

## Brazilian Backlands to Get 50,000 New Cisterns

Contributed by Bianca Estrella  
Saturday, 19 March 2005

US\$ 25 million (68.7 million reais ) will be spent in 2005 on the construction of 50 thousand cisterns in the semi-arid region of Northeast Brazil and in the states of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo.

The funds will be transferred by the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Alleviation (MDS) to the Semi-Arid Coordination (ASA), a forum of non-governmental and social organizations that work in the region.

The goal is to surpass last year's total of 35 thousand cisterns and reach 250 thousand people this year, thus improving the living conditions and availability of consumable water for the semi-arid region's rural population.

The program also is meant to facilitate access to a simple and efficient structure for gathering and storing rainwater for sustainable use.

Each cistern costs, on the average, US\$ 540 (1.5 thousand reais) and can hold up to 16 thousand liters of potable water.

According to the MDS's secretary of Food and Nutritional Security, José Giacomo Baccarfin, the cistern construction project will be part of the Family Grant social program:

"The idea is to have integrated actions that stimulate the creation of jobs and income, giving people more access to education, health, and better living conditions," he affirmed.

ABr