

POINT I EXECUTIVE SUMMARIZE

The Dominican Republic is located in the middle subregion of insular America, in the great Caribbean Antilles and located between the latitudes of 17° 00' and 20° 00' North and the lengths of 68° 71 and 72° 00 West. It occupies the Eastern portion of La Española Island, and shares it with the Republic of Haiti, occupying the two third parts, with a territorial extension of 48.670,82 Kms² (University Geographic Institute 1992) and a population of 8,6 million inhabitants approximately.

The economy of the country has been sustained in the present century, the use and intensive consumption of natural resources, as it were the forest exploitation of the Sixties, the development of an agriculture not well technified and dependent of agrochemicals, polluting agents, the development of a policy of export based on agricultural products, until the end of the eighty and in the last years, with the development of the tourism, the promotion of agroindustry and free zones.

Because of their physiografic complexity, local climatic variations appear, with annual average temperatures between 28° C in the dry low zones and down to 18° C aproximately in the mountainous zones (1.300 msnm), also the rain regime is complex, with 2,300mm of annual average, in the rainiest zones (Northeast of the country) and lowering to 450mm in the La Hoya de Enriquillo (Southwestern country).

The country counts on little agricultural ground availability, only 20,3% of the territory; the rest includes 24% for pasture and permanent cultures; 52,7% of forest and 2,5% for the protection of the wildlife (United Nations National Report Conference, 1991). In spite of this, great amounts of forests have been destroyed for the agricultural activities as sugar cane and rice cultivation, the development of cattle ranches, among others.

It's been estimated that 16.7% (8,055 Kms²) of the territory of the Dominican Republic correspond to barren and semi-arid zones (Morillo A, 1997). They are at the Southwestern region, extending from the La Hoya of the El Lago Enriquillo to Puerto Viejo, Azua, generally to less than 300 msnm. Other areas are in the northwest of the El Cibao, extending from Santiago to the border with Haiti and a small portion in the Eastern region of the country. In these zones there are the highest percentage of poor homes of the country.

STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE PLANS AND/OR POLICIES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The country advances in significant form on the implementation of the Convention, with the development of a group of strategies, national plans and programs that contribute and affect the fight against Desertificación and Drought. The plans, strategies and programs that are developed at the present time are the following:

PLAN NACIONAL QUISQUEYA VERDE

Its objective is to improve the conditions of life of the population in the rural zones, through the promotion, handling and use of the natural resources, the generation of employment, the protection of the environment and the coordination between government institutions and the organizations of the civil society that work in favor of the sustainable development.

This Plan has a national coverage, although it prioritizes those areas that need a greater attention. It has great participation of the civil society and it is executed with Government funds, contemplated in the national budget.

PROJECT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

This project was formulated with the objective of establishing the bases for an improved environmental handling in the Dominican Republic, through a process of learning and participation, defining reforms of environmental policies and elaborating a National Program of Environmental Management.

This project is in its initial phase and it is financed with a loan of the World Bank. It will contribute with key investigations to design a National Program of Environmental Management, which will be able to serve as base for the processing of the National Plan of Action to Fight against Desertification and Drought.

PROGRAMA 21 NACIONAL

It is an initiative of the Dominican Government for the support of the National Commission to follow up the commitments with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and to generate a participative process between the public and private sector to allow to articulate the social, economic and environmental dimensions for the sustainable development.

The program's objective is the development of the institutional and technical capacities of the country, to stop the process of degradation of the environment and the biodiversity, by means of a process that guarantees the bases of the sustainability integrating the economic, social, scientific - technological and environmental dimensions in the planning and management of the national sustainable development, with the participation of different actors from the society. The same one has a horizon of three years, financed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Dominican Government.

NATIONAL PROGRAM ON CLIMATE CHANGE

This program is an initiative of the Dominican Government, founded by the Climate Change Secretariat with GEF funds. The main program objective is prepare the National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; which will include a

greenhouse gas inventory, a country study in vulnerability and adaptation to climate change and a mitigation study. This program is just starting and is coordinate by ONAPLAN as Focal Point of the Convention.

NATIONAL STRATEGY AND PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

The strategy has the objective assist the Dominican Republic in the preparation of its national strategy and the plan of action of conservation of biodiversity, in fulfillment to articles 6 and 8 of the convention of biological diversity. It will identify key strategies and high-priority actions for the conservation and administration of the biodiversity, in the context of the sustainable development.

The Strategy and the Plan of National Action, constitute basic tools to undertake actions of Fight against Desertification and Drought since it will allow to make a better use of the biodiversity of the country. It is in its initial phase and it is executed with a donation of GEF.

SMALL SUBSIDIES PROGRAM OF THE WORLD FUND FOR THE ENVIROMENT (PPS/FMAM)

The objective of the project is to assure the global environmental benefits through climatic interventions in the areas of biodiversity, climatic changes and international waters with proposals based on the community, that generate local benefits.

In the next two years, the Small Subsidies Program will support the implementation of about 25 new projects, which will be concentrated in the provinces of the border zone, which will approach the promotion of new sustainable methods of production, and ecoturism, using the resources of local biodiversity, the protection of terrestrial water-bearing sources and the use of solar paddles and hidrogenerators; like alternative of clean energy. Within possibilities, the projects to be supported must present a strategy of how they are going to work the subject of desertificación, in the execution place. In this beginning phase four focal areas have been prioritized: conservation of the biodiversity, climatic change, international waters and desertificación and drought.

NATIONAL PLAN OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

It is the basic instrument to give answer to the commitments assumed in the Summit of Social Development, and constitutes a reaffirmation of the Dominican Government to improve the health, the employment, the education, the basic cleaning, the access to potable water, the nutritional security and the possibility of having a house for all the Dominicans.

The objective of the Plan is the eradication of poverty, the generation of productive employment and the promotion of solidarity. The horizon anticipated for its execution is period 1996-2005. In order to give answers to the objectives of the Plan, the Program Comunidad Digna and the National Plan of Feeding and Nutrition are being implemented.

NACIONAL PLAN FOR REDUCCTION OF POVERTY PROGRAMA COMUNIDAD DIGNA

The program Comunidad Digna, constitutes a assembly of cultural and social strategies of intervention, in which economic, social, political, gender, cultural and environmental factors are taken into account, as strategies that combine the generation of income and the access to public services. These strategies express the interest in orienting the social expenditure, through programs focused in the territories where poverty predominates.

The Plan is being implemented and the financial resources come mainly from the following sources: Funds assigned in the national budget to the Program of Promotion of Social Development and Funds managed by different public social institutions. The high-priority geographic areas of the program, are affected by desertification and drought.

NATIONAL PLAN OF FEEDING AND NUTRITION PLAN NACIONAL DE ALIMENTACION Y NUTRICION (PLANAN)

It is conceived like a assembly of actions articulated to the economic and social development policies, implemented by the Dominican Government. Its main objective is to increase the levels of nutritional security in all the homes of the Dominican nation, stimulating the production of basic foods and increasing the buying and consuming capacity of the social groups.

The Plan is being executed at the moment with funds of the national budget and external resources by means of cooperation of international organisms, as the World Food Program.

NATIONAL STRATEGY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

This was developed in 1992 with the objective to put in practice the Law 295-85, (that does obligatory to introduce in the educative plans the conservation of the natural resources and the atmosphere) and for the formulation of a Plan of National Action on Environmental Education. The strategy contains a tending assembly of actions to contribute with the formation of conscious and defender citizens of its environment.

The fundamental aspects that they are taken into account in the strategy, to reach the predicted intentions are: the policy of management, institutional aspects, the investigation and the qualification. Within the beginning of the strategy, the Project of Environmental Education in the Basic Education is executed at the present moments, which is financed by the GTZ and the

Dominican Government. This project has a great importance for the country, since educating introduces the Environmental education as a transverse axis in the programs.

INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION

At the present moments valuable efforts in the country are being made to create the Secretariat of State of the Environment, which will have the responsibility of the handling of the natural resources and the environment and will unify the existing institutional dispersion in the country.

Like a passage of advance to reduce the institutional dispersion, three institutions have been created at the present time that concentrate functions and unify other that were dispersed. The created institutions are: The National Institute of Environmental Protection (INPRA), with the functions to send the certification of declaration of Environmental Impact and to establish mechanisms of control, monitoring, supervision and pursuit of the contamination of the air and the water; including the coastal zones; before, during and after the execution of any public or private project, among others.

The National Institute of Forest Resources (INAREF), which unifies the Main Forest directorate and the Forest Technical National Commission, which had (both) competitions in the handling of the forests. The Main Forest directorate, that was a dependency of the Secretariat of State of the Armed Forces, with the creation of the INAREF, turns to be a decentralized institution, which in ahead could be directed by a civilian.

In addition the Coordinating Commission of Natural Resources and Environment (COSERENAMA), with the purpose of establishing the bases for the creation of the Secretary of State of Natural Resources and Environment. This Commission developed and put under the Legislative chambers, a Project of General Law of Environment and Natural Resources, which introduces several principles of the convention as they are: the creation of a national fund for the environment, which will be used, to develop and to finance programs and projects of protection, conservation, restoration, education and sustainable use of the environment and natural resources. This project of law prohibits in addition any activity that produces salinization, latinización aridification and desertificación and any other activity that produces Earth degradacion.

PARTICIPATIVE PROCESS IN SUPPORT TO THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMS OF NACIONAL ACTION

In the country a National Committee of fight against the Desertificación and the Drought exists, which was created during the celebration of the First National Day of Awareness of the Convention, in September of 1996. This Committee is integrated by 28 institutions, of which 14 are governmental and 14 nongovernmental ones. In this one the state institutions participate, the ONG, s, universities, business company, professionals' associations, producers' associations, women organizations and the national press.

At the present moments it is developed in the country, a National Campaign of Awareness and Diffusion of the Convention, with an ample participation of the different actors from the affected zones. This national campaign is being developed by a technical equipment of the National Committee of Desertification and Drought and within the same one in the prioritizing affected zones have been made 5 workshops (Santo Domingo, Mao Valverde, Barahona and La Romana) in different points from the country.

The groups selected for the accomplishment of the workshops have been the Provincial Councils of Development, for consider these as the participative institutions that exist in the provinces, since they are integrated by the provincial, municipal authorities and by representatives of the social and congressional forces of the provinces and with a multisectorial structure, that allows to make a coordinated and effective work for the application of the Convention.

PROCESS OF CONSULTATION IN SUPPORT TO THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMS OF NATIONAL ACTION AND THE AGREEMENTS OF ASSOCIATION WITH DEVELOPED COUNTRIES PARTS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

The Dominican Republic has not yet processed its National Plan of Action of Fight Against Desertification and Droughtness, which had not received the corresponding financing for these aims. In spite of this the country has received financing from the Secretary of the Convention, to accomplish the First National Day of Awareness and being able to submit the First National Report of Implementation of the Convention.

On the other hand the country has received financing from UNSO-PNUD, for the implementation of the National Campaign of Sensibilización and Diffusion of the Convention, which is implemented at the present moments.

The Dominican Government has submitted to the Secretariat two proposals, the one with the Basic Lineaments for the elaboration of the National Plan of Action, in which he asked for to the Secretary financial support and technical cooperation of some countries and a other proposal, for the accomplishment of a Binational Diagnosis of the Border Zone, without to date this financement has been received.

OVERHAUL OF REFERENCE POINTS AND INDICATORS USED TO MEASURE THE PROGRESS AND EVALUATION OF THE SAME

Although the country is immersed at the moment in a dynamic process of structural changes and legal and institutional reforms of the environmental sector, it has been recognized as urgent tasks the necessity to develop national environmental indicators, and the institutional and technical definition of the capacities and coordinations that must be created to generate this information and to make a system possible of monitoring. The identification of a conceptual base and a method adapted for the selection of indicators, and of an appropriate process for the possible development of a system of monitored and pursuit is at the moment under consideration.