

Social Forum Starts in Venezuela, But Brazilians Have Seized the Agenda

Contributed by Newsroom
Tuesday, 24 January 2006

This is the first time that more activities for the World Social Forum, which gets underway today in Caracas, Venezuela, have been proposed by organizations from an outside country - in this case, Brazil - than ones from the country hosting the event.

This observation was made by professor Cândido Grzybowski in an interview for the Brazilian state-owned Radio Nacional. Grzybowski, a sociologist and director of the Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Analyses (IBASE) is one of the founders of the forum.

According to the professor, Brazil's strong presence at this year's (6th) edition of the forum "has to do with the fact that four of the five previous editions were held here in Brazil."

He informed that more than 2,300 activities are scheduled to take place at the event, and he emphasized that most of the agenda is decided by the participants.

According to Grzybowski, one of this year's innovations is an idea circulating among political leaders to hold a leaders' forum. He said that this is a real possibility and that such a group "could counteract the G8," the group consisting of the world's seven richest countries and Russia."

Grzybowski foresaw that this year's edition of the forum will be viewed as a "mosaic of options" extant on the Latin American political scene: "Some will prefer what is happening in Chile, others will defend the Brazilian experience, others will favor Argentina, and still others, Venezuela."

Claiming that the Social Forum is an open space, Grzybowski pointed out that there is "a respect for diversity and a gamut that runs from extreme left to center-right."

According to the professor, the forum creates a culture "that denies leadership pretensions, be they by activists or bearers of ideological banners."

In his opinion there is room for all, and everyone follows his (her) own ideology. "There is confrontation there, however," he underscored and summarized that the space at the forum "is for people to confront each other and, through the confrontation, come up with something better as alternatives for the future and grow stronger in the process."

Agência Brasil