

From Space Brazil's First Astronaut Encourages Kids to Become Scientists

Contributed by Ana Larissa Albuquerque
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Brazil's first astronaut, Marcos Pontes, participated in a videoconference, Wednesday, April 5, with various members of the Brazilian government.

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said the whole country was proud of the fact that a Brazilian was in space.

"After so many years of waiting [Pontes has been in astronaut training for eight years], we finally sent a Brazilian astronaut into space where he is doing Brazilian experiments. That is something we can all be very proud of."

Lula asked Pontes about the experiments that Brazilian school children had developed with bean seeds. Pontes said he was working on the experiments with special care and that around 60% of the work had been completed.

He added that he hoped the experiments he was doing would stimulate other Brazilians to do scientific studies and become scientists, engineers and astronauts.

Lula asked what Brazil looked like from 350 kilometers out in space. Pontes said that he had been deeply moved to see Brazil from space. As they spoke, Pontes said, they were flying over Russia.

Minister of Science and Technology, Sergio Rezende, also participated in the videoconference. He declared that the most important thing Pontes was doing was making young people aware of the importance of Brazilian scientific research and technology.

Pontes said he was eager to return to Brazil and bring the results of his experiments. "We are certain that your experiment results will be another reason for all of us to be proud of you," concluded president Lula.

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