

## Minister Wants Brazil to Get Into the Habit of Holding Referenda

Contributed by Marcela Rebelo  
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"I am an admirer of the referendum, because I am an admirer of democracy," affirmed the president of the Brazilian Federal Elections Board (TSE), minister Carlos Velloso.

He called on the country to hold more referenda. He proposed that they be held simultaneously with municipal elections, when the population votes for only two candidates, mayor and alderman.

Velloso suggested that the population be consulted for example on the issue of abortion of anencephalic fetuses, which are missing all or a major part of the brain.

The president of the TSE commented that the participation of the population in the referendum on disarmament was a demonstration of the "feast of democracy."

Regarding the victory of the "no" votes, the minister said: "I do not examine the merits of the question," but he did say that "what the people decide is sovereign."

"More than 100 million Brazilians were called upon to make a direct decision on a matter of government policy. If we have more referenda, the Brazilian people will exercise their citizenship to an even greater extent," he declared.

He said that he was not anticipating a victory either by the "yes" or the "no" votes and affirmed that all Brazilians who participated in the referendum can feel "proud," regardless of the outcome.

According to Velloso, the government spent around US\$ 110.88 million (250 million reais) on the referendum, half of the amount spent on last year's municipal elections. The minister said that the expense "is necessary in reverence to democracy." With the victory of the "no" side, weapons and ammunition sales will be permitted in the country.

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