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Bush Aide Lauds Brazil's Efforts To Fight AIDS, Poverty

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SAO PAULO - The top U.S. envoy for public diplomacy on Monday described Brazil as a hemispheric leader and praised Latin America's largest country for its efforts to combat AIDSs, poverty and drug trafficking.

Karen Hughes, Undersecretary of State of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, made her remarks while addressing close to 150 journalism students at Sao Paulo's Mackenzie University.

Hughes arrived in this city on Sunday from Chile, where she accompanied Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to the inauguration of that country's new president Michelle Bachelet.

Hughes said Brazil should be commended for helping Portuguese-speaking African nations, like Mozambique, combat HIV/AIDs and for leading the United Nations peacekeeping forces in Haiti. She highlighted President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's Zero Hunger program - a food distribution program that seeks to eradicate hunger among the estimated 54 million Brazilians who live on a dollar a day or less. - and said President George W. Bush has doubled U.S. development assistance to Latin America.

Hughes told the students that that Brazil and the U.S. work closely together to fight terrorists and drug lords that she said threaten the survival of the rule of law in the region.

Hughes also met with opinion makers - economists, sociologists, and media leaders - and visited a slum where a Brazilian organization sponsors a social inclusion program for underprivileged children. She was scheduled to leave Tuesday for Colombia - the third leg of her trip that also includes Panama and El Salvador.

[See the topic on aegis.org](http://aegis.org)