

Forty NGOs are invited to the Social Arena

Throughout the organisation of the 17th WPC, the Brazilian Committee has tried to make this Congress a socially responsible event. With the objective of encouraging an in-depth discussion on social responsibility, the Brazilian Organising Committee is setting up an arena where representatives from the community and the oil industry will gather. In this venue participants will discuss issues such as sustainable development, ethics and education.

The 17th WPC Social Responsibility Arena will bring together around 40 international non-governmental organisations and third-sector companies devoted to the development of social and environmental action programmes and projects. One of the NGOs to take part in the event is the Comunidade Solidária, one of the principal NGOs in the country, that is presided by the first lady of Brazil, anthropologist Ruth Cardoso.

Open to the general public, the meeting will take place from September 2 - 5, in the same conventions facility where the 17th WPC is to assemble. The Arena will be the stage for the exhibition of social responsibility and sustainable development projects and action programmes, as well as conferences, round tables and talk shows with business executives, scholars and journalists. The NGOs will be able to take advantage of the meeting to sell their products.

Organisers expect participants to gather resources that will contribute towards improving their strategies and the results of programmes already in progress. "The event also aims at helping to disseminate innovative projects with a proven track record in the social and environmental areas" adds João Carlos de Luca, president of the Brazilian Organising Committee of 17th WPC.

Volunteering

Beyond the addresses and discussions, the concept of social responsibility will be applied in the Congress' own organisation effort. Brazilian NGOs have been retained to provide services during the event. One of them is the Computer Democratisation Committee, which will be in charge of lending computer support to the Congress. This institution, which seeks to work against digital exclusion, is a pioneer in educational programmes for children and teenagers from impoverished communities.

The 17th WPC will choose about 200 volunteers, most of them university level students and retired oil industry employees, to provide clerical services at the Congress. The aim is to provide work experience and inter-generational learning exchanges to volunteers, as well as to promote volunteering in Brazil. Delegates will have the opportunity to make a contribution, large or small, to the refurbishment of a state sector school near Riocentro.

Furniture produced from plastic bottles will be used in the Congress area. Thread made from this type of plastic will also be used in the making of T-shirts for the volunteers and general staff.

Selective litter collection

The Congress will also represent a landmark for the Riocentro. A selective waste collection programme will be implemented in the conventions facility during the Congress and expo set-up phase, and be used throughout the duration of both events. The

Congress will also have waste bins specifically for recycling.

The organisers estimate that, together, the Congress and the Rio Oil & Gas Expo 2002, will generate a total of 16 tonnes of recyclable waste (plastic, aluminium, paper and glass). "Proceeds obtained from the recycling will be passed on to litter collection co-operative," explains de Luca.

