



# We have the leading role

Venezuelan People has the power to build the model of welfare they deserve

THE TWICE CHAMPION SPENT SOME TIME WITH REFUGEE FAMILIES

# 160 Miles of Passion

According to Ángel Andrés Benítez, the boom of auto racing in Venezuela is due to the support the Bolivarian Government has provided to this discipline and other sports as well.

IN NOVEMBER  
LAST YEAR  
PASTOR MALDONADO  
MADE IT TO  
THE FORMULA 1  
AND WILL RUN  
FOR WILLIAMS F1  
ALL THROUGH 2011

MILKA DUNNO  
IS AN OUTSTANDING  
VENEZUELAN FEMALE  
PILOT WHO  
RUNS FOR INDYCAR

The smells that fill the air in Quinta Alicia located in the historical parish of La Pastora comes from the hallacas, spices, and different condiments traditionally found in Venezuela's Christmas festivity. It is two days to New Year's Eve and a scent of food, the children's laughter and the sound of the ball rolling on the floor surround Angel Andres Benitez while he shares the peculiarities of his profession with those around him.

Angel is not used to speaking in public, his profession demands him to be quiet and focused: At the age of 21, he is a car racing pilot. Twice champion of the Formula Ford 2000 and the 1600 category of the national circuit, Ángel arrives smiling to the Quinta Alicia house where the holiday spirit surrounds him. He is there to hand out toys and sport equipment to the children of the families affected by the heavy rains. "I heard that there hadn't been enough donations in this parish so we decided to do our bit for the people who need it. It is important to help others in these difficult times the country is going through due to the floods," he says.

## Inherited

This is the very first time Angel participates in this kind of activity, but he also affirms that there is nothing alike as the feeling of being able to share with others what the country has given you: "this is the first time I do this, and I would like to do it again, I cannot explain this feeling," he says.

Maybe, Ángel knows that motivation and enthusiasm given by others is fundamental during the childhood. He remembers how his parents cheered him up to do what he considered to be his life's dream: car racing. "I started at an early age. I entered the racing world because of my parents, my father races, my grand-



father did, and I've been on a racing track since I was three months old. Not having raced then is a different story," he says kidding while is surrounded by children who carefully listen to him.

When he was 15 years old, Ángel started racing professionally. The Bolivarian Government has widely supported this sports activity. Ángel tells he started racing in the 1600 category winning a championship back in the year 2006. He was then able to access to the 2000 category becoming champion in two consecutive years, 2007 and 2008.

## The boom of car racing

According to the pilot, a sport like car racing also demands very specific physical conditions, talent and



practice. It also requires the support of the institutions because the expenses cannot be afforded by any athlete. "This is a very expensive sports; I wish it were like soccer, or baseball. But in here you have to get a car, gas and a team to support you".

"The truth is that this is all possible thanks to the Ministry of People's Power for Sports, which has supported us, thanks to the Minister Hector Rodriguez too. If it weren't for their support we wouldn't be able to race abroad", Ángel says.

"We have received support from the Government and I think that's the way it should keep going, because it would be impossible without the Government and the support of other institutions. Formula 1 has always existed, but in Venezuela baseball ruled. Just as soccer has had its boom in the last years with the Vinotinto (Venezuelan national soccer team), [I think] we should take advantage of having Pastor Maldonado on the top of Formula 1. We should take advantage of the boom in car racing so that we seek to exploit it and popularize it [in Venezuela]" he says.

Ángel has raced in the US Daytona competition and other foreign races, but his career has just taken off. He plans to participate in the Continental Formula races on February 2011, and the F2000 Championship in April, both races to be held in the US.

"I look forward racing at a professional level. I always wish to do my best in my career, I'm working hard to place my country in a good position", Ángel says.

Ángel Benitez can reach 161,55 miles per hour in his car; this is the speed of a Venezuelan's dreams who works hard to be always the first. ♦

Carmen Ugueto T/BP



AWARENESS AND SELF-MANAGEMENT ARE IRREVERSIBLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN VENEZUELA

# More participation, more prominence

*23 de Enero was celebrated by many as the end of dictatorship and the beginning of democracy in Venezuela, but the vision of democracy held by those who took power right after the popular uprising had nothing to do with giving power to the people.*



"Sovereignty resides untransferable in the people, who exercise it directly [...]". These were dead words in previous Venezuelan Constitutions. However, this was the mandate established in the national constitution which opened the gates for participatory democracy in 1999, when the Bolivarian Government had only just started.

The quoted words represent a new political model that gives the people the chance to organize itself and to get directly involved in the decisions concerning its destiny. This right was mocked along all the history of Venezuela as a Republic. It is a betrayal of the Bolivarian dream which first manifested itself on January 23rd 1958.

Four years after the overthrow of the dictatorship, Fabricio Ojeda's resignation speech before the congress exposed the betrayal to democracy (he gave away his parliamentary immunity). He had been the founder and president of the Patriotic Junta which led the struggle against the then dictator General Marcos Perez Jimenez.

"Venezuela [...] needs a profound change so that the democratic rights of the people do not become dead words, so that freedom becomes real, and justice rules; so that the right to

**Empowering Laws**

- Organic Law for Communal Councils
- Organic Law for People's Power
- Organic Law for the Public and People's Planning
- Organic Law for Communes
- Organic Law for the Communal Economic System
- Organic Law for Social Control Office

education, work, health and welfare become true rights for the majority and not only for a few minorities. But nothing of this will be achieved in an underdeveloped and dependent country as ours. But through the revolutionary action that leads to the conquest of the political power by the people", the journalist Fabricio Ojeda said on June 30th 1962. He later announced joining the guerrilla.

He was murdered four years later in the secret basements of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces (SIFA Spanish acronym). Hundreds met the same fate, being persecuted, tortured and exterminated by the governments that signed the Puntofijo pact. These are the same governments which celebrate January 23rd as the "return to democracy". They have unsuccessfully tried in the last eleven years to turn the date into a massive popular demonstration against the Bolivarian Government which has on the con-



trary succeeded in empowering the Venezuelan people.

## From the Community Council to the Commune

Fostering participation and leadership of the people is part of the essence of the national Constitution. Therefore, article 70 enshrines the following means for achieving exerting these principles: legislative, constitutional, and constituent initiatives; open town councils, and citizens' assemblies whose decisions are considered to be politically binding; regarding the social and economic areas, the constitution establishes institutions of public assistance, self-management, and co-management, any kind of cooperative including the financial-oriented ones, savings banks, communitarian entrepreneurs and others forms of association guided by the values of mutual cooperation and solidarity.

The exertion of such rights was reinforced with the enactment of the first Organic Law on Community Councils and it led to the creation of this type of organization for the solutions of problems nationwide. Now the people are establishing communes and they have a legal instrument as a support.

This is how 243 families from Los Valles del Tuy (Miranda state-central Venezuela) have gone from living in shanty houses to worthy houses. They have started their own agricultural projects, among other social production projects. They have as well their own InfoCentros (free internet access).

"It's a great joy. I feel proud and I am thankful to God and to President Chavez. My children sleep happily in their own rooms. My husband, a construction worker, has peace of mind. It's a complete change", Zenaida Torres said. She is a young housewife who lived in a shanty house with her family for a long time.

The Torres family was beneficiary of a housing project with the support of the Communal Council "Santa Teresita de Jesus". The family itself and other members of the commune participated in the construction, thus reducing the expenses and creating new jobs.

## You give me a hand, I give you a hand

The strength of those who work with organization and coordination was tested also under emergency. The relatively few casualties (though not regrettable at all) caused by the heavy rains proves the response capacities of well organized communities. It is also evident in the duty sharing and order observed in most of the shelters, and this attitude has been strengthened as the refugees have been relocated to housing complex.

Carmen Ruiz is one of the two thousand people who received brand-new houses in Los Naranji-

llos, which is part of the Housing Complex Ciudad Betania II, located in Ocumare del Tuy in the State of Miranda.

"We've got together to get things done. I knew how to sew, so I decided to do something useful with that skill, and so I joined my neighbors. We went building by building, looking for anyone who was interested; we then put the project together and requested the support of the Foundation for the Qualification and Investment in the Support of Agrarian Revolution (Ciara Spanish acronym)".



Carmen was joined by ten professional seamstresses and nine apprentices; together they will make school uniforms for their neighbors who will pay fair prices and will not have to leave the neighborhood to get them. Construction worker Ramon Villanueva also contri-

butes to improve everybody's lives. Together with 48 men and women, he promotes the communal garden project, and a Tambaqui reservoir. Brason Deivis does his part as one of the 25 drivers that covers the socialist route of the Betania neighborhoods I, II, and III.



## More participation



### By sheer self-management

Another example of successful self-management in the housing area is given by the 66 families of the Communal Council Pablo Prado from San Andres, in El Valle parish (south of Caracas).

"For my kids, it's been a great change to a better life, now they'll have their privacy and the place is cleaner. We had no toilet before, we used a septic tank, and there were feces over feces. My daughters always had infections in their genitals", Susy Gonzalez revealed. The woman lived with her husband and their five children in a shanty house made "partly with zinc and wooden planks."

A diagnosis of the necessities of the area was made with information recorded in a census. The information later led to the creation of housing projects which also include the restoration of houses with severe filtration problems and hazardous conditions, as well as the reconstruction of walkways.

Furthermore, an outstanding example is given in Caracas by the developing commune Victoria Socialista, in which 17 Community Councils from the Antimano parish (southwest of Caracas) have gathered together to share knowledge, techniques, skills, and efforts along

with some Bolivarian Government institutions in order to leave behind the misery suffered during 40 years of governments derived from the Punto Fijo Pact.

In this place, the Development and Consolidation of Urban and Suburban Agriculture project has greatly advanced. Its main objective is to foster food security and sovereignty through the community vegetable gardens. The best examples are in Las Torres and El Algodonal.

"We, the revolutionary men and women, are producing and consuming our own food. We are returning to our protein values", Orailene Maccari said. Maccari is the spokesperson of Community Council of Algodonal and member of coordination team for Community Garden Doña Marcela.

As she explains how community gardens work, social fighter Maccari makes it clear that the labor in progress goes beyond the mere acts of seeding and harvesting. She explains it is the consolidation of a lifestyle that breaks the perversions of dependence and speculation developed in the capitalist system.

The parish also possesses the Communal Center of Carapita, where neighbors enjoy the facilities of BiceAbasto (supermarket), Infocentros and Simoncito (childcare center) and a Communal Bank office.

## more prominence

### Palpable Socialism

Back to Miranda state, some graduates from Mission Vuelvan Caras recovered 94 hectares of idle lands and turned them into the Nucleolus of Socialist Development La Limonera in which lettuce, parsley, chive, paprika and other vegetables are sown and sold in green markets in the area. The profit is used to keep the production going.

“This is the opportunity for the people to rule themselves. It is the people who rules and the one who proposes the ideas,” Luis Brando said. At the animal farm he built, he breeds rabbits that are to be domestic pets, and chickens that lay eggs for the green markets.

The project includes the construction of a Simoncito (childcare and kindergarten center,) Bolivarian Schools, Comprehensive Diagnostic Centers, a firefighter department, and sports facilities where senior citizens can also do recreational activities.

### Cell phone cases made in Petare

The community councils in the parish of Petare have made important contributions to reduce unemployment rate in their communities. An outstanding example is the cell phone cases factory, Orinoquia Social Production

Unit, a partner of the cell phone factory in La Carlota.

Nubia Perdomo, head of the Social Battle group of Barrio Union “a group in charge of organizing community councils in the area” says that “Orinoquia has become a solution in the neighborhood for a number of families that had no income. We have lots of expectations because the work we do has a common goal: Improve our neighborhood through self-management. We all win working in the neighborhood”.

The factory future plans imply the purchase of a larger facility that allows the diversification of products and the opening of new job opportunities.

Pacu Breeding, cinder block fabrication, powder milk packers, vegetable gardens, cloth design and production, carpenter workshops, iron works companies, and support to the creation and reform of laws that provide a solution to the problems in Caracas, Mérida, Carabobo, Aragua, Lara, Bolivar, Guárico, Anzoátegui, Miranda, Sucre, Vargas and Portuguesa, among other States. There are hundreds of these stories. The participative democracy is stronger. The power in the hands of the people is now irreversible. ♦ *Yeneiza Delgado/ Carmen Ugueto/ Luis Eloy Pacheco/ Belén Van Arcken/Daniela Uzcátia/Berenice Sulbarán T/BP*

### Belandria Rodríguez

Venezuelan people are delighted with a fulfilled democracy because we are free, we exert our rights, and we have the power to develop projects for our communities. Community Councils and Communes are a clear example of the power that the Revolution has handed us, because for the first time in many years, we have complete freedom to speak our minds out.



### Rosa Méndez



The people really have a leading role, because now we have the right to express ourselves, and we take part in the decision making process that defines the destiny of our nation through elections. Since the arrival of the Bolivarian Government, we've been called to elections many times. The sovereign people can gather on any corner to debate and exchange ideas without the fear of being repressed or attacked, as it used to happen during the previous Governments.

### María Gil

Executing the people's power together with the organized community is an opportunity only granted for President Chavez. Those of us who live in the neighborhood know our needs; all we have to do is take the initiative to solve them by proposing projects. This vision of community allows us to live a participative democracy, and provide us with a leading role as our voices are heard..



### Evelyn Rico



Community Councils allow the inhabitants of the communities to analyze their problems and seek the means to solve them. This was not possible before because the power was only on the hands of governments. But now, with the absolute freedom we enjoy, the people are both legislator and leader.

### Domingo Vicenti

In Venezuela, we live a participatory democracy because we have an intellectual president who sees beyond his own power, so he has given Venezuelans the opportunity to legislate from their communities through the Communes and Community Councils; these organizations make of the people's power a reality.



### Miguel Gómez



The opposition leaders' offensive statements are clear examples of how freedom and democracy are openly exerted in the country. None of those individuals that insult Chávez is in jail; they say whatever and however they want. The community power is another example on how the participation and integration of the people is fused with the economic and social development of Venezuela.



## THE PATH TO THE COMMUNE

# Morón, when things turn good

*Communal Councils in Morón, a Venezuelan town located on the coast of Carabobo state (northern Venezuela, about two hours by car from Caracas) make a living breeding fish and making handicrafts.*

The inhabitants of Morón, Carabobo state, started the New Year working full steam for the common welfare: They are taking full advantage of the natural resources available to them in order to consolidate their social production projects and thus improve their life quality.

Communal Councils are working shoulder to shoulder with the Federal Government Council and the Bolivarian Mayor's Office of Moron on plans such as fish breeding in El Paraíso Lagoon, walkways and the construction of a Comprehensive Diagnostic Center for the community.

## Community's food self-sufficiency

"We started working on the program because we all benefit from it. We also help neighboring areas that have no means to supply their communities since the lagoon, where we will breed fish (cachamas and tilapias), is near," Francis Mujica explains. Mujica is member of the social audit committee of El Paraíso Communal Council, which was founded four years ago and is comprised by 28 people.

Jose Antonio Meza, another member of the council, says the projects will generate employment for the neighbors and for others in the surrounding areas.



Jacinto Lugo



Francis Mujica



Leobaldo Flores



José Antonio Mesa



"We will admit people from nearby communities so that they work with us, and the products will be sold at much lower prices than those products you find in the market, and they won't need to leave the community."

## All for one

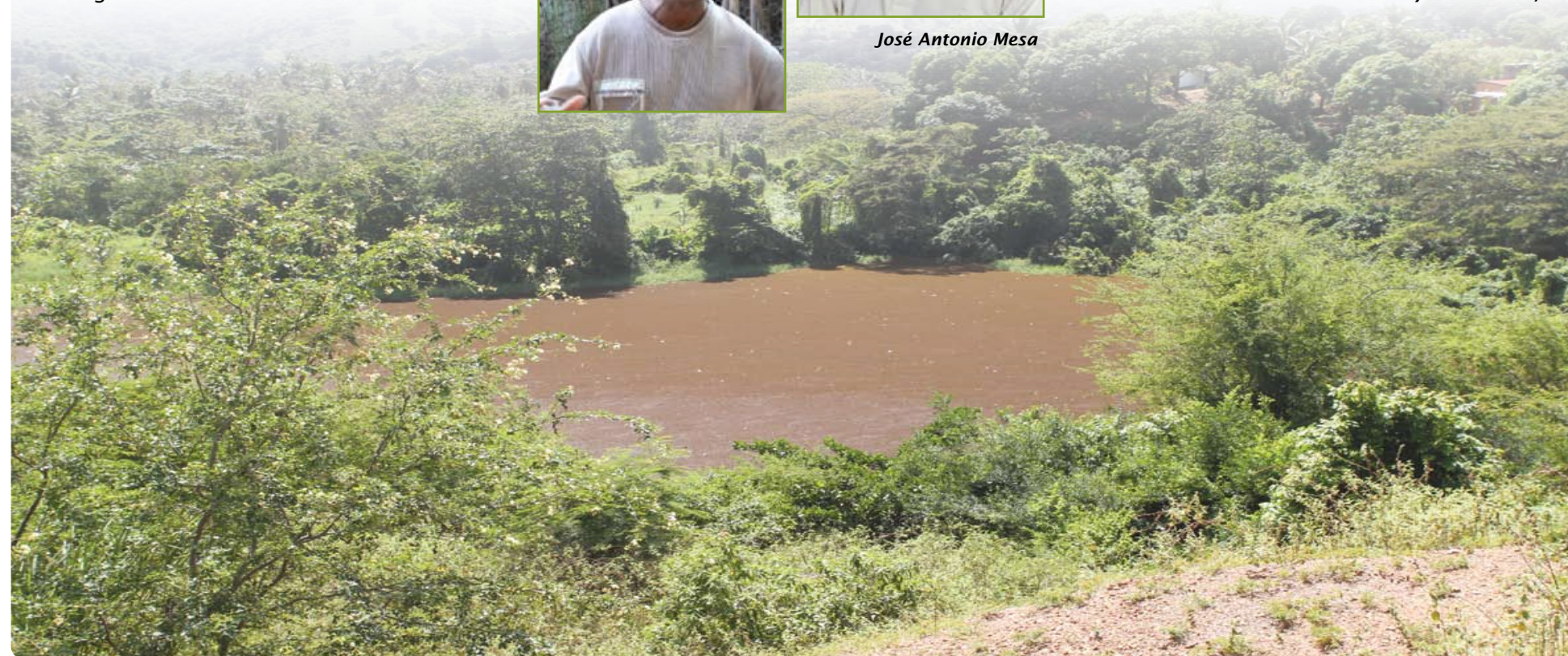
The fish breeding project in El Paraíso Lagoon will benefit 84 families and around 360 people. But this is not the only project, considering that the people of nearby communities are also working very hard to materialize their plans, explains Jacinto Kugo, liaison between the Juan José Mora Mayor's Office and Communal Councils.

"One of the most ambitious projects is the construction of the Ezequiel Zamora Commune, which will include El Paraíso, Terrazas del Paraíso, Caño Negro, José Félix Mora, Cobetra, Tres de Mayo, La Esperanza, La Rosa, La Victoria and the Simón Bolívar Communal Councils."

According to Lugo, the neighbors have already started launching socio-production projects such as handcrafted soaps made of aloe. This pilot project is currently bringing benefits to everybody.

"We want our community to grow, and the best way to achieve this is by working together, and we are going straight on that path." ♦

*Luis Eloy Pacheco T/BP*



## Get in the Train!

Under the hot sun of Maracaibo, the traffic chaos has been transformed into an organized 4-mile railway of high technology and high-speed as well. The Metro of Maracaibo benefits a total of 23,258 people daily. 69% of the total course planned has been built so far and is operative along the highway Sabaneta to the southwest of the city.

With a total investment of US\$ 192,512,096, the Metro system has generated 2,000 direct jobs and 3,000 indirect jobs. It has also benefited 1,265,670 inhabitants of the eight surrounding parishes.

Each of the seven trains available has three cars with a total capacity of 600 passengers. The subway fare is very low: BsF 0,50 (\$0,10) for standard users and BsF 0,15 (\$ 0.3) for students allowing people to travel in twelve minutes a distance that would otherwise take them more than half an hour.

Another remarkable achievement of this public transportation work is the construction of 349 houses as part of the House Replacement Program, as well as the construction of the Housing Complex Ciudad Socialista Losada and the Housing Complex Villa Metro Guayabal, which comprises three buildings with 128 apartments. This has provided communities with decent Houses. ♦ T/BP



**11 miles**  
of railways  
in three lines  
of Metro System

So far  
**eight million**  
people could  
benefit from these  
projects



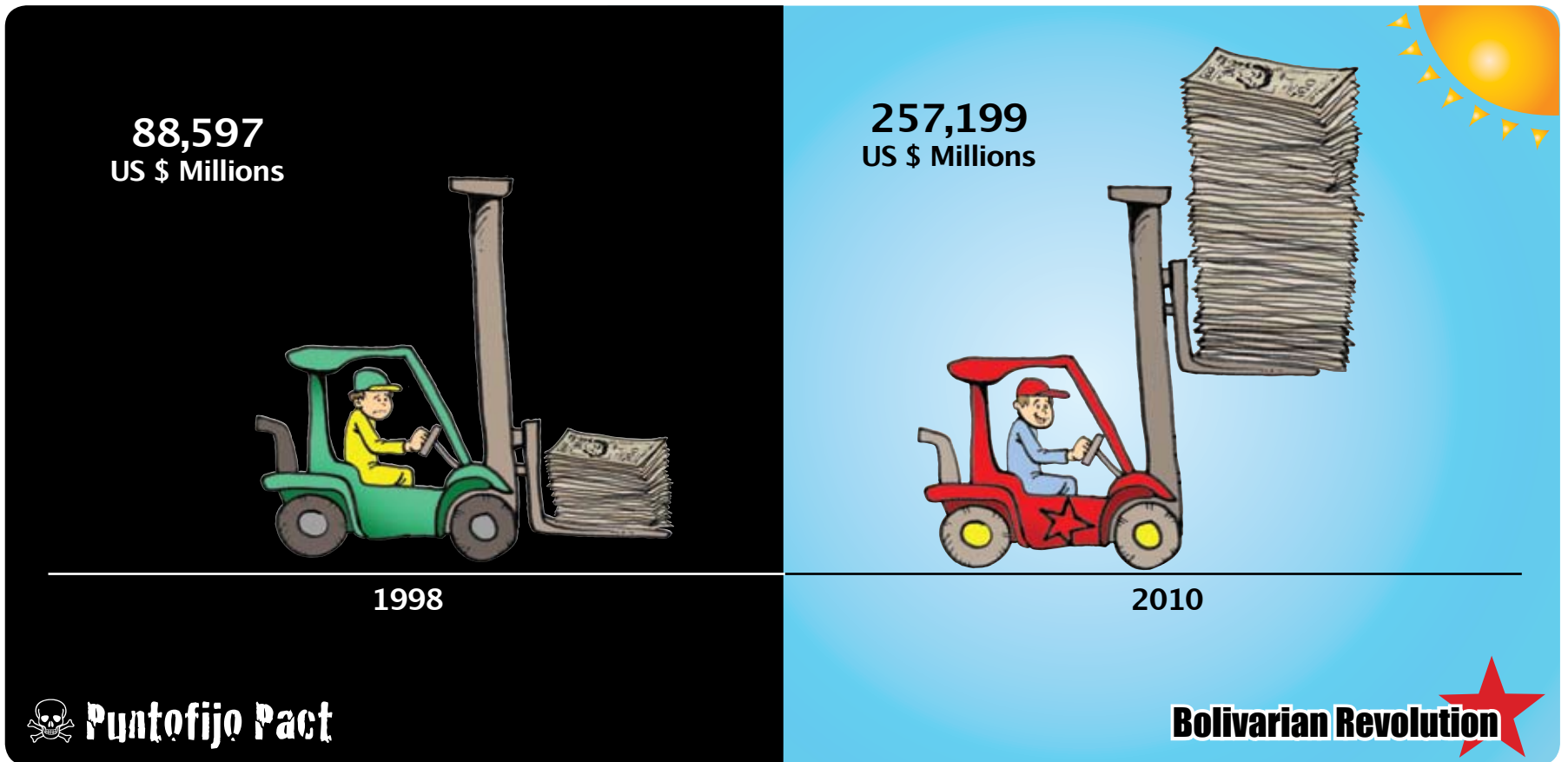
**VENEZUELA**  
*ide verdad!*

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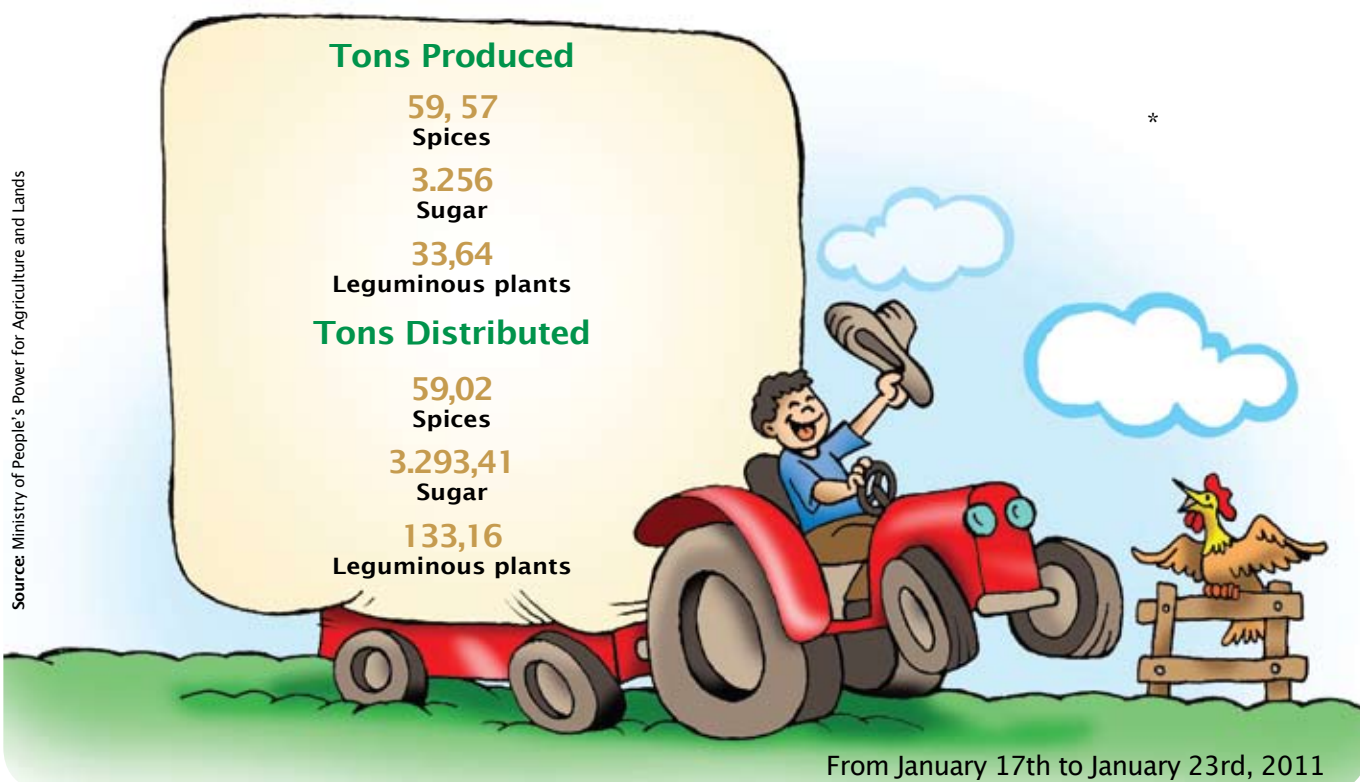
## Gross Domestic Product increased 290%



Source: Presidential Presentation of Annual Reports and Accounts before the Venezuelan National Assembly, 1/15/2011

### PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

## Socially-Owned Companies



5,428 Credits approved by the Social Banking

Total Investment:

**Bs. 1,231,507,485.00**

Total Beneficiaries: **6,368**

1,998 credits approved by the Universal Banking System

Total Investment:

**Bs. 236,005,014.20**

Total Beneficiaries: **2.058**

From January 17th to January 23rd, 2011