



U.S.-BRAZIL JOINT ACTION PLAN PROMOTES RACIAL AND ETHNIC EQUALITY

The U.S.-Brazil Joint Action Plan recognizes that Brazil and the United States are multi-ethnic, multi-racial democracies whose ties of friendship are strengthened by shared experiences. Both countries recognize and celebrate the rich contributions of Afro-descendent and indigenous populations to the fabric of our societies.

The Joint Action Plan, signed in March 2008, pledges an ever-deepening and ongoing collaboration between the two governments to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination and promote equality of opportunity in both countries. On October 31, 2008 Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Shannon and Brazil's Minister for Racial Equality Edson Santos presided over a ceremony in Brasilia that officially launched the initiative. They led the inaugural meeting of the Steering Group comprised of agencies from both governments.

Collaboration

The Joint Action Plan calls upon both governments to collaborate in promoting cooperation, understanding and exchange of information to eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all. The Joint Action Plan encourages the continued involvement of civil society and the future participation of the private sector from both countries, viewing them as critical to the success of the initiative. Both governments have instituted legislation and policies to promote social justice and social inclusion for all members of society. Under the Joint Action Plan, the partners will continue to share their best practices, resources and information to promote equality of all racial and ethnic groups.

A binational Steering Group has developed specific areas of cooperation and will continue to meet alternately in Brazil and the United States. Members of the Steering Group represent Brazilian and U.S. Government entities. Presently, members of civil society provide guidance for the future endeavors of the Joint Action Plan. Active participation of the Brazilian and U.S. private sectors is envisioned for the near future.



Brazil's Minister for Racial Equality Edson Santos and Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Shannon presided over the official launch of the bilateral plan in Brasilia on October 31, 2008. (DOS photo)

Subjects under consideration by the Steering Group include:

- Education, including equal access to quality education and the role of education in countering ethnic and racial discrimination;
- Culture and communication;
- Equal protection of the law and access to the legal system;
- Labor and employment; and
- Health.

In the future, the Steering Group intends to address other topics including:

- Housing and public accommodation;
- Domestic enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and policy;
- Sports and recreation;
- Social, historical and cultural considerations that may be related to racial or ethnic prejudice; and
- Access to credit and opportunities for vocational training.

Techniques and initiatives for the promotion of equality include:

- Training programs;
- Regional initiatives to strengthen democratic institutions;
- Public-private partnerships with business and nongovernmental organizations;
- Workshops and seminars;
- Exchanges of technical experts; and
- Scholarships and fellowships.