

Brazilian Emigrants Send US\$ 6.4 billion Back Home. Only Mexicans Send More.

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Funds sent to relatives of Latin American and Caribbean workers who live abroad broke a record and reached US\$ 53.6 billion last year, which represented an increase of almost 17% in relation to 2004.

Brazil was the country that received the second greatest volume of dollars from emigrants, US\$ 6.4 billion, an increase of 14% in comparison to the previous year, according to figures in the Multilateral Investment Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The country that received the greatest volume of funds was Mexico, with US\$ 20 billion, 20% more than in 2004, and Colombia was in third place, US\$ 4.1 billion. Around 25 million adults born in Latin America and the Caribbean live abroad.

From Brazil, the estimate is that the total is approximately 2 million. Almost two thirds of the residents send money to their countries of origin periodically. According to the report, transfers range from between US\$ 100 and US\$ 300 a month per emigrant.

The funds sent come mostly from workers who live in Japan, Europe and the United States. From the United States alone come around US\$ 40 billion of the total sent in 2005.

According to the report, the funds have been growing in recent decades, even exceeding the foreign assistance for development donated by other countries to the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The president of the IDB, the Colombian Luis Alberto Moreno, stated that the institution started studying the entry of these funds five years ago, aiming at finding cheaper ways to execute transactions between banks and governments in the region. This way, average costs have been cut to half, making it possible for emigrants and their relatives to save more money.

Despite the reduction in costs, the IDB estimates that less than 10% of the Latin Americans and Caribbean residents who receive funds have access to savings accounts, loans to small businesses or housing credits.

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