

GELEDÉSBLACK WOMAN INSTITUTE

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CHANGE CONFERENCE
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RECOMMENDATIONS BY GELEDÉS – BLACK WOMAN INSTITUTE

FOR THE GENDER
AND CLIMATE CHANGE
ACTION PLAN

eledés - Black Woman's Institute is a civil society organization that advocates for the rights of Black people, especially Black women, based on the understanding that these groups face disadvantages and discrimination in accessing social opportunities due to the racism and sexism present in Brazilian society. The institution provides critical contributions on the issue of climate change in Brazil, which should be considered in the context of the Gender Action Plan, highlighting the various challenges that may impact the implementation of this plan at all levels.

Recent climate disasters have highlighted that the impacts of climate change are both sexist and racist, demonstrating that climate solutions must not reinforce the social inequalities rooted in race and gender. The climate crisis does not affect everyone equally: African descendant populations, particularly women and children, bear the brunt of its worst effects, despite contributing minimally to its causes. Discriminatory practices based on race and gender, along with sociocultural norms, myths, laws, and selective public investment, create disproportionate challenges in addressing climate change, resulting in heightened impacts on women and children across all their diversities. These groups not only face exclusion from the resources necessary for adaptation but are also denied access to opportunities, goods, and services due to systemic racism. Regardless of their position within the social hierarchy, they are more vulnerable to losses and damages.

It is equally important to consider the different responsibilities behind this crisis. As demonstrated by Oxfam's "Confronting Carbon Inequality" report, the wealthiest individuals are responsible for the majority of cumulative emissions between 1990 and 2015, with most of these people living in core, industrialized countries. Additionally, these emission patterns vary greatly according to gender, race, and power relations. Generally, the most polluting companies are managed by white men from industrialized economies, who are also the main beneficiaries of activities that fuel this crisis.

Climate policies and their negotiation processes are largely patriarchal and racist, overlooking the aspirations and priorities of African descendant women. The exclusion of these women from climate policy-making means that their rights, needs, and voices are ignored.

Global economies need to confront the economic system that deepens inequalities, systemic racism, gender injustices, and environmental degradation, particularly in already vulnerable territories. However, it is increasingly clear that many of the current plans to reduce global emissions, such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), repeat patterns of systemic social and racial inequalities. In Brazil, the production and use of renewable energies, such as biofuels, for instance, affect food security and interfere with land ownership dynamics, often intensifying land concentration and threatening the rights of African descendant and quilombola women. Even solar and wind en-

ergy projects can result in land appropriation and environmental degradation, leading to the forced displacement of thousands of families led by African descendants, quilombola communities and Indigenous women.

Land, forest, and human rights advocates have long fought against extractive activities and projects that, under the banner of development, actually intensify the climate crisis. These activities put pressure on residents of the most vulnerable areas, deforest forests and other biomes, pollute the air, contaminate water sources, break community ties, and cause forced displacements. These practices are responsible for the systematic violations of the rights of African descendants, quilombola communities, rural, and Indigenous women.

ON ADAPTATION

daptation encompasses the processes and actions designed to reduce disaster risks and socio-spatial vulnerabilities while enhancing the response capacities of populations, communities, and governmental entities in the face of the global climate emergency. This crisis is driving an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme events, such as storms, droughts, and heatwaves. In the Brazilian urban context, one of the primary challenges faced by developing countries is the risk of landslides and floods, alongside issues like inadequate sanitation, limited access to potable water, insufficient ventilation, and lack of thermal comfort. If climate justice necessitates racial justice, and racial justice demands climate justice, it is evident that anti-racist climate adaptation must prioritize the political confrontation of racial and income inequalities, as well as address the housing crisis, particularly in urban peripheries.

According to the João Pinheiro Foundation¹, Brazilian housing deficit includes issues of overcrowding, poor-quality housing, and excessive rental costs. Based on the 2022 Census, it is estimated that over 6 million households are in deficit, concentrated in the country's metropolitan regions, representing over 8% of private households in need of public housing policies.

1 For more information, visit: https://fip.mg.gov.br/deficit-habitacional-no-brasil/>

Across all regions, the highest percentage of this deficit is found in households headed by women. Additionally, households headed by Black and mixed-race individuals are the most affected by overcrowding, excessive rental costs, and housing precariousness, representing approximately 66% of the total. Notably, households headed by Black individuals account for 74.2% of the deficit related to substandard housing, meaning that of the 1,682,654 precarious dwellings identified by the João Pinheiro Foundation, 1,248,831 are headed by Black people.

Moreover, a survey conducted by the National Confederation of Municipalities (CNM)² reports that over 2.5 million homes were affected by disasters between 2016 and March 2024. To examine the racial dynamics at play, a study by the Pólis Institute³ across three Brazilian capitals—Belém do Pará, Recife, and São Paulo—identified, based on official data, a pattern of socio-spatial segregation influenced by systemic racism. In each of these cities, low-income families and Black populations are concentrated in areas known as "subnormal agglomerations"—zones marked by irregular urban planning, inadequate public services, and restrictions on occupancy.

2 For more information, visit https://cnm.org.
br/biblioteca/
exibe/15316>

3 For more information, visit: https://polis.org.
br/estudos/racismo-ambiental/>

Black and low-income communities experience greater difficulty accessing essential urban infrastructure, such as sanitation and potable water, and face heightened exposure to adverse environmental conditions, leaving them more vulnerable to disaster risks.

These data underscore the need for a national adaptation policy that promotes climate and racial justice, including the fight against substandard housing through affirmative public policies that ensure safe residence for the African descendant population, with a special focus on female-headed households. In this sense, the Brazilian urban context provides a basis for formulating adaptation policies that advance climate and racial justice, by investing in urban peripheries to address housing precariousness, reduce risks, and promote response strategies, without resorting to extensive removal processes.

ON LOSS AND DAMAGE

According to the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction:

RISK MANAGEMENT aims to prevent and reduce the occurrence of disasters, making it more closely associated with adaptation measures.

PREVENTION

MITIGATION

PREPARATION

DISASTER MANAGEMENT, on the other hand, seeks to minimize and repair the impacts after a disaster occurs, thus relating to the losses and damages already incurred.

RESPONSE RECOVERY

RECONSTRUCTION

REHABILITATION

The approval of an international loss and damage fund is directly linked to the recognition that increasingly intense and frequent extreme events are already causing negative impacts. Therefore, it is essential to act to repair affected populations, encompassing:

- **RESPONSE**: Provision of emergency services and assistance during and immediately after a disaster to save lives and ensure the safety and livelihood of affected communities.
- **RECOVERY**: Restoration of livelihoods and living conditions, along with encouragement of economic, social, and environmental activities.

- **RECONSTRUCTION**: Restoration of infrastructure, housing, and essential services to support the development of affected areas.
- **REHABILITATION**: Implementation of new infrastructure and services to ensure the functioning of economic and social activities and promote transformations that make not only the affected people and communities but also society as a whole more sustainable and resilient.

The environmental racism approach recognizes that African descendant and indigenous populations are disproportionately affected by disasters, suffering greater and more frequent losses and damages. Therefore, the guidelines for a loss and damage fund should include racialized monitoring criteria and prioritize access to resources for these populations. In this context, reparation refers to the set of measures associated with disaster management as outlined in the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY GELEDÉS – BLACK WOMAN INSTITUTE

FOR CLIMATE AGENDA

ighlighting the interaction between environmental racism and other forms of social exclusion is essential. In this context, intersectional analyses of human rights violations related to the environment and climate must recognize that African descendant and Indigenous people, especially women and children, are excluded and face multiple human rights violations. The climate and environmental crisis disproportionately impact the most vulnerable communities, such as African descendants and quilombola communities in Brazil. Therefore, this form of discrimination must be acknowledged and addressed effectively in climate change discussions.

Racial and gender inequalities are intrinsically linked and must be approached in an integrated manner through a holistic approach that considers the complexity of these issues. Tackling the significant invisibility of African descendant and indigenous women in climate and development agendas is crucial. These women play a fundamental role in defending their communities and face unique challenges that require targeted solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

ALWAYS CONSIDER RACIAL ISSUES ALONGSIDE GENDER ISSUES.

- Make race and gender central to the national review and planning of NDCs and national communications, extending beyond individual sections.
- Institutionalize, within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the meaningful participation and decision-making power of African descendant populations in global and national climate governance, including African descendant women and youth from urban peripheries, rural, or quilombola communities.

ANY ACTION ON LOSS AND DAMAGE MUST ADOPT AN EXPLICIT GENDER AND RACE PERSPECTIVE TO ENSURE INEQUALITIES ARE REDUCED, NOT DEEPENED.

- Ensure any loss and damage funding is accessible to African descendant women and women's organizations, streamlining submission and funding processes through information, training, and capacity building.
- Include knowledge from territory-based experiences led by women in every phase of these actions.
- Integrate African descendant women in formulating reparation strategies and proposals—from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation stages.

AFRICAN-DESCENDANT WOMEN'S VOICES MUST BE AMPLIFIED THROUGH PROACTIVE ACTIONS. GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY MUST RECOGNIZE THEM AS RIGHTS HOLDERS AND DECISION-MAKERS, NOT JUST BENEFICIARIES.

To achieve this, the knowledge and experience gained by women within their communities and territories should lead and inform solutions to the climate crisis. In this regard:

Climate mitigation and adaptation policies should be territorially and culturally compatible with nature protection practices already in place, particularly when it comes to ancestral knowledge upheld by African descendant women, whether from urban peripheries, rural, quilombola territories, or Indigenous areas, respecting the individual and collective rights of each territory.

THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE ACTIONS VARIES BY RACE AND GENDER AND SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THROUGHOUT EFFECTIVE PROCESSES FOR PRODUCING AND GENERATING DISAGGREGATED DATA AND PERIODIC REPORTS.

These impacts cannot be overlooked by focusing solely on global or national averages that disregard race and gender. In this concern:

- All parties should produce racialized information, especially on adaptation demands and actions, and integrate this perspective in cases of loss and damage.
- All parties should establish national focal points for race and gender, maintaining constant dialogue with organizations, women's groups, and civil society working on these issues.

RACE AND GENDER MUST BE INTEGRATED INTO NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS AND DISASTER PREVENTION PLANS, RECOGNIZING AFRO-DESCENDANT WOMEN AS CAPABLE AGENTS OF CHANGE.

It is crucial to acknowledge and value the resilient traditional knowledge present in communities, based on the experiences of women in climate adaptation, governance, water and agricultural security, and their connection to human rights in decisions about the planet's future. In this sense:

We recommend that State Members provide adequate resources to women African descendants for implementation and recovery activities within their own territories.

IT IS ALSO NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT UNFCCC NEGOTIATION SPACES ARE NOT DOMINATED BY WHITE MEN AND SYSTEMIC PATRIARCHAL FORMS OF NEGOTIATION. IN THIS SENSE:

■ We recommend that State member commit to diversity and promote effective access and participation of Afro-descendant and African women in both international and national negotiation spaces.

THE DISCUSSIONS ON CLIMATE JUSTICE WITH THOSE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. IN THIS SENSE:

We recommend that the UNFCCC negotiation documents include the following paragraph of the Political Declaration of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Convened under the Auspices of the General Assembly 2023:

"We recommend that all UNFCCC negotiation documents include the following paragraph, approved in the Political Declaration of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, held under the auspices of the General Assembly in 2023: "We commit to intensifying our efforts to fight against racism, all forms of discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, stigmatization, and hate speech, through cooperation, partnership, inclusion, and respect for diversity."

E. TENDAYI ACHIUME, United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY GELEDÉS – BLACK WOMAN INSTITUTE

FOR THE NEW COLLECTIVE
QUANTIFIED GOAL ON
CLIMATE FINANCE

eledés presents the following contributions on the climate situation in Brazil, to be considered as part of the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate financing. We emphasize the inclusion of the following paragraph on racial issues, from the Political Declaration adopted at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)⁴, under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023:

"We are committed to intensifying our efforts to combat racism, discrimination in all forms, xenophobia, and related intolerance, as well as stigmatization and hate speech, at every level. We will achieve this through collaboration, partnership, inclusivity, and a deep respect for diversity."

4 For more information, visit: hlpf.un.org/sites/de-fault/files/2023-06/ Zero%20Final%20 SDG%20PD%20 Revised.pdf>

True racial justice requires the end of environmental racism, as well as fair adaptation, a racially just transition, mitigation, and the establishment of loss and damage structures that eliminate systemic racism in the global economy, political hierarchies, and legal frameworks.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Establishing new concessional climate financing instruments and mechanisms that prioritize adaptation measures and enhance the resilience of vulnerable groups in developing countries, aiming to increase the number of resources available for donations and grants.
- → Decentralizing energy generation through financial and institutional incentives to encourage community-led initiatives and small-scale renewable energy projects.
- Continuing with Geledés's recommendations for the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate financing
- Develop monitoring indicators to identify social groups most impacted by energy transition measures, with a focus on income, race, gender, and location. Special attention should be given to workers in the fossil fuel supply chains, particularly those in vulnerable and precarious conditions, to promote their productive and financial inclusion.

- Encourage global cooperation for sustainable development through data sharing, science, technology, and innovation cooperation, and the mobilization of additional financial resources for the countries in greatest need, in alignment with SDG 17, "Partnerships for the Goals."
- Integrate race and gender into national adaptation and disaster prevention plans, ensuring African descendant women's participation in policy formulation, implementation, and recovery processes, with adequate access to economic and political resources.
- Ensure public climate funding from developed countries to support climate adaptation in the most vulnerable regions of developing nations.
- Provide access to financing for small-scale adaptation projects using prioritization indicators that recognize African descendant women and socio-territorial organizations, while simplifying submission and accountability processes through clear information and capacity-building initiatives.

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS AIM TO ENSURE THAT CLIMATE FINANCING AND ADAPTATION INITIATIVES ADDRESS STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES, PRIORITIZE RACIAL AND GENDER JUSTICE, AND EMPOWER MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES TO ENGAGE MEANINGFULLY IN CLIMATE RESILIENCE EFFORTS.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY GELEDÉS – BLACK WOMAN INSTITUTE

FOR THE GLOBAL OBJECTIVE OF ADAPTATION

n light of the situation regarding climate change in Brazil, Geledés works to ensure that environmental racism is recognized by national and international authorities. This concept was formulated to demonstrate that the impacts of environmental degradation and injustices are racially unequal, necessitating the reorientation of political institutions, economic systems, and legal principles to implement anti-racist measures for adaptation, mitigation, and reparations for losses and damages. This position is based on the recognition of systemic racism, historically shaped by a long process of racialization of African descendant and indigenous populations, and on the deliberate institutional actions that maintain African descendant populations in a state of ongoing social, political, and economic vulnerability worldwide.

Even amidst increasing pressure from Black movements globally for the racial dimension of the climate crisis to be acknowledged, the African descendant population has yet to be incorporated with the necessary importance in international documents and negotiations. The following recommendations engage with this context and with recent positions in the global climate agenda. They are based on the principle that environmental and climate justice requires racial justice, and that racial justice, in turn, necessitates environmental and climate justice.

It is also crucial to align discussions on environmental and climate justice with the sustainable development agenda, which has recently committed

to intensifying efforts to combat racism, all forms of discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, stigmatization, and hate speech through cooperation, partnerships, inclusion, and respect for diversity. In this context, Brazil's inclusion of a paragraph on racial issues in the last Political Declaration adopted at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 4, under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023, stands out:

"We commit to intensifying our efforts in the fight against racism, all forms of discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, stigmatization, and hate speech at all levels, through cooperation, partnership, and inclusion, with respect for diversity."

It is essential to emphasize that environmental racism interacts with other forms of social exclusion. Intersectional analyses of human rights violations related to the environment and climate must recognize that women face distinct human rights violations and continue to be excluded from spaces of political formulation and deliberation. This discrimination needs to be recognized and addressed. It is also considered that the climate crisis is a humanitarian crisis unfolding in a highly unequal social context. In other words, it overlaps with conditions of income vulnerability, housing precarity, and social markers that impose greater difficulties on African descendant, quilombola communities, and

indigenous populations. To deny environmental racism is to ignore the systemic racism that permeates the nation, as well as the reality of urban peripheries, the rise of hunger, and the violation of constitutional rights of communities, quilombola territories, and indigenous lands. It is to deny the country's history of urbanization and its deep territorial inequalities. This dynamic, which also affects other nations, must be highlighted in all documents, negotiations, and global pacts.

Finally, the African descendant population is disproportionately concentrated in "global sacrifice zones" – regions that have become dangerous and even uninhabitable due to environmental degradation. These areas can be more precisely described as "racial sacrifice zones," as they mainly encompass the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples, as well as Black and peripheral territories that face the worst impacts of climate change. This underscores the need for climate adaptation measures that take racial and territorial inequalities into account.

Adaptation, in this context, refers to socio-spatial adjustment processes aimed at reducing disaster risks and vulnerabilities, as well as increasing the response capacities of populations, communities, and government entities in the face of the global climate emergency, which intensifies extreme events. For Geledés, adaptation policies aimed at addressing racial sacrifice zones must include measures for permanence, such as reducing housing precarity and

providing qualified urban infrastructure. As highlighted by the concept of Anti-Racist Climate Adaptation, formulated by organizations within the Anti-Racist Adaptation Network:

"Anti-racist climate adaptation is the confrontation of racial, gender, generational, social, regional, and territorial inequalities through a set of structuring, intersectional, and intersectoral public policies. These policies must focus on ensuring the well-being of vulnerable lives and conserving biomes through structural and emergency measures. Anti-racist adaptation policies, in their conception, planning, financing, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, must incorporate knowledge, solutions, and popular, ancestral, and traditional practices, considering the specificities of territories. Their effectiveness aims to reduce the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis and extreme climate events, which primarily affect Black, indigenous, quilombola, traditional, peripheral, and favela populations, in rural areas, cities, forests, and waters."

(Anti-Racist Adaptation Network, 2024)

In Brazilian urban territories, the greatest challenges to be addressed in this realm are the risks of landslides and flooding, as well as issues related to sanitation, access to potable water, ventilation, and thermal comfort. If climate justice needs racial justice, and racial justice requires climate justice, an anti-racist climate adaptation in cities must substantially address the political dimension of the housing crisis, particularly in cities peripheries.

IN RELATION TO THE STATEMENT ABOVE, GELEDÉS RE-INFORCES THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

RACIAL ISSUES MUST ALWAYS BE CONSIDERED WHEN GENDER ISSUES ARE ADDRESSED. THIS DEMANDS A HOLISTIC APPROACH THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE COMPLEXITIES INVOLVED IN ADDRESSING THE SIGNIFICANT INVISIBILITY OF WOMEN AFRICAN DESCENT AND INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN CLIMATE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENDAS. THESE WOMEN PLAY A FUNDAMENTAL ROLE ON THE FRONT LINES OF DEFENDING THEIR COMMUNITIES AND FACE UNIQUE CHALLENGES THAT MUST BE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED.

AS A RESULT OF THIS GENERAL RECOMMENDATION, WE PRESENT MORE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Recognize the differentiated impacts of climate change in terms of race and gender through effective data collection processes and periodic reporting that go beyond global or national averages.
- Foster the production of data on environmental racism in racially vulnerable areas and develop qualitative diagnostics on racial sacrifice zones, in order to improve the quality of information and expand access to data that can support negotiations.
- Recognize the differentiated impacts of climate change in terms of race and gender through effective data collection processes and periodic reporting that go beyond global or national averages.
- Foster the production of data on environmental racism in racially vulnerable areas and develop qualitative diagnostics on racial sacrifice zones, in order to improve the quality of information and expand access to data that can support negotiations.

- Highlight the resilient traditional knowledge developed in communities and territories, including peripheral urban areas, especially the ones occupied by women, concerning climate adaptation, governance, water security, and agriculture, and its connection to Human Rights in decision-making about the planet's future.
- Increase the titling of quilombola territories, ensuring access to land and the permanence of these communities which are recognized as guardians of the diverse biomes where they have settled.
- Develop qualitative indicators and methodologies to size the impacts of local adaptation measures.
- Expand governance structures for climate adaptation, including the participation of African descendant organizations, leaders, groups, and collectives, especially youth, undocumented migrants, refugees, climate-displaced persons, women, and other stakeholders in the planning and implementation of adaptation actions.
- Ensure public climate financing from developed countries in order to support climate adaptation in the most vulnerable regions of developing countries.

- Provide access to funding for small-scale adaptation projects, with prioritization indicators that consider African descendant women and socio-territorial organizations, simplifying submission and reporting processes through accessible information and training.
- Reduce the number of deaths from climate-related disasters
- Strengthen the links between climate adaptation and urban policy, promoting actions and measures in urban peripheries aimed at reducing disaster risks, providing free and high-quality infrastructure and urban services, and ensuring secure permanence through social housing.
- Give notoriety to resilient traditional knowledge in communities and territories, including urban peripheries, especially by women, in relation to climate adaptation, governance, water security, and agriculture, and its connection to human rights in decision-making about the planet's future.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY GELEDÉS – BLACK WOMAN INSTITUTE

FOR THE JUST
TRANSITION WORKING
PROGRAM

s part of the Brazilian Black movement, Geledés has deepened discussions, developed proposals, and promoted debates at both national and international levels to achieve recognition of environmental racism by authorities. We consider this recognition an essential step in addressing the disproportionality of impacts resulting from the global climate emergency context.

The concept of environmental racism is based on the acknowledgment of systemic racism, formed through a historical process of racialization of African descendant and indigenous populations, as well as deliberate institutional actions that keep these populations in conditions of social, political, and economic vulnerability. In all regions of the planet, the African descendant population is disproportionately concentrated in sacrifice zones—regions where life-threatening environmental degradation predominates. This reality must be confronted as a historical and political fact, resulting in economic and political gains for some while subjecting many to extreme hardship.

Measures for a just transition must be formulated in light of environmental and climate justice. Therefore, all commitments made must address global inequalities, as well as foresee and mitigate the disproportionality of damages and losses across multiple levels and dimensions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Bring the just transition work plan closer to the sustainable development agenda, which recognized the racial issue in the Political Declaration adopted at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 5 held in September 2023 under the auspices of the General Assembly. The document emphasizes the need to enhance cooperation, partnerships, inclusion, and respect for diversity, as well as to intensify efforts to combat racism, discrimination, xenophobia, related intolerance, stigmatization, and hate speech.
- Institutionalize participation mechanisms for the formulation of policies and the reception of reports of human rights violations in the context of a just transition. This recommendation aims to ensure the inclusion of African descendant populations in global and national climate governance, as well as to guarantee gender and racial diversity in decision-making positions.

- Decentralize energy generation through financial and institutional incentives, promoting community initiatives and smallscale projects aimed at renewable energy generation.
- Reduce energy inequalities, both nationally and internationally, and expand access to clean energy technologies, ensuring equity in the supply and use of energy.
- Develop monitoring indicators to identify social groups most impacted by energy transition measures, with emphasis on income, color, ethnicity, gender, and locality. Special attention should be given to individuals employed in fossil fuel supply chains, especially those in more vulnerable work situations and poorer conditions, with the goal of promoting the productive and financial inclusion of the most affected workers.



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