Electricity generation caracas

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Venezuela, the main oil exporter in South America, suffered from a long drought that significantly reduced the volume of water in the dams of hydroelectric plants. For 2009, 73% of the electric energy consumed by Venezuelans depended on these plants.[15] Additionally, the country"s electricity consumption has been increasing by 6% per year, a percentage that exceeds the growth rate in the electrical supply that has been installed.[16]

The possibility that the Guri reservoir reached the critical level was first seen by President Hugo Ch?vez on 31 January 2010, by ensuring that if the companies did not reduce their electricity consumption "70% of the country would be left without electric service".[26] On 9 March, Ch?vez was more emphatic about it, declaring:

The Guri is 13 meters away from what they call the collapse level. If these parameters were reached, the Guri plants would have to be turned off, which generate electricity for half of Venezuela. That is the reality.

Subsequently, on 18 March, the Minister of Electric Power, Al? Rodr?guez Araque, accused the Venezuelan opposition of causing fear in the population by talking about a "collapse."[26] Operating below this level is dangerous because steam could enter the turbines, a phenomenon known as cavitation, that can cause mechanical damage to them.[citation needed]

The National Electric Corporation, the public body that manages all electricity generating companies, acknowledged that by the end of 2008, 79% of thermoelectric plants were more than 20 years old, and that 30% were unavailable due to technical problems.[30] In addition, of the plants that were working, many did not do so at full capacity: 3,800 MW were generated, when the installed capacity was 9,051 MW.[30]

According to figures from the Office of Operation of Interconnected Systems, the Ch?vez government completed less than half of the investments in thermoelectric energy generation planned in 2005. Al? Rodr?guez has denied that the government has not made the necessary investments, although he acknowledged that there are delays in the execution of projects.[24]

President Ch?vez set a goal of installing 6,000 MW in 2010 through thermoelectric plants,[16] an increase in the electricity supply greater than what has been installed during his then-eleven years in office.[16] In addition, the estimated cost of the plan was of more than US$5,000 million.[40]

In the rest of Venezuela, an electric rationing system was implemented by zones. Before Holy Week in 2010, the power supply was cut by about 3 hours at a frequency of 3 or 4 days. On average, outside of Caracas,

Venezuela experienced an interruption in electrical service of between 9 and 12 hours a week.[42]

However, the results were not as expected; between January and February, a reduction in demand of 3% was experienced, while the goal set by President Ch?vez was 20%.[42] After Easter, the frequency and duration of electricity supply cuts would increase in all of Venezuela except in Caracas: The Venezuelan inside the country experienced daily cuts of four hours, that is, more than 20 hours per week.[42]

At the end of April, Corpoelec ordered greater rationing, this time without prior notice and at night. Blackouts due to this cause have been reported in the states of Aragua, Anzo?tegui, M?rida, Sucre, T?chira and Zulia.[33]

SIDOR"s basic industries in Venezuela"s side of the Guiana Shield have been hit hard by the crisis, whose production had already fallen by 40% in December 2009, after the Electricity Ministry set a 300 MW consumption limit; before the crisis, SIDOR consumed 800 MW.[45] By February 2010, SIDOR operated at only 45% of its capacity, and 30,000 tons of metal billets were imported to Brazil to meet national demand.[45]

The government did not rule out paralyzing the activities of these industries completely, due to the high energy consumption that their processes require.[15] In addition, three power plants were acquired to allow SIDOR to generate its own energy.[45] It was expected that by the end of May 2010, the first of these plants would start generating the first 175 MW out of a total of 425 MW.[45]