

40 Million Brazilians Have No Water to Drink

Contributed by Aline Beckestein
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"It behooves us to remember that 40 million people in the country today do not have access to potable water and that over 70% of the pediatric hospitalizations in Brazil are caused by diseases transmitted by contaminated water," affirms Samuel Barreto, coordinator of the Water for Life Program of the WWF-Brazil (World Wildlife Foundation - Brazil).

On Sunday, June 5, the non-governmental organization WWF-Brazil sponsored an event in commemoration of World Environment Day and on behalf of streams and the promotion of access to potable water for the Brazilian population.

A faucet spouting water into an inflatable bucket nearly 15 meters high was placed in front of the statue of Christ the Redeemer.

Barreto also said that the demonstration underlined the need to protect bodies of water, tributaries, and wooded areas.

According to him, the situation is critical in various Brazilian states, and he cited the case of Rio, which basically depends upon a single source that conveys water from the Paraíba do Sul River to the Guandu River, supplying nearly 80% of the population in the metropolitan area, around eight million people.

"In the last 10 years this source has been suffering heavy impacts, ranging from uncontrolled urban expansion in the Campo Grande and Santa Cruz region, through which part of the Guandu Basin passes, to clandestine activities, such as mining, deforestation, burnings, and trash dumps."

The environmentalist also criticized the delay in the Guanabara Bay cleanup, "which has already consumed millions of dollars and has still not presented a meaningful result."

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