

Bolivia to Build 200,000 Houses



La Paz, November 11 (teleSUR-RHC), -- Bolivia's State Housing Agency, AEVIVIENDA has been constructing thousands of houses across the country. Houses built are handed over at no charge to communities living in precarious housing conditions as well as to those who have lost their homes in natural disasters.

The social housing project, developed jointly with an additional program offering socialized credit rates to first time home-buyers, aims to alleviate Bolivia's housing deficit. With a population of just over 10 million, the country had a housing shortage of some 290,000 units in 2012.

The government has promised to construct 200,000 units between 2015 and 2020 to meet this demand and tackle the country's housing deficit.

Bolivia's new constitution, approved by popular referendum in 2009, establishes access to housing as a fundamental right. A pillar of the Bolivian project to construct a new state is the indigenous concept of "El Vivir Bien," (Live Well), the idea that development in Bolivia must take place in a balanced way and a main priority of meeting the people's basic needs, such as access to adequate housing.

Up to September 2014, the government had built 61,000 housing units across the country. Each 61.5 square meter unit, at \$14,000 investment cost, includes 3 bedrooms, a living and dining room, kitchen, and bathroom.

Like most of state-run social spending programs in Bolivia, the project is funded by the country's natural gas reserves, nationalized by President Evo Morales soon after taking office in 2006.

Most of the houses are located in impoverished rural areas, like the Ascension de Guarayos municipality in the eastern lowland department of Santa Cruz.

At a recent act, Vice President Alvaro Garcia Linera oversaw the transfer of the houses to their new owners. Clearing up fears in the community that houses were only temporary, the Vice President reiterated "these houses belong to you, as long as the house stands, your children, grand children, and great great grandchildren may inherit these homes."

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