

# Minister Defends Brazil's Zero Hunger from Those Who Call It Mere Hand-Out Program

Contributed by Juliana Andrade  
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The Zero Hunger program is essential for Brazil to achieve the Development Goals of the Millenium. This comment was made by the Minister of Social Development and Hunger Alleviation, Patrus Ananias.

Ananias talked during the 2nd National Federal Savings Bank Seminar: We Can, sponsored by the Federal Savings bank as part of the program of the National Citizenship and Solidarity Week.

"The Zero Hunger program is fundamental to the current strategy of our government and, more than that, of Brazilian society - mobilizing governmental and non-governmental organizations, social movements, unions, churches, and universities - as part of this great national collective endeavor to fulfill the goal of the millenium," Ananias emphasized.

One of the eight goals of the millenium endorsed by 191 countries in September, 2000, is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. "We will achieve the goals of the millenium and bequeath a great victory to our children and future generations," Ananias avowed.

The Minister also observed that President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's major objective is to reconcile economic stability with economic growth, social justice, and income distribution.

According to Ananias, the Family Grant, the "chief program of income transfer and financial and economic support for poor Brazilian families," is currently taking care of more than 7.5 million families, corresponding to approximately 30 million Brazilians.

He affirmed once again that it is not a handout program. "We are not adopting clientage or handout practices in Brazil, because this presupposes subjective limitations on whom to benefit, which is, indeed, a historical factor of corruption in Brazil. All our programs are based on norms and discipline."

The Minister also said that he disagrees with the criticisms of "dualism" between structural and emergency policies. "Those who insist a lot on this point neither distributed fish nor taught anyone how to catch fish."

He recalled that the situation nowadays, not just in Brazil but in other countries, is one of unemployment. "So we have to recover these people and reinsert them into the labor market."

According to Ananias, the government has invested in policies to generate jobs and income, without neglecting income transfer policies. "Teaching someone how to catch fish presupposes buying the fish," he pointed out.

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