

## Brazil Approves Plan for Rational Use of Water

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Brazil is the first country in Latin America to have an integrated management plan for water resources. The head of the Secretariat of Water Resources at the Brazilian Ministry of Environment, João Bosco Senra, says that the action plan deals with much more than just water.

"It establishes guidelines for the rational use of water resources while taking into consideration social, cultural, ethnic, technical and economic aspects of the problem," he explains.

The plan was approved yesterday by the Water Resources Council. It will be presented at the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico in March. The plan meets a UN deadline on water resource management under the terms of the Millennium Goals project.

"Brazil is one of the few countries in the world to achieve this Millennium Goal, and the only one in Latin America," says Senra.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Environment, Marina Silva, points out that although Brazil has 12% of the world's fresh water resources, parts of the country are semi-arid and face frequent problems with drought.

"That is why we must seek the ways and means to ensure the rational use of water resources and reduce the negative impact of human activities," she declared.

The Water Resources Plan that was approved in Brazil is not just good news for environmentalists, according to the Brazilian government. Farmers can also commemorate the guidelines and goals established in the plan for the rational use of water resources in Brazil between now and the year 2020.

According to Minister of Environment, Marina Silva, with an agricultural sector that uses 70% of the country's water resources, the plan had to take that sector into consideration.

"Our objective is to maximize use while we avoid contamination and the loss of vegetation," she declared.

Jose Cisino Menezes, who represents sugar mill owners, says the plan will mean more security for water users. He points out that in order to irrigate an hectare of land for an hour you need an average of 3,600 liters of water.

"There was a need for a clear policy that established some control. With the new plan we will have the water we need for irrigation," he says.

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