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Brazilian Society Opposes Nuclear Plans of President Lula da Silva

by Guest
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[Jose Pedro Martens is a journalist in Sao Paulo. He has written several books on the environment and human rights, including Tierra Nuestra Prometida and Tierra Cantata Una historia de la sostenibilidad. He writes for Lima-based Noticias Aliadas/Latinamerica Press and Brazilian publications, including Correio Popular and A Provincia.]

Various sectors of civil society began an offensive against the unexpected announcement by the government of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva that it would resume expansion of its nuclear-energy program.

Minister of Mines and Energy Edison Lobao, who made the announcement, said the government plans to construct between 50 and 60 new nuclear plants in Brazil in the next 50 years. Lobao made the announcement Sept. 12 at Angra dos Reis, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, at the site where the Lula administration wants to finish the country's third nuclear plant. The minister said that the Angra 3 plant, which could be ready in five years, will have a 1,405 megawatt capacity.

Those in the Lula administration favoring nuclear energy base their arguments for this new strategy on the unreliable supply of natural gas from Bolivia, the need for the country to find new sources of energy to satisfy future demand, and world efforts to fight global warming. "The problems in Bolivia are another reason we need to continue our nuclear program. The president considers the nuclear policy a priority for Brazil and Angra 3 is a personal decision of the president."

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