

# *Cuba Implements Soil Improvement and Conservation Program*

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Havana, May 28 (RHC-PL) -- Cuba is currently implementing a soil improvement program the main priorities of which are to prevent erosion, acidity, alkalinity, salinity and low fertility.

"The implementation of this project includes the use of additions to the soil to correct pH imbalances in the most affected areas, with special attention to the use of industrial minerals such as soil improvers: calcium carbonate, dolomite, phosphoric and zeolites," Dagoberto Rodriguez, director of Soils and Fertilizers at the Ministry of Agriculture, said.

Rodriguez, who was speaking at a workshop on soils that concluded Thursday at the Conference Centre in Havana said that the project also includes the execution of tests and measurements in high pH areas.

At present, 71.23 percent of the country's agricultural land is being affected by erosion, and of that figure, 43 percent is classified as being moderately or strongly affected.

Salinity, that is, the average of salts affecting the properties of the soil and the development of crops, damages 15 percent of the land, in other words, about one million hectares.

"Technical training in conservation and the improvement of the soils, are among the new programs that could be funded by the state to counteract that situation," Rodriguez said.

Prior to the closing ceremony, more than 130 participants among them specialists, managers, leading producers and decision makers, conducted a field visit to the National Soil Polygon, in the Havana municipality of Guanabacoa.

The president of the Organized Committee and general director of the Soil Research Institute, Luis Gomez, stressed Wednesday at the opening ceremony of the forum that this resource is not given enough attention, despite its importance for ecosystems and the economy worldwide.

The representative of the Food and Agricultural Organization, Theodor Friedrich, attending the event, gave a lecture entitled 'Sustainable management of soil: The challenge of producing foods under the effects of climate change.'

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