



Organization of
American States

SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP (SIRG)



OEA/Ser.E
GRIC/INNA-3/08
15 May 2008
Original: Portuguese

NATIONAL REPORTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENTS
FROM THE FOURTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

(Brazil – presented in 2008)

SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS: REPORT OF BRAZIL (2008)

A. STRENGTHENING THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM OF HUMAN RIGHTS

In December 1998, Brazil recognized the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for all cases relating to interpretation and application of the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, reiterating the willingness of the Brazilian Government to strengthen the inter-American system for the protection and promotion of human rights.

A draft law is now under study to facilitate enforcement of decisions of the Court and of recommendations from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) at the different levels of government in the Brazilian Federation. Brazil is monitoring some 170 petitions and cases of interest to it in the IACHR, as well as two cases that are before the Court.

Brazil believes that the defense and strengthening of democracy, the quest for development, and the promotion and protection of human rights are interdependent objectives. It considers it inappropriate to link the application of general human rights principles to possible threats to the domestic legal framework or the governance of countries. Although it is desirable to urge the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to take a broad approach in assessing the cases and petitions addressed to it, it is not necessary for the IACHR to consider application of the provisions of the American Convention on Human Rights in terms of the domestic legal system, which would take it beyond its sphere of competence.

The suspension of fundamental rights and guarantees in cases of grave instability in the institutional order is not absolute: such a move must be time-bound, and it does not exempt the state from providing reparations and from punishing violations committed by agents who exceed the powers granted them during the emergency.

The establishment of domestic legal assistance mechanisms to promote access for victims to the inter-American human rights system has merit. It is important that each state create its own mechanisms to achieve access to justice. The creation of a specialized body to help these victims in dealing with the system would require the allocation of resources to the Public Defender or Ombudsman, resources that, in terms of economy, could be better applied to dealing with complaints internally.

Brazil agrees that the IACHR should take a more active role in promoting friendly settlements. Participation in reconciliation hearings places a significant burden on states, and also requires preparations on the part of the IACHR Secretariat, which will be frustrated if the Commission does not make effective use of this opportunity to try to close the gap between the positions in dispute. Without prejudice to its impartiality, the Commission must attempt to present convincing evidence to the parties, based on the jurisprudence of the inter-American system or of other systems where the friendly settlements procedure has proven successful. The promotion of friendly settlements would have a positive impact, moreover, on the speed and cost of the system's proceedings, with obvious benefits for its image.

B. INITIATIVES OF THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT TO COMBAT POVERTY AND ERADICATE HUNGER, TO ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND TO COMBAT NATURAL DISASTERS

1. Eradicating hunger

At the national level:

Among the government programs for eradicating hunger, the *Fome Zero* ("Zero Hunger") program is the most important, because of its strategy of guaranteeing the human right to adequate food for persons facing difficulties of access to food. The program has four integral components: access to food, strengthening family agriculture, generating incomes and linkages, and social mobilization and oversight. One of the main activities of *Fome Zero* is the *Bolsa Familia* ("Family Grant"), an income transfer program that serves 11.1 million families in all municipalities of Brazil.

The *Bolsa Familia* guarantees food security for families in need, and contributes significantly to reducing extreme poverty and social inequality.

The school lunch program, another part of *Fome Zero*, in which R\$4.9 billion had been invested to the end of the last year, has already benefited 145 million children and adolescents since 2004. At the preschool level alone, the per capita value transferred by the federal government for school lunches was increased by 267% and the benefit was extended to 881,000 children at 18,000 public kindergartens and charitable daycare centers.

Other programs that could be cited include: financing for cisterns in semiarid areas of Brazil (251,639 cisterns were financed to December 2007 in 1,241 municipalities, representing a total investment of R\$327,038,548, guaranteeing access to water for some one million people); low-cost cafeterias; food banks; community kitchens and urban agriculture (with financing for urban garden plots and plant nurseries), among many other programs.

At the multilateral level:

One noteworthy initiative is the "Latin America and Caribbean without Hunger" Initiative. This represents an effort by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to do away with hunger. Launched by the Governments of Brazil and Guatemala during the Latin American Conference on Chronic Hunger (Guatemala, 2005), the initiative later received further support, and was ratified at the 29th Regional Conference of the FAO (Venezuela, 2006), as one of the action priorities for the Organization in the region. The initiative, which the FAO has taken over, has contributed to the development of food and nutritional security legislation in Ecuador and in Guatemala. The initiative is also supporting the design of food security legislation in Bolivia, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru.

2. Food and nutritional security

a. At the domestic level

The National School Meals Program (PNAE), introduced in 1955, transfers funding to guarantee school meals for children at the kindergarten and preschool level and in primary school, including indigenous schools, and pupils in public schools and private institutions alike are eligible. Its objective is to meet the nutritional needs of pupils while they are in the classroom, contributing thereby to their growth, development, and learning and to their school performance, as well as to the formation of healthy eating habits. The budget for the program in 2008 is set at R\$1.6 billion, to serve 36 million pupils.

CONSEA

The National Council on Food and Nutritional Security (CONSEA) is an instrument of coordination between government and civil society in proposing guidelines for action in the food and nutrition area. The Council has an advisory capacity and reports directly to the President of the Republic on the formulation of policies and the definition of guidelines whereby the country can guarantee the human right to food.

Inspired by decisions of the National Conference on Food and Nutritional Security, the CONSEA supports and proposes different programs, such as the *Bolsa Familiar*, School Lunches, Purchase of Food from Family Farming, and Food and Nutritional Surveillance, among many others.

LOSAN

The Organic Law on Food and Nutritional Security (LOSAN) instituted the National System of Food and Nutritional Security (SISAN), with a view to ensuring, in a sustainable manner, the human right to adequate food for the entire Brazilian population. The law was sanctioned by the President on September 15, 2006.

Possible areas for cooperation: the Brazilian government could provide human resource training in these areas for implementing similar programs and laws.

b. At the multilateral level

The Brazilian Government donated R\$1 million to the World Food Program (WFP) in December 2007 to set up school lunch programs in developing countries of the CPLP (Community of Portuguese Language Countries), in Nicaragua, in Bolivia, and in Haiti.

The Minister of Agricultural Development and the Director General of the FAO signed an agreement, on the occasion of the 30th FAO Regional Conference (April 14-18, 2008), to create a trust fund for South-South cooperation under the aegis of FAO, for issues relating to family agriculture. To this end, the Ministry of Agricultural Development will transfer R\$1 million to the foreign office (Itamaraty).

3. Natural disasters and humanitarian assistance

In 2007, Brazil provided humanitarian assistance to 17 countries, in an amount estimated at R\$5 million.

At the request of the Minister of State, who insisted that the first shipment of humanitarian aid to countries in an emergency situation should be dispatched at all speed, construction work is being completed on a quick response warehouse at the Galeão International Airport in Rio de Janeiro, to deliver humanitarian assistance within 48 hours, primarily to countries of Latin American, the Caribbean and Africa. This is a facility located in the export section of the freight terminal at Galeão, where approximately 15 tons of food and/or drugs will be stocked for quick dispatch (previously cleared and released by the federal revenue authorities, ANVISA and airport security).

In order to arrange a systematic structure for humanitarian assistance, consideration is being given to preparing a National Plan for International Humanitarian Assistance, which would clearly indicate the responsibilities of public agencies, and establish a system of virtual stocks and a database.

In this way, Brazil's international humanitarian assistance would be complete: a warehouse for immediate emergency response, integrated into a National Plan for International Humanitarian Assistance, with clearly defined powers and responsibilities, capable of responding to successive phases of an emergency, and also during the reconstruction period (through the distribution of seeds, etc.).

C. **DIGITAL INCLUSION AND ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT**

The Brazilian Government is implementing and supporting efforts for digital inclusion through a number of programs and agencies, including:

Casa Brazil (“Brazil House”)

Establishment of multifunctional forums of knowledge and citizenship in communities with a low HDI (Human Development Index), through partnerships with local institutions. Each unit of *Casa Brazil* will house a telecenter, using free software, and there will be at least two other modules, such as a public library, an auditorium, a multimedia studio, a radio broadcasting center, a laboratory for popularizing science or a workshop for maintaining computer equipment, and room for community activities, in addition to the module for banking inclusion in locations where this is possible. Currently there are 74 units in operation, serving on average 20,000 people per month. More than 1,000 people have already been trained in the 37 free workshops offered through the platform for distance education that the project has constructed. In total 86 units, selected through calls for proposals, will be installed in the major cities of the country's five regions.

Vocational technology centers (CVT)

These are centers for instruction and professional development, dedicated to broadening access to scientific and technological knowledge, practical know-how in the area of technical services, as well as the transfer of technological knowledge for productive processes. The CVTs are intended to provide technological training to the public, as an entity for basic vocational training, scientific experimentation, research, and the provision of specialized services, taking into account the particular features and strengths of the local region, to promote improved processes. To date, the Ministry of Science and Technology has supported the creation of 236 CVTs, which have been installed throughout Brazil since 2003.

Computers for all

Targeted at class C, this allows industry and retailers to offer computers and Internet access at subsidized prices, with a specific line of financing, in addition to exemption from PIS/COFINS taxes. PCs worth up to R\$1,200 that comply with the minimum configuration can be paid for in R\$50 installments. The equipment must use free software and it must have a 1.4 GHz processor, a 40 GB hard disk, RAM memory of 256 MB, a 15 in. monitor, a floppy disk drive, a CD-ROM (RW) / DVD-ROM (combo) unit, a 56 K modem, onboard video, audio and network cards, a mouse, a keyboard, and a USB port, and 26 programs. Notebooks worth up to R\$1,800, which meet the minimum configurations described at the program portal, are also exempt from tax and eligible for subsidized financing.

GESAC – E-Government Services to the Public

GESAC allows satellite connection to the Internet for schools, telecenters, NGOs, remote communities and frontier military bases, besides offering services such as an e-mail account, web page hosting, and training for local multipliers, and today has 3,530 service points serving some 2,200 Brazilian municipalities. It is a partner in several government programs for digital inclusion. The next phase of the program calls for establishing 11,919 points of connection to the Internet via satellite. Service will be provided to localities that have no ADSL connection, rural public schools and telecenters established with kits shipped by the Ministry of Communications to prefectures throughout the country.

Maré: Fishery Telecenters

Establishment of telecenters in fishing communities, providing equipment, GESAC connections, training and support for local monitoring agents, and use of free software. There are 27 units now operating, and another 36 are being established.

National Observatory of Digital Inclusion (ONID)

This compiles and posts information on all the federal government's digital inclusion programs at the portal <http://www.inclusaodigital.gov.br>, with news, links, events, and reference materials. Telecenters throughout the country (nonprofit centers with Internet connection, free community access and training) are being inventoried. There is an estimated total of 5,000 telecenters now functioning in Brazil, divided between the federal, state, and municipal levels. The

ONID is also working to select reference materials, such as directives, documents, manuals, studies and success stories, for sharing best practices among those interested in the topic. Telecenters are pre-inventoried and mapped at the web site <http://www.onid.org>.

Pontos de Cultura—Digital Culture

The Live Culture Program is supporting local and grass-roots cultural initiatives and has as its priority activity the "*Ponto de Cultura*", which coordinates other program activities. The Digital Culture activity allows the installation of equipment and training of local agents for producing and exchanging video, audio, photography and digital multimedia products using free software, plus connection to the Internet. There are currently 648 cultural projects supported financially by the Live Culture program.

Digital Station Program

With the support of a local partner in all cases, for the most part nongovernmental organizations, this initiative seeks to introduce computers into students' lives, housewives, workers, traditional populations and cooperatives, saving time and money, creating new perspectives, and improving the quality of life. Since 2004 there have been 202 units operating in Brazil, 41 are in the installation process, and another 20 units have been approved for installation by the end of 2008. About 56% of the units are located in the northeast, 16% in the center west, 15% in the southeast, 11% in the north, and 2% in the south, with the capacity to serve between 500 and 1,000 people per month, and integrated into local productive arrangements.

ProInfo -- National Program for Computer Use in Education

ProInfo was developed by the Secretariat of Distance Education (SEED) through the Technological Infrastructure Department (DITEC), in partnership with the state and municipal education authorities. The program's operations are decentralized and there is a state coordination office for ProInfo in each unit of the Federation, the main purpose of which is to introduce the use of information and communication technologies into the public schools, and to coordinate activities under their jurisdiction, in particular those involving the Educational Technology Units (NTEs).

"Computers for Inclusion" Project

Establishment of a national system for reconditioning used computers offered by public and private donors, reconditioned by low-income youth in vocational training, and distributed to telecenters, schools and libraries throughout the national territory. There are three Computer Reconditioning Centers (CRC) operating on a pilot basis in Porto Alegre (RS), Brasília (DF) and Guarulhos (SP), and two are being established in the cities of Belo Horizonte (MG) and Niterói (RJ). These five centers have a total of 410 young trainees. As of February 2008, the project had received more than 15,000 used computers, and delivered 3,320 reconditioned computers to 252 public schools, libraries, telecenters and other digital inclusion initiatives selected by the national coordinator's office.

Serpro Cidadão

In action: SERPRO (Federal Data Processing Service) – the *Serpro Cidadão* Space offers free training to people who want to know about Internet facilities for obtaining government services and information for the public. Among its digital inclusion activities is the establishment of telecenters, which is done in partnership with the local community, prefectures and civil society institutions, to guarantee their sustainability. Instituted in 2003, this project is being offered as part of SERPRO's social responsibility policy, and it is consistent with the Federal Government's Brazilian Program for Digital Inclusion which seeks to promote digital and social inclusion in the neediest communities. The program has already installed 153 telecenters in Brazilian cities, and eight more abroad (one in São Tomé and Príncipe, two in Cuba, three in Haiti, one in Angola and one in Cape Verde), totaling more than 1,847 donated computers.

Banco do Brasil Telecenters

The Banco do Brasil's Digital Inclusion Program reflects the Bank's policy of social and environmental responsibility. It began with the modernization of its own fleet of computers and the donation of surplus equipment to needy communities, with a view to establishing community telecenters. The program is not restricted to the donation of microcomputers, as the Bank also trains, monitors, and coordinates partners, for fostering local development. The Banco do Brasil has already set up more than 1,600 telecenters and computer halls throughout the country, totaling nearly 39,000 donated computers and serving more than 4 million users each year. The telecenters offer access to the new digital technologies, training in information technologies, distance courses, e-government services, document digitizing and printing, and they encourage computer use in school research work. The entities involved take responsibility for managing and administering the spaces.

D. ENVIRONMENT

The government of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva took office just as the Brazilian Agenda 21 was entering the implementation phase. The importance of that agenda as an instrument for promoting democracy, participation, and collective action by society was recognized and its guidelines were inserted in the government plan and in its strategic goals.

Another step was to use the principles and strategies of the Brazilian Agenda 21 as input for the National Environment Conference, the Conference of Cities, and the Health Conferences. This integration of Agenda 21 reflects the need to prepare and implement policies in each municipality and in each region of Brazil.

To this end, an essential precondition was to transform Agenda 21 into a program within the Multiyear Government Plan for 2004-2007, which gives it greater scope, influence and importance as public policy. The Agenda 21 program consists of three strategic actions that are being pursued with civil society: implementing the Brazilian Agenda 21; preparing and implementing local Agendas 21, and ongoing training in Agenda 21. The priority is to help prepare and implement local Agendas 21 on the basis of the principles of the Brazilian Agenda 21 which, consistent with the global Agenda, recognizes the importance of the local level in giving effect to substantive policies. Currently, there are more than 544 local Agenda 21 processes underway in Brazil, nearly three times the number in 2002.

Carrying out the priority actions defined in Brazilian Agenda 21 is a challenge for the government and for society, as it involves incorporating into national policies the proposals agreed with the various segments of society during the process of preparing Agenda 21, which took as its basis the principles of sustainable development. The definition and establishment of a methodology for carrying out those actions is being designed and established through:

- Technical and administrative support from the National Commission on Sustainable Development Policies (CPDS).
- Implementation of the National Agenda 21 System.
- Definition of the means for implementing and monitoring priority actions.
- Promotion and integration of policies and instruments for sustainable development.
- Definition of strategies for supporting the government's priority programs.
- Survey and dissemination of good practices for sustainable development.
- Preparation of a program for publicizing Agenda 21.
- Promotion and monitoring of the inclusion of goals from Brazilian Agenda 21 in the local sustainable development plans.
- Definition of indicators for monitoring the process of implementing Agenda 21.
- Review of Agenda 21, through further public consultations.

The Secretariat for Biodiversity and Forests is intended to promote (with due regard to participation, social inclusion, and distribution of benefits) the assessment, conservation, and sustainable use of biodiversity and of traditional knowledge associated with forestry, wildlife, flora, fisheries and the genetic resources of ecosystems. It comprises four departments and four advisory units for each biome:

- The *Cerrado-Pantanal* Unit (NCP), created in 2004, has as its primary task to coordinate and promote initiatives for the conservation and sustainable use of the dry and wet savanna biomes of central-western Brazil jointly with the programs and projects underway in the Ministry of Environment and other government actions, and it is the focal point for dialogue with organized civil society.

The NCP is also supposed to promote implementation of the National Program of Protected Areas as it relates to the biome, to coordinate the revision and updating of Priority Areas and Actions for Conservation, Sustainable Use and Distribution of Benefits of Biodiversity from the *Cerrado*, as well as to articulate, implement, and monitor the GEF Cerrado project.

The *Caatinga* Unit (NBC). Its main tasks are to act as executive secretariat of the *Caatinga* Biome Working Group (Decree MMA 321/2004) and to coordinate and guide actions for the conservation, sustainable use, and distribution of benefits from the biodiversity of the *caatinga*, the semi-arid scrub forest of Northeastern Brazil.

The NBC has the following objectives:

- To serve as executive secretariat of the Caatinga Working Group.
- To help define and execute participatory policies for the use and conservation of the Caatinga biome.

- To coordinate and guide actions of the SPF offices and other MMA secretariats as they relate to MMA actions in the biome.
- To help define and implement policies for the conservation and sustainable use of the Caatinga.
- To coordinate work with the Directorate of Protected Areas (DAP) and with IBAMA (Brazilian Institute for Environment and Renewable Resources) on the creation of conservation units, mosaics, and corridors in the biome.
- To promote and facilitate coordination between IBAMA, state environment agencies, and NGOs.
- To contribute to the technical and financial support of sustainable management in the Caatinga (FNMA/PNF initiatives).
- To promote coordination between IBAMA and state agencies in joint actions of command and control.

Action strategies:

- A moratorium on forest clearance in the Caatinga.
- The creation of integral conservation and protection units in priority areas for the conservation of biodiversity.
- Coordination and integration of government and nongovernment actions in sustainable development projects in areas where lands have already been converted, cleared, or degraded.
- Coordination of government and nongovernment actions to preserve the integrity of the biome within the landscape, primarily through the establishment of ecological corridors between protected and sustainable use areas, and applying different management instruments.
- Promotion of research and dissemination of information on social and biodiversity aspects of the biome, in particular through the annual "Caatinga Week".

The Coastal and Marine Zone Unit (NZCM). Its principal tasks are to coordinate actions and monitor programs and projects for the conservation, sustainable use and distribution of benefits from coastal and marine ecosystems, to coordinate and support activities, and to promote the concept of protected marine areas as an instrument of fisheries management.

The NZCM also coordinates and executes policies adopted by the Environmental Protection Committee of the Antarctic Treaty and the environment-related policies, programs, and projects of the Brazilian Antarctic Program, including representing the institution at international forums on this topic; in addition to coordinating and implementing policies under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) and, as executive secretariat, the activities of the National Wetlands Committee (CNZU).

There is also the Atlantic Forest and Pampa Unit.

The National Forests Program (PNF) was created to coordinate forestry policies for promoting sustainable development and reconciling the use and conservation of Brazilian forests.

This is an interagency program (involving 11 ministries) for coordinating Brazilian Government actions with respect to forest resources, and it is coordinated by the Ministry of Environment. It is funded from the national budget and from external technical and financial cooperation, including the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Pilot Program for the Protection of Tropical Forests (PPG7), and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). With respect to specific topics, the PNF has contributed to updating forestry legislation, and has demonstrated effective means and instruments for adapting legal rules to the new reality in the sector: Sustainable Forestry Management in the Caatinga. Sustainable Forestry Management in the Brazilian Amazon. Consumption of Forest Resources and Forest Restoration, and Forest Reserve Quota. Transition of the Law on Public Forest Management and model contract of transition for Forest Management Plans already approved for federal public lands.

E. BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE

The federal government launched a Growth Acceleration Program (PAC) slightly over a year ago, with measures that, without compromising economic stability, seek to accelerate the country's growth in order to generate more employment and incomes and reduce regional disparities. Over the next three years, the PAC is expected to invest R\$503.9 billion in the country's infrastructure. The Program includes promotion of credit and financing, tax exemptions, and legislative reforms, among other fiscal measures.

Funding is earmarked for the areas of transportation, sanitation, energy, housing and water resources. Of this total, R\$67.8 billion will come from the general federal budget and R\$436.1 billion from the state budgets and the private sector. Investments will be made in the following areas: logistics (highways, railways, ports, airports, and waterways); energy (generation and transmission of electricity, oil and natural gas, and renewable fuels) and social and urban infrastructure (sanitation, housing, urban transport, "Light for All", and water resources).

The program calls for the construction, upgrade, rehabilitation and doubling, within four years, of 42,000 km of highways, 2,518 km of railway, the expansion of 12 ports and 20 airports. In addition, the generation of more than 12,386 megawatts of electricity, the construction of 13,826 km of transmission lines, the installation of 4 new oil refining or petrochemical units, the construction of 4,526 km of oil pipelines, and the installation of 46 biodiesel plants. Water and sewage networks will also be constructed, serving 22.5 million households.

In the housing area, the Growth Acceleration Program will earmark R\$106.3 billion between 2007 and 2010 for the benefit of 4 million families. Of this total, R\$55.9 billion will go to programs and financing for the purchase of a house by families with an income of up to five times the minimum wage (there is estimated to be a deficit of 7.9 million dwellings for families in this income bracket).

E. OTHER PROGRAMS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Child Labor Eradication Program (PETI). This program provides monthly grants and funding for the *jornada ampliada*, an after-school activities initiative designed to reduce the possibility that children and adolescents will be put to work and exposed to risks.

Brasil Sorridente ("**Smiling Brazil**"). This guarantees specialized dental care through the public health system. Beyond basic care, the centers offer specialized treatment, such as root canals, gum disease, dental surgery, and care for cases of oral cancer.

Farmácia Popular ("**People's pharmacy**"). This expands access to essential medications, and benefits primarily persons with difficulty in following treatment because of the high cost of drug products. Beyond creating a public network of "People's pharmacies", it is fostering the development of the national pharmaceutical industry.

Qualisus. Besides improving emergency medical care, this program sponsors the upgrade of basic care units to perform simple procedures, helping thereby to reduce lineups in emergency rooms. It also guarantees access to specialized consultation and surgery procedures of medium complexity, and it is contributing to the policy of humanizing care in the SUS (public health service). It complements the care available through the Mobile Emergency Service (SAMU).

Brasil Alfabetizado ("**Literate Brazil**"). This program promotes partnerships with states, municipalities, universities, private businesses, nongovernmental organizations, international agencies, and civil institutions as a form of boosting the national effort to combat illiteracy. The program, coordinated with the Youth and Adult Education (EJA) program, strengthens policies that encourage students to continue their studies or to return to school.

"University for All" Program (*ProUni*). Launched in 2004, ProUni offers full and partial (50%) tuition grants in private universities for low-income students and those with disabilities who have completed intermediate education in the public schools or as subsidized students in private schools. A portion of vacancies is reserved for Afro-descendent and indigenous students, in proportion to their share of the population in each state.

G. SUPPORT TO MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES

The Brazilian Support Service for Micro and Small Enterprises (SEBRAE) is a private nonprofit entity with a mission to promote the competitiveness and sustainable development of micro and small-scale businesses. The institution was created in 1972, as a result of initiatives to foster entrepreneurship in the country.

In Brazil, according to the Brazilian Institute Geography and Statistics (IBGE), there are 14.8 million micro and small enterprises (4.5 million formal and 10.3 million informal), accounting for 28.7 million jobs and 99.23% of the country's businesses.

The National SEBRAE is responsible for strategic guidance of the system, defining guidelines and priorities for action. The state units pursue their activities and projects in line with regional realities and national guidelines

The agribusiness sector is being consolidated as one of the most important levers of economic growth in the country. According to the National Confederation of Agriculture (CMA), the sector accounts for 28% of Brazil's GDP, and 37% of its exports, the equivalent of US\$44 billion. Small rural entrepreneurs are responsible for the bulk of this economic activity, and family farming accounts for the greatest portion of output and employment in the countryside.

SEBRAE gives priority to serving rural entrepreneurs organized in collectives. In addition to training, it gives special attention to entrepreneurial techniques. In the agribusiness sector, SEBRAE is supporting some 500 projects, distributed among 14 segments: organic farming, agro-energy, beekeeping, aquaculture and fish-rearing, coffee, beef, sugarcane derivatives, flower growing, horticulture, dairy products, manioc, gold and sheep raising, and medicinal and aromatic plants.

More than 1.3 million micro and small enterprises are engaged in the retail trade in Brazil, generating approximately 7 million jobs. This is a strategic sector for SEBRAE, which has about 200 projects in various segments, including dry goods, pharmacies, bars, and restaurants. The institution offers courses and consulting services to broaden knowledge and it works with methodologies of cooperative integration. The objective is to upgrade, modernize, and enhance the competitiveness of clusters and networks of small commercial undertakings with common interests.

The services sector, which is a dynamic source of employment and has a direct influence on the competitiveness of other sectors, also merits special attention from SEBRAE. It embraces a variety of segments, ranging from logistics firms to specialized technical services, and employs more than 4 million formal workers.

Beyond the traditional segments of commerce and services, SEBRAE encourages sectors with emerging potential and takes a stake in the development of new businesses and commercial formats. This is the case with tourism, handicrafts, and entertainment. The tourism sector engages various other segments in its commercial operations, such as hotels and restaurants, entertainment and culture.

To enhance standards of quality and competitiveness, SEBRAE works in partnership with public and private institutions, including the Ministry of Tourism, and promotes an environment favorable to growth of the sector. In the crafts sector, which is very important for generating jobs and incomes in the country's poorer communities, SEBRAE has established various training programs that have helped artisans to improve the management of their businesses and to make their products more competitive, by seeking and blending raw materials, new techniques, design, and technology. In addition, the formation of craft associations and cooperatives has provided access to new marketing practices, with participation in fairs and events, which are essential for publicizing Brazilian handicrafts in the country and abroad. In the culture and entertainment sector, SEBRAE invests in various areas, for example in audiovisual production projects and in the promotion of Brazilian music on the international market.

The industrial sector generates 3.7 million jobs in Brazil. SEBRAE is pursuing some 400 collective projects for micro and small-scale industrial enterprises, grouped in local productive arrangements, sector clusters, alliances with larger businesses, and other forms of cooperation. The objective is to develop partnerships between firms in different sectors, so as to produce greater synergy between projects and promote integration of productive chains.

Projects pursued by SEBRAE benefit more than 63,000 micro and small-scale industries throughout the country. SEBRAE serves various sectors, such as textiles and clothing, wood, and furniture, food and beverages, biotechnology, civil construction, cosmetics, leather and footwear, electrical and electronic appliances, gems and jewelry, the graphic arts, metallurgy, pottery and ceramics, ornamental stones and rocks, oil and gas, plastics, chemicals, information technology, toys, medical, dental and hospital equipment, pharmaceuticals, and paper and cardboard.