

DRYNET – BOLIVIA NEWS

WITH THE SUPPORT OF DRYNET, NEW ACTIONS TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND MITIGATE DROUGHT IN BOLIVIA WERE FORMULATED, FOR THE FIRST TIME, IN A JOINT EFFORT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Event: “1st National Seminar on the Formulation of Actions to Combat Desertification and Mitigate Drought in Bolivia”

Location: Centro de Retiros de Vinto, Quillacollo, Cochabamba - Bolivia.

Date: 24-25 of April, 2008

Organisers: PROBIOMA (DRYNET-Bolivia), Vice-ministry of River Basins and Water Resources (National Focal Point), Vice-ministry of Territorial Planning and the Environment, RIOD-Bolivia, and the Soil Platform.

Summary: In coordination with Bolivia’s National Focal Point for the UNCCD, and the RIOD-Bolivia, DRYNET-Bolivia successfully organised the first National Seminar on the formulation of actions to combat desertification and mitigate drought in Bolivia. The event brought together over 60 representatives from a range of different backgrounds, including the relevant state institutions, departmental and municipal authorities, representatives of the RIOD and the National Soil Platform, community based organisations, and productive associations.

The overall objective of the event was to:

“Reformulate and adjust Bolivia’s National Action Plan to Combat Desertification, through the design and proposal of Actions to Combat Desertification and Mitigate Drought in the short- (immediate actions), medium- and long-term, that aid in the fulfilment of Law N° 1688, passed on the 27th of March 1996, and which ratified the UNCCD, and in line with the National Development Plan and National Plan for River Basins.”

At the same time, the event aimed to strengthen the participation of CSOs at all levels of planning and implementation of the UNCCD in Bolivia, by jointly elaborating the new structure for the implementation of the UNCCD in Bolivia.

During the event, the participants represented the following 6 sectoral groups:

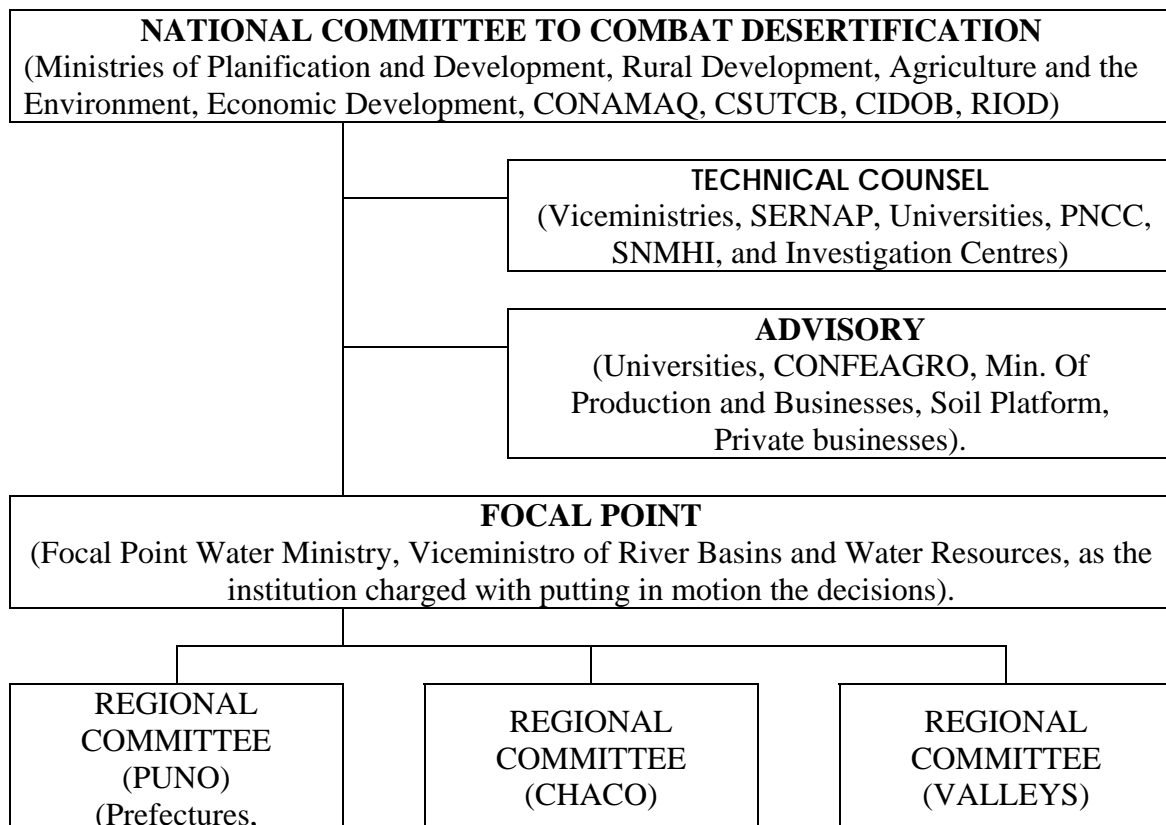
- Peasant Economic Organisations (OECAS) and Productive Associations
- NGOs
- Municipalities and Social Organisations
- Prefectures
- Government institutions
- Inter-institutional group

Each group presented their proposals for the reformulation of the Bolivian National Action Plan and the restructuring of the UNCCD convention in Bolivia.

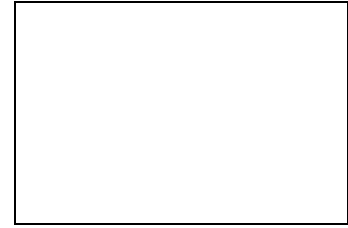
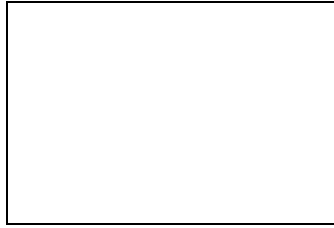
The proposals were very diverse, taking the form of actions, results, institutions in charge, and sources of funding. They included the following suggestions:

- Better identification of areas affected by desertification in each department.
- Generate systems of participative control for the monitoring of processes of degradation and the identification of causes and effects.
- Develop an appropriate legal framework which supports the UNCCD convention, including the improvement of the Soils Law, Water Law, Protected Areas Laws, etc.
- Develop a national early warning system
- Foment sustainable agriculture with an increased focus on agroecology, through the use of incentives, alternative sources of finances, technical support etc.
- Strengthen the capabilities of grassroots organisations and local farmers to implement activities in line with the convention.
- Increased promotion and use of alternative energy sources in vulnerable areas, such as biogas, wind power, solar power, and solar ovens.
- Incorporate the thematic of desertification into the relevant university degrees, leading to the creation of new professionals with an integrated vision on land management. At the same time, incorporate the thematic into the national education curriculum at all levels.
- Develop a Database of all programs, projects, studies, experiences, and human resources related to the UNCCD process.

The main debate of the event focused on the restructuring of the convention in Bolivia. Both the Inter-institutional group and the NGO group contributed suggestions which were openly debated and adapted. The final proposal follows:



Municipalities, Local and indigenous Organisations, Private businesses, RIOD-Regional, Relevant Regional Institutions)



With the conclusion of the event, the National Focal Point assumed the responsibility of organising all proposals, and using them to construct the adjusted National Action Plan within a period of 15 days. Participants will have the chance to review and comment on the National Focal Point's proposals, before the final NAP is approved. DRYNET-Bolivia will continue to articulate government and civil society entities in this process, so as to ensure that the Focal Point complies with its commitments, and so that Bolivia achieves a participatory and functional National Action Plan.

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Final Day Photograph: 1st National Seminar on the Formulation of Actions to Combat Desertification and Mitigate Drought in Bolivia. Quillacollo, Cochabamba. 24-25 of April, 2008



Peasant Economic Organisations (OECAS) and Productive Associations Group, discussing their proposal for the National Action Plan