

**AS THE ECONOMIC CLOUT OF THE BRICS** (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) has captured the spotlight of the local and international media, the position of these countries in the defense and promotion of human rights, particularly with regard to economic and social development policies, has also acquired growing global attention. In 2013, Conectas' human rights advocacy in the context of the foreign policy of emerging countries focused on two fronts:



## **Crisis in Syria**

In 2013, the [crisis in Syria](#) sadly commemorated its two-year [anniversary](#). Ever since the outbreak of the crisis, Conectas has called for firmer action from Brazil, for example by sending a [joint statement](#) with other human rights organizations to the Brazilian Foreign Ministry. The statement called on the Brazilian government to come out in favor of referring the Syrian crisis to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

At the [5th BRICS Summit](#), held in Durban, South Africa, in March 2013, Conectas and partner organizations attended with the primordial goal of influencing the BRICS governments. The advocacy focused on ensuring that the [final declaration](#) adopted by the BRICS governments contained recommendations on, for example, the conflict in Syria. The endorsement for the entry of humanitarian aid into Syria was indeed given in the final declaration of the BRICS Summit. The Brazilian government informed Conectas that Brazil was responsible for including the topic in the final declaration. More recently, in February 2014, Conectas and partner organizations welcomed UN Security Council [Resolution 2139](#). The resolution established unhindered humanitarian access to the victims of the armed conflict in Syria.

## **BRICS Bank**

In September 2013, during the G20 summit, [Brazil announced that it would commit US\\$18 billion to a US\\$100 billion reserve fund to be set up by the BRICS](#). The creation of a new multilateral development bank brought to light and underlined the need to define human rights standards for the credit granted by the recently created BRICS Bank.



The creation of the bank is justified by the need to invest in infrastructure and development projects in emerging countries and to diversify the lines of credit beyond those offered by existing institutions, namely the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The need for investments in infrastructure projects in poor and emerging countries is undeniable, but the development model currently adopted by the BRICS is strongly biased towards large-scale and complex projects that generate social and environmental impacts. These impacts, meanwhile, have caused alarming cases of human rights violations.

In view of this situation, Conectas and partner organizations prepared and called on the leaders of the BRICS to incorporate *five minimum points* into the operating strategies and policies of the BRICS Bank – such as guidelines and policies for respecting human rights and free, prior and informed consultation – before investing in projects that impact the lives of indigenous and tribal peoples.



**BRICS BANK**  
5 POINTS THAT THE BLOCK'S FIRST PROJECT CANNOT OVERLOOK

- 1** Socio-environmental and human rights-respecting policies and guidelines
- 2** Free, prior and informed consultation for projects that impact the lives of indigenous and tribal peoples
- 3** Solid transparency and access to information policies
- 4** Effective and transparent grievance and conflict resolution mechanism
- 5** Participation by society during the formalization of the bank and the cycle of the projects

**IN 2014, CONECTAS** will continue engaging in advocacy and liaising with partners to urge the BRICS to adopt a policy that is more responsible and protective of human rights, and to take a firmer position in cases of human rights violations on the international level.

