

In Brazil, the COVID-19 pandemic scenario is not at all hopeful - 2020.04.27

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Sergio Makrakis is Associate Professor and researcher at the University of the State of Western Paraná, in Brazil, and specialist in evaluating the impacts of passes for migrating fish on fish populations and an IFGR's member. He also evaluates the impacts of hydropower plants on fish. In particular, he was in charge of evaluating the longest fish pass downstream of the Iguçu falls, and of analysing hydropower feasibility studies on the Mekong River with respect to fish migrations.



Sergio Makrakis @IFGR

While our Argentinean members are worried about the harsh recession that will follow the coronavirus pandemic, Sergio Makrakis gives us

an update on the health situation in Brazil, one of the states in the world that has been slow to implement containment measures.

When the first news of a deadly virus arrived in December 2019, which had the epicenter in the city of Wugan, in China, Brazil remained indifferent, celebrated its traditional carnival in February, underestimating its great destructive power. However, when the shocking images and videos began to arrive, mainly from Italy, the population began to realize that those fictional movies about pandemics could become a reality for us too.

When the first cases of contaminants began to appear in some Brazilian cities, state governments, mayors of many cities and their populations began to make decisions, such as adopting social distancing, with the closing of shops and stores, maintaining only essential services, adoption of hygiene measures mainly to wash the hands and use of alcohol in gel. We know that currently the most efficient measure for controlling the spread of

Sars-Cov-2 is social isolation, supported by tests to identify the presence of COVID-19 in people who may have been potentially infected.

However, the federal government, in the person of President Jair Bolsonaro, has not set a good example. He has constantly participated in demonstrations with crowds of people, asking people to go back to work. It is clear that, always after these demonstrations, many people stop staying in their homes, increasing the crowds in the streets. This stance by the country's largest leader has created tensions with the states, which has forced the Supreme Court to decide that decisions on social distancing must be the responsibility of governors and mayors.

The fact that most states and municipalities started the social isolation, with some antecedence, this may have contributed to the flattening of the population contamination curve.

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However, in addition to the disarticulation of the federal government, municipalities are under pressure from local businesspeople for commercial activities to return, that is, the opening of stores and commerce in general. The number of tests carried out has also been another factor for more effective control of the pandemic in the country. The extreme dependence on imported inputs explains Brazil's precarious situation in testing for the new coronavirus. Even only examining seriously ill, dead, health professionals - and with recognized underreporting - the country is already the 11th in the world in cases and the least tested among the 15 most affected countries.

Today (04/27/2020) Brazil has 63,100 confirmed cases, 30,152 recovered, 4,286 deaths and a mortality rate about 5.0%, which may be underestimated due to the lack of tests. We have not yet reached the peak of the pandemic, but what is expected is very worrying. However, many hospitals are already starting to have their beds fully occupied.



Homeless people in Rio de Janeiro

Experts comment that large centers such as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, mainly in the favelas that live in poor and high density populations, unfortunately, the situation in these places may become dramatic soon. **The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) presented this Tuesday (21st) a projection of GDP performances in Latin America in view of the impact of the new coronavirus pandemic.** In the presentation, Alicia Bárcena, the entity's Executive Secretary, said that the region could contract by 5.3% in 2020. Brazil would have a decrease of 5.2%.



In mid-March, the Brazilian government adopted a 147.3 billion real (26 billion euros) plan to support the economy during the coronavirus crisis.