Pollution muddies Rio 2016 waters

March 22 2014

Night view of the Guanabara bay with the Sugar Leaf hill in the background (C) in Rio de Janeiro on October 30, 2012, Brazil

Waters polluted by sewage off the coast of Rio remain a concern for organisers of the 2016 Olympics, but the International Olympic Committee insisted Friday that the sea will be safe for competition.

Guanabara Bay, which will host the sailing at the Games, has caused consternation amongst some athletes with the water quality condemned as "disgusting" by one sailor.

IOC co-ordination commission chair Nawal el Moutawakel noted on a sixth visit Friday that authorities have pledged to deliver a huge increase in sewage treatment by 2015.

"There will be a seven-fold increase in treated sewage around the Guanabara Bay by 2015," she said, with sailing test events slated for August serving as an environmental catalyst for the city authorities.

Environmental officials said late last year that more than two thirds of sewage goes untreated in the Bay, which will also host marathon swimming—a statistic which left sailors aghast.

British Olympic 2000 silver medalist Ian Barker last year described the site as "disgusting" and "a sewer."

Plans to bring new treatment plants on stream have lagged and pollution levels running way above official tolerance levels have not gone unnoticed by water sports federations.

With the test events in the Bay only five months away El Moutawakel would only point to the organizers' planned campaign to boost sewage treatment as a matter of urgency.

"We've been given assurances that Guanabara Bay will be clean for athletes," she said at the end of her team's visit.

© 2014 AFP

Citation: Pollution muddies Rio 2016 waters (2014, March 22) retrieved 16 June 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2014-03-pollution-muddies-rio.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.