

For World Bank Chief, Brazil Is Doing Well, But Millions Are Still Too Poor

Contributed by Ana Paula Marra
Friday, 16 December 2005

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva met Thursday, December 15, with the president of the World Bank (IBRD), Paul Wolfowitz.

On his departure from the Planalto Palace, where the meeting took place, Wolfowitz told the press that he came to Brazil to learn more about measures adopted by the Brazilian government to ensure economic growth and, at the same time, advance on social issues.

"My stay in this economic mammoth, which has become a global and regional actor, will help me understand Latin America's richness and diversity," he commented.

The IBRD president said that at his encounter with Lula the two discussed difficulties faced by country representatives in dealing with the themes on the agenda of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, in Hong Kong, as well as the importance of combining commercial exchanges with sustainable development, always giving due attention to environmental questions.

What the World Bank and Brazil can do together to reduce poverty in the country and the world was also treated at the meeting, Wolfowitz said.

He pointed out that, although the Brazilian economy is doing "well," millions of Brazilian still live in poverty. In speaking to the press, Wolfowitz emphasized the World Bank's commitment to Brazil and all the other medium-income countries of Latin America.

He remarked that Brazil "is important to the IBRD's business." He also praised the Brazilian President and said that Lula is a "strong world leader."

When asked about Brazil's current political juncture, the IBRD president said he didn't want to get involved with this matter, but he observed that corruption is a problem in the majority of countries and that one of the major challenges faced by institutions is to combat it and limit its effects.

This is Wolfowitz's first trip to Latin America as president of the World Bank and his first visit to Brazil.

Agência Brasil