

## Brazil Says Its São Francisco River Project Will Benefit 12 Million

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Brazil's Ministry of National Integration reports that its regional river basin development corporation (Companhia de Desenvolvimento dos Vales do São Francisco e Parnaíba) (Codevasf), will be investing a total of US\$ 29.9 million this year in São Francisco River revitalization projects.

According to Pedro Brito, the coordinator of the project, most of the money is earmarked for environmental sanitation. There will be also be cistern construction, which will be part of a program conducted by the Ministry of Social Development, and recovery of riverside erosion sites, which will include the use of seedlings produced in partnership with the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST).

The amount of fresh water available on an annual per capita basis to residents in the northern part of the Northeast region - the area that will be served by the São Francisco River integration project - is 450 cubic meters. This is less than a third of what the United Nations defines as the minimum amount to provide for human needs, 1.5 thousand cubic meters.

These figures were presented recently by the minister of National Integration, Ciro Gomes, at the 15th Planalto Forum, an event sponsored by the Presidential Advisory Staff for civil servants who work in the Presidency.

"The beneficiaries of the project live under more adverse conditions than Brazilians in other parts of the Northeast," the Minister observed.

Gomes said that the São Francisco River integration project is the surest of all such experiences heretofore tested in the world. The federal government expects the project to benefit around 12 million people who are affected by drought in the semi-arid part of the Northeast.

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