

## 31% of Brazilian Homes Still Lack Sewage Collection

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According to Brazil's 2004 Household Survey (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios 2004) (PNAD-2004), which was conducted by the Brazilian government statistical bureau (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística) (IBGE), 31% of Brazilian homes are not connected to sewage disposal networks.

The survey reports that from 2003 to 2004, the availability of sewage disposal networks rose 3.5% in the country.

However, there have been improvements in garbage collection and electricity. In 1999, 20% of Brazilian homes did not have garbage collection; that has now fallen to 14.1%.

And while 5.2% of the population did not have electricity in 1999, today only 2.6% do not have it.

The federal government will release 4.084 billion reais (a little less than US\$ 2 billion) for basic sanitation in states and municipalities announced President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, earlier this month.

"We have to understand that basic sanitation is not spending, it is an investment. It translates into better quality of life and better health. It also creates jobs. And this is something that we have to do now or they are going to be talking about basic sanitation 50 years from now," said the President.

Lula said large urban centers were the target of this new effort by the government and would be getting most of the money. "We have people living really close together in subhuman conditions without sewage disposal or garbage collection and we have to reach out to them," said Lula.

Pointing out that every 1 real invested in basic sanitation means a saving of 4 reais in healthcare, the President said there has to be a commitment to make consistent investments in sanitation.

Lula said that one of the problems with basic sanitation was that most of it was underground pipeline. "Basic sanitation is not an easy way to get political mileage. It is hard to name an underground pipeline after a politician. So politicians shy away from this kind of infrastructure," he said.

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