

Brazil Is World's Second Poorest. 22 Million Are Indigent.

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With a total of 53.9 million poor people (31.7%), about a third of the total population, Brazil appears in second-to-last place on a list of 130 countries ranked by income distribution, losing only to Sierra Leone, in Western Africa, which was in a civil war from 1991 to 2002.

This was the finding of a study done by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (Ipea) and released today by the Minister of Planning, Budget, and Management, Paulo Bernardo.

The study, *Social Radar 2005*, classified as poor those individuals who subsist on a per capita family income of half a minimum wage (US\$ 50 in 2003) or less.

People whose per capita incomes did not exceed a quarter of a minimum wage (US\$ 25) at the time of the study were considered very poor or indigent, categories that embrace 21.9 million Brazilians.

Poverty in Brazil is greater among blacks. According to the Ipea, 44.1% of the black population survived on less than half a minimum wage in 2003.

Among whites, the percentage was 20.5%. Nevertheless, the Ipea document says that the number of poor people in the country declined between 1993 and 1996.

To correct this situation of inequality, the study says that "it is essential to promote a development model that favors the combination of growth with job and income creation."

Accelerating agrarian reform, expanding Social Security, social assistance, and income transfer programs, raising educational standards, and combatting race and gender discrimination are cited by the study as government policies capable of reducing inequality.

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