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## Brazil Approves Plan to Deal With Elderly

(Tuesday, 12 April 2005) - Written by Priscilla Mazonotti

The National Council on the Rights of Senior Citizens (CNDI) gave its approval today to the Action Plan for Dealing with Violence against the Elderly.

The proposal establishes procedures to combat physical and psychological violence, abandonment, and negligence involving members of the population who are over 60 years old.

The vice-president of the Council, Paulo Roberto Ramos, affirms that it is necessary to deal with violence in the home environment. Around 2/3 of the aggressors are children or spouses.

Ramos says that figures on violence are unreliable, because senior citizens are often reluctant to file complaints.

"The complaints come through neighbors or friends, so that much of the data on violence is concealed. Information is fundamental in these cases. The elderly need to realize that they cannot be victims or targets of violence and that their dignity should be respected."

Over the next two years, the Action Plan provides for the installation of a special telephone line to denounce human rights violations, the training of 20 thousand caregivers for senior citizens, and the establishment of an agreement with the Ministry of Education to guarantee literacy training for senior citizens throughout the country. Moreover, the installation of senior citizen councils in at least 20% of Brazil's municipalities will be encouraged.

The Plan also defines the care that family members should take in dealing with senior citizens at home. For this purpose, it will promote courses for relatives who take care of the elderly.

Teams from the Family Health and Health Agents Programs will, in turn, be prepared to provide orientations about aging, as well as help in adapting the residences of the elderly.

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