Mr. Vanderlei Assis (PP - RJ) pronounces the following speech:

1) Brazilian scenery and the social role of infoinclusion (photograph of Amazonian children are projected on the screen)

Mr. Inocêncio Oliveira, First Secretary of this House of Representatives, illustrious president from this Panel. Mr. Rogério Santana, Secretary of Logistics and Information Technology from the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management. Doctor Kim Suk Joon, distinguished representative from South Korea.

From distance, Brazil seems like just a Country with great social inequalities presented abroad as a synonym of poverty and injustice. A more accurate observation throws down a so relentless vision that the Country would be totally stagnate on the run to be inserted on a dynamic, powerful and distributive global virtual community.

Although it may seem, Brazil is not inert on this technological incorporation process of informatics on the day by day of the citizens. No matter how unfavorable the numbers are, since just 11% of the Brazilian population has the opportunity to interact daily with a computer, which means that more than 150 million people are excluded from this kind of media, the Country has histories, models, examples and, especially, good thoughts about the issue: the digital inclusion is, if not the only one, at least one of the most important strategies to make the Country grows and to make it ends up with hunger and misery.

Brazil is hungry, as much as it has information. Brazil wants jobs, but it also wants that the technology to be employed in the service of the intellectual production, productivity, income distribution. Brazil wants to talk the virtual communities talk, but not the computing world net prevailing language, but it wants to show its own way to talk, its culture, presenting its products, wealth and diversity.

The infoinclusion experiences reflects a Nation that struggle itself facing its own social problems and economic bruises. We will talk a little bit about this Brazil, delayed on its basic net attention to the great mass of population, but at the same time barn of the biggest propositions and ideas.

There are dozens of punctual experiences to disseminate Information and Communication Technologies in Brazil. They are less worthy by the impact that they produce than by the life demonstration on how to extract theory from daily actions to fundament a real and reaching policy of digital inclusion, and, by extension, social, because there are no ways to dissociate both things. The computer, on its actual conception, is a socializing machine.

On the Brazilian way to promote infoinclusion, the effort is shared by everybody: Government, private companies, third sector institutions, communitarian associations, schools. Although the role of inductor of this process belongs to the government. There are more then 50 initiatives of digital inclusion in the Country today, from which few can be summarized as a simple "informatics school".

Those are areas destined to service rendering, to debate communitarian problems, to the manifestation of theatrical and cultural actions, to accomplish workshops of qualification and learning, to the production of communitarian radio and videos, to citizenship formation.

At Rio de Janeiro, housewives became radio communicators, learning through the Cêmina project how to produce, reccord and distribute radio shows, by internet. Piraí *(show page from Digital Piraí)* small city located at the State of Rio de Janeiro, received the Latin American Digital Cities award for the creation of acquaintance centers on free software, for the computerization of its public schools and its city hall and for the creation of a cabling net in the entire city.

In São Paulo, people from the community became "reporters" and created a news agency on the internet *(project slide 3)*, on an ONG project called Sampa.org.

to talk to the population from one of the biggest *"favelas"* of the city, the Capão. In Maranhão, the State government is installing computers on various indigenous schools.

The internet is fundamental on the exchange of social experience to the devoid communities. The "Catalyze Communities" Portal presents very well succeeded projects in more than 30 areas, like health and education.

With more than six thousand daily visits, the Portal from the Saci net *(project the Portal Page)* is dedicated to the digital inclusion of the people with special needs, with information about work and education. The net offers a curriculum data bank with more than five registrations and dispose freely kits with more than 60 programs adjusted to this public, but that ends up being used also for the elderly, like those which allows computer operation by voice command. *(Project slide 4).* The entity maintains acquaintance centers, with free use of internet.

The Saci net participate of a Work Group coordinated by Serpro, a Federal Government data processing enterprise, to develop screen reader software for blind people in Linux *(project slide 5)*. This is the first Brazilian initiative in order to provide accessibility conditions, in Linux, to people with physical deficiency.

2) Telecenters and software as registered trademarks from the Brazilian programs

Added, the Brazilian experiences on digital inclusion, Public Power computerization and the modernization of the Legislative and Judiciary Powers, brings some common traces. *(project slide 2).* The main guidelines can be summarized as follows:
- the telecenters has been the main line of a politic that searches to offer free and shared spaces of access to computers and to the Internet;

-   the main preoccupation has been offering knowledge and tools for the communities to take possession of new technologies. In order for them not being mere consumers, but producers of contents.
-   the computation has been the bridge to the access to other forms of communication and expression, such as the production of communitarian medias, as radio and electronic agencies.
-   the only way to allow the technological knowledge appropriation, the contents generation and the creation of new perspectives for the use of technological resources is through the use of non proprietary software.

3) Free software as a measure of economy and sustainability

Adopted as a Government politics, the use of free software is an irreversible tendency at the catalyzing process of the Brazilian digital inclusion. It came to break up a vicious model, in which the first popular initiatives of digital inclusion were anchored by proprietary software systems, "to generate an addiction" on the users in a system which would soon begin to be charged. Nowadays, there are telecenters which are obligated to pay for the use of the computer programs, some of them even located in *"favelas".*

If Information Technology came to free the more oppressed people, the first liberation that is required is the one of the right to create, produce, reinvent, adapt, improve. Everything can be done, except to reduce these levels of freedom. Each year in Brazil, a value superior to 1 (one) billion dollars is paid for the use of proprietary software licenses. We have to free ourselves from this straitjacket.

More than just an ideology or an authorship model, the development of the free software created and ripened a knowledge generation strategy with no precedents, in which cooperation and competition join themselves to obtain quality products in a very fast way.

From the Country's north to south, we find a migration movement in favor of the free software and a brief example comes from Minas Gerais. The Cidada.net Net *(project slide 6)* commits itself to bring informatics even where the blackboard barely arrived. Some cities from the Jequitinhonha Valley, one of the poorest regions from Brazil, with illiteracy indices near by 50% of the population, are already in the digital era.

This is the case of Cetubinha, a small village with five thousand inhabitants, half of them even know how to read of write. There, there are not only some computers connected on the net, but a radio through the internet.

Those who don't even know how to write its name are part of a digital radio, telling histories to the population. "*Quilombolas*" communities, which means, those who survived from the "*quilombos*", also communicates between them, using the technology as an identity link and more: as a salvation board and a preservation of their culture.

4) Libertas Project

As a support of these initiatives, various programs of open font code are available on the Internet. Some of them are on the Libertas Portal, from the Minas Gerais Federal University, that offers an open process of development of a distribution GNU/Linux Debian to schools, governments and companies, with softwares that does from text edition, electronic spread sheets, internet navigation, to multimedia resources, like radio via internet and video edition that are disposed in the proprietary software.

5) Health Joy Project

The telecenters has also reached places where not even electric energy has arrived *(project slide 7)*. In Pará, inside the Amazon forest, the Health Joy Project opens a window to the world, also based on open systems. There are two years, the

Suruacá communities, with 100 families, *(simultaneous exhibition of photographs)* and Maguari, with 60 families, won telecenters, using solar energy. *(Project slides 8 and 9).*

Beyond social mobilization, as a stage to a lot of events, *(project slide 10)* the telecenter shelters the radio and multiple training courses, as the one of midwife and health communitarian agents. The local economy has changed *(project slide 11)*. Through the Internet, the inhabitants receive orders from Santarém, distant more than 500 kilometers, of handicraft products, such as andiroba oil, copaiba, blanket of latex, and handicraft made of vegetal leather. *(project slide 12)*

6) Electronic Parliament

Another essential contribution to the digital inclusion in Brazil is in the Public Power. The Deputy Chamber gives the example of information democratization, transparency and popular participation. *(project main page from the Chamber)*. The platform is in free software. Not only an option of economy of what could be spent with the purchase of proprietary systems, but a political improvement strategy. The programs were developed by the Chamber own technicians.

There are 400 thousand pages and documents available, with eight terabytes total storage capacity. Actually, the site uses 58 gigabytes. In average, 135 thousand pages are accessed each day (approximately 900,000 daily hits). The Deputy Chamber site is a reference to the citizen today and it disseminates itself as one of the most important source of information used by the national media, specially the regional newspapers, allowing the democratization of the access to the news.

7) Deputies rendering of accounts to the society

One of the great virtues of the Chamber portal is the rendering of accounts from the parliamentary activity. The section deputies, presents the biography,

presented propositions, speeches, the positioning of the deputy in each voting, presence in plenary and in commission.

(Simultaneously it will be shown the following pages from the Chambers site:

- *Choose the deputy*
- *Present complete information*
- *Close)*

8) Plenary online

The time factor is essential to the quality of the information. On the section plenary, there are the day order, the topics in guideline, the course of the session and the voting results. It's also available, almost in real time, the text and the audio of the speeches, a few minutes after the pronouncement.

Simultaneously, there will be made the following procedures in the Chambers site:

- *Select a session from the day*
- *Present a speech transcription*
- *Close)*

9) Popular participation

The Portal has also created a two way communication with the society. There are various instruments of popular participation. The chat makes the deputy argues, in real time, with the citizen the most important themes on the parliament. The "Speak with the deputy" service allows that the citizen sends e-mail, with only one click, to a deputy, to all deputies from his state, or to all 513 deputies from the Chamber. To give an idea of what happens, my cabinet receives 500 electronic messages daily, about the most diverse issues.

Simultaneously, it will be done the following procedures in the Chamber's site:

- *Select the item "Chat"*
- *Present a chat done*
- *Select the item "Talk to the Deputy"*
- *Close)*

10) Transparency at the Legislative

The Legislative site is also an instrument of social control. It brings information on the Chamber's financial expenses, fiscal management, contracts and tenders. It presents detailed information on trips that were made in official mission, as well as detailed description of the budget expenses.

(Simultaneously it will be made the following procedure on the site:

- *Select the item "Chamber's Budget"*
- *Present the budget descriptive graphics*
- *Close)*

11) Chamber's infantile site

To take care of the future of the Nation, the Chamber also turned itself to a new public, with the creation of a site to child and youth, where are discussed and approached themes such as citizenship, human rights, political system, political participation, inequality and social justice. The site talks about serious issues with an educative language and uses various animation resources and it is today a very powerful pedagogic instrument of learning in classrooms.

(Simultaneously, it will be done the following procedures in the Chamber's site:
- *Select the Plenarinho page*
- *Show an animated history*
- *Close)*

12) Interlegis – the Brazil legislative integration

In 1997, the National Congress launched the Interlegis Portal *(show Interlegis page)*, developed in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (BID). It is a communication net that integrates the Legislative Power in a federal, state and county level, to search transparency, the information exchange and the approach with the society. Approximately 2,700 County Chambers have already received computers and printers from the Program and all the State Assemblies has now Multiuse Rooms, with 20 computers all connected on the net. This is another example of the success of the free software use.

13) *Justice* Computerization

The Brazilian justice also searches to modernize itself to give a more efficient and rapid answer to the societies demands, reducing the costs and the paper circulation. At the www.infojus.gov.br Portal, it's possible to find, for example, all Federal Supreme Court jurisprudence and decisions, the maximum court of the Country. The objective now is to create a unique portal that integrates all courts, offering the citizens relevant information.

However, the most notorious action from the Brazilian justice in terms of intelligent use of informatics is the electronic ballot box *(project slide 13)* which revolutionized the Brazilian electoral process.

The vote computerization process started on 1996 and it is used today on the 5,563 Brazilian counties, reaching a total of 119 millions of electors. It is 408 thousands and 800 "voting machines" used on the last elections, that allows the verification of the dispute in less than 24 hours. It is an experience that is already been taken to other countries.

14) Final considerations

At this digital promenade through the Brazilian experiences, there are lessons to be taken *(project slide 2 and maintain until the end)*. In the first place, that the digital inclusion is not a fast process, although it is cumulative. In every new action it is created a multiplying effect capable to disseminate the information. The second is that the anchor of the telecenters does not summarize itself on a model in itself, but in a temporary, transitory alternative to cover a social gap that solves itself.

Each Brazilian must have the right to use, as he judges the most convenient, the new medias. It is not acceptable that only 8.6 % of the Brazilian counties have computers. And that only 10% of the elementary schools have access to the Internet, in accordance with a UNESCO research. But, in order to change that, beyond the spread of digital resources, it is necessary to have parallel public policies of social inclusion. An IBGE research shows that more than 95% of the Brazilian population receives less than 10 minimum salaries, the correspondent to 1 (one) thousand dollars.

There is no more doubt that the communication technologies are an instrument of poverty confrontation, citizenship promotion, employment and income generation to the disfavored communities, rescue of identity and local culture. But in order to achieve that it is necessary to respect nature and the essence of the informatics concept, which is the freedom to develop and the plenitude to transform.

The free software confronts three nodes that exist nowadays:

- it reduces the more and more increasing costs of the proprietary systems;
- it increases the sustainability of the projects that are operated, distributed and transformed by the own user;
- it promotes an intellectual appropriation and allows an income generation.

This politics is not effective, however, without a direct intervention from the government, the society and from the wealthiest part of the Brazilian society. We also need legislative measures and agencies that can manage them. I do defend, for example, the creation of a national agency of informatics and information technology, to establish the guidelines of this digital inclusion process.

These transformations are not possible if we do not have safe and permanent financing sources, which in the Brazilian case, also lack a clear and precise legislation. In Brazil there are a total of 1.5 billion dollars available to universalize the telecommunications infrastructure and to offer support to the computerization of schools, hospitals and public libraries. Those are resources from the Universalization Telecommunication Fund, the Fust, foreseen on the General Telecommunications Law. However, a breach on the law which has created the Fust let these resources stay at the public safes.

Digital inclusion only makes sense if the computer is no longer something exotic and starts to become a first need good, essential to the cultural, intellectual and professional citizen formation.

To end, we would like to exhibit the video that shows how, when listened and valued, the community talk and spread its values. And with the strength and energy of each one it helps to build no only a country, but a better world to everyone.

Thank you very much!

Observation: the parts written in italic and in blue are not to be read, they are only a script to the talk and to the presentation.