



**Statement by Dr. Eduardo Rios-Neto, Delegation of Brazil, to the
Forty-first session of the Commission on Population and Development**

Monday, April 7 2008

Mr. Chairman,

An important basic human right is the right to strive for individual and family socioeconomic mobility. At the national level, both economic and political constraints, associated with economic development and the provision of local services, might leave rural-urban migration as the one of the few alternatives to achieve socioeconomic mobility among the locals. This reinforces the basic right to internal migration.

Although poverty rates measured in monetary terms tend to be lower in large urban cities than in small-sized urban localities and rural areas, a multidimensional measure of poverty would display the importance of housing, transportation, and other costs associated with residence in large cities. This point should be accounted for in the welfare comparisons between rural and urban areas, notwithstanding the positive impact of urbanization on the population's wellbeing.

Another important point is the intra-urban disparity, generally observed between migrants and non-migrants living in large cities. The under-provision of services to migrants living in large cities is a major issue. Where infrastructure is concerned, migrants are usually under-serviced, for instance, by means of land titling, electricity, central water, central sewer, and garbage collection. The under-provision of health, education, and other services is also generally observed. The corollary of this process is urban growth with spatial segregation.

A framework based on rights to infrastructure and social provision services to migrants, to be matched by those found among non-migrants, tend to regulate urban growth in a positive way. Most developing countries that have experienced urbanization in the last century failed to incorporate this dimension, which favored the growth of informal dwellings and spatial segregation. An important indicator of this process is the share of total households living in an urban locality that is not being full serviced in terms of infrastructure.

In conclusion, the explicit goal of full servicing migrants in urban sites tend to increase the quality of life of urban areas and to spread urban growth at a larger network of cities by population size.

Thank you.



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Tuesday, April 8 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Brazil is a special country in terms of the role that internal migration has played historically in shaping its internal spatial distribution during the last seventy years. Just considering the period between 1960 and 1990, rural to urban migration amounted to around 42 million persons. In the same period, 8.1 million and 3.8 million persons left the Northeast region and the state of Minas Gerais in direction to destinations such as the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, as well as some frontier areas such as the state of Paraná, and the North and Center-West regions.

The urbanization rate of the Brazilian population grew from around 30% in 1940 to 55% in 1970, reaching around 80% in year 2000. Taking the experience between 1970 and 2000, the share of urban population living in metropolitan areas declined from 49% to 41%, while the share of non-metropolitan areas grew from 51% to 59%. Even considering only the metropolitan areas, the observed trend during the period was a decline in the share of the population in the center in favor of the periphery of these areas. Also mid-sized non-metropolitan urban areas comprised by agglomerations between 100 and 500 thousand inhabitants grew from 10% to 17%.

The positive side of this migration process is that social mobility during the period was highly associated with the internal migration process. Also urban migration was positively selected in terms of the receiving regions. There was a great deal of integration of the regional labor markets. The growth in the labor informal sector is not explained by migration nor comprised exclusively by internal migrants. It is also difficult to blame migration as the primary cause of the high income inequality observed in the period.

The Brazilian rapid urbanization process was not fully accommodated by infrastructure provision and social policy. Under-service in both dimensions was the norm rather than exception. Urban zoning of formal housing in the core of metropolitan areas is blamed as the cause of an exclusionary spatially segregated process with the sprawl of under-serviced dwellings in the periphery of metropolitan areas. This process tended to be more aggravated in metropolitan rather than in mid-sized urban areas. This is considered a major factor behind the decline in urban amenities and the rise in violence observed in large cities of Brazil. Recent experiences have shown that good social policies and urban infrastructure based on equal access and citizenship rights can reverse this process. If this experience can be passed to other countries, it is better that the provision of services is created as urbanization takes place. This creates a negative feedback mechanism that keeps cities from social segregation and the degradation of urban amenities. Unfortunately, mayors tend to adopt a Todaro labor migration model to the urban provision realm, by considering social provision of urban services as a device to attract more migrants. The outcome is a degradation of urban amenities with urban growth in the periphery and irregular land settlements.

The share of precarious housing condition in Brazil, measured as the percentage of dwellings built with non-permanent materials on the walls, roofs, or non-cemented floors has declined more recently from 13% in 1992 to 5% in 2004. In the same period, the share of households under-serviced by some infrastructure service declined from around 10% in 1992 to 4% in 2004. The share of untitled dwellings has been constant around 4% during the period. A great deal of urban investments has been done more recently by the Brazilian Government, in order to alleviate the problems that have accumulated over the years of this urbanization process. A Ministry of the Cities was created to deal with these necessary compensatory investments and a long-term National Urban Plan is being organized, including a land titling reform. Non-contributory assistance cash programs were also created both to elderly and to families with school aged children, these major innovative programs seem to be contributing to the growth and stabilization of small non-metropolitan urban areas in the country.

Mr. Chairman,

I hope that the Brazilian experience of uprooted population by means of internal migration in a continental country can contribute to the design of policies that may be helpful to other countries.

Thank you.