

**X Regional Meeting of Latin America and Caribbean country
Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification
(UNCCD)**

***São Luís, Maranhão – Brazil
August 29-31, 2005***

Participant's Guide

São Luís

Population: 870,028 inhabitants, according to the 2000 IBGE Census. Currently approximately 1.000.000.

Geography: The city of São Luís, capital of the State of Maranhão, is located in an island at the North-East of Brazil, 24 meters above the sea level, at latitude 2°31' south and longitude 44°16' west. It was founded in 1612 by Daniel de La Touche and has an area of 828 square kilometers. Neighbors of the Upaon Açú Island are the districts of São José do Ribamar, Paço do Lumiar and Raposa.

Distances: Brasília (2.157 km), São Paulo (2.970 km) and Recife (1573 km).

Official Language: Portuguese

Currency: Real (R\$)

Economy: Commerce, industry, fishery and tourism.

Site of the X LAC Regional Meeting

The X LAC Regional Meeting in the framework of the UNCCD will take place Monday 29th until Wednesday 31st August, 2005, in Sao Luis, at the São Luís Park Hotel located in Avenida Avicência s/nº, Calhau Beach.

It is recommended to the participants to go directly to the Hotel after the arrival in São Luís.

At the moment of the registration in the Hotel, please make reference to the GRULAC meeting.

Tel + 55 98 2106-0505

Fax + 55 98 3235-4921

Site: www.saoluisparkhotel.com.br

Immigration Procedures

For participation in congresses and seminars (without payments done in Brazil), business visa is the appropriate.

The validity of a business visa varies from country to country, depending on the government's reciprocity agreements. Basically, the rules are the same as the ones applied to the tourism visa. This means a visa that allows multiple entries, valid for a period of a maximum of five years, with a stay permit limited to ninety days renewable for one more time, totalizing a stay of maximum 180 (one hundred and eighty) days every 12 months, as of the first entry to Brazil.

NOTE: Vaccination against yellow fever is compulsory in the area of São Luís

Visa Requirements:

The requirement for obtaining business visa before entrance to Brazil is not applied to all foreign citizens. As well as in the cases for tourism visa, the position is based mainly in the international reciprocity agreements. Citizens of the countries who require visa to enter Brazil are listed in Annex 1.

Those who do not need to request visa before entrance in Brazil are required to present their valid passport or any other document, if applicable (for example, personal identity card). It will also be required to fill out an international embarkation/disembarkation card. These documents are distributed during the international flights upon entering or leaving Brazil.

The procedures for obtaining such visa are essentially the same applied for the tourism visa, with an additional requirement that the employer of the traveller shall issue a letter, using letter-head paper, stating the type and purpose of the trip. It must also be mentioned the length of the trip and that the bearer will not receive payment in Brazil.

Some Brazilian consulates in the world still ask the citizens to submit an official declaration certifying that were not involved in criminal acts. For additional information, please visit the site: www.mre.gov.br

Embassies in Brasília

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

www.alemanha.org.br

Tel: (61) 3443-7000

Fax: (61) 3443-7508

E-mail: info.brasilia@alemanha.org.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARGENTINA

www.embarg.org.br

Tel: (61) 3364-7600

Fax: (61) 3364-7666

E-mail: embajador@embarg.org.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOLIVIA

www.embolivia-Brazil.org.br

Tel: (61) 3366-3432

Fax: (61) 3366-3136

E-mail: embolivia.Brazilia@embolivia.org.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

www.embcol.org.br

Tel: (61) 3226-8997/8902

Fax: (61) 3224-4732

E-mail: embjcol@embcol.org.br

EMBASSY OF SPAIN

(Monarchy)

Tel: (61) 3244-2776/ 2023

Fax: (61) 3242-1781

E-mail: embespbr@correo.mae.es

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF FRANCE

www.ambafrance.org.br

Tel: (61) 3312-9100/9106/9107

Fax: (61) 3312-9108

E-mail: france@ambafrance.org.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA

Tel: (61) 3365-1908/1909

Fax: (61) 3365-1906

E-mail: embaguatebra@terra.com.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

Tel: (61) 3248-0874/0875

Fax: (61) 3248-0886

E-mail: embguyana@brturbo.com

EMBASSY OF HOLLAND

(Monarchy)

www.embaixada-holanda.org.br

Tel: (61) 3321-4769

Fax: (61) 3321-1518

E-mail: bra@minbuza.nl

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY

www.embitalia.org.br

Tel: (61) 3442-9900

Fax: (61) 3443-1231

E-mail: embitcom@embitalia.org.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA

Tel: (61) 3248-1115/7902

Fax: (61) 3364-3909

E-mail: embanibra@terra.com.br

EMBASSY OF NORWAY

(Monarchy)

www.noruega.org.br

Tel: (61) 3443-8720/8722

Fax: (61) 3443-2942

E-mail: emb.Brazilia@mfa.no

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF DOMINICANA

Tel: (61) 3248-1405

Fax: (61) 3364-3214

E-mail: embajdomBrazil@nutecnet.com.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SWITZERLAND

www.dfae.admin.ch/Brazilia

Tel: (61) 3443-5500

Fax: (61) 3443-5711

E-mail: vertretung@bra.rep.admin.ch

EMBASSY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

www.delbra.cec.eu.int

Tel: (61) 2104-3122

Fax: (61) 2104-3141

E-mail: delegation-Brazil@cec.eu.int

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

www.embvenezuela.org.br

Tel: (61) 3322-1011/2101-1011

Fax: (61) 3226-5633

E-mail: embaixada@embvenezuela.org.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA

www.embaixadacuba.org.br

Tel: (61) 3248-4710/4517

Fax: (61) 3248-6778

E-mail: embacuba@uol.com.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR

www.elsalvador.hpg.com.br

Tel: (61) 3364-4141/3364-3044

Fax: (61) 3364-2459

E-mail: brasemb@es.com.sv

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF HONDURAS

www.embhonduras@ig.com.br

Tel: (61) 3366-4082

Fax: (61) 3366-4618

E-mail: embhonduras@ig.com.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF PORTUGAL

www.embaixadadeportugal.org.br

Tel: (61) 3032-9600

Fax: (61) 3032-9642

E-mail: embaixadadeportugal@embaixadadeportugal.org.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Tel: (61) 3365-3466/1132/3572

Fax: (61) 3365-1733

E-mail: trimbago@terra.com.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE

Tel: (61) 2103-5151

Fax: (61) 2103-2966/ 0714

E-mail: embchile@embchile.org.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF EQUATOR

www.ecuador.org.br

Tel: (61) 3248-5560/5660
Fax: (61) 3248-1290
E-mail: embeq@solar.com.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF HAITI

Tel: (61) 3248-6860/ 1337
Fax: (61) 3248-7472
E-mail: embhaiti@zaz.com.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MÉXICO

www.mexico.org.br
Tel: (61) 3244-1011/1211/1411
Fax: (61) 3244-1755/3866
E-mail: embamexbra@cabonet.com.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

Tel: (61) 3248-7309
Fax: (61) 3248-2834
E-mail: empanama@conectanet.com.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF PARAGUAY

Tel: (61) 3242-3732/ 3244-9449
Fax: (61) 3242-4605
E-mail: embapar@yawe.com.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF PERU

www.embperu.org.br
Tel: (61) 3242-9435/9835/9933
Fax: (61) 3244-9344
E-mail: embperu@embperu.org.br

**EMBASSY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
(Monarchy)**

www.uk.org.br
Tel: (61) 3225-2710/2745
Fax: (61) 3329-2369
E-mail: contato@reinounido.org.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

Tel: (61) 3248-3595/6706
Fax: (61) 3248-3791
E-mail: surinameemb@terra.com.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY

www.emburuguai.org.br
Tel: (61) 3322-1200/4533/1785
Fax: (61) 3322-6534
E-mail: urubras@emburuguai.org.br

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF UNITED STATES

www.embaixadaamericana.org.br
Tel: (61) 3312-7000
Fax: (61) 3312-7676
E-mail: contact@embaixadaamericana.org.br

Climate

The climate is tropical, hot and semi-humid in the Equatorial zone. São Luís has two different seasons: the summer, from July to December, and the winter, from January to June. The summer is hot and dry with cool winds and the winter is rainy. The yearly pluviometric average is of 1953 mm and the temperature usually ranges from 23° - 33° C.

Timetable

São Luís has Brasília's official hour (Timetable 3hs GMT).

São Luís is 2hs20' flight from Brasília and 3hs40' flight from São Paulo.

In São Luís, the sun sets at 6 a.m. and turns out at 6 p.m.

Currency

The Real (R\$) is the official currency. In circulation, there are metal coins from 1 cent up to 1 Real and paper and plastics of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 Reais.

The official exchange in relation to the North-American dollar varies daily. On August 1st, it was: 1 US\$ = R\$ 2.38.

Exchange

Preferably, the currency exchange should be done at the central agency of the Banco do Brasil, located at the traditional Praça Deodoro s/nº, downtown.

Credit Cards

Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Diners Club international credit cards are accepted.

How to arrive

The main way to arrive in São Luís is through the International Airport of Guarulhos in São Paulo, from where the flights operated by the Brazilian companies TAM, Varig and GOL arrive in the International Airport of São Luís.

Government and Politics

The Prefect of the District is Dr. Tadeu Palácio, elected in 2004 for a mandate of 4 years. In the District Chamber, there are 21 official administrators.

The District is the headquarters of the capital of the State of Maranhão, whose major is Eng^o José Reinaldo Tavares, elected in 2002 for a mandate of 4 years. The Legislative Assembly of the State has 42 deputies.

Maranhão is one of the 27 Federative Units of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

The President of Brazil is Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, elected in 2002 for a mandate of 4 years. The Legislative and Judicial Courts are presided by Senator Renan Calheiros and Judge Nelson Jobim, respectively.

More about São Luís, Maranhão and Brazil

The city was founded by a French expedition in 1612 and taken over by the Portuguese in 1615.

The local culture has a strong Portuguese colonial inheritance as well as African and Indigenous presences.

It has attractive beaches, beautiful handcrafts, delicious foods and regional beverages.

The official creation date of São Luís is September 8 (local holiday).

Maranhão has the only National Park of Dunes and Palaedunes of the Country with 155 thousands of hectares, *Lençóis Maranhenses* 300 km far away the Capital, in the Sand Region (North East of the State).

In the eastern region of the State, the climate is sub-humid, dry and semi-arid, with vegetation characteristics of *Cerrado* (Brazilian savanna), *Caatinga* (Brazilian stunted sparse forest) and *Cocais* (grove of coconut palms).

The average index of human development in Maranhão is 0.647, the second lowest of Brazil.

The official date of Maranhão is July 28th, occasion when the State joined the Brazilian Empire in 1823.

The national Brazilian date is September 7th, in commemoration of the Independence of Portugal, declared in 1822.

The Federative Republic of Brazil was proclaimed on November 15th, 1889.

Brazil, especially its Northeastern region, is considered a warming country, with nice and happy people.

For security reasons, special care should be taken with valuable items such as jewelry, credit cards and cash. When away from the meeting place, recommendation is given to be unnoticeable and to stay in groups.

Phones for Tourism Purposes

Tourist Info

Telephone - (98) 244-4500

Government Tourism Office

Address - Av. Jerônimo de Albuquerque, s/n - Ed. Clodomir Milet, 5º Andar - Calhau

Zip Code - 65051-200

Telephone - (98) 227-5566

Fax - (98) 227-5564

E-mail - planomaior@geplan.ma.gov.br

Touristical Information Desk

Address - Praça Deodoro - Centro

Open - Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Municipal Tourism Foundation

Address - Praça Benedito Leite s/n - Palácio do Comércio - Térreo - Centro

Telephone - (98) 231-9086 / 231-9085

Services - Guides, maps, library, exhibition room and bilingual attention.

Open - Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturdays and holiday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Useful Telephones

Police - 190

Civil Police - 147

Military Police - (98) 235-4766 / 235-2159

Electricity (Requests/Informations) - 120

24-hours Drugstores - 136