

# *Ecuador Moves Toward Hydroelectric Energy*

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Quito, April 02 (teleSUR-RHC) Moving away from oil dependence, Ecuador is in the process of constructing eight hydroelectric plants, all of which are scheduled to be finished by 2016.

With the first recently inaugurated, the completion of the remaining seven will allow for 93 percent of energy in the country to be hydraulic.

While Ecuador is undertaking these massive development projects, in 2008 it was also the first country in the world to stipulate the rights of nature in its Constitution of *Montecristi*, which the government is seeking to uphold and protect.

Professor of law at the University of *Zaragoza*, Antonio Embid Irujo, has been involved in developing national water policy in Ecuador. He told teleSUR English, "planning is linked to the constitution and in no way puts at risk the rights of nature. It is noticeable that this is respected by creating areas of protection, water protection, and the regulation of ecological reserves."

Water has been identified as one of the seven priority sectors for planning purposes as well as for conservation in the National Strategy for Climate Change. With this in mind, the dams are expected to generate 2,827 megawatts of power, as well as reduce CO2 emissions by approximately 8.2 million tons annually. "

The electric sector will take advantage of hydraulic resources, respecting also what is stipulated in the constitution. And the constitution specifies that piped water should be for first human consumption, second for guaranteeing food sovereignty, third for industrial use, and fourth always meeting ecological reserve norms," said General Manager of the Public Water Company of Ecuador Carlos Bernal.

With the highest public investment in the region, accounting for 15 percent of its gross domestic product, Ecuador is looking to exploit clean energy with the construction of the hydroelectric plants at different points throughout the country, while seeking to respect the constitutional rights of nature and ensure the consultation of citizens.

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