



Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the United States

## Ten Years of Bolivarian Revolution in Figures

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It has been ten years since President Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution first came to power in Venezuela through a democratic election. During the past decade Venezuela has made many social and economic advances. Despite the fact that some of these advances—such as the sense of dignity and inclusion of previously voiceless Venezuelans—are difficult, if not impossible, to quantify, much of this progress is directly quantifiable; the following graphs will bear that out.

Notes: Between 2002 and 2003, Venezuela experienced a coup d'état and a sabotage of the oil industry. These events had noticeable effects on development. Most of the graphs displayed here begin in 1997 to provide an overview of the situation just prior to President Chávez's 1999 inauguration. The sources for the figures and graphs appear at the end of the document.

### Democracy

Venezuela has been a democracy since 1958, but prior to President Chavez's election the country's system of representative democracy was widely seen as corrupt and lacking in legitimacy. With his election and a new Constitution voted approved in a national referendum in 1999, Venezuela has undertaken a process of building a system of participatory democracy.

Latinobarómetro is a poll measuring attitudes toward democracy in Latin America that is conducted annually by the respected Chilean polling firm known by the same name. Its newest survey, released on November 14, 2008, contains many important findings about Venezuela.<sup>1</sup>

The numbers show a picture of a country in which democracy is strongly valued, confidence in democratic institutions is higher than in most of the region, and the rights of political participation are both enjoyed and taken seriously. These facts bring a level of detailed analysis to the political realities of Venezuela that is rarely available in the media.

Latinobarómetro 2008 finds that Venezuela has the region's highest rate of support for democracy as the best system of government, and the second highest rate of satisfaction with the actual functioning of democracy. Satisfaction with democracy has shot up by 14 percentage points over a decade ago, when President Chávez was first elected. While Venezuela ranked two percentage points below the regional average on this issue in 1998, it is 12 points ahead of the regional average in 2008.

In the poll, Venezuelans were the most likely among all Latin Americans to view voting as the best way to affect political change. A full 80 percent held this view, compared to 55 percent in Chile. Venezuelans were by far the least likely to agree that it is impossible to influence political change, while Chileans were the most likely to agree. Meanwhile, though



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fifteen percent of Venezuelans said they had attended a protest, this country was the second-to-least likely to express the view that political change is best sought by protesting. This indicates a high level of confidence in official channels for political participation.

Accordingly, institutions are viewed as an essential to democracy. The survey found that Venezuelans were the second most likely in the region to agree that democracy cannot exist without political parties, and the third most likely to express confidence in political parties and to agree that political parties are “doing a good job.” They were the third most likely to state that democracy cannot exist without congress. Venezuela is 8 percentage points above the regional average on this point, far ahead of countries like Chile (8th), Mexico (12th), and Brazil (15th). Venezuela’s confidence in the congress is also high, ranked third in the region, far above Argentina (10th), Colombia (11th), and Costa Rica (12th).

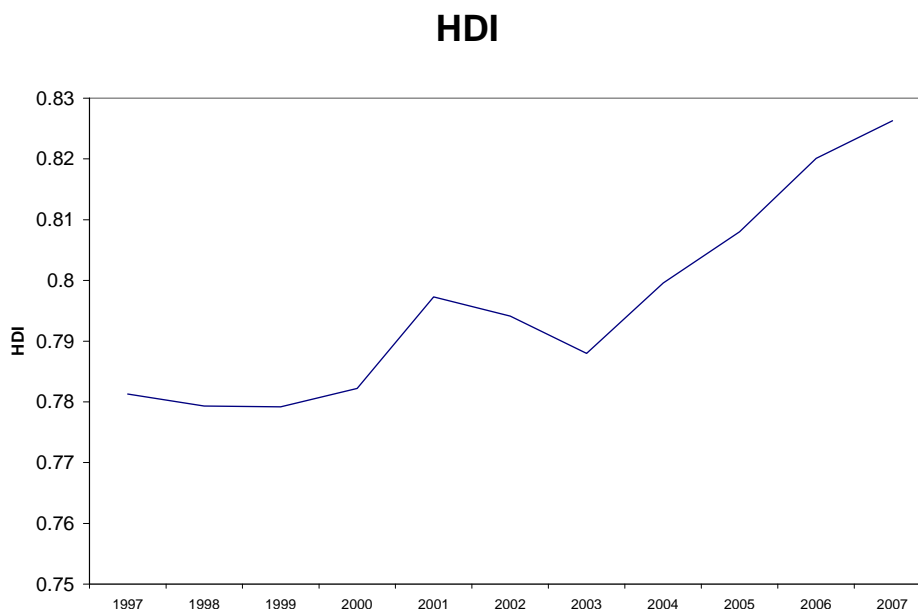
## Social Progress

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite measure of well-being that relies on life expectancy, education and GDP data used to rank countries on a scale of 0-1 with zero being not developed and 1 being perfectly developed. For years, Venezuela’s HDI hovered

between .75 and .78, showing little to no progress. The Venezuelan government’s commitment to health and education, as well as its sound economic management, has led to a clear increase in the well-being of Venezuelans.

According to figures from the

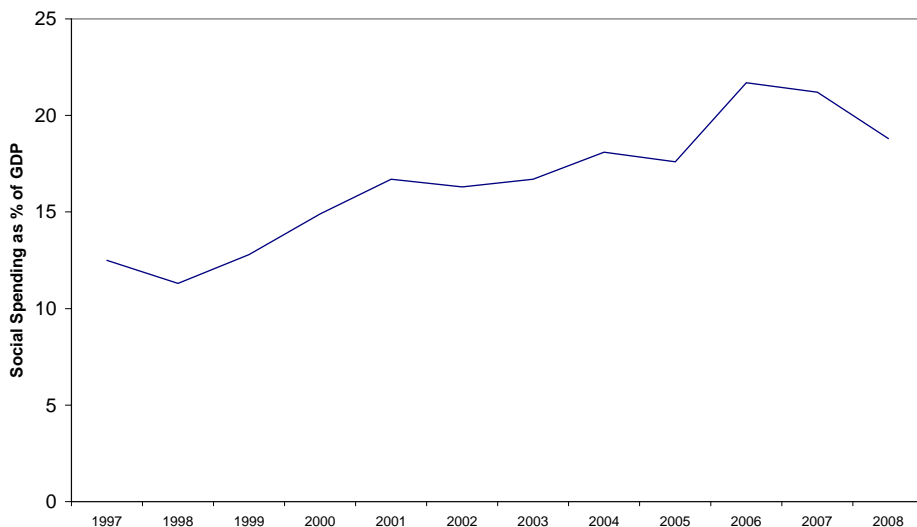
National Statistics Institute, Venezuela became “highly developed” (reaching the threshold HDI of .8) in 2005. **In 2007, Venezuela registered an HDI of 0.8263. UN HDI data also classifies Venezuela as a “highly developed country”.**<sup>2</sup>





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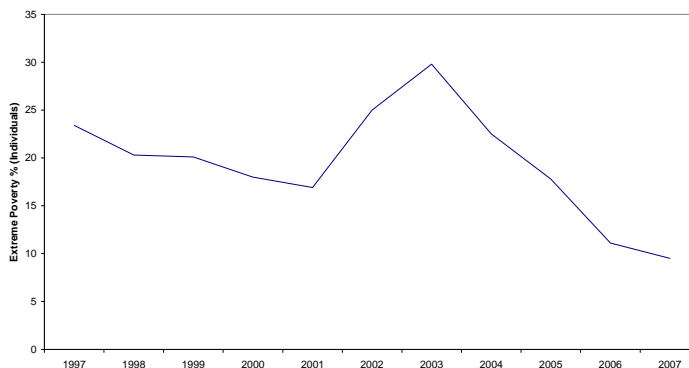
### Social Spending as a Percentage of GDP



The government's social spending as a percentage of GDP is further evidence of a commitment to improving the lives of Venezuelans. According to the Ministry of People's Power for Planning and Development, between 1988 and 1998, social spending averaged 9.5% of GDP. In the ten years since President Chávez

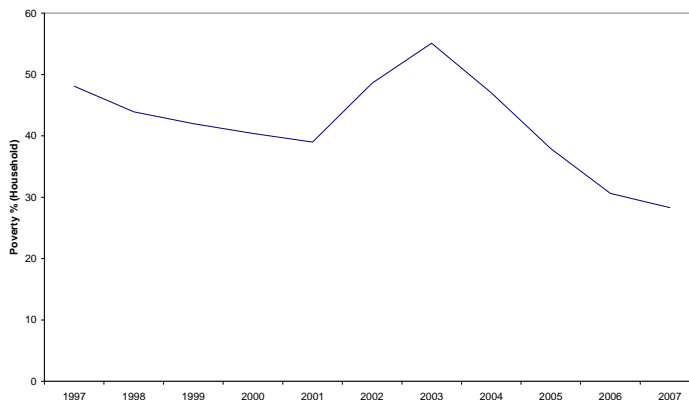
took office, **social spending as a percentage of GDP has averaged 17.5%**, including an increase in spending during the economic and political turmoil in 2002 and 2003.

### Percentage of Individuals in Extreme Poverty



Fighting poverty is one of the government's priorities and thanks to its efforts over the past ten years significant reductions have been achieved. **Extreme poverty has fallen from 20.2% in 1999 to 9.5% in 2007**; this amounts to **over 2 million Venezuelans who escaped extreme poverty** during that time. Similarly, **household poverty has fallen by nearly 14%**, from 42% in 1999 to 28.3% in 2007. This progress has been made despite the massive impact caused by the oil lockout in 2002 and 2003 which caused millions to temporarily descend into poverty.

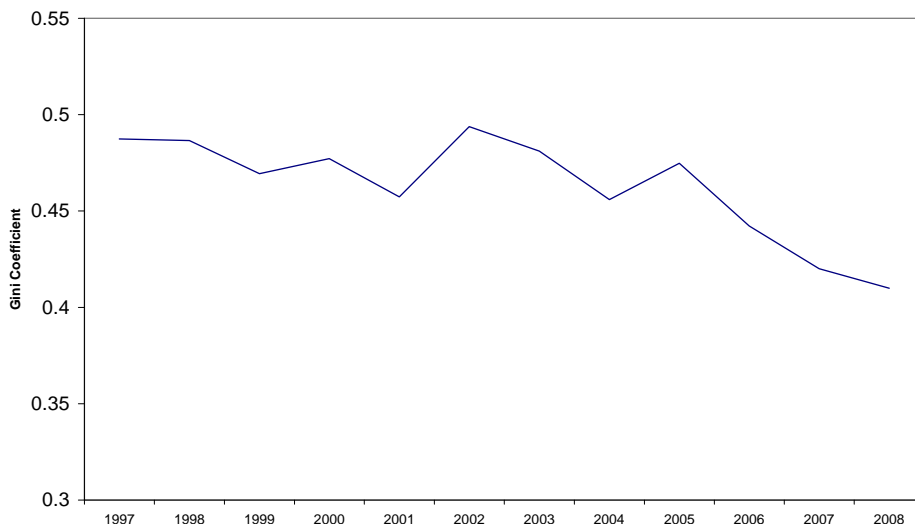
### Percentage of Household Poverty





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### Gini



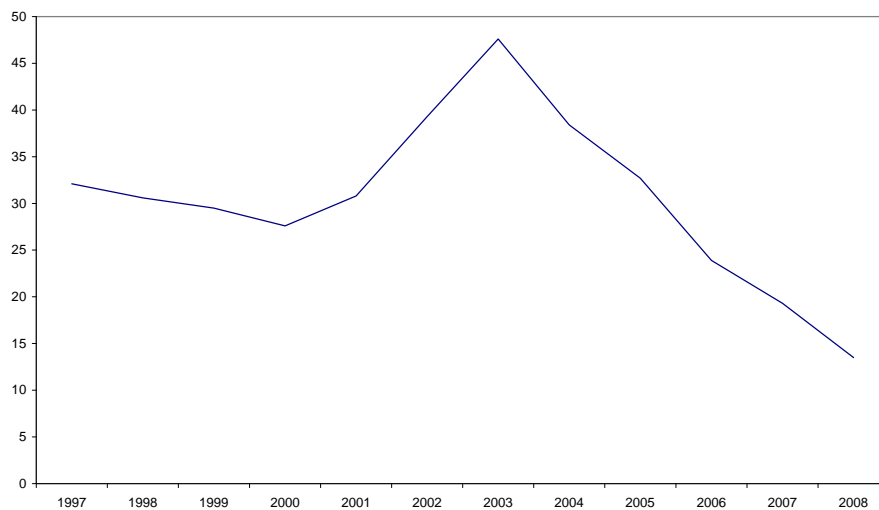
Inequality in Venezuela is often misreported by international media. The Gini coefficient, a measure of inequality between 0 and 1 where 1 represents complete inequality, has decreased during President Chávez's tenure, demonstrating a

reduction in inequality. In 1999, Venezuela's Gini coefficient was 0.47. **By 2008, the Gini coefficient dropped to 0.41, equivalent to a 12.7% reduction in economic inequality.**

### Economic Progress

One of the prevalent myths regarding Venezuela's economy is the debt has been poorly managed. The facts, however, show that the national government has demonstrated fiscal responsibility in both paying off debt and not accruing new unnecessary debt.

### Public Debt as a Percentage of GDP

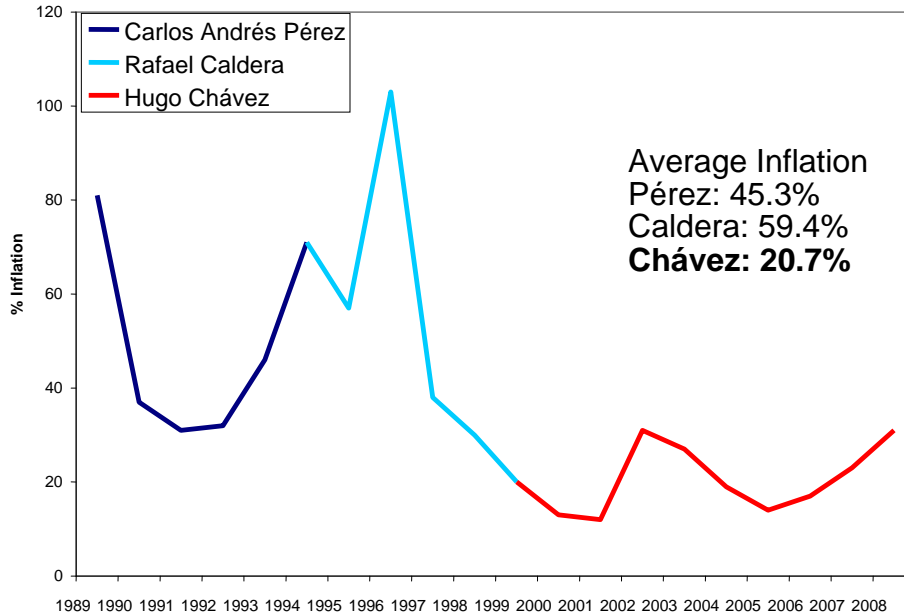


In 1998, public debt was 30.6% of GDP. **By 2008, public debt had been reduced to 13.5% of GDP. Furthermore, Venezuela has completely paid off its debts to both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.**<sup>3</sup>



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### Annual Inflation by Presidential Tenure

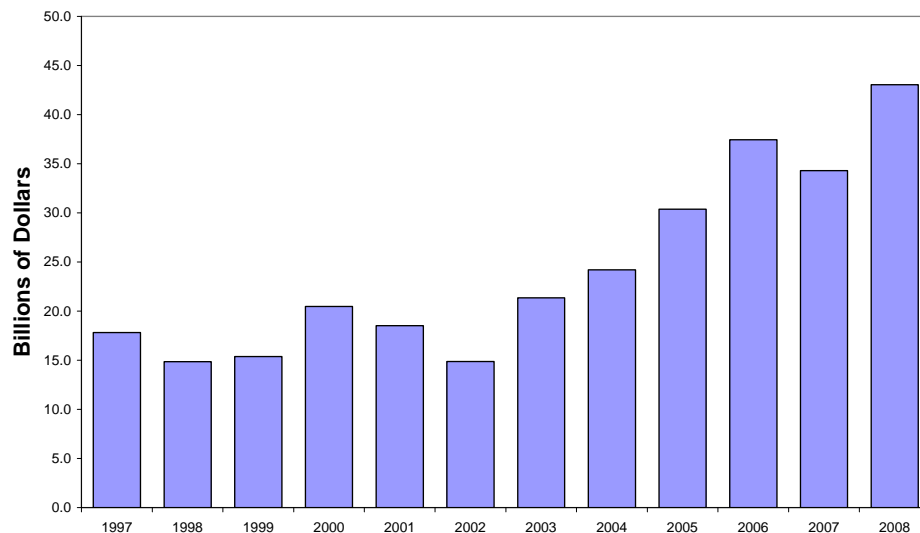


Although fighting inflation continues to be a priority for the government, inflation over the past ten years it has been comparatively low. As the Center for Economic and Policy and Research (CEPR) explains, double digit inflation in developing economies should not be compared to the same

occurrence in developed economies.<sup>4</sup> **Inflation over the past ten years in Venezuela is relatively low compared to levels during the previous two presidencies.**

Over the past 10 years, the Venezuelan Central Bank's international reserves have nearly tripled, rising to **\$43.1 billion at the end of 2008**. This figure does not include another estimated **\$40 billion in the National Development Fund (Fonden)** and in joint

### International Reserves



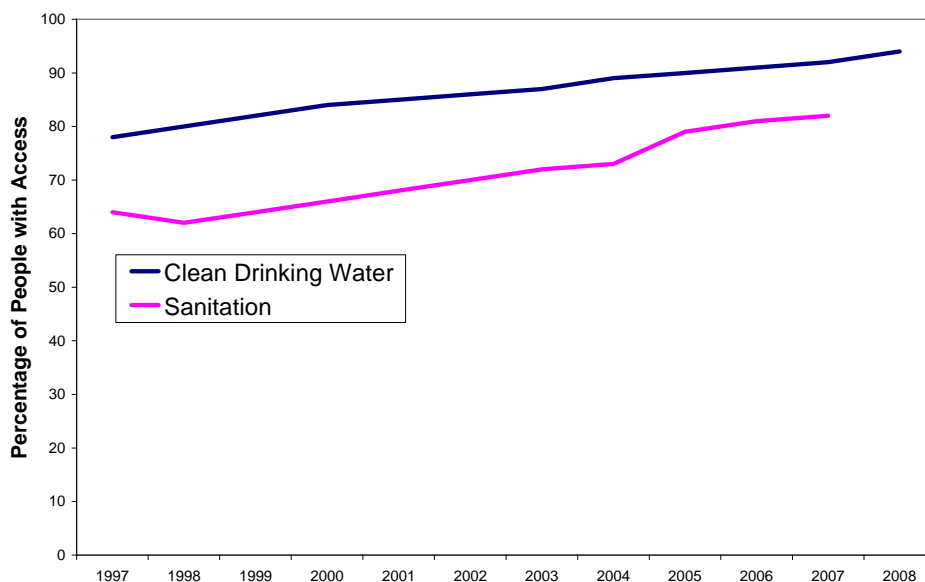
development funds with Russia and China. These reserves and funds will help Venezuela weather the international economic crisis.



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## Health Care

### Access to Clean Drinking Water and Sanitation



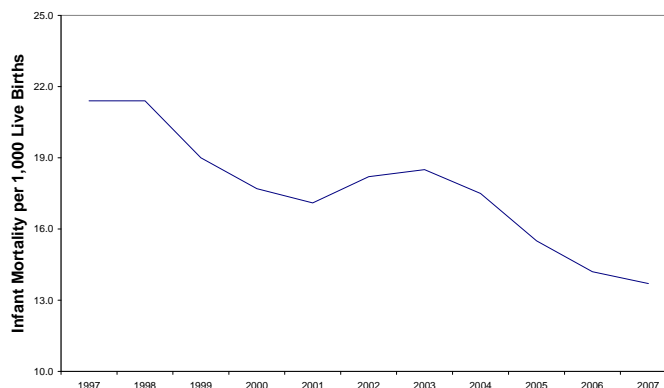
Over the past decade, **over 6 million Venezuelans have gained access to clean drinking water and another 8 million to sanitation.** 94% of the population now has access to potable water, and 82% have access to sanitation, which means **Venezuela has achieved the Millennium Development**

### Goals (MDGs) on these issues.

The 1999 Constitution guarantees access to health care as a constitutional right. Through government programs and social missions such as Barrio Adentro (which establishes clinics in populous, as well as isolated, communities throughout the country), **infant mortality per thousand live births has dropped from 21.4 in 1998 to 13.7 in 2007.**

In six years of existence, there have been **over 328 million consults through Barrio Adentro**; 44.5% of these consults have been house calls by health professionals. Furthermore, since 2005, 7,491 health care centers have been constructed throughout the country. In 2007 and 2008, over \$2 billion were spent renovating and upgrading existing hospitals and health care facilities.

### Infant Mortality Rate



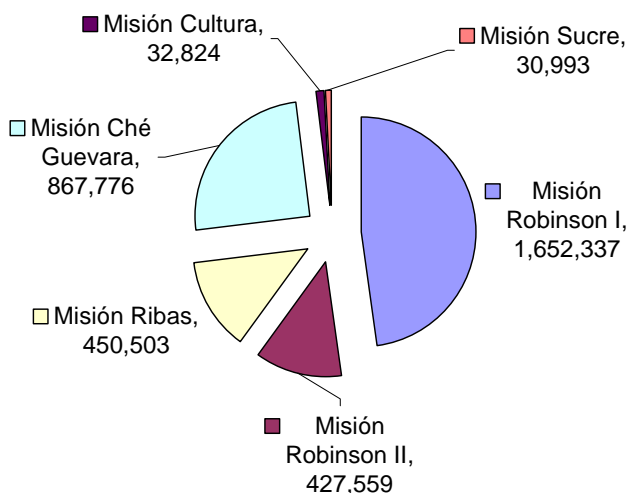
Type of Health Care Center Built	Total
People's Clinics	6,462
Comprehensive Diagnostic Centers (CDI)	464
Rehabilitation Halls (SRI)	542
High Technology Centers (CAT)	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,491</b>



## Education

### Graduates from Education Missions

Total Graduates: 3,461,992

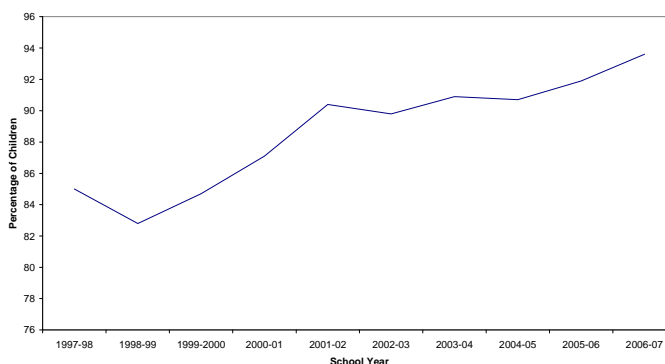


The right to education is enshrined in the 1999 Constitution. Several of the government's social programs, or "misiones," relate to education. Nearly **3.5 million Venezuelans have graduated** from the following **education missions**: *Misión Robinson I* (for adult literacy); *Misión Robinson II* (for primary education to adults); *Misión Ribas* (equivalencies for high school dropouts); *Misión Ché Guevara* (training in developing economic alternatives within the social economy); *Misión Cultura* (to promote culture and community participation in cultural activities); and *Misión Sucre* (free college and graduate level education to those who

did not have prior opportunities for university education). In 2008, 1.4 million Venezuelans studied in these education missions.

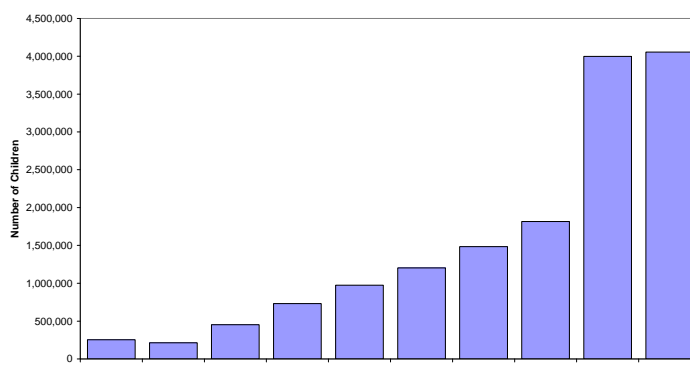
Between the 1998-99 and 2006-07 school years, nearly 700,000 Venezuelan children were incorporated into the school system. During this period **the percentage of children receiving primary education rose from 82.8% to 93.6%, ensuring that the MDG for education will be met before 2015.**

Percentage of Children Receiving Primary Education



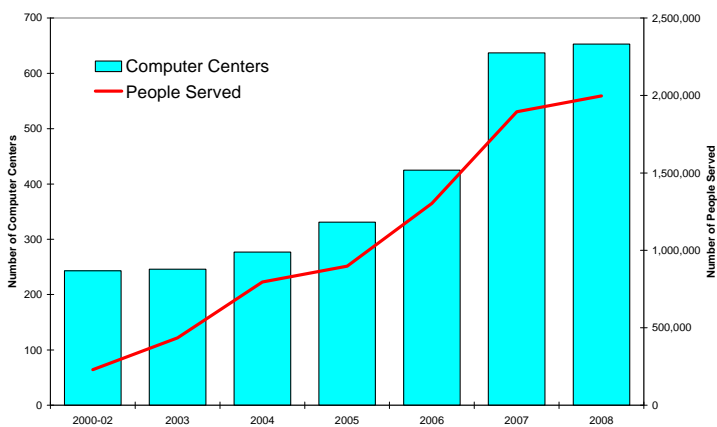
School lunch programs serve as an incentive for parents to send children to school, and also contribute to poverty alleviation by allowing families to save money. **Between 1999 and 2008, the number of children receiving free lunches in school rose from 252,284 to 4,055,135**

Number of Children Benefiting from the School Lunch Program (PAE)





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Computer and Internet Centers**



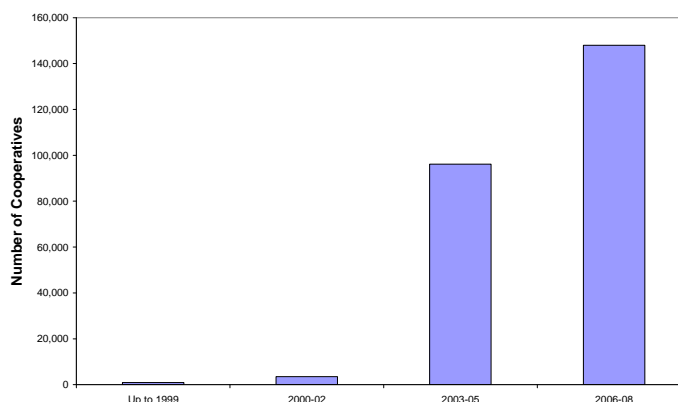
As part of the government's campaign to promote computer literacy and guarantee access to information, over the past nine years **653 internet centers** have been built where people can use computers and access the internet. **Nearly 2 million Venezuelan have taken advantage of this free resource.** According to Latinobarometro 2008, a regional poll, 53% of Venezuelans have used the internet at some point in

their lives, the highest of the 19 countries in the survey.<sup>5</sup>

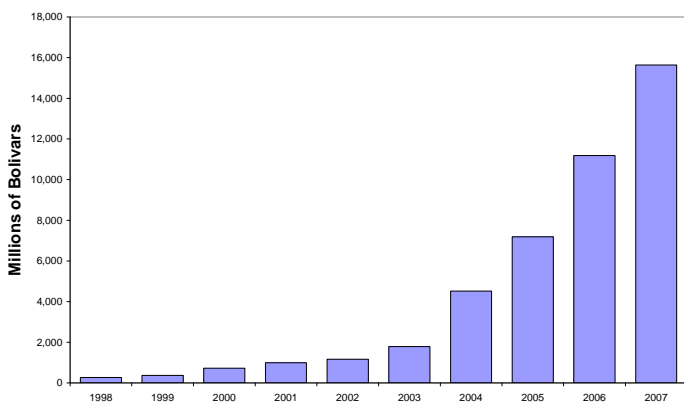
## Diversifying the Economy

Reducing the economy's reliance on oil and creating a new model of economics that emphasizes the community and social gains rather than private gains and profit has been an ongoing process for the Bolivarian Revolution. In efforts to achieve this, the government has fomented the creation of cooperatives: **before 2000, there were only 910 cooperative in the country; as of 2008, there are 148,020 cooperatives.**

### Social Economy - Cooperatives



### Agriculture Financing



Food sovereignty remains a key policy of the government, especially given the global price increases of food over the past few years. In order to reduce dependence on food imports, the government has boosted loans and financing for agriculture projects. Between 1998 and 2007, **agriculture financing from public and private banks has increased by over 5,000 percent.** In 2007, over 15.6 billion Bolivars (approximately \$7.3 billion) went towards agricultural financing.

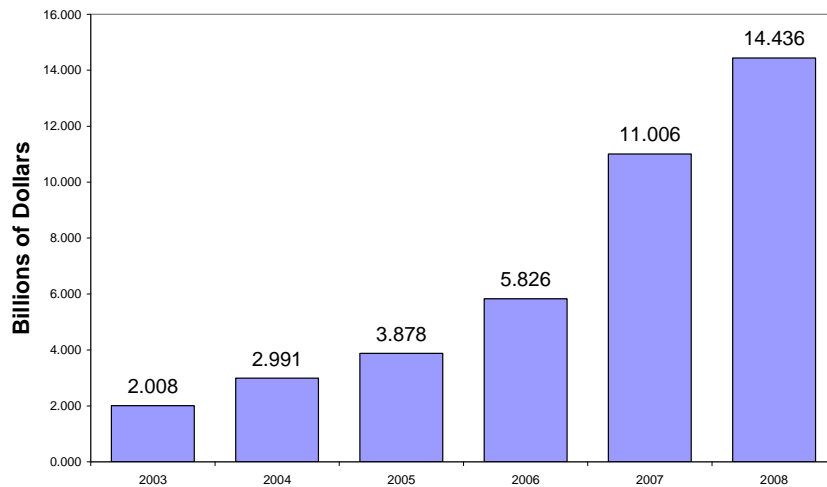


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## Oil

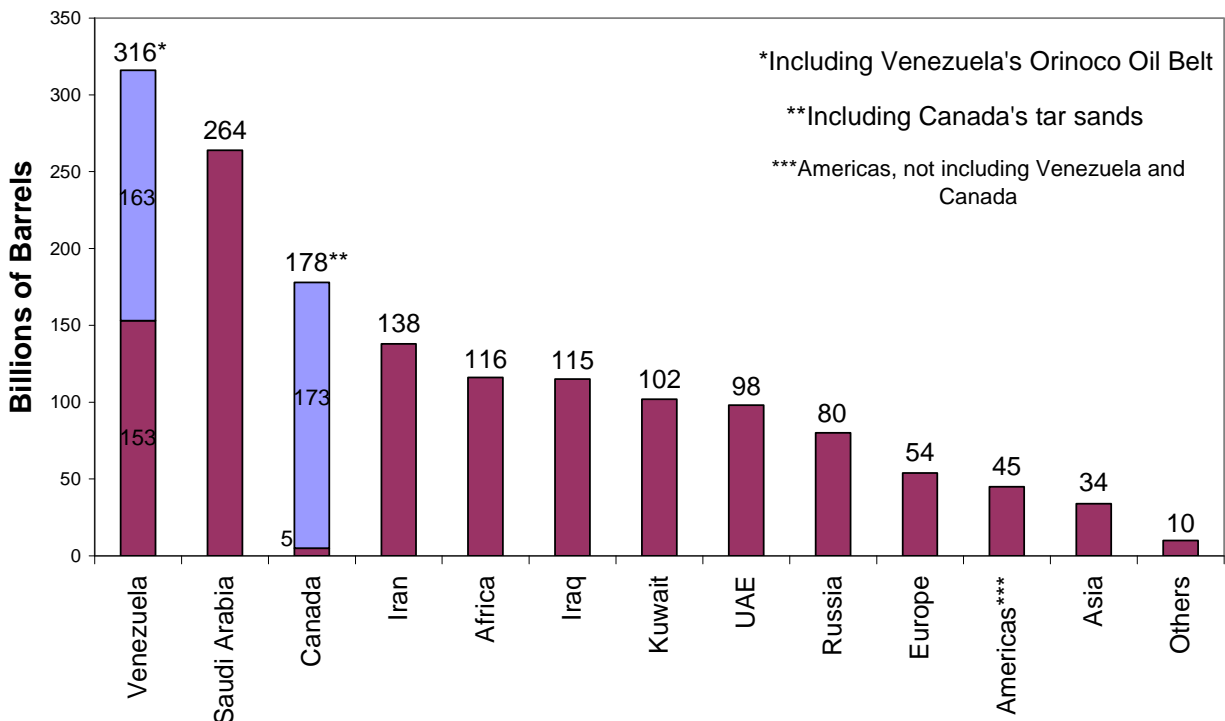
PDVSA (Venezuela's state oil company), has increased investment, posted record revenues, and increased its social spending. As part of its Sowing Oil Plan, which is designed to quantify new reserves, develop new oil fields, and increase both production and refinement, among other things, PDVSA invested \$14.436 billion in Venezuela in 2008.

PDVSA Investments - Sowing Oil Plan



Venezuela will have the highest volume of proven oil reserves in the world (316 billion barrels of oil) once reserves in the Orinoco Oil Belt are counted.

## Oil Reserves





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For more news and information about Venezuela, please visit our website:  
<http://www.venezuela-us.org/>

## **Sources**

Figure 1: HDI. Source: National Statistics Institute.

Figure 2: Social Spending as a Percentage of GDP. Source: Ministry of People's Power for Planning and Development based on data from ONAPRE (National Budget Office), PDVSA, BCV (Venezuelan Central Bank), and FONDEN (National Development Fund).

Figure 3: Extreme Poverty, Individuals. Source: Household Surveys, National Statistics Institute, second semester data.

Figure 4: Household Poverty. Source: National Statistics Institute, second semester data.

Figure 5: Gini. Source: National Statistics Institute.

Figure 6: Public Debt as a Percentage of GDP. Source: Ministry of People's Power for Economics and Finances using GDP data from the BCV.

Figure 7: Annual Inflation by Presidency. Source: BCV.

Figure 8: International Reserves. Source: BCV.

Figure 9: Access to Clean Drinking Water and Sanitation. Source: Ministry of People's Power for the Environment.

Figure 10: Infant Mortality Rate. Source: Ministry of People's Power for Health.

Table 1: Health Centers Built. Source: Ministry of People's Power for Health.

Figure 11: Graduates from Education Missions. Sources: Samuel Robinson Foundation; Misión Ribas Foundation; Ministry of People's Power for the Communal Economy; Ministry of People's Power for Culture; Misión Sucre Foundation.

Figure 12: Percentage of Children Receiving Primary Education. Source: Ministry of People's Power for Education.

Figure 13: School Lunch Beneficiaries. Source: Ministry of People's Power for Education.

Figure 14: Computer and Internet Centers. Source: National Center for Information Technology (CNTI)



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Figure 15: Cooperatives. Source: Ministry of People's Power for the Communal Economy

Figure 16: Agricultural Financing. Source: Ministry of People's Power for Agriculture and Land

Figure 17: Oil Sowing Plan. Source: PDVSA

Figure 18: Oil Reserves. Sources: PDVSA, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), U.S. Department of Energy (DoE).

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<sup>1</sup> Informe Latinobarómetro 2008. November 14, 2004.

[http://www.latinobarometro.org/docs/INFORME\\_LATINOBAROMETRO\\_2008.pdf](http://www.latinobarometro.org/docs/INFORME_LATINOBAROMETRO_2008.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Reports

[http://hdrstats.undp.org/2008/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_VEN.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/2008/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_VEN.html) (Accessed February 24, 2009)

<sup>3</sup> Guillermo Para Bernal, "Venezuela Pays Off IMF, World Bank Debt, Finance Minister Says,"

Bloomberg.com, April 14, 2007,

[http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601086&refer=latin\\_america&sid=awr5d6zntU.Q](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601086&refer=latin_america&sid=awr5d6zntU.Q)

<sup>4</sup> Mark Weisbrot and Luis Sandoval, "Update: The Venezuelan Economy in the Chávez Years," Center for Economic and Policy Research, February 2008,

[http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/venezuela\\_update\\_2008\\_02.pdf](http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/venezuela_update_2008_02.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Latinobarómetro, Informe 2008,

[www.latinobarometro.org/docs/INFORME\\_LATINOBAROMETRO\\_2008.pdf](http://www.latinobarometro.org/docs/INFORME_LATINOBAROMETRO_2008.pdf)