

Brazil Presents Samba de Roda as Mankind's Heritage

Contributed by Paula Medeiros
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The National Non-material Heritage Program, launched yesterday by Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, combines a series of measures for the identification, recognition, preservation, and promotion of non-material cultural values.

The program will be administered in conjunction with federal, state, and municipal institutions, non-governmental organizations, development agencies, and private entities in the areas of culture, research, and financial support.

The occasion also served to propose the Circle Samba ("samba de roda") of the Bahian Recôncavo (coastal region around the state capital, Salvador) as a candidate for the status of Masterpiece of Mankind's Oral and Non-material Heritage.

The title, which is conferred by UNESCO, is a way to treasure and protect countries' non-material cultural output. UNESCO will announce the result in July, 2005.

In 2003, UNESCO bestowed this honor on the Kusiwa graphic art and body-painting of the Wajãpi tribe in the northern Brazilian state of Amapá.

President Lula declared his intention to ratify the UNESCO convention for the preservation of the cultural and non-material heritage.

This convention, according to the President, will integrate other international, multilateral instruments designed to protect mankind's cultural and natural heritage.

"By assuming this position before the international community, we are reaffirming our ideals and our customary actions on behalf of cultural diversity and sustainable development," he said.

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