



Nilcéa Freire, born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1952, has occupied the post of Minister of the Special Secretariat for Policies for Women (SPM) as of February 2004. As Minister, she has organized and coordinated, in partnership with the National Women's Rights Council, the 1st National Conference on Policies for Women. From this event resulted the guidelines for the National Plan for Policies for Women (PNPM), which went into effect in December, 2004. The PNPM is being implemented as of January, 2005 and targets four strategic areas: autonomy and equality in the workplace and in citizenship; women's health, sexual and reproductive rights; non-sexist and inclusive education and the confronting of violence against women.

As head of the SPM, she was also a pro-tempore chair of the Mercosur Specialized Meeting on Women during the second half of 2004, and is the Brazilian delegate at the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference on Women (CEPAL) and member of its supervising council. She is also head Brazilian delegate at the Inter-American Commission of Women (OEA), which she has presided since October, 2004.

More recently, Nilcéa was named "Personalidade Cidadania 2006" in recognition of her work as Minister, and as Dean of the Rio de Janeiro State University - UERJ. This award is sponsored by UNESCO, the Brazilian Press Association, and Folha Dirigida (a Rio de Janeiro media company) through an election of a jury comprised of 2500 people.

Nilcéa is a physician and a university professor, and graduated from the Rio de Janeiro State University, Medical Sciences School in 1978. She is divorced and the mother of two children.

Due to her involvement in student movements, she was forced to interrupt her studies and resided in Mexico between 1975 and 1977.

Her graduate studies began with her medical residence at the Rio de Janeiro State University, Medical Sciences School, followed by a Master's degree in Zoology at the National Museum of the Rio de Janeiro Federal University. In both her Medical Residence and in her Master's studies, she conducted research on parasites that are responsible for large epidemics in Brazil, especially *Schistosoma mansoni*, whose transmission cycle between rodents and humans was the focus of her Master's dissertation (concluded in 1985), and of a research internship at the National Natural History Museum of Paris, in the Parasite Zoology Laboratory, in 1984.

In 1980, she was admitted to the faculty of the UERJ, in the Pathology and Laboratories Department, where she taught Parasitology to biomedical students, having also participated in several research projects, the most important of which was *Esquistossomosi mansoni* in Sumidouro, in the state of Rio de Janeiro: its ecological and epidemiological aspects and comparative study of strains isolated in humans and rodents, in conjunction with the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation and with the support of CNPq, of which several publications were produced, as well as participations in national and international congresses and seminars.

Also as professor of UERJ, she has held posts politically representing faculty members on a departmental level, as well as in the higher councils of said institution, having also been honored, on several occasions, by the student body. As of 1988, she became involved in university management, which motivated her to do specialized graduate studies in university administration in 1992, sponsored by the Brazilian University Council of Deans and the Inter-American University Organization, and participated in a practical internship in Canada, overseeing the University Leadership and Management Institute.

She was counsel for the UERJ Graduate Studies and Research Vice Dean's office from 1988 to 1991, and Budget and

Planning Director of said university from 1992 to 1995, when she was elected Vice-Dean of the university for the 1996-1999 period.

At the end of 1999, she was elected Dean of UERJ for the 2000-2003 mandate, being the first woman to hold such a post in public universities in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

In 2002, she chaired the Rio de Janeiro State Education Council, and during the last two years of her mandate at UERJ she was actively involved in the implementation of the quota systems for Rio de Janeiro public school students and for afro-descendants.

On 23 January, 2004, by invitation of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, she assumed the post of Minister of the Special Secretariat for Policies for Women of the Presidency of the Republic.