

## Brazil Promises Electricity for All Brazilians by 2008

Contributed by Irene Lôbo  
Tuesday, 25 October 2005

Brazil's Minister of Mines and Energy, Silas Rondeau, said today that the Light for All program will have made electricity available to two million Brazilian families by the end of November. According to Rondeau, approximately 1.6 million connections have been installed up to now, and preparations are underway for another 577 thousand connections. According to the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME), the federal government's Light for All program began in 2004 and plans to extend electricity to over 12 million people by 2008. "We have invested more than US\$ 880 million in the program so far, and the goal is to invest US\$ 3.9 billion," the Minister said.

Rondeau pointed out that the program's target population consists of needy families that live in rural areas. According to him, 84% of the families benefited by the program meet these criteria.

The Minister also recalled that the arrival of electricity in rural municipalities makes it easier to integrate other federal government programs, as well as improving health, education, water supply, and sanitation services.

Also regarding the Light for All program, Rondeau observed that the government will fulfill the goal of universalizing electricity in the country seven years ahead of schedule, in 2008 instead of 2015. It is expected that in 2008 all Brazilian municipalities will have access to electricity.

### IDB Loan

The minister of Social Development and Hunger Alleviation, Patrus Ananias, and the president of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Luis Alberto Moreno, signed a US\$ 1 billion loan agreement in Washington, on Monday, October 24, for the Family Grant program.

The goal of the program is to combat hunger and extreme poverty and promote the independence of the country's poorest families. Through the Family Grant, the federal government pays monthly cash benefits to families with monthly per capita incomes of up to US\$ 40.

According to the Ministry, around US\$ 984.3 million of the loan will be spent on the enlargement of the Family Grant and its integration with the Program for the Eradication of Child Labor (Peti).

The remainder should be used to fund activities of the National Secretariat of Social Assistance and evaluate and monitor the income transfer programs.

### Agência Brasil