

As written

Cairo + 5:

Relevance and meaning within the Brazilian context

The Brazilian Government is a full signatory of the Cairo Program of Action. Its implementation in Brazil is an integral part of the larger effort to translate into national public policies the cumulative agenda which has emerged from the UN Cycle of Social conferences: World Summit on Children (New York, 1990), the Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), IV World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), Habitat 96 (Istanbul, 1996), World Summit on Food and Agriculture (Rome, 1996).

The full adoption of the Cairo agenda - in harmony with recommendations emanating from other UN Conferences meant a complex exercise in the realm of public policies monitoring and adjustment. Implementing the ICPD Program of Action required that action should be taken over a wide range of public policies directed to the promotion of equity and sustainability, as well as in the case of initiatives related to population distribution and migration as well as citizenship and respect for human rights.

The Forum aims at identifying advancements and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Cairo Program of Action. It is worth noting, however, that only four and half years have passed since the negotiation and approval of the Cairo Program of Action and, most principally that this period corresponded to a time of profound changes as well as great challenges in Brazilian public policy arena. The implementation of the Cairo Program of Action (1995) coincided with new Federal and State administrations. The 1995-1998 period has meant an important phase with respect to the consolidation of democracy after the political instabilities of the 1989-1992 period. A fundamental task of the new Federal administration was the challenge of controlling chronic inflation and recovering economic growth.

It was also vital to establish new norms to guide the economic opening started in 1990, which, in turn, meant a series of constitutional reforms. Most pressing, however, was the need to design poverty and inequality reduction measures and ensure more efficiency of the social sectors.

As far as national priorities are concerned, two different moments coexist in the period under analysis. From 1994 to 1996 the positive impacts of stabilization and income distribution growth prevailed. Although stabilization implied in demand for fiscal control, a favorable institutional environment was gradually established that favored the implementation of the Cairo ^{Program} of Action.

As of October 1997, however, the stabilization strategy was affected by global financial turbulence, which required protection measures of a recessive nature. The risks to the adopted strategy became more acute as of August 1998, leading to even more severe measures of contention of public expenditures. Difficulties of a political nature also developed in the agenda of structural reforms designed in 1994. The time frame of the evaluation of national implementation of the Cairo Program of Action - 2nd semester of 1998 - coincides with a new macroeconomic environment which has brought with it even heavier fiscal and credit demands, as well as making internal and external obstacles to a return to economic growth more rigorous.

The 1995-1998 period, however, brought with it relevant advances for the Brazilian scenario regarding ICPD recommendations. These recommendations constitute a frame work for future actions and and in-depth evaluation and reorientation of policies developed in the last three years.

Some policy advancements observed between 1995 and 1998 - that are relevant in light of ICPD recommendations - must be highlighted. A clear progress has been observed with respect to the consolidation of the Universal Health System whose premises were established in 1998, particularly in what concerns decentralization, innovations in primary health care and greater regulation of the private sector.

These steps forward create an enabling environment for the expansion and improvement of reproductive health services. Education has been defined as a priority. Targets were defined for universal access to primary and secondary level enrollment until 2007 and great emphasis is being given to improving the quality of education.

A new institutional architecture is also under development in the areas of poverty reduction, labor retraining and Agrarian Reform. In the case of poverty reduction new experiences and propositions aimed at leaving behind compensatory policies that prevailed in the past. The training and retraining of the labor force has been set as priority. Newly designed programs in this area aim at reducing the social costs of productive re-structuring and giving access to groups generally excluded from professional qualification initiatives. The Agrarian Reform policy has been revitalized and the number of Landless families settled between 1995 and 1998 doubled what has been achieved in the previous 30 years. There has been as well a relevant increase in resource allocation and outcomes regarding housing in urban areas.

Although the emigration of Brazilians is a new phenomenon, innovative approaches have been designed to address it and new rules currently preside the situation of migrants in Brazil. A final dimension to be underlined is high priority given to the implementation of the National Human Rights Program. The Program agenda covers both classical human rights - referring to protection against State abuse - and entitlements known as third generation rights encompassing gender and racial discrimination.

The last four years have also witnessed the expansion and maturation of participatory social accountability mechanisms aimed at monitoring social sector policies, as well as of a proliferation of partnerships between government and civil society in the most diverse areas. With respect to legal frames the last legislative period (1994-1998) has been the scenario of few debates and law approvals regarding core concepts of the ICPD Program of Action as it is the case of family planning,

gender equality, abortion and sexual rights.

Before closing this brief report my delegation wants to stress that the ICPD recommendation constitute a framework for future actions and an in-depth evaluation and reorientation of policies related to population and development, a task which will necessarily extend beyond Cairo + 5.