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Same Actions For New Demands? The Brazilian Case.

Alberto Flávio Pêgo e Silva (UFES) & Luiz Cláudio M. Ribeiro (UFES)

Introduction

Brazil has the greatest resources of fresh water in the planet. This apparent abundance has shaped historically a cultural perception of limitless availability, leading to a water misusage and waste predominant behavior within the population together with the absence of sufficient policies from the authorities to overcome the issue.

However, since the fifties in the last century, four social and economic phenomena have been pressuring the water consumption and pushing the Brazilian society as a whole, including the governmental sectors, to a new mentality towards the issue - the intensive migration to urban areas, industrialization, the increasing number of hydroelectric plants, and, last but not least, the irrigated agriculture frontiers expansion (GARRIDO, 1988).

By the end of the century Brazil reached the first goals in facing the challenge of water conservancy, by editing the Federal Act # 9.433/97. It established the national policy for hydric resources, 20 years after the UN Mar del Plata Conference of 1977.

Upon 10 years of the said legislation, the research and the policies for hydric resources are becoming outdated under the global climatic changes forecasts concerning the impacts and the needs for conservancy. Is Brazil prepared to face the upcoming challenges concerning the water?

Objective

Collect, study and evaluate the governmental measures and the legal framework adopted in Brazil by the end of 1990's to reduce or avoid the water shortage brought in this context of consumption pressures. The evaluation is oriented to verify the degree of readiness of the legal framework to support and face the new pressures coming along the climate changes forecasted.

Methods

Analyze the Brazilian legislation for water to verify the effectiveness of the hydric resources planning and management; confront the conclusions of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) with the findings to understand the possible consequences of climate changes upon the hydric resources in the Country, and highlight the emerging demands identified, drivers for policies, actions and projects to deal with the impacts from now on.

Results

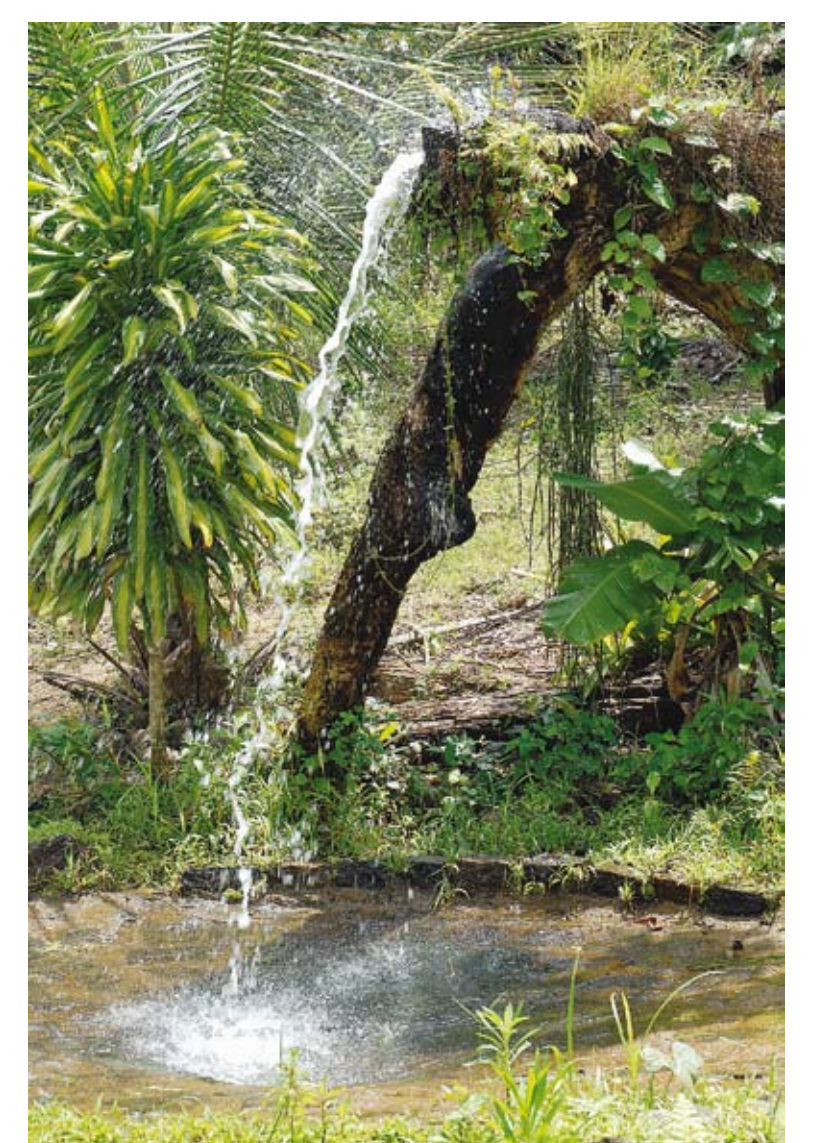
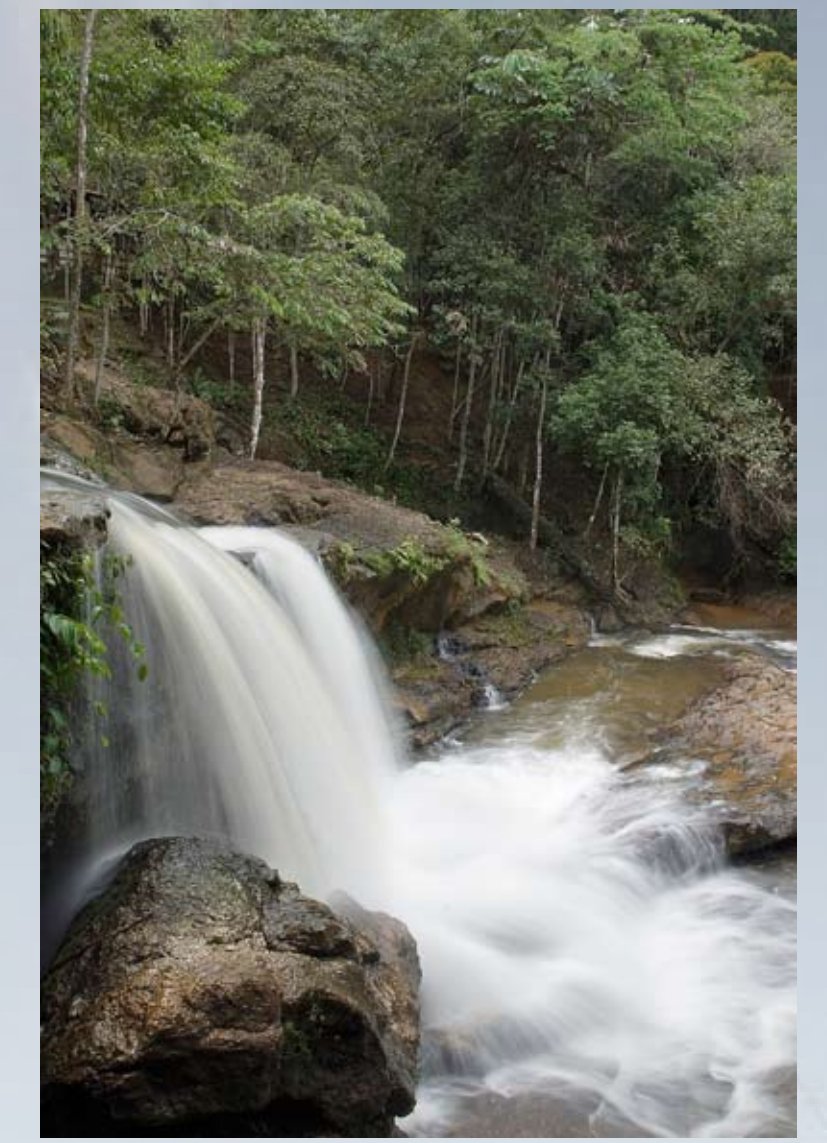
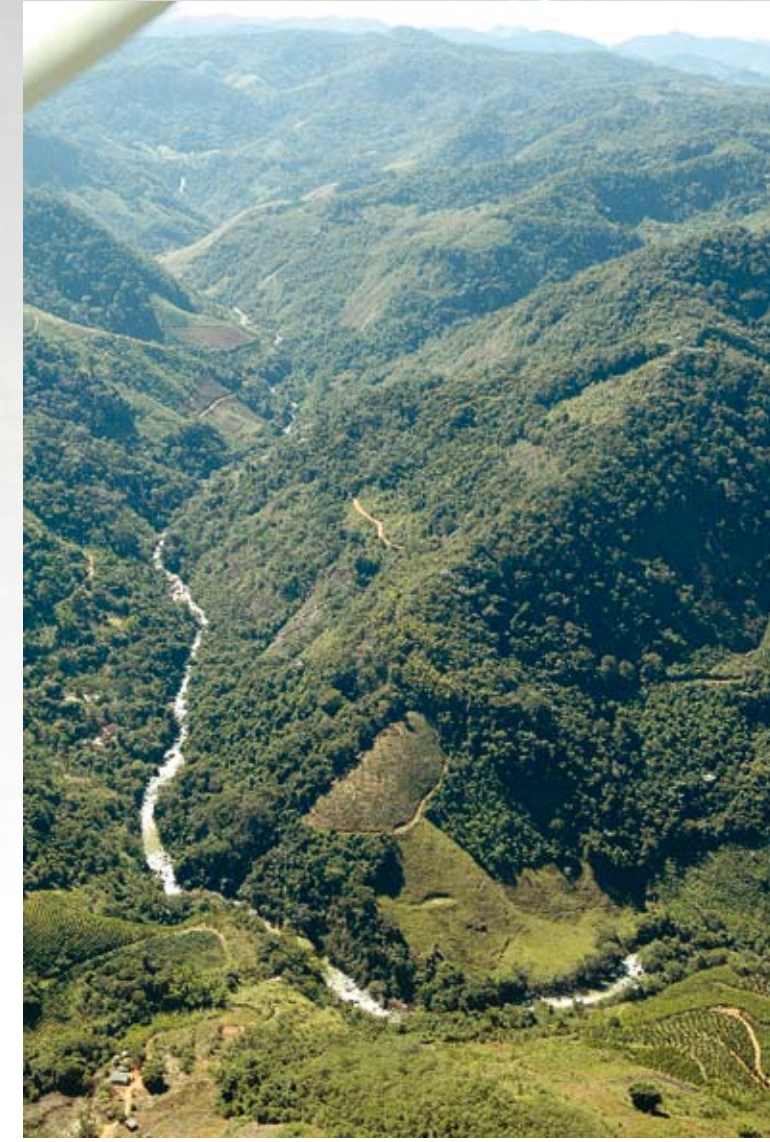
A preliminary evaluation indicates that announced climate changes will make a great impact over Brazilian accumulated and distribution of hydric resources. The governmental sector, in effect, will be forced to create solutions on the future demands from society. This coming crisis, differently from others in the past, will force a great capacity of response in its time and a double integration: among hydric resources policies and the rest of the national environmental agenda and from this relationship among the entire role of efforts that have been made by countries and multilateral institution around the world.

Conclusion

Studies have shown that the current Brazilian hydric resources policy, although effective to overcome the water crisis in the fifties of the twentieth century, it will not be able to deal with the effects of climatic changes forecasted. To reach this goal Brazil will have to adopt a severe forest policy, either related to conservancy or priority areas recovery, decreasing the bureaucracy of the current legislation, eliciting a framework easier to administer and apply. This policy must integrate the hydric resources in the scope, in order to allow attractive projects for national and international cooperation.

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Rua Alberto da Oliveira Santos, 42 – Ed. AMES, sala 1.315, Centro, Vitória-ES – Brasil – CEP 29.010-250. Tel. + 55 (71) 3222-0817 - ecobacia@ecobacia.org

