

Statements from Brazil (national capacity)

Item 6 - Session 1: COVID-19 as Catastrophe and Catalyst

Brazil thanks the Working Group for holding this timely public session and for the choice of the topics for discussion.

(2) At the outset, Brazil would like to reiterate its firm and continuous commitment to the fight against COVID-19. Brazil stands for the preservation of life and the full realization of the right to health for all, at all times, especially the most vulnerable.

(3) Apart from the health crisis itself, the pandemic imposed serious economic and social challenges and unveiled disparities in all countries.

(4) As we know, Afro-brazilians are disproportionately represented among the poor and therefore emergency social policies, together with social protection systems already in place in the country are essential **for their protection**.

(5) To mitigate the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations, we successfully implemented an Emergency Aid, comprising a nine-month grant for informal workers, small businesses, self-employed and unemployed workers from low-income families.

(6) Nearly 67 million Brazilians directly benefit from the grant. By July, it had reached more than 30 million households, 44% of the country's total.

(7) The Emergency Aid took Brazil's extreme poverty rate to the lowest level in 40 years, according to the Household Sample Surveys conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Statistics, IBGE. In June, the rate was down to 3.3% of the Brazilian population, as 83.5% of the people living in households with the lowest income had access to the benefit system.

(8) Special attention was also given to the Traditional African descent communities, the Quilombolas. The main actions concern **measures of food security and the expansion of health support.**

(9) We appreciate the recognition by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights that Brazil is among the few nations producing data on the impact COVID-19 disaggregated by race. And yet, despite all the efforts, we recognize that much still needs to be done in order to adequately respond to the multifaceted challenges faced by people of African descent in Brazil.

(10) The COVID-19 pandemic has proven to be a catalyst to the aggravation of the many underlying conditions that negatively affect the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. Racism and racial discrimination are clearly one of them. The next three thematic sessions will give us the opportunity to provide our views and further specific inputs on different aspects related to this issue. At this stage, we wish to reiterate the full commitment of the Brazilian government to combatting racism and all forms.

(401 words)