



Geodiversity and geoconservation in Brazil

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Brazil is a large country with a wide diversity of landscapes and geological features and has been an important world producer of mineral resources. Despite this, until the 90's of last century, there has not been much concern and policies about geological heritage and geoconservation. Only at the end of the century the National Geological Service (CPRM) included the physical characterization of areas with geotouristic interest in its mission of generation and diffusion of geological information. In 1997, was created the Brazilian Commission of Geological and Paleobiological Sites (SIGEP, <http://sigep.cprm.gov.br>), responsible for the assessment, description and publicizing the sites of geological heritage. This is by now the most comprehensive and relevant initiative to protect the national heritage. It is composed by a fully accessible national database composed by 167 certified sites presented as scientific papers. Furthermore, a web-based applicative for the inventory and protection of geological heritage sites is being developed by the National Geological Service. The wider knowledge about geological heritage can be a useful tool for its conservation and this has been an important goal in the creation of protected areas, by means of environmental education and tourism. In Brazil, actions, research and publications about the subject have increased in the last five years, as well as the outreach and responsible use of the geological heritage. Scientific meetings, conferences and courses are growing and spreading around the country. The main scientific meeting has been the Brazilian Symposium of Geological Heritage that in its second edition (2013) had more than 200 papers presented. At that meeting it was also created the Association in Defence of the Geomining Heritage and the Association of Aspiring Geoparks. Brazil has only one geopark in the Unesco's Global Geopark Network, that is the Araripe Geopark, created in 2006. By the moment, propositions are being prepared in eight states of the country. Movements and activities have been developed to widen the understanding of geological features in many states, which include interpretative panels, training of monitors, publication of folders and educational leaflets. Geotourism is being stimulated both as a way to protect the geological heritage sites and as a source of jobs and income to local communities. Still, the strengthening of geoconservation in Brazil depends on a change of strategies related to geological heritage: they include education, the suitable use of resources and coordinated activities. Public policies about sustainable use of natural resources from local to national levels have to take into account geodiversity and its protection.