

Nuclear Center in Brazil's Northeast Will Make Radioactive Drugs

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Thursday, 21 July 2005

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva inaugurated the Regional Center of Nuclear Sciences today in the Northeast Brazilian city of Recife.

The Center received US\$ 6.8 million (16 million reais) in federal funds in the past two years and US\$ 6.4 million (15 million reais) between 1999 and 2002.

The unit, which comprises three laboratories - metrology, environmental analysis, and radioprotection - is expected to benefit industry, agriculture, medicine, and the environment.

The place should also have the capacity to provide emergency care in cases of accidents involving radioactive material in hospitals, industries, and research centers in the North and Northeast.

According to the Center's director, Ricardo de Andrade Lima, there will also be professional training courses given there for doctors and sanitary surveillance and regional labor office inspection teams in contact with radiotherapy and radioactive material.

He observed that the inauguration of the pioneer unit in the Northeast can help decentralize the activities of the National Nuclear Energy Commission, which has specialized centers in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Belo Horizonte.

Andrade Lima also informed that, as of next March, the Center will have a particle accelerator, or cyclotron, which will permit the production of radioactive drugs for the diagnosis and treatment of heart and neurological diseases and cancer.

The Regional Center of Nuclear Sciences will employ 64 people, including scientists and undergraduate and postgraduate students in the fields of Health, Physics, Chemistry, and Engineering.

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