

Brazil Sets Aside \$1 Billion for Projects to Alleviate Water Crisis



Rio de Janeiro, December 5 (Xinhua-RHC)-- Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff on Thursday earmarked over \$1 billion to water projects in a bid to alleviate the severe water crisis in Sao Paulo.

The fund, totaling 3.2 billion reais (some \$1.24 billion), was agreed by Rousseff and Sao Paulo state governor Geraldo Alckmin during a meeting on Thursday. The money will be released after Sao Paulo state presents the projects, the federal government said.

Water shortage is a recurring problem in Brazil's northeast and Sao Paulo state has also been severely affected this year. The state has faced a long and serious dry season during the year, which has led the water level at the dams of the Cantareira system, which supplies water to the Sao Paulo metro area, the largest and most populated area in Brazil, to drop to almost zero. Residents, agriculture and commerce have all been affected.

To tackle this problem, the government has launched a project to pump water from deep reservoirs which were not accessed before, but this water resource, too, has almost dried out. And as summer is coming in Brazil, water consumption is expected to rise.

In addition to the long dry season, a UN representative has recently blamed the Sao Paulo state government and local water company Sabesp for not making the necessary investments to improve water

distribution and reduce waste of water, thus prolonging the long drought.

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