

Solidarity Is a Common Interest Between Brazil and France NGOs

Contributed by Carolina Pimentel
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The Brazilian Association of NGOs (Associação Brasileira de Organizações Não-Governamentais) (Abong) and the Solidarité Urgence Développement (SUD), a French network of NGOs, have come together this week in Paris as part of the Brazil Year in France celebrations.

They are meeting at the Civil Society Forum, for the third anniversary of the union of the two associations. The forum ended yesterday with a speech by president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

According to Jorge Eduardo Durão, the Abong director general, over the last three years the Brazilian and French organizations have found similarities and differences that have combined to help them grow in many ways.

The main areas of interest are family farming, housing, development financing and solidarity economics. Durão says both groups are strongly in favor of family farming.

"We have lobbied hard to protect family farming from harmful policy decisions," he said.

Brazilian products, from family farms, are being sold at the forum. Among them are accessories (such as necklaces made from seeds), footwear, clothes and food.

Durão said that the question of adequate housing is also high on the agenda. NGOs want to create an international oversight (observatório) organization for urban policy which would draw up a Citizen Rights Letter. He added that at the forum an effort is being made to get all the groups behind this issue.

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