



**"Voluntary Contribution to the Third Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, for the 40th Session of the Working Group on Universal Periodic Review Period 2016-2021."**

Review Period: 2016-2021

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**"Voluntary Contribution to the Third Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, for the 40th Session of the Working Group on**

## **Universal Periodic Review Period 2016-2021."**

1. The Venezuelan Foundation for the Right to Housing (Fundavivienda) is a non-governmental, non-profit civil organization, formed by human rights activists and activists of pro-housing organizations. Dedicated to the study, research, monitoring, defense and dissemination of human rights, with special emphasis on the right to housing, for having to his credit, a history of 16 years, as founders of the defunct Metropolitan Network of tenants (RMI). Through the RMI we were proponents and co-sponsors of the Law Against Forced Evictions of Housing, decree 8190, and the Law for the Regularization and Control of Housing Leases. We are members of the Coordinating Committee of the international platform International Alliance of Inhabitants (IAI). We have participated in conferences in the World Social Forums as speakers since 2009 and participated as speakers in the UN-Habitat 2009 events in Rio de Janeiro, in the 75th meeting and sessions of the World Urban Forum, as well as in the UN Habitat III 2016 events in Quito. We have also submitted Voluntary Contribution to the Second Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela 2012-2016, to the Third Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of the People's Republic of China, 2013-2018. We are currently part of the OCHA's Shelter and Supplies Cluster and are part of the Humanitarian Response Plan 2020-2021.

### **General Situation of Human Rights in Venezuela**

2. In order to review the 2016-2021 period, it is essential to situate the historical context in which we are transiting, which in a good part, gave rise to the current situation of human rights in Venezuela. Locating the year 2014 as a milestone of a before and after. Because Venezuela was subject to a series of sanctions imposed unilaterally by the United States and other countries, a set of sanctions aimed at economic, financial and commercial blockade, freezing of Venezuelan assets, funds, goods and properties abroad, which generated income for the country. All these actions produced a serious decrease in the national income, which has had an unfavorable impact on the economy. These actions have given rise to a series of economic imbalances that have had a serious impact on the lives of the country's citizens, especially affecting the set of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

3. As for the exercise as a human rights activist, it is necessary to mention the constant participation we have had within the National Human Rights Council, to whom we send complaints, proposals and recommendations, with constant follow-up by the National Human Rights Council.

### **Progress of the National Policy on housing construction and improvement**

4. In the context described above, the national housing policy has been maintained. The current public housing policy in Venezuela has had three objectives during the period: protection and encouragement through laws and decrees, the construction of an absolute number of new public housing units, and the encouragement of the participation of beneficiaries and communities in housing construction plans and policies.

5. The program called Gran Misión Vivienda Venezuela (Gmvv) is part of the public housing policy in Venezuela. This has been a plan designed to generate the

articulation of the planning, execution and financing of housing, such as: land, materials and supplies, executing entities and financing, but with a more accentuated and leading integration of civil society organizations than in previous periods.

6. This program has established a method that has favored not only construction, but also social organization networks around housing as a need and as a right. Stimulating the appropriation by individuals of the concept of the "right to the city", encouraging participation in the adoption of decisions related to housing at the national and community levels.

7. As of the date of preparation of this report, 3.587.675 adequate housing units have been built and delivered to families residing in the national territory since the creation of the program. At present, the governing body has promoted the self-construction system, stimulating the organization led by the beneficiaries through a structure called "Movimiento Viviendo Venezolano" which groups more than 3,000 people.

8. Regarding the status of the adequate housing condition of these homes delivered, through the GMVV. FundaVivienda carried out an investigation entitled "Quality of the Housing of the Great Mission Housing Venezuela and its Impact on the Quality of Life of its Inhabitants", there a study was made on the quality of housing in relation to the Adequate Housing standards according to the UN and the impact on the quality of life of the participants based on the theory of operations, with visits and interviews with inhabitants in 2019, randomly chosen from the states of Miranda, Barinas and Caracas. The study showed that they are housing structures built under the parameters of Adequate Housing required by the UN, the beneficiaries previously did not have their own home and through this policy, they became owners of their home, stating that they had no fear of being harassed or evicted. , there was an improvement in the availability of basic and private services. There was a significant change in their lives, from living in vulnerable areas to stable and safe places.

9. Likewise, in terms of housing improvement, the housing renovation and community equipment program called Barrio Nuevo Barrio Tricolor, has renovated 1.498.455 homes since the beginning of the program.

10. In relation to the issue of legal security of tenure. There is a program aimed at the inhabitants of low-income areas, called the Urban Land Tenure Regularization Program, which provides title deeds for homes built on urban or peri-urban land. To date, 1.113.270 urban land titles have been delivered since the beginning of the program.

11. Regarding the defense against forced evictions, in the country there is a legal prohibition against arbitrary evictions, it is estimated that evictions have decreased by 90%. And those that have been attempted represent situations in which people have taken the law into their own hands and 97% have been stopped through civil society organizations and government agencies.

12. Public housing policies have resulted in a historic decrease in the number of deaths caused by the collapse of houses built in high-risk areas.

13. During the 2016-2020 period, the protection of families against real estate fraud and usury is implemented, being almost fully controlled compared to previous periods.

14. In the year 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic appears in the world, the imbalance in the social field caused many countries in the world and especially Venezuela to take a series of measures to protect the population from the collateral effects of the pandemic, in the area of housing mainly the national government, on March 23 until September 1, 2020 suspended the payment of rental fees for commercial real estate affected by the cessation of activities and the suspension of rent to family housing, also the prohibition of evictions was ratified. These measures were extended consecutively. Resolution 023 dated April 1, 2020 issued by the Ministry of Housing and Habitat was also published, which establishes possible forms of payment to refinance overdue housing lease payments.

### **Challenges of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the area of the Right to Housing**

15. The right to adequate housing includes other rights such as the right to food, the right to health, the right to education, among others. In this context of the interdependence of human rights, it is important to point out once again that Venezuela has been subject to the application of unilateral coercive measures, economic, financial and commercial blockade by the USA, Canada, the European Union, Switzerland and Panama, the blockade has included an attack on the national currency (the bolivar) and PDVSA, the industry that generates the greatest income for the country. This situation against the Venezuelan economy has generated the deterioration of the real salary, contraction of production levels and insufficient spending and public investment. In addition, in 2020, Covid-19 appeared and was added to the factors explaining the drop in production.

16. In view of this scenario and in order to continue developing as a nation, it represents a challenge to deepen the development of alternative systems, such as traditional construction techniques with local means, self-construction by civil society organizations, in order to keep up the pace of housing construction in the midst of an economic and financial blockade.

### **Threats**

17. The Venezuelan State has been complying with the Right to Housing, what this organization considers a threat, is that if the system of blockades and affectation to the national economy persists, the percentage of houses to be built could decrease. Likewise, the attack on the national economy has brought as a consequence that houses delivered with the full enjoyment of potable water, gas, electricity, and transportation services, present a deficit in the provision of these services due to lack of investment in the maintenance systems.

### **Recommendations to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.**

- 1- It is recommended to consciously incorporate the use of ecological and sustainable materials, as well as clean and renewable energy in housing construction, in order to generate the least impact on nature and move towards the development of ecological cities.
- 2- Develop mechanisms for the transition towards the development of sustainable energies.
- 3- The Venezuelan State is urged to comply with item 091-2011 dated 05/05/2011 sent by the Vice-Presidency of the Republic to the Presidency of the Republic, approving the start of negotiations with owners of old buildings, to be sold to their tenants. This recommendation was also contributed to the 2012-2016 UPR.
- 4- It is recommended that the Venezuelan State continue to request before Multilateral Bodies, the suspension of the application of coercive measures and economic, commercial and financial blockades to the country, in order to invigorate the economy.
- 5- The Venezuelan State is recommended to carry out the actions conducive to seeking the reimbursement of the nation's assets, with the aim of investing them in the social area and in the modernization of public services.
- 6- It is recommended that the pace of construction and delivery of adequate housing be maintained.