek without reducing salaries as a way to generate jobs, Berzoini said that he has some reservations.

"Today, international competitiveness is very high in several sectors, where a four-hour reduction in the workweek could cause some difficulties. It is necessary to reduce tax and interest costs, so that we could make more room for a shorter workweek," he affirmed.

The new minimum wage became effective May 1st. It went from US\$102 (260 reais) to U\$118 (300 reais).

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