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## Macro

### Middle class represents 52% of the population of Brazil

#### Agência Brasil\*

Brasília – The Brazilian middle class reached 51.89% of the country's population in April 2008. The group in the middle class, with average household income ranging from 1,064 Brazilian reais (US\$ 676) and 4,591 reais (US\$ 2,920) exceeded the average peak of 2004, when it represented 42.49% of Brazilians.

The figures were disclosed yesterday (5) by Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV), which attributed the advance of middle classes in the six metropolitan regions studied to greater employment and to the good performance of the Brazilian economy despite foreign crises.

"Brazil has done its homework over the last 20 years and is reaping the rewards," stated the economist responsible for the research, Marcelo Néri. According to him, the climb made by part of the population is also explained by the generation of income. "That is, people are making their own money and depend less on government income transfer programs."

Based on a monthly employment research by the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and considering figures by the Ministry of Labour, the FGV study has also identified lower social inequality and extreme poverty, which dropped 30% over the last six years.

In April this year, 25.6% of the population was considered extremely poor. This is the lowest rate since 2002, but shows that 36 million Brazilians are in this category, according to the study, with a household income of less than 768 reais (US\$ 489) per month.

**\*Translated by Mark Ament**

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