

In Rural Brazil Many Watch World Cup for First Time Thanks to New Electricity

Contributed by Carolina Pimentel
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Brazil's rural electrification program Luz para Todos (Electricity for Everyone), has now reached 3.3 million people. The fact will be commemorated by president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva during a visit to Santo Estevão, in northeastern state of Bahia, later today.

This morning during his weekly radio program Café com o Presidente (Breakfast with the President) Lula commented at length on the program.

Luz para Todos was created in 2004 and its target is to reach 10 million people in rural areas by the year 2008. According to minister of Mines and Energy, Silas Rondeau, who participated in the Breakfast with the President radio program, by the end of this year the program will reach 5 million people.

Luz para Todos connects rural properties to electricity grids free of charge, which costs the government around US\$ 2,353 (5,300 reais) for each connection.

"When we connect the homes of these poor families things get very festive. They certainly are happy to be able to keep food in the refrigerator," said minister Rondeau.

Lula recalled living in a house without electricity until he was seven years old. "When somebody who has lived in candlelight gets electricity it means a big change: you can have a radio, TV and a life with more quality."

Rondeau also pointed out that with the Luz para Todos program a lot of families in rural areas were watching a World Soccer Cup on TV for the first time.

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