

Special Subcommittee to fight poverty related disease in action in Brazil



A public hearing took place in Brasilia last August 20 to discuss with government representatives the situation of public policies adopted in order to address to poverty related diseases. The public hearing was convened by the special subcommittee of studies regarding poverty related disease, established by the parliamentary front to stop TB.

In the public hearing there were representatives from the Ministries of Health, Social Development and Social Security, in addition to activists Jair Brandão, executive secretary of Stop TB Brazil, and Nadja Faraone. The hearing was presided by Congresswoman Benedita da Silva, president of the subcommittee, and assisted by Congressman Antonio Brito, rapporteur of the subcommittee and president of the parliamentary front to stop TB. The aim of the subcommittee's work is to promote integrated work among the different sectors of the government.

This public hearing is the continuation of a set of work and actions developed by the subcommittee, which also considers challenges and progresses from civil society and academia in the elaboration and implementation of health public policies.

The parliament authorities heard the government representatives, who exposed the efforts from their respective areas in order to address the health issues related to poverty. The Health Ministry representative, Claudio Maierovich, director of the Communicable Disease Surveillance Department initiated the discussion presenting the main diseases associated with poverty.

"Disease and poverty are a two-way determinant road. Diseases cause low productivity, prolong the return to the labour market and, thus, maintain people in poor conditions" he stated. He also highlighted the main diseases that affect specially the most vulnerable populations such as leprosy, schistosomiasis and tuberculosis.

He presented the epidemiologic panorama of TB in the country, the challenges and progress from the last decade. The Brazilian Ministry of Health considers a priority to develop actions directed to vulnerable populations and it has been debating special measures for case detection, diagnose and treatment.

“The Brazil without Poverty Plan represents the integration and articulation among the different government sectors in order to ensure access to public services to those who need the most” he concluded.

Mariana N ris, from the Ministry of Social Development stressed: “Poverty has a multidimensional nature, involving health, hygiene, access to public services, violence, hunger, housing, human rights violation, among other issues. The less people living in poor conditions, the less people exposed to risk situations there will be”.

The common “speech” heard in the public hearing was based on the integration of governmental policies and service systems.

The debates from the public hearings and requested documents will subsidize the final report from the subcommittee that intends to diagnose the actions taken to address poverty related diseases. The work of the subcommittee will not end with the report. To Benedita da Silva, the Parliamentary Front and the Social Security and Family Commission will give continuity to the theme, fostering discussions to combat TB.