

*Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office in Geneva*

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**Human Rights Council**

**Intersessional meeting on human rights and the 2030 Agenda**

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Mr. President,

The human right to health is a fundamental right enshrined in the Brazilian Constitution, which also established Brazil's Universal Health System (SUS). In fact, Brazil is the only country with a population of over 200 million people to have a universal health care system. The services provided by SUS are based in the principles of universality, equity and integrality. Every person (including non-residents, migrants and refugees) has access to public health services in Brazil, without discrimination.

In the pandemic context, the Brazilian Government created additional parameters to characterize the situation of social vulnerability for the purposes of eligibility to the continued provision welfare benefit (BPC), and established exceptional social protection measures to be adopted during the period of the public health emergency of international importance due to the coronavirus (Covid-19).

The most important one was the Emergency Aid created in April 2020. It consisted of five monthly payments of R$ 600 reais (approx. 120 dollars) or R$ 1,200 reais (approx. 240 dollars) for women providing for single-parent families. In any case, two people could receive the aid per family. In September 2020, the benefit was extended until the end of the year, paying half of the previous amount.

As a consequence, 1.2 million new families entered the ‘Bolsa Família’ Program in April 2020, elevating the number of beneficiary families to 14.3 million, of whom 95% started to receive the Emergency Aid. If Bolsa Familia families had not benefited from it, they would have received an average of R$ 191 (40 dollars) a month instead of R$ 1,118 (approx. 220 dollars) paid by the Government.

Migrants who met the criteria and refugees (already beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família Cash Transfer program) were eligible as well. The Brazilian Government, UNHCR and IOM released a leaflet for immigrants and refugees in Brazil with information on the benefit.

By the end of 2020, the Emergency Aid had covered more than 19 million people among the beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família. Overall the emergency financial aid reached approx. 67 million people, totaling expenses of over R$ 200 billion (approx. 40 billion dollars).

A contingency plan, designed by the Ministry for Women, Family and Human Rights, covered the monthly payment of the emergency financial aid during three months to 1.8 million families of traditional peoples and traditional communities registered in the Bolsa Família program. In total, more than 6.4 million people benefited, in an investment of over R$ 3.2 billion (aprox. US$ 640 million).

A total of R$ 1.5 billion was transferred to states and municipalities for school meals. It reached 40 million students. Among them, 274.2 thousand indigenous people, 269.3 thousand ‘quilombolas’ (Afro-Brazilian traditional communities) and almost five million rural students, including all other traditional groups of people. Around 150,000 schools were benefited, of which more than 58,000 serve students from traditional peoples and communities.

Another measure was the distribution of basic food packages (“cestas básicas”), with 8 items each, to guarantee the food security of roughly 154,400 indigenous families and 7,300 ‘quilombola’ families. The total investment was over R$ 40 million.

In addition, by means of the Provisional Measure 950 (April 8, 2020), the government exempted 9 million low income families from paying electricity bills for a period of three months (the Ministry of Mines and Energy received public funds totaling R$ 900 million to compensate generation and distribution costs related to this measure).

The Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights (MMFDH) and the National Council for the Rights of the Elderly (CNDI) authorized on 30 March 2020 the use of the National Fund for the Elderly to help nursing homes overcome supply shortages during the pandemic of the new coronavirus (Covid-19). Registration of Institutions also provided an overview of their situation in responding to the sanitary crisis.

The National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CONANDA) authorized on April 3, 2020 the use of the National Fund for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (FIA) to help fund actions not provided for it the law that created the fund aiming at the protection of childhood and adolescence during the pandemic of the new coronavirus (Covid-19).

With the Provisional Measure n. 946, the Federal government provided a transfer of resources from public funds to FGTS (a compulsory individual savings accounts which every employee in the private sector is entitled to withdraw in part or in total in specific occasions). The measure also allows for the one-time withdrawal of an amount up to one minimum wage (R$ 1,045), per person, from FGTS.

The Ministry of Citizenship, together with the Special Secretariat for Social Security and Labor (Ministry of Economy) established a joint regulation to allow the anticipation of sick leave benefits for up to three months in order to avoid procedural delays due to the sanitary emergency.

Provisional Measures n. 927 and n. 936, in force as from 1st April, enabled the anticipation of annual paid leave, the adoption of teleworking schemes and the possibility of future compensation of hours not worked during the pandemic (“bank of hours”), in order to prevent wage cuts, and also allow the reduction in work hours or temporary suspension of the employment contract (max. 90 days), with government-funded compensation. During the period of reduction in work hours, that is compensated by the payment of benefits, a dismissal of the employee is not permitted, unless upon payment of a special indemnity by the employer or in the case of a termination for cause. The relevant labour unions must be given notice whenever the arrangements include individual agreements.

The deadline for payment of contributions related to the payroll and to be transferred by employers to the federal government has been deferred by 4 to 5 months, aiming at reducing the short-term impact of the lockdown measures in the cash flow of enterprises (Provisional Measure no. 927).

Moreover, Brazil’s National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES) has expanded its lines of credit, in order to help recovering from the economic crisis arising out of the lockdown measures. Small and medium enterprises are eligible to credit with low interest rates, in order to help them avoid running out of cash flow and to finance the payment of wages (2 minimum wages per worker, for up to 2 months).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with the Ministry of Defense and other partners, in an unprecedent effort of consular assistance to Brazilians that had impediments to their return to the country as a result of “lockdowns” established all around the world and the disruption of transport routes (air and land), was able to provide for the repatriation of more than 13,000 people to Brazil and, in some cases, the transport arrangements also allowed the return to South America of citizens from neighboring countries that were facing the same challenges.

Thank you.