

Brazil's Oil Industry Is Short 32,000 of Technicians

Contributed by Agência Brasil
Monday, 11 July 2005

Brazil lacks specialized technical personnel to act in some expanding sectors of the economy, such as petroleum, steel, and shipbuilding.

This observation was made by the secretary of Professional and Technological Education of the Ministry of Education (MEC), Antônio Ibañez Ruiz.

In his view, the lack of middle-level technicians can jeopardize the country's development.

Ruiz explained that the specialized labor deficit can be overcome by investments in technical schools.

"Brazil is creating various growth poles, such as the shipbuilding industry and agribusiness, and it really needs a large quantity of technicians," he affirmed.

According to the secretary, the petroleum and gas sector, for example, will need 50 thousand technicians by 2007, and the market can only provide 18 thousand.

"The demand is enormous. Around US\$ 80 billion will be invested in this sector by 2010, and we don't have personnel," Ruiz observed.

Another example is the steel sector in Maranhão, where new mills will be implanted that, according to the secretary, can double steel production in Brazil by 2008.

There is a Federal Technological Education Center in the region, but there are no steel technicians.

Last month the MEC submitted a plan to the Presidency of the Republic for the expansion of the federal vocational school system.

It proposes investing US\$ 29.31 million (70 million reais) on the creation of 32 schools and technological training units in 18 states, on top of the 144 that already exist.

The idea is for the project to go into effect as early as next year.

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