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### Drought: Symptom of an Unbalanced Climate

By: Cynthia Hernández Mayol / CubaSí

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Climate change, accelerated by global warming, is affecting the entire planet as a result of the excessive and irresponsible activity of man towards and with the environment over time. As a consequence, among one of the imbalances, the drought has intensified over the years and therefore increasingly harming the life and development of man, flora, and fauna.

Drought wilting shouldn't be only associated with deserts and other extreme sites. According to the UN, an estimated of 250 million people suffer from land desertification in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, while another billion are settled in areas susceptible to such degradation.

According to the Mexican newspaper El Financiero, because there are some 3.6 billion hectares of land surface in a desert state, food production worldwide could decrease by 12% in a period of 25 years. On the other hand, he added, one of the most extreme and worsening droughts is located in the Horn of Africa.

Only 2.5 % of water is suitable for human consumption, out of the 70 % of that liquid that occupies the entire Earth. The driest place on Earth is located in Chile, in the Atacama desert. This is considered the driest non-polar desert on Earth, and covers an area of approximately 105 thousand km<sup>2</sup>. It last bloomed in 2017.

In the Caribbean, Cuba is not foreign to this climatic phenomenon. The Cuban Institute of Meteorology (INSMET) recently announced that last March could be considered the third month with the least accumulated rainfall within the dry season in Cuba. "It ended with 61% of the entire national territory with deficits in accumulated rain."

INSMET pointed out that, "by the end of the January-March 2021 quarter, 82% of the entire national territory was affected by drought due to the low accumulated rainfall reported. The 18 corresponded to the severe-extreme category, the 31 to moderate and the 33% to the weak category". The most affected were Havana, Mayabeque, and Cienfuegos.

"This behavior resulted in a 14% increase in the total affected area compared to December 2020 - February 2021

quarter. The 7% from severe to extreme, 5 in the moderate and 2 in the weak. A figure of 103 municipalities had moderate to extreme drought in more than 25% of their areas. In 65 municipalities with more than 75% affected", added the institute.

Argelio Fernández Richelme, director of Hydrology and Hydrogeology, of the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources, specified on April 14<sup>th</sup> that the nation is experiencing a complicated situation due to the low availability of water, both on the surface and underground in some areas. He clarified that, "if water continues to flow out of the reservoirs and does not enter, the situation will get worse."

Trabajadores newspaper, reported that 87 reservoirs in Cuba are below their half full, while another five are at what's called dead level due to runoff deficit. Experts say that 60 out of the 101 main basins tend to decrease, 31 to stability and only six with a slight tendency to increase.

Even more worrisome, the Ariguanabo basin, which occupies the surroundings of the former Ariguanabo Lagoon and the river of the same name, last week broke the record for its lowest level in the last 30 years. The capital every year, in the dry period is affected by the scarcity of rainfall, which leads to serious problems with the water supply to its inhabitants.

Hence, the call to the entire population not to waste this finite resource and to fix leaks at homes and work centers. The alert also goes to institutions and authorities. It's unfortunate to see the hundreds of leaks in the streets, spraying up like fountains and streams, some due to the visible deterioration of the roads over the years, where pipes are exposed, and the water runs unstop.

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