

SYNOPSIS

The national report has been structured in two main parts: the first one with the introduction and the methodology. The presentation of the country, the points of view about the erosion problem and The United Nations Convention of the fight against desertion (CLD) and methodology aspects are included in this part. The second part is conformed by seven central chapters, where the results of national consulting processes are expressed, according to previous and future experiences and commitments that in fact aboard the application of the convention in Venezuela.

Introduction

Divided in six section presenting some ideas, one of the initial ones is the evolution of life in the planet from water to earth; the attitudes of the world population, toward the environmental problems being one of them the erosion of the soil as an initial degradation process of the land, where is relevant the identification of the actions and conditions that produced them.

- The historic evolution of the territorial area, from pre-Columbian time till today. The agriculture production of the national history, the beginning of the commercial boom of the Oil Industry in 1922, the military and politic facts that affect the social, economical and environmental conditions.
- The natural - physical dimensions, where each Natural Region is described and classify according to its natural restrictions, potentialities and some human, social and economical conditions
- The reports objectives are: to present the situation of the desartic areas in the country, the convention goals, the past actions in fighting the erosion and degradation of the soil problem and the future action to apply .
- Venezuela enters the convention in 1998 after studying and getting involved with the instrument, particularly understanding the desertification problem since 1995. Been this a development problem that requires inter-institutional and multidiciplines efforts, the defense of the vulnerable ecosystems and the community participation.
- Venezuela's vision upon the convention goals. Its purposes is to expand the zone where it reaches (arid, subarid, subhummed-dry) toward more hummed zones or areas that are also in degradation of the soil and poverty of the population.
- The natural disaster of December 1999 in almost the totality of the north-central area of the country showed that an atypical climatic variation can cause a big natural and social disaster when the occupational rules of the territory are

violated, specially when the prevention and conservation of the hydrographic basing are not respected.

Methodology

The bases of the preparation of this report are the participation and national consult of distinguish actors involved in the matter. The eight faces can be summarized as following:

- A workshop ministerial and interministerial to designed the questionnaire that would collect the information needed to elaborate the report with the assessment of the international assessor of the convention.
- 120 questionnaires were delivered to private enterprises, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, environmentalist and technical cooperation agencies.
- Analysis and synthesis of 50 answers received.
- The designed of the seven sketches for the questionnaires.
- National workshop for the designed and assessment of the main chapters.
- The final designed of the chapters of this national report.
- Mailing the total report to the Secretary of the German Convention through the Chancellery.

Chapter I: Development of variables and bases (diagnostic)

- Evaluation and diagnostic of previous experiences, in the national, regional and local areas. First of all 20 twenty works were identified in the environmental area of the natural resources in degradation of soil and grounds in the territory.
- First of all is very relevant the support of the Ministry of Environment and National Resources in two big main programs and projects: The National Inventory of Soils and Grounds and The Environmental Venezuelans System. It is also good to mention the support of other national institutions such as

Agriculture National Research Center (FONAIAP), The Venezuelan Guyana Corporation (CVG), The Venezuelan Foundation Of Seismological Research Center (FUNVISIS), and some specific publications in this area build the National Cardinal References.

- In local and regional levels, two grate sources have contributed to the general environmental knowledge and degradation of the soils, one is the universities, such as Yacambu Lisandro Alvarado University, Francisco de Miranda University, Táchira University, Venezuela Central University, the Inter American Center of Development and Environmental and Territorial Research. (CIDIAT). And the public institutions MARN; FONAIAP; PIDZAR Project; IPIAT; and Palmichal enterprise.

Chapter II: Evaluation processes

- Evaluation processes involved the supervision of the field actions and the management to guide the programs and projects.
- Institutional development for the elaboration of the indicators. A list is made with the most common indicators of environmental and agricultural use in order to know the facts of the environmental states and the institutional performance. It is important to mention that the Venezuelan Environmental Balance 1994 - 1996 named " Health" was consulted.
- Methods to integrate the actual mechanisms and systems. It is formed by two programs of the ministry: Management and Conservation of Basing; through the control and checking system plans.
- Mechanisms of early alert for possible dryness. The VENEHMET Project should be constituted in the near future, over the angular stone itself; due that Venezuela is a country historically affected for long periods of dryness, that affect the standards of life, public services and agricultural production in general.
- Environmental economy This discipline has not been aproched by the MARN, but not so in the universities and The Polar Foundation.

Chapter III: National plans and strategies for the convention support.

Venezuela has not formulated a clear and explicit policy on desertification neither on the state environmental policy nor its direct instruments.

- Legal juridical instrument system needs to be modified and actualized according to the new constitution 1999. The Environmental Organic Code is under discussion on this moment and it will allow the ruling of the legal instruments.
- National plans, strategies and other supporting instruments to the convention. The most important are: The national Constitution; The National Plan of reorganization of the territory; The National Report to Rio (1992).
- Institutional aspects; Its important the need of reorganization of MARN. As a main instrument of the environmental control, as well as the modification of its organic and internal rulings.
- National plans: there is not a new national plan; the previous plans are the bases of the big national and regional projects among them the project of the fluvial basing Apure Orinoco which is fundamental in the decentralization strategies.
- Problem of relevant impacts related to the degradation of the soils and desertification. A serious of anthropic actions in the agricultural areas that are degrading the land in the country are named; problems of natural order such as dryness and flows; as well as social-environmental impacts due to urban and rural marginality over the geographic spaces.
- Institutional answers; two main lines are important here, The first one are the action of the executed plans of the regional dependencies of the MARN, research centers, private industries and ONG, as well as the formulations of the conservation of the resources and rural development plans in different areas on the country. The second one is the proposal of the integral general development plan which is formed by : National Soil Plant, National and Regional Plan of the management of the hydrografic basing, Agricultural and nourishment National Development Plan, and the national inventory of affective areas by problems of dryness, desertification, degradation of soils are all priority.

Chapter IV: Measurements for the promotion of the environmental conservation, the institutional growth and organization of the knowledge over desertification.

- Actual programs and projects. Even there is not a national policy for the problems of the degradation of the lands in Venezuela, some specific programs and projects are being developed, some examples of these are Plans and programs of conservation, management of hydrographic basins project of soil evaluation and planification of its use, conservation and use of the hydra resources of the international basins Carrapia- Paraguachon research program and projects and the development of arid zones among others.
- New actions and prevention. This are the ones we need to enhance the fight against the desertification of a country. among the most important we can find: the elaboration of the national program, training of the special technicians, coordinated programs according to the desertification convention, biodiversity, climatic changes, reactivation of the conservation program of the soils, actualization the degradation state of the Venezuelan soils.
- The environmental education. Through the last 30 years the national program called "Foundation Gran Mariscal De Ayacucho", plus the help received from CIDIAT have prepared technical and scientific professionals which reinforced the institutional capacity needed for the environmental conservation and the increased knowledge over desertification the continuity of this actions are needed to improve the decentralization of the public administration and the MARN.
- Reinforcement of the institutional and local capacities. In this areas we have the knowledge and the experience needed to identify possible solutions to the environmental and socioeconomical problems. The tradition of decentralization in this country is really short. and the results are far from being beneficial in particular with regard to the processes and legal support. Being this the main reason for the need of the reorganization, The MARN have had the tendency of reinforcing the regional performance.

Chapter V: Institutional Measures.

- The Main national point and the national coordination instrument. The first one is represented by the ministry of International Relationship, through its department of environment, and the next one by the General Direction of Hydrographic Basing in Coordination with the international cooperation department. both from the ministry of environment and national resources. which is the one in charge of the things related to the environment in general. Coordinator of the action, public consulting, and participate and integrate the different facts; public, private, Scientific and the organized society.
- Coherent and functional institutional frames to control desertification. The priority assigned by MARN and CLD goes through two actions: Improve the coordination mechanisms through the formation of an inter-institutional committee and the internal group MARN. On the other hand by the development of the PAN through which the technical professionals with experience could guarantee the exchange of relevant information and look for political and financial support from the national government and the international agencies of cooperation.
- Regulating and legal frame. The MARN is now going through a process of revision of the fundamental environmental dispositions in concordance with the new national constitution approved in 1999.

Chapter VI, Participative Process

- Participatives methods. The participation of all the citizens is fundamental in the fight against the desertification. The woman should play a protagonic roll guarantee by the new constitution. The Environmental Educational Program formal and informal, the consciousness campaign The Environmental Educational research projects integrated all the methods.
- Identification of national priorities by the representatives of different sectors. The identified sectors where group of volunteers, public and private enterprises, students, house wives and consultants among others.
- Information and communication nature. There is a different variety of media that allows to spread the information about desertification: meetings, workshops, conferences, oral expositions, congresses, agricultural and environmental extension expressions.

- Local and regional population interest. Evaluation of the consults results. The needs of the population of the arid, semi-arids and subsumed areas are the following: domestic uses, for watering field managing the hydra resources a development plan to fight poverty and creating new sources of employee development alternative systems, to make the soils productive basic services, to control the natural tendency of the soil.

Chapter VII financial contributions of the national budget and international support.

- For action in order to fight against desertification there are not financial contributions so far. There are two basic sources of financial help, the ones going to research institutions coming from (CONICIT) and (FUNDACITES). The other source is the centralised national public administration and the decentralised ones.
- Processes for the mobilisations of the internal resources: Through the elaboration, studies, projects, executions of buildings equipment supply, etc.. But, the strategies for giving financial support have not being developed so far creating the inefficient use of the economical resources, wasting of time and human effort.
- Identification of financial requirement available resources and stablishing priorities. The needs identified were quantification of the desertification problems education and consciousness , institutional reinforcement.
- International support. There is a very little experience on this matter in this country. We are just submitted to be send to assessor meetings an evaluation of their results. there is no clear policy that let us identified the financial and administrative mechanisms as well as how to access to that co-operation.