

51 Million Brazilians Live Without Water, Sewer and Trash Collection

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Brazil has around 51 million inhabitants living in dwellings that are considered substandard - without sewer pipes, drinking water, property deeds, and garbage collection. This finding comes from the Global Report on Human Settlements 2005, issued Monday, September 12, by the United Nations.

According to the report, which is based on data from 2001, Brazil trails only China and India in terms of the quantity of people who inhabit this category of dwelling. For the UN expert on human settlements, Erik Vittrup, the two major housing problems that Brazil faces are land without deeds and the lack of private investment in the construction of mass housing.

Vittrup observed that Brazil is making a worthy effort in the area of housing. He emphasized the creation of the Ministry of Cities, in 2003, and federal expenditures on sanitation and housing.

"I have no doubt that we shall see significant changes in the statistics in the 2008 report, in consequence of the social policies adopted here.

"It is also true that, given the magnitude of the problem in Brazil, the budget is still very small to meet the demands and address the housing problems in the large Brazilian cities," he said.

The UN representative also highlighted two successful experiences in Brazil: the Participatory Budget, developed by the municipal administration of Porto Alegre, for allowing the population to speak up and request more budget funds for housing, and the Shantytown-Neighborhood ("Favela-Bairro"), created by the municipal administration of Rio de Janeiro, for having urbanized various shantytowns in the city.

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