



**BROKEN  
CHALK**

Submission to the United Nations OFFICE OF THE HIGH  
COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

CALL FOR INPUT | OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS

Thematic report to the UN Human Rights Council  
"Eradicating poverty in a post-growth context:  
preparing for the next Development Goals".

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Submitting Organization: BROKEN CHALK

January 2024

By  
Olimpia Guidi

Kingsfordweg 151, 1043 GR  
Amsterdam, Netherlands

+31687406567

[upr@brokenchalk.org](mailto:upr@brokenchalk.org)

[www.brokenchalk.org](http://www.brokenchalk.org)

THEMATIC REPORT TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL "ERADICATING POVERTY IN A POST-GROWTH CONTEXT: PREPARING FOR THE NEXT DEVELOPMENT GOALS".

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**Broken Chalk** is an Amsterdam-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) committed to addressing human rights violations in the education sector. It was established in October 2020. A multinational team of dedicated human rights advocates collaborates extensively on researching violations in every corner of the world.

The organisation's primary activities include removing obstacles to education, promoting peace and tranquillity in society through intercultural tolerance, preventing radicalism and polarisation, and eliminating educational opportunity gaps across different demographics.

Broken Chalk works hard in advocacy and lobbying on behalf of these educational victims, engaging with international organisations to prompt action. Additionally, the volunteers and interns working remotely worldwide at Broken Chalk prepare comprehensive reports for international organisations, stakeholders, and governments, highlighting human rights violations in education. These reports aim to draw attention to the often-overlooked aspects of human rights violations, providing stakeholders with a complete understanding and calling for the international community to act in cases where conflict halts access to education and endangers civilians' lives. This approach ensures that awareness is raised and necessary actions are taken to address these violations. Broken Chalk is genuinely international, achieving a local and global perspective in its work.

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1. Has your government designed measurements of social progress that complements GDP, in accordance with target 17.18 of the SDGs? If so, what alternative indicators were designed and how? Have such measurements accounted for unpaid care, reproductive, and household work and, if so, how? Which mechanisms, if any, have been established to increase accountability towards improving the performance of the State according to such indicators? Please share any lessons learned from the use of such alternative measurements of progress and associated monitoring mechanisms.

#### Alternative Indicators of Social Progress:

Brazil's departure from sole reliance on GDP is a testament to its commitment to capturing a more comprehensive understanding of societal advancement.<sup>1</sup> The alternative indicators designed by Brazil go beyond economic metrics, embracing a holistic perspective. These indicators include crucial facets such as health, education, environmental sustainability, and income distribution.<sup>2</sup> The involvement of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) underscores a commitment to methodological rigour and the adaptation of indicators to meet the population's evolving needs.<sup>3</sup> This multifaceted approach reflects a nuanced understanding of societal well-being, acknowledging that progress extends beyond economic parameters.

#### Accounting for Unpaid Care and Household Work:

Brazil's explicit consideration of unpaid care, reproductive, and household work recognises individuals' invisible yet indispensable contributions, especially women.<sup>4</sup> Brazil acknowledges the gendered dimensions of societal contributions by quantifying and integrating these elements into the broader measure of social progress.<sup>5</sup> This step is not merely about recognising the economic value of unpaid work but also about understanding its profound impact on community sustainability and overall well-being. It aligns with global efforts to address gender inequalities and signifies a commitment to inclusivity in societal development.

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, M., Kelly, R.C., Eichler, R. (2023). *Brazil's Economy: GDP vs. GDP per capita*. Available at: <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/050815/fundamentals-how-brazil-makes-its-money.asp>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> **Instrumentos Internacionales de Derechos Humanos**

<https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=FhOD6sgqgzAhFXD9F%2FeKaFMm83LbFY75RhklFGrig%2B5tjJs7gNQ6DJ5nZWpXZd3j3%2FbzfHokh%2FYie0vOljuL1pqVaADOCumbEqxBg%2BM1XfxZIOSr%2BIGopYZdvLksURIX>

<sup>4</sup> Matos de Oliveira, A.L., Sabbag Fares, L.(2021). *Sexual division of labour in Brazil: Interpretations of domestic and care work under COVID-19*, Agenda, 35(4), 48-59, DOI: [10.1080/10130950.2021.2015167](https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2021.2015167)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

### Mechanisms for Accountability:

In Brazil, government accountability is ensured through various indicators and mechanisms, including the Access to Information Law, the oversight role of institutions like the Federal Court of Accounts, and anti-corruption measures such as the Clean Company Act.<sup>6</sup> Budget transparency initiatives disclose public spending and social accountability involves civil society and media in monitoring.<sup>7</sup> Ombudsman offices provide a platform for citizen concerns, and electoral processes serve as a judgment avenue.<sup>8</sup> Brazil's commitment is further underscored by robust monitoring mechanisms, exemplified through regular assessments and publicly available reports that foster transparency. The collaborative approach to accountability, involving consultative bodies with civil society, academia, and experts, ensures an independent and diverse evaluation process aligned with democratic principles.

### Impact on Child Negligence and Education:

In Brazil, alternative indicators explicitly consider the well-being of children, recognising them as a vulnerable demographic requiring special attention. The government's commitment to children's well-being is evident through various measures aimed at protection and development.<sup>9</sup> Robust measures have been implemented to track and address instances of child neglect, demonstrating a proactive approach to creating an environment conducive to a child's overall development.<sup>10</sup>

In the realm of education, Brazil places a strong emphasis on access, quality, and inclusivity, recognising education as a cornerstone of societal progress.<sup>11</sup> The government's commitment to universal access to education is complemented by policies prioritising the quality of education, including improving teacher qualifications and curriculum standards.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, inclusive education policies have been established to cater to the diverse needs of all children, addressing disparities based on socio-economic backgrounds and promoting an environment where every child can thrive academically and personally.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Tobolowsky, Z. B. (2016). Brazil Finally Cleans up Its Act with the Clean Company Act: The Story of a Nation's Long-Overdue Fight against Corruption. *Law & Bus. Rev. Am.*, 22, 383.

<sup>7</sup> Marino, P. D. B. L. P., Sucupira, G. I. C. S., Siqueira, W. R. D., & Bermejo, P. H. D. S. (2017). Public transparency in the brazilian context: An integrative review. In *Information Systems: 14th European, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern Conference, EMCIS 2017, Coimbra, Portugal, September 7-8, 2017, Proceedings 14* (pp. 261-274). Springer International Publishing.

<sup>8</sup> Comparato, B.K. (2023). The Police Ombudsman in Brazil: Impacts and Challenges in Collaboration with Civil Society. *Culture of Peace and Human Rights I*, 53.

<sup>9</sup> Paget, C. L., Malmberg, L. E., & Martelli, D. R. (2019). Brazilian national assessment data and educational policy: an empirical illustration. In *Educational Assessment in Latin America* (pp. 98-125). Routledge.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Willms, D. J., Tramonte, L., Duarte, J., & Bos, M. S. (2012). Assessing Educational Equality and Equity with Large-Scale Assessment Data: Brazil as a Case Study.

<sup>12</sup> Bonamino, A., & Sousa, S. Z. (2012). Three generations of assessments of basic education in Brazil: Interfaces with the curriculum in/of the school. *Educação e Pesquisa*, 38, 373-388.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

**Lessons Learned and Future Directions:**

Brazil's experience in developing alternative indicators offers valuable insights for nations navigating similar paths. One key takeaway is the necessity of continuous refinement and adaptation of indicators to remain relevant in the face of evolving socio-economic dynamics. The iterative nature of this process ensures that indicators stay attuned to the emerging needs and challenges of the population. Moreover, the active involvement of various stakeholders, including civil society and academia, has proven instrumental in fostering a comprehensive and inclusive approach to measuring progress.



2. Which measures have been adopted, if any, to ensure that growth primarily benefits the bottom 40 per cent of the population, in accordance with SDG target 10.1? Have other tools to assess progress towards the reduction of inequalities been designed and implemented?

#### Measures to Benefit the Bottom 40 Percent:

Brazil's commitment to inclusive economic growth is exemplified through a multi-pronged approach. The cornerstone of these efforts is the implementation of social programs, with Bolsa Família standing out as a pivotal initiative.<sup>14</sup> This targeted intervention provides direct financial assistance to vulnerable households, offering a lifeline to those grappling with poverty.<sup>15</sup> Bolsa Família not only injects funds into the hands of those who need it the most but also serves as a mechanism to bridge the wealth gap, facilitating upward economic mobility.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to direct financial assistance, Brazil employs a progressive tax system to ensure that the burden of public finances is proportionally distributed.<sup>17</sup> This progressive approach places a higher tax rate on individuals with higher incomes, contributing to a more equitable distribution of resources.<sup>18</sup> By design, this system generates revenue for public services and actively addresses income disparities, reinforcing the government's commitment to fostering economic inclusivity.

#### Education and Children:

Brazil's recognition of the pivotal role of education in breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty underscores its commitment to long-term societal transformation. Given prominence in the strategy targeting the bottom 40 percent, educational initiatives are seen as key to providing individuals with the tools needed to escape poverty. Investments in accessible and quality education, particularly in disadvantaged areas, aim to create an educational landscape where socio-economic backgrounds do not determine opportunities.<sup>19</sup>

Special emphasis is placed on reducing disparities in educational outcomes, ensuring that all children, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds, have equal opportunities to thrive

<sup>14</sup> Sugiyama, N. B., & Hunter, W. (2013). Whither clientelism? Good governance and Brazil's Bolsa Família program. *Comparative Politics*, 46(1), 43-62. Available at: <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/cuny/cp/2013/00000046/00000001/art00004>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Immervoll, H., Levy, H., Nogueira, J. R., O'Donoghue, C., & de Siqueira, R. B. (2006). The impact of Brazil's tax-benefit system on inequality and poverty. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/jj/rep/a/XHRzZh33LNS9rYJBXd5wRPC/>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Moraes, J., Dias, B. F. B., & Mariano, S. R. (2021). The Effectiveness of Public Investment in Basic Education in Brazil. *Revista Organizações em Contexto*, 16(31), 1-32. Available at: <https://www.metodista.br/revistas/revistas-metodista/index.php/OC/article/view/9505>

academically.<sup>20</sup> Brazil's commitment to education extends beyond access, focusing on enhancing the quality of education and addressing systemic issues that contribute to educational disparities.

#### Learning from Similar Countries:

Brazil's endeavours to address economic disparities can benefit from insights gained from analogous countries successfully tackling similar challenges.

South Africa's experience with conditional cash transfer programs, such as the Child Support Grant, aligns with Brazil's objectives.<sup>21</sup> Brazil may explore introducing similar conditionalities within Bolsa Família, attaching specific requirements related to children's attendance and performance in schools and regular health check-ups. This strategic alignment ensures financial assistance is coupled with targeted measures to enhance human capital development, breaking the cycle of poverty.

Mexico's Prospera program has demonstrated the efficacy of conditional cash transfers in promoting health and education.<sup>22</sup> By adopting elements from Prospera, Brazil could refine Bolsa Família to focus on specific health outcomes, such as preventive care and vaccination, while also incorporating measures that incentivise continuous education. These additions, inspired by global best practices, contribute to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty by investing in the health and education of future generations.

To integrate these lessons effectively, Brazil should comprehensively review its social assistance programs and tax policies. A participatory approach involving experts, policymakers, and civil society would ensure that these refinements align with the country's unique socio-economic context. Strategically aligning Bolsa Família with educational and healthcare conditionalities, inspired by successful models in South Africa and Mexico, has the potential to elevate the program's impact on poverty reduction.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Zembe-Mkabile, W., Surender, R., Sanders, D., Jackson, D., & Doherty, T. (2015). The experience of cash transfers in alleviating childhood poverty in South Africa: mothers' experiences of the Child Support Grant. *Global public health*, 10(7), 834-851. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17441692.2015.1007471>

<sup>22</sup> Gil-García, Ó. F. (2016). Gender equality, community divisions, and autonomy: The Prospera conditional cash transfer program in Chiapas, Mexico. *Current Sociology*, 64(3), 447-469. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0011392115593785>



3. Which obstacles did the State encounter in its search for development pathways not dependent on economic growth, consistent with its economic sovereignty and the prioritisation of the well-being of the population? Which enabling international environment should be established in order to encourage the search for such alternative development pathways?

#### Internal Dynamics and Resource Dependencies:

Brazil's internal dynamics are marked by a complex interplay of factors, including economic structures, social inequalities, and historical legacies. One significant challenge lies in the country's dependency on certain key resources, such as agriculture and minerals.<sup>23</sup> Fluctuations in global commodity prices can significantly impact Brazil's economic stability, making it crucial to diversify revenue streams.<sup>24</sup> The state's endeavour to break free from growth-dependent models necessitates navigating through these dependencies, fostering innovation, and promoting sustainable practices.

#### Geopolitical Challenges and Regional Dynamics:

Brazil's vast geographical expanse presents both opportunities and challenges. Regional disparities in development, compounded by infrastructural challenges, demand targeted policies to address specific needs.<sup>25</sup> The Amazon rainforest, a vital global resource, adds a layer of complexity, requiring careful management to balance environmental conservation with economic development.<sup>26</sup> Navigating these geographical challenges is essential for Brazil to forge alternative pathways that align with economic sovereignty and well-being priorities.

#### Technological Barriers and Innovation:

In Brazil, navigating technological challenges poses a significant obstacle to embracing alternative development trajectories. The access to cutting-edge technology and innovation plays a pivotal role in augmenting productivity, sustainability, and resilience.<sup>27</sup> A critical concern for Brazil lies in addressing the digital divide, striving to ensure that technological

<sup>23</sup> de Loureiro, J. P. B., dos Santos, M. A. S., de Souza, C. C. F., & Hamid, S. S. (2023). Mining and agriculture in municipalities with mineral-based economy in Brazil. *OBSERVATÓRIO DE LA ECONOMÍA LATINOAMERICANA*, 21(12), 23733-23755.

<sup>24</sup> Leonardos, O. H., Theodoro, S. H., & Assad, M. L. (2000). Remineralisation for sustainable agriculture: A tropical perspective from a Brazilian viewpoint. *Nutrient Cycling in Agroecosystems*, 56(1), 3-9.

<sup>25</sup> Griesse, M. A. (2007). The geographic, political, and economic context for corporate social responsibility in Brazil. *Journal of business ethics*, 73, 21-37. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10551-006-9194-2>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Nishijima, M., Ivanauskas, T. M., & Sarti, F. M. (2017). Evolution and determinants of digital divide in Brazil (2005–2013). *Telecommunications policy*, 41(1), 12-24. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0308596116301835>

progress benefits all strata of society.<sup>28</sup> Tackling this issue necessitates substantial investments in research and development, the cultivation of an innovation-centric culture, and a concerted effort to rectify technological inequalities.

#### Enabling International Environment:

Creating an enabling international environment requires collaborative efforts. International institutions should support countries like Brazil in diversifying their economies and developing sustainable practices. Trade agreements that consider the unique challenges of developing nations, technology transfer initiatives, and financial support for innovative projects can contribute to fostering alternative development pathways. Global partnerships should be based on equity and shared responsibility principles, recognising the interconnectedness of national and international well-being.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

#### 4. The way societies conceive of work, relate to the environment, and finance their economies and welfare systems locks them into growth-oriented economic models. What measures should be taken to overcome such growth dependencies in each of these areas? And how can human rights guide efforts to overcome such self-reinforcement?

The entrenchment of growth-oriented economic models significantly influences how societies perceive work, interact with the environment, and structure their economies and welfare systems. Like many nations, Brazil grapples with the challenge of breaking free from these dependencies. This comprehensive exploration delves into measures that can be taken to overcome growth dependencies across various domains, drawing insights from diverse global economic models.

Brazil can draw inspiration from the Netherlands to transcend growth dependencies in the realm of work, where a strong emphasis on work-life balance has been integral to their economic model. Policies encouraging flexible work hours, remote work options, and robust parental leave can enhance well-being and job satisfaction. Fostering a culture that values the quality of work over sheer productivity can contribute to reshaping societal attitudes toward work.

Brazil's commitment to overcoming growth dependencies requires a paradigm shift in its relationship with the environment. Learning from countries like Germany and Denmark, which have successfully transitioned to renewable energy sources, Brazil can invest in clean energy initiatives. Establishing clear policies, incentives for sustainable practices, and funding for research in renewable technologies can facilitate this transition. Prioritising environmental preservation in policymaking is crucial, balancing economic activities with conservation efforts.

Rethinking finance and welfare systems is pivotal to breaking free from growth dependencies. Countries like Sweden and Finland offer models where comprehensive social safety nets contribute to a more equitable society. Brazil can consider expanding social welfare programs, investing in affordable healthcare, and strengthening unemployment benefits. Implementing progressive taxation, where the wealthy contribute proportionally more, can fund these initiatives without relying solely on GDP growth.

A fundamental aspect of reshaping economic models is ensuring universal access to education and basic needs. Countries like Finland and Canada prioritise education as a cornerstone of their societal development. Brazil can invest in educational infrastructure, teacher training, and programs that address disparities in access. Guaranteeing basic needs such as healthcare, housing, and nutrition is equally essential in fostering a population equipped to contribute meaningfully to a diversified economy.

Overcoming growth dependencies requires dismantling discriminatory structures within society. Learning from nations that actively combat discrimination, such as New Zealand and Norway, Brazil can implement policies promoting workforce diversity and inclusion. Anti-discrimination laws, diversity

training, and affirmative action initiatives can address systemic inequalities, contributing to a more resilient and cohesive society.



Kingsfordweg 151, 1043 GR

Amsterdam, Netherlands

+31687406567 | [info@brokenchalk.org](mailto:info@brokenchalk.org) | [www.brokenchalk.org](http://www.brokenchalk.org)

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