



## **AMERICA/BRAZIL - "The conflict over the land is also ruining our culture," say the indigenous communities**

Luziânia (Agenzia Fides) - The question of land ownership was the focus of traditional communities, which was held from February 25 to 28 in Luziânia (in the State of Goiás in central Brazil). The event was attended by 120 representatives of traditional communities around the country who discussed ways to protect their land rights against the hoarding of land by landowners.

During the work, the need to join different social movements and organizations that deal with the problem emerged.

Indigenous people present at this meeting denounced that the conflict for the land undermined also their culture and their traditions. For example, the quilombolas of Rio dos Macacos, in Bahia, denounced the action of the Marina and violence against their community, where it was forbidden even to cultivate the land.

A lawyer of the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI) conducted a debate on the Constitution and conventions concerning the rights of traditional communities, such as the Convention 169 of the ILO (International Labour Organisation). It was stressed that the rights of these communities are already implicit in the Brazilian Constitution, but they must be better defined. For the Movement Quilombola of Maranhão, the 1838 territories demarcated so far, only 121 have ownership attributable to the indigenous communities. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 01/03/2013)