

FIRST NATIONAL REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I) STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED INSIDE THE CONTEXT OF THE PLANS AND/OR POLITICAL OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The National Environmental Management was framed in the proposals defined by National Agenda 21, Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development, National Environmental Action Plan, the Peace Agreements undersigned 1,996 and the Environmental National Politics.

The National Agenda 21:

Generally it defines to reach the following purposes: 1. To strengthen bases that promote the implementation of a model of sustainable development, articulating the economic scenes, social, politician, cultural and environmental. 2. To Incorporate the environmental component in national plans, programs and into project with a multisectorial interpretation. 3. To strengthen the participation and the capacities of management of the governmental entities, no governmental and local municipal organizations in the process toward the sustainable development. 4. To prevent and mitigate the environmental contamination in all the manifestations.

By the other hand, is planning the following strategic elements for the implementation: 1. Identification of actors and groups of interest in specific problems that affect the environment and the sustainable development. 2. Analysis of national problematic in multisectorial manner and participates to identify priority areas at regional and local level. 3. Formulation participatively of plans programs and projects of short, median and long term. 4. To incorporate the both aspects in political of planning of the country. 5. To provide the general guides of action to strengthen the capacity of management of different actors of the society at national, regional, municipal and local levels.

The Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development:

In 1994 the Central American Presidents approved the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development, that pursues to transform, with the complementary support of the international community, to the region in a model of sustainable development for all the planet. A region where the respect to the life in all the manifestations, the permanent improvement of the quality of life, the respect to the vitality and diversity of our earth, the peace, the democracy participates, the respect to the cultural diversity of the townes of the central American area, are the principles that regal the future.

One of bases of the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development constitutes the sustainable management of the natural resources and improved the environmental quality. The depletion and deterioration of the base renovates the natural resources is a problem for

the future development in Central America. The contamination of the water, the air and the land have increment rapidly in the region and probably continues if no guide the current processes of development and industrialization. The principal threat radiates in the loss of forests and the decrease and deterioration of the wealthy and quality of the water, what to the time is one of the cause principals of sickness and death over in the populations The consumption of assets and services implicated the use of resources of all type, marginal.

The Environmental National Action Plan:

The Environmental Action Plan was elaborated in 1995, with the vision of formulating plans, programs and to project that involve to all the population in order to propitiousing the interrelation of the management of the natural resources and the coherent environment with the development economic and social.

Identified as principals both problems the following:

- 1) Damage of the land natural resources: deforestation, deterioration of the soil resource, reduction of hydric resources and lost of the biodiversity.
- 2) Damage of the marine-coastal resources: About exploitation and disorderly exploitation of the fished resource, loss of the mangrove and contamination of the water in the region of production coastal-marine.

The Peace Agreements:

Three agreements are mention with major protagonis of the natural resources and the environment, these are:

- a) Agreement for the resettlement of uprooted populations by the armed confrontation.

This agreement mentions from the fixation of the principles the sustainable development, sustainable and equitable, refer to the criteria for the selection of lands: to the potential agro-ecological, price, sustainability of the natural resources reindeers and existing services. These criteria relate specifically the production with the sustainable management of the resources.

In relation to the execution of the projects also combine aspects related to the agricultural sustainable development, the territorial settlement, the utilization of the natural resources in function of the potential to title and rights about the land and the water, use and planning of the natural resources, and infrastructure of sanitation.

- b) Agreement on the identity and right of the indigenous towns

In this agreement strengthen and enlarge the related aspects with the ambiance and the natural resources, in it related to the science and the technology mention the need of promoting technological innovation and the ethical principle of conservation of the environment. Referring to the land, it is contemplated the need of administering of sustainable manner the natural resources that of the land depend on a proper conception of the indigenous population.

- c) Agreement on socioeconomic aspects and agrarian situation

It is the agreement where mention with major insistence the related aspects with the environment and the natural resources, from a principle mention the need of promoting an integral strategy that includes: Possession of the land, use of the renovable natural resources, systems and mechanism of credit, processing and commercialization; legislation

agrarian and juridical security and labor relations; technique attendance and training; sustainability of the natural resources and organization of the rural population.

As soon as to the fund of lands, is planning the promotion of the access to the property and sustainable use of the natural resources. Furthermore the development of plans of territorial settlement and the application of criteria of economic and environmental sustainability. It is planned the creation of and environmental agrarian jurisdiction within the judicial organism, by means of the emission of a corresponding law.

In relation to the access of the natural resources it is planning that for 1,999 must have granted to little and legally median organized peasants, in concessions the management of 100,000 hectare distribute them between protected areas, ecotourism, protection of fountains of water and other compatible activities with the potential and sustainable use of the natural resources.

Also establish the promotion and support to the private sector and communitary organizations of basing in projects of management and conservation of natural resources through incentives, direct localized subsidies or mechanisms of funding in conditions brandishing and point to the search of the international cooperation.

From this frame indicator of different guides that in matter of environment and natural resources must to be observed in the search of a model of sustainable coherent development with the economic and social development of the country, has planned and in some cases implementing political, strategies, plans and following programs:

1. Agrarian and Sectorial Politics (1, 998- 2030)

It establishes as general objective "to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the rural population that depended direct and indirectly of the agriculture and the natural resources, that permit to revalue the life in the field, the advance toward equity, the equalized development of the regions of the country and the decrease of the structural heterogeneusness that is the expression of the undevelopment and poverty".

2. Forest Politic of Guatemala

It is proposed as general objective "to increase the socioeconomic benefits of the goods and generated services in the forest ecosystems and to contribute to the territorial settlement in rural lands, through the promotion of the productive management and of the conservation of the base of natural resources, with emphasis in forest and associated resources as the biodiversity, the water and soils; incorporating increasingly the forest activity to the economy of the country in benefit of the Guatemalan society"

3. National Politics for the development of the Guatemalan System of Protected Areas Protected (SIGAP)

The which is defined as "The description of the group of principles, objectives, legal and institutional frame, lines of politics, instruments and desired situation, that State might declare, with the purpose of guaranteeing the provision of goods and services and the conservation of the biological diversity for the social and economic welfare of the settlers"

4. Environmental National Politics

It is proposed as central objective, to improve the quality of the environment and to manage adequately the natural resources of the country, inside of a frame of equitable and sustainable global development, in order to help to improve the quality of life of the Guatemalan population.

Sectorial Environmental Politicals for sectors: Agriculture, Industry, Commerce, Tourism, Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Transectorials: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification, (in consultant process with diverse sectors): Waste, Air Water, Energy.

5. National Strategies for:

Biodiversity, Climate Change, Prevention and Control of Forest Fires.

6. Hydrobiological Action Plan

It is important to observe, that the term Desertification does not appears considerate as such in the context mentioned, however, the concepts and principles of the prevention, mitigation and to control of the exhaustion and the degradation of the natural resources, principally the water, the soil and the forest are considered of prior in different instruments mentioned before.

II. INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES ADOPTED FOR IMPLEMENTATE THE CONVENTION

Starting from its participation in the First Regional Meeting for Latin America on Desertification and Drought held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in February of 1,996, Guatemala begins the process of analysis, discussion and definition of some actions focused to the combat Desertification and the negative effects to the hydric resource and to the environment in general. At the same time are begun the steps established in the legal procedure for the subscription and adhesion of the country to the Conference of the Parties, which were achieved in April of 1,999.

The adhesion of Guatemala to the Conference of the Parties implicates the responsibility of the State toward the execution of the established in the same. Like first step is delegated to the National Commission of the Environment (CONAMA, entity state clerk directly of the Presidency of the Republic) like focal point of the country in front of the Convention, reporting it officially to the Executive Secretariat this national decision.

Inside the CONAMA's organization, has delegated to the staff of professionals of technical attendance (instantance of direct advisor to the National Coordinator, the attention and accompaniment of Conventions of Desertification, Climate Change and Biodiversity. So in this manner, the CONAMA has assumed the role of National Coordinator Agency for the implementation of Convention of Desertification, putting to disposition the human resources, material and necessary equipment for the good fulfill.

Institutionally has an annual budget distributed as follows:

Human Resources:	Q 3, 700, 000.00	US \$ 47, 435.00
Material and Institutional Equipment:	<u>Q 8, 300, 000.00</u>	<u>US \$ 1, 064,102.00</u>
TOTAL:	<u>Q 12, 000, 000.00</u>	<u>US \$ 1, 538, 400.00</u>

As has manifested since the beginning of the present report, The Program of National Action to Combat Desertification, has not been adopted yet officially by the government of Guatemala as a priority component of the agenda. It is important to mention that as such Convention, as same as of Climate Change other agreements and international treaties are relatively new initiatives in the concept and focus why the process of implementation has initiated with actions of information to diverse actors of the society. However, exist similar initiatives that have undertaken as by as no governmental and governmental organizations on the plans and work programs.

Must to be mentioned, that of the budget of the State, assigned for the functionality of CONAMA, has not assigned a specific departure for a national program to combat Desertification. Even though has proposed the assignment of this departure for the budget of the year 2001 in forward.

III. PARTICIPATIVE PROCESS TO SUPPORT THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMS

The process of implementation of Convention of Desertification, initiated in 1997 by means of First National Encounter realized in Northwest and Northeast Regions of the country. This encounter had as fundamental purpose, to identify the principals causes and the effects of the degradation of the soil, concluding in that the causes of this phenomenon have the origin in the social aspects, economic and cultural, whose effects influence directly in the environmental deterioration and to the increment of the poverty. At the same time the results of this national encounter served of base to propose to the current governmental authorities the criteria for the formulation of political and national strategies to combat Desertification and mitigation of the effects of Drought.

The citizen participation, is an established commitment by means of the subscription of the Peace Agreements. Nevertheless, the process participate is still incipient, first by the fear of public expression that let the 36 years of the armed internal conflict and later by the lack of organization in the expression and proposal of the civil society, before the daily proposals of the government.

In Guatemala the communitary participation is not a new matter, since 1945 constitute legally the committees of communitary development with a focus of support to the management of the central government and the municipal governments, however these never have had an outstanding paper before proposed of both governments, turning them only in manager of conjuncture communitary actions, for example in the organization of

festive days, organization of religious events, communitary vigilance before incidental problems, etc.

Actually in the Guatemalan society, the woman plays an important paper in profit and management of the natural resources, as well as in the national economy; however, the role is not completely recognized, inclusive by the same woman. This has a direct relation with the cultural and social proper pattern of the country; since for historic the man is who had developed the economic activity, and his male conduct has relegated to the woman to a second place. Actually the woman has recovered some spacious of participation in the national life, principally in the politician aspect what has created a climate hopefully for a focus of equality of opportunities for women and men. This of course, also will transcend in the efforts of incorporating focus of type in different initiatives and national commitments, as the implementation of different Conventions, between them of desertification.

The participative focus are effective always that the communitary count with a transparent and truthful information about the problems that affect them; at the same time, the participation must create demand and disposition in the definition of proposed serious and viable.

In spite of not to be duly implemented the National System of Environmental Information (SINIA), some concrete actions have come developing, such is the case of to divulge of some political, strategies, laws, rules, etc. related with the environmental management and the natural resources. However, by the characteristics of nation pluricultural, pluriethnic, and multilanguage, in Guatemala is not so easy to design a strategy of divulging and/or general communication without taking in these consideration particularities of the country.

In the proposals of (SINIA), is considered extremely important to conform of database, no only of both aspects, but also of inventories and diagnoses of the natural resource for a certain definition of the national accounts of the environmental and cultural patrimony of the country.

IV. PROCESS OF CONSULT IN SUPPORT TO THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMS AND OF AGREEMENTS OF ASSOCIATION WITH THE DEVELOPPED COUNTRIES PARTIES AND OTHER ENTITIES

As before mentioned, the process of implementation of Convention of Desertification initiate with the first national encounter in the Northwest and Northeast regions of the country, where are presented the major problems of the phenomenon. In this encounter, besides identifying the causes and effects of the desertification, was planning the urgent needs executing actions to detain the accelerated depletion of the lands of those regions.

In spite of the problem is patented at simple sight, this must be tackled in the frame of a national politics, with different strategies of implementation, and no with remoted

mitigating actions and to control. In the agenda of the current government, the theme has gone turning importance in a slow manner due to problems of major importance that according to this must to be resolved with priority.

On the other hand, the international cooperation at technical support, economic and financial level, might seem no to consider it neither in the priorities. In multiple occasions have done proposals to organisms, such as bilateral and multilateral in search of support, but up to date any results have obtained about this.

It is important to mention the support that Secretariat of Convention has offered to the national counterpart, as for the ratification as for the execution of the national encounter, and the elaboration of this national report. Attitude that not have assumed the parts or development countries members of Convention, in spite of being established as an agreement inside of the same.

In the efforts of implementation of the commitments amanated from the peace agreements undersigned on 1996 in which the recuperation of soils and degraded lands and subutilized ones, form important part, concrete actions to the respect have been planned, such is the case of the request of support proposed to the countries friends (Sweden, Norway, Spain, France, Canada and United States of America), for the protection of the basins as units of production and alimentary subsistence.

Separately the National Commission of the Environment, (CONAMA), has initiated negotiations with international organisms for the support of the management in environmental matter in which undoubtedly will be given full importance to the protection and conservation of the natural resources, principally the water, the soils and the forest.

With the purpose to promote a process of self-management, actually is working in order to conform of committees and communitary and voluntary groups for the prevention, recuperation and conservation of productive degraded areas by causes of the hydric and eolic erosion, the protection of the fountains of water and the reforestation. This initiative is carry out in coordination with municipal government and the urban and rural development departamental and regional councils.

In synthesis, has not obtained yet, the cooperation of developed countries parts, such as establishes in the Convention, surely because neither has proposed of punctual manner the problem in the frame of a national politics, with concrete actions from the concept of the desertification.

V. ADOPTED OR PLANNED MEASURES INSIDE OF THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMS, INCLUDING MEASURES TO PROMOTE ENVIRONMENT ECONOMIZED, TO CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES, TO PROMOTE INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION, INCREASE THE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DESERTIFICATION AND CONTROL FOR LABORS OF FOLLOWING UP AND EVALUATION OF DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

Upon analyzing the problem of the desertification, is necessary to consider that in the dynamics of the phenomenon, the social and economic factors have a meaningful incidence. It is probably, in the case of the problems related with the desertification, where is more evident the incidence of said factors.

Nowadays, is recognized, that exists a clear association between situations of poverty, but yet extreme poverty, and conditions of desertification; exist evidence clear of it in, practically all the areas of the country, affected by the phenomenon of the desertification in different degrees and magnitudes. In the context of this association is that dynamic a vicious circle poverty-degradation environment-poverty, the poverty as cause and consequence of the deterioration of the natural resources.

Exist high population concentrations in relatively rural little areas, facilitating a progressive degradation of the natural resources of same areas. This situation has unchained a group of subprocesses with environmental negative impacts, migration to the cities pressuring over areas of ecological severe risk, exploitation of fragile ecosystems with surcharged demographic and deforestation enlarging the agrarian frontier.

There is in consequence a social and economic pressure over the natural resources which destruction or deterioration leads to the desertification, though the majority of the Guatemalan population, recognized and this is conscious, that to alleviate such pressure and to detain, and possibly, to revert the situations of degradation, is necessary to adopt a model of economic and social equalized and compatible development with the environmental protection; however, situations of economic and social crisis, determine priorities, that currently, favor the achievement of benefits at short term, favoring the persistence of processes of environmental transformation negative.

Some aspects of direct incidence in the desertification, according to the results of the national encounter on the theme are following: Social pressure on the land (property and tenure, availability of lands), utilization of firewood as only fountain of combustion in rural areas and urban marginal areas (massive deforestation), change of use of the land to (of agricultural or forest to cattle), overpopulation, etc.

Guatemala has experienced very few advanced meaningful in matter to combat the desertification and the drought specifically; since the political, strategies, plans, programs and to project that of global manner and/or of separated manner have formulated in the search of a model of sustainable development for the country, not have considerate this variable as parts important to structure and operativeity. The academic entities and of investigation, as governmental as no governmental, do not incorporate yet in the programs

and pensum of studies the theme, so that these studies serve as point of departure for the formulation of political, strategies and actions tending to the prevention and to control of the problem.

Some initiatives that have proposed up to date such the case of the Action Plan for the Forest, Action Plan for the Environment, Program of Agricultural Development, etc. To guide the propositive actions to the conservation of the natural resources water, soil, forest, of manner individualized. It have lack a perspective of group, integrating, that considers the new conceptions of the sustainable development (economic growth, social equity and environmental conservation) and incorporates from a vision of nation the alternatives of solution to problematic given.

On the other hand, have promulgated legal texts that believe in normative instruments and also, economic, oriented to the conservation or development of the renovable natural resources to (soils, vegetation, continental waters, etc.). However, are limited or very scarce the successful results that, objectively, could to be attributed to the majority of plans, programs and to project executed, to equal thing can be told respect to the results of the application of normative bodies and economic instruments for the management of the natural resources.

Taking as premise the prior proposals, has suggested to the current authorities of government to adopt a group of criteria over the which must to be based the operative schemes for the formulation and implementation of political and national strategies to combat the desertification and mitigation of the drought, being these:

- 1) To Structure of Nation Programs of Action to combat Desertification
- 2) Compatibility of political and national strategies of environment and natural resources with problematic derived of Desertification
- 3) To Incorporate of economic instruments
- 4) Evaluation of the phenomenon of the desertification and agroecological and socioeconomic zonification
- 5) Creation and/or to consolidate of decentralized schemes and participative of management
- 6) Adoption of a institutional frame for the execution of programs of action to combat the desertification
- 7) Formulation of guided programs to the nucleus of desertification
- 8) To Delimit spatial of proposals
- 9) Creation of mechanisms for the technical support and financier of the national strategy to combat the desertification
- 10) Implementation of the national system of environmental information

It is necessary to mention, that since 1, 997 year in that was held the first meeting of the subregion (Central America, Mexico and Caribbean) in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and later in the month of march of 1998 In Guatemala city, has come proposing the need of coordinating actions to level of the subregion. However, has not achieved to concrete these ideas, by a side, because in the majority of the countries members of the subregion, still has not implemented the programs of national action, and by other side

because apparently to governments of these countries still not achieve to value the problematic existing for prioress in the contents of the agendas of work.

In view of the above mentioned, is indispensable to socialize with many most aggressivity Convention to level of takers of national decision, and penetrate the contents in the instances of subregional coordination as Central American Commission of Environment and Development- CCAD-, Central American Bank of Economic Integration- BCIE-, etc. At the same time, is necessary to promote a third subregional encounter for making compatible the problematic and interests of the same, identified by means of respective national reports, and to formulate a subregional plan in agreement with the realities of this, which could be appropriate by the governments of the subregion.

VI. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF NATIONAL BUDGETS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION, AS WELL AS FINANCIAL ATTENDANCE AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION, INCLUDING AFLUENCY PROCESSES TO IDENTIFY REQUIREMENTS, FINANCING AREAS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES

As is presented in the report, the government of Guatemala still has not assumed of official manner in the agenda the theme of Desertification, consequently no assigns a budget for the implementation and operativity. On the other hand the external cooperation does not manifests full interest in supporting the actions tending to the prevention and/or mitigation of the effects of Desertification, possibly because has not done a concrete proposal of the problem.

Of equal manner, the parts that are developed countries neither have pronounced or shown their will of supporting technique and financially to the developing countries, such as establish in the text of Convention.

In 1,999 CONAMA, owing to a diagnosis of the national and international cooperation, identified different scenes to part the which will be developed the strategy of cooperation. Between the aspects most important of this panorama cite:

1. The manner how has managed the cooperation
2. The agreements undersigned.
3. The affectivity and operativity of the agreements undersigned
4. Why is necessary to define a national strategy for the cooperation
5. Objectives to reach with the cooperation
6. The lines of cooperation (scientific, technique, financial)
7. Instances and local entities of cooperation
8. Entities and International Organisms with who has experience in the cooperation
9. Entities and international organisms suggested to establish cooperation

VII. REVISION OF POINTS OF REFERENCE AND UTILIZED INDICATORS TO MEASURE THE PROGRESSES AND EVALUATION OF SAME

As much as the National Plan for the Environment, as Environmental National Politics in the proposal value of meaningful manner the permanent evaluation of the indicators and instruments of implementation of a mark of reference. In this sense, in the context define following indicators and instruments :

1. Indicators :

- a. Modernization of the management of protected areas and conservation of the biological wealth of the country
- b. Restauracion and conservation of the soil and utilization of the forest resources, to improve the management in benefit of diverse regions of the national territory
- c. Integral management of the water, promoting the efficient use and sanitation
- d. Protección of the oceans and utilization rational of the resources, as well as to modernize the fished activities and related to water.
- e. Improvement of the quality of the air, specially in the urban zones to protect the health of the inhabitants
- f. Rational ecologically management of the solid and dangerous ecological wastes.
- g. Ecological territorial settlement, to control and norm the use of the earth and the resources in a frame of certitude and knowledge for the possessors.

2. Instruments:

- a. Instruments to fixed environment conditions
- b. preventive Instruments)
- c. correctional Instruments

These have as purpose to correct situations that are contributing to that the both standards are to point of being, or have been known.

Also here the plans of destined conservation to insure the capacity of regeneration and the biological diversity associated to the use and profit the natural resources. These plans of management include, between other, following both considerations : a) maintenance of wealthy of water and conservation of soils, b) maintenance of the landscape value, and c) protection of species in danger of extinction, vulnerable, rare or insufficiently known.

- d. Instruments of fulfillment
- e. Instruments economic
- f. Instruments of education and investigation
- g. Instruments of the citizen participation
- h. Instruments for the generation of information
- i. Instruments of financing

In the frame of the environmental national legislation, established two fundamental mandates for the implementation of the mecanismes of evaluation and control of the degradation and/or deterioration of the natural resources, being these :

- a) The obligatoriness of presenting a study of evaluation of environmental impacts by part of interested, for the development of any productive activity.
- b) It is conceded popular action to denounce before the authority, all done, act and omission that generates contamination and deterioration or loss of natural resources or that affects the levels of quality of life. If in the locality no exist representatives of National Commission of the Environment, the denunciation could do before the municipal authority, that will remit for the attention and procedure to the group of mention commission.

In the search of an authenticated representation and participation of the actors of the guatemalan society in the development of the national environmental management, doing efforts by implementing a mechanism of institutional coordination and sector by means of the creation of the National System of Environmental Management (SINGA). This mechanism of coordination base in to conform of National Councils integrated by representatives of different sectors, stablishing in forums of expression and debate in different areas and levels.

The SINGA, has represented, though of incipient manner the best mechanism of coordination, and proposal of the most serious alternatives of solution to national environmental problematic. This mechanism bases the operativeity in the coordination with the government through CONAMA, and the materialization of the respective actions through of to municipal governments.