

Brazil's Nuke Program Is Step Backward, Says Greenpeace

Contributed by Alan Gandra
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Greenpeace, one of the world's best known NGOs, calls Brazil's new uranium enrichment factory in Resende, Rio de Janeiro, a step backward.

The factory, built at a cost of US\$ 172 million to make Brazil independent of enriched uranium imports that costs US\$ 16 million annually, should go into operation in the next few days.

Guilherme Leonardi, the coordinator for nuclear energy at Greenpeace, says Brazil is investing in a technology that many countries are abandoning. Leonardi disagrees with experts who say that nuclear energy is clean.

"Inevitably nuclear energy produces nuclear waste. And when you are dealing with nuclear energy there is always a risk of an accident at various points in the nuclear fuel cycle - in the processing of nuclear fuel, the generation of energy or in disposing of the nuclear waste," he says.

Leonardi goes on to say that many countries are rethinking the nuclear energy alternative. They are deciding against new nuclear power plants, he explains, which is what Brazil should do.

Greenpeace says that Brazil spent US\$ 2.58 billion on the construction of its first nuclear power plant, Angra I. And that the second power plant, Angra II, cost US\$ 6 billion.

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