

# *Rousseff and Neves Debate Economic Issues*

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Brasilia, October 15 (teleSUR-RHC), -- Dilma Rousseff, Brazil's president and incumbent candidate in the upcoming presidential runoff on Oct. 26, and runner up Aécio Neves held the first debate to discuss their economic differences.

Rousseff defended the role of the public bank, which has extended preferential credit to citizens, as well as to industrial sectors with problems.

Neves said that Brazil should follow a path of social and economic growth, while the Workers' Party candidate, on the other hand, stressed access to pre-school education for four and five year old children, 86 percent of whom are now enrolled in such programs.

After Neves read off a list of corruption accusations, Rousseff responded "I've spent my entire life combating corruption."

The president said she has gone after those accused of corruption in her own government, forcing out several Cabinet ministers at the beginning of her term after they faced accusations of wrongdoing.

The debate, organized by the Band television channel, is the first out of four to be held before the runoff.

The chief executive proposed a “new government administration with new ideas,” with a focus on education, health services and citizen security. Neves admitted that Brazil has “improved a great deal in recent decades,” during the administration of Lula da Silva, Rousseff’s mentor.

The next two debates will be held this coming Thursday and Sunday. The final televised encounter between Rousseff and Neves will be on Friday, October 24, just two days before 142.8 million Brazilians go to the polls.

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