



## **AGENDA 21**

### **Introduction**

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, was a historical watershed, representing a planetary effort to establish new directions for development that would be based on concern for environmental protection, social justice and economic efficiency.

This Conference resulted in five documents: Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Statement of Forest Principles, the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Agenda 21 has turned out to be an especially important document, which reflects a set of principles adopted by consensus by leaders from the entire world, oriented to guaranteeing a sustainable basis for development in the next century.

Sustainable development should be understood as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Agenda 21 thus indicates strategies in pursuit of sustainable development, and indicates actions, actors and partnerships, methodologies, and institutional mechanisms necessary for its implementation and monitoring.

The discussions about the formulation of Agenda 21 did not emphasize only global strategies, but had a simultaneously global and local focus. It was perceived that the strategies sketched out in Agenda 21 for solving problems can best be



achieved through a combination of decentralized cooperation and localized actions, by means of the implementation of policies and programs that would mobilize at the same time local, national, regional and international institutions.

In light of the importance given to the need for each society to establish their own priorities, the signatory countries to the accords resulting from the UN Conference on Environment and Development assumed the commitment to develop and implement their respective national Agenda 21s.

Thus Brazil, as a signatory to these documents, has the commitment to formulate and implement the Brazilian Agenda 21.

The Interministerial Committee for Sustainable Development (CIDES)

With the goal of assisting the President of the Republic in taking decisions about national strategies and policies necessary for sustainable development, compatible with Agenda 21, and in light of the complexity of this task and the resulting need for the joint involvement of a large number of institutions, the government of Brazil established a Interministerial Committee for Sustainable Development (CIDES), by Presidential Decree (Decree no. 1160, of June 21, 1994).

CIDES was chaired by the Minister of Planning and Budget, and consisted of other Ministers of State.

As part of its structure, three agencies were created under CIDES:

Coordinating Group for External Relations, under the responsibility of the Ministry of External Relations, to coordinate



the work of preparing and defining Brazilian positions in the international negotiations about sustainable development, administer the international implications resulting from decisions taken about national strategies and policies necessary for sustainable development, and accompany the activities of other countries in carrying out their international commitments resulting from the Rio Conference;

Coordinating Group for Climate Change, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Science and Technology, to coordinate the implementation of commitments resulting from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and

Coordinating Group for Biological Diversity, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment and Legal Amazonia, to coordinate the implementation of the commitments of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Under the guidance of CIDES, responsibility for the implementation of the U. N. Framework Convention on Climate Change was given to the Ministry of Science and Technology.

As set out in Article 2 of the Decree under which it was created (Decree no. 1160, of June 21, 1994), CIDES has the following responsibilities:

Propose national strategies and policies necessary for the implementation of the activities described in Agenda 21, with special attention to their incorporation in overall planning and budgeting within the jurisdiction of the Federal Administration;  
Propose the legal instruments necessary for the implementation of Agenda 21, to comply with the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and to meet obligations under the international accords and conventions;



Propose national criteria and priorities for obtaining the international financial, technical and technological resources necessary for the implementation of Agenda 21; and

Accompany and evaluate the implementation of the planned activities.

#### Sustainable Development and National Agenda XXI Policies Commission (CDPS)

The methodology used by several countries for putting together their national Agenda 21 emphasizes partnership between the different levels of government, the productive sector, and organized civil society. In more than 70 countries, for the guidance, implementation and follow-up of Agenda 21, National Councils or Committees for Sustainable Development were created, linked directly to the Presidency of the Republic, generally with the participation of civil society.

Thus, by means of the Decree of February 26, 1997, which revoked the Decree no. 1,160 of June 21, 1994, the Sustainable Development and National Agenda XXI Policies Commission (CPDS) was created, within the Chamber of Natural Resource Policies. The purpose of the Commission is to propose strategies for sustainable development, and for the coordination, development and implementation of Agenda 21.

The CPDS is chaired by a representative of the Ministry of the Environment, Water Resources and Legal Amazonia, and consists of a representative of each of the bodies given responsibility for the various sectoral activities of the government: the Ministry of Planning and Budget, Ministry of External Relations, Ministry of Science and Technology, the Secretary of Strategic Affairs of the Presidency of the Republic,



as well as the Coordination Secretary of the Sectoral Policies Chamber.

Along with the government bodies related to development and environmental issues, it was intended that the CPDS would be balanced, and therefore five members of organized civil society are also included.

According to Article 2 of the Decree which created it, the CPDS has the following responsibilities:

Propose to the Chamber strategies, instruments and recommendations for sustainable development in the Country;

Develop and submit for the approval of the Chamber the National Agenda 21;

Coordinate and accompany the implementation of the National Agenda 21.

The Decree of February 26, 1997, as stated above, revoked the decree creating CIDES, but without affecting the three coordinating bodies that had been constituted. The implementation of the commitments resulting from the Conventions, which were the object of two of the coordinating bodies, continue to be carried out within the Ministries as previously set out in CIDES.

### Multi-year Plan 2000

In the first meeting of the Commission for Sustainable Development Policies and National Agenda XXI, the then Minister of Planning, Antônio Kandir, announced that the Program "Brazil in Action" and the "Multi-year Plan 2000", covering the years 2000-2003, would be developed taking into



account the sustainability criteria of Agenda 21 and with the participation of civil society.

To consider Agenda 21 as the basis for the development of the next multi-year plan of the government (for 2000-2003) is a considerable advance in terms of incorporating the concept of sustainable development in the public policies of the country. Thus, the National Agenda 21 has come to be considered a strategic instrument, through which a bridge should be constructed between the current model of development and the desired model.

The next Multi-year plan will be prepared in 1999. The formulation of the National Agenda 21 is still in progress, as will be described below. Even though the process of preparation of Agenda 21 won't be completed by the time the Multi-year plan is approved, it is intended to integrate the existing results of the Agenda 21 process into the Multi-year Plan.

### Development of the National Agenda 21

The first steps toward the development of the National Agenda 21 were taken in 1995. On this occasion, the Ministry of Environment developed studies and held a series of meetings with many governmental and non-governmental actors, seeking input and assistance in defining the methodology to be used and in sketching a picture of the initiatives for sustainable development undertaken in the country.

The following important initiatives took place in this period:

A Preparatory Workshop for the Brazilian Agenda 21, held in Brasilia in April, 1996, bringing together representatives of government institutions, the private sector, NGOs and universities;



National Consultation - "Sustainable Development: 100 Brazilian Experiments", conducted between October 1996 and February 1997 according to themes, and the publication of information about 183 projects from all over the country;

Seminar - "Agenda 21: The Concrete Utopia", held in Rio de Janeiro, in March 1997, concurrently with Rio + 5, with discussions of strategic themes and priorities of the National Agenda 21;

National Research - "What Brazilians think about the environment, development and sustainability, carried out with the Museum of Astronomy and Related Themes (MAST), the Institute of Religious Studies (ISER), and IBOPE, which surveyed the opinions of around 2000 people from throughout the country;

Document - "The path of the Brazilian Agenda 21 - Principles and Actions, 1992-1997", developed with input from the initiatives listed above.

This intense process of discussion provided important inputs which allowed the Sustainable Development and National Agenda XXI Policies Commission to develop its methodology for moving forward with the Brazilian Agenda 21, defining the priority premises and themes for the country.

It was decided that the Brazilian Agenda 21 would be structured in three primary parts: an introduction, which is intended to outline the broad panorama of the country on the threshold of the 21st Century, a part devoted to six themes established as priorities (sustainable cities, sustainable agriculture, infrastructure and regional integration, management of natural resources, reduction of social inequalities, and science and technology & sustainable development; and a final part about



the means of implementation of the strategies established for each theme.

It is intended that the methodology adopted reflects the interconnections of the priority themes and the interdependency between the environment, economic, social and institutional dimensions.

Considering that the National Agenda 21 shouldn't be merely a document of the government, but rather the product of a consensus between the many sectors of Brazilian society, the Ministry of Environment has set up a tendering process to contract consultants who will organize processes for discussion and debate and the development of reference documents about the themes considered priorities for the National Agenda 21.

The consortium of consultants which emerges successful in the tendering process will base their work on participatory methods, by means of workshops and seminars which are open to the public, in such a way as to involve all sectors of society affected by the themes being discussed.

The results of the work carried out by the consultants will be organized and consolidated, with the goal of creating the first version of the Brazilian Agenda 21. This first version will then, be discussed and refined in a broad national seminar and be transformed into a final version to be analyzed and approved by the Sustainable Development and National Agenda 21 Policies Commission.

The development process of the Brazilian Agenda 21 can be followed on the homepage of the Ministry of Environment ([www.mma.gov.br](http://www.mma.gov.br)).

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