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## **Challenges remain as Brazil seeks to promote cultural rights – UN expert**



Farida Shaheed

19 November 2010 – An independent United Nations human rights expert today urged the Brazilian Government to draft and implement legislation to put into effect a new plan to protect and promote the cultural rights of all communities in the country.

“The adoption of the National Plan of Culture gives new impetus for Brazil to make their laws and programmes a living reality on the ground,” [said](#) Farida Shaheed, the UN Independent Expert on Cultural Rights, after a 12-day visit to Brazil. “Many stakeholders pointed out that effective implementation remains a major challenge,” she said.

Ms. Shaheed said she was inspired by initiatives to promote cultural expressions in Brazil, including steps towards constitutional recognition of culture as a right, as well as legislation and policies that have been developed through consultative processes from the grassroots to the federal level.

Brazil has taken significant measures to promote and protect the cultural expression and heritage of marginalized peoples, she pointed out. However, many individuals and communities still do not feel they are fully appreciated as equal participants in national life, she added.

“This continuing experience of exclusion and discrimination needs to be recognized and addressed, especially in view of a reported increase in the attacks on, and in some instances the

demonization of, some specific communities on the basis of their religion, ethnicity and race,” Ms. Shaheed said.

The expert said guaranteeing cultural rights enabled communities to build their self-esteem, to be respected for their values and practices, and to be able to preserve the elements of their culture that they desired to keep.

Ms. Shaheed welcomed efforts by the Government to promote global and regional cooperation in the field of culture, including initiatives to uphold international legal instruments for the promotion and protection of cultural rights and cultural diversity.

Appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council, Ms. Shaheed works in an independent and unpaid capacity.

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