

Why Can't a 16-year-old Sell Her Own Body, Asks Brazilian Alderman

Contributed by Edison Bernardo DeSouza
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Despite the fact, that Brazil will be hosting the United Nations World Conference, November 2008 for the New Millennium's resolution, a member of the local government for the city of São Paulo, in southeastern Brazil, has a very polemic opinion about ways to eradicate poverty.

Agnaldo Timóteo, a popular singer and also an alderman for the city of São Paulo, declared on a daily national TV Show - Hoje em Dia (Nowadays): "I do not see any problem, why a 16-year-old girl cannot sell her own body, and why we should arrest foreigners who seek these types of services," he said.

An alderman for the city of São Paulo since 2005, Agnaldo Timóteo, believes if the state cannot provide employment conditions and qualifications for these young women, there is nothing else these women can do, other than seek alternatives.

"A 16-year-old girl is no longer a minor, she is a woman," he said. Regardless of his controversial statement, Timóteo affirmed that he is also a very conservative man. "I am a very conservative man, and my family always had some finesse," he said.

It is not the first time the alderman makes such a statement. Back in March 2007, the he had already shocked the public opinion with the same statement, while new ministers were taking office in Brazilian capital Brasília.

During the show, the TV hostess tried in vain to explain why maintaining sexual intercourse with a minor was illegal in Brazil, and why we should not encourage this type of behavior, however the alderman was adamant: "Many laws are not respected in this country, smoking in some places is prohibited for example, it does not mean people will abide by these laws," he argued.

Timóteo started his career as a politician in 1982, when he was elected Federal Representative for the state of Rio de Janeiro. He was re-elected in 1996. The singer and alderman also believes that the problem of Brazil is the lack of education, laziness and foolishness of some people. "We are uneducated, lazy and foolish, we need to stop being all of these things," he yelled.

During the TV interview, the alderman also declared the military government was wonderful for Brazil. "If it wasn't for the military government, no investments would have ever occurred in Brazil, look at Petrobras' for example, it was created during the military years, General Geisel did it." The alderman refused to talk about the AI5 (institutional act 5 that prohibited freedom of expression).

When questioned by the TV hostess, whether his point of view would not encourage sexual tourism, the alderman-singer replied: "I am not in favor of sexual tourism, I just believe that we should not arrest any foreign citizen who seeks a 16 year-old woman for sex, if she is selling herself on the corner, police should prevent her from doing it." Eloquently though, he advised: "If you are at home right now and you are poor with no job, think twice, there may be other

alternatives."

In November 2008, Brazil will be promoting as part of the New Millennium resolutions for the WHO (World Health Organization) a debate on effective actions to eradicate poverty and hunger, better education, and betterment of life conditions.

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