

# SEVENTY-SIX YEARS OF THE VENEZUELAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE (ASOVAC)

In 1950, the founders of AsoVAC took on the challenge of creating and laying the foundations for what would become the country's scientific development during the second half of the 20th century. This involved organizing the association itself, providing it with a guiding doctrine, and defining feasible projects. During the decade of the dictatorship of General Marcos Pérez Jiménez (1948–1958), AsoVAC carried out two activities that made it visible: the Annual Convention, which has been held uninterruptedly, and the publication of a multidisciplinary journal, *Acta Científica Venezolana* (unfortunately now discontinued).

In both initiatives, AsoVAC introduced modern standards in scientific communication, both oral and written, which were progressively adopted across different disciplinary fields. At the same time, its leadership undertook the task of outlining a national scientific project based on a public university with research capacity, with consolidated faculties of science and with the professionalization of research activity, supported by adequate undergraduate and graduate training and by remuneration consistent with credentials and responsibilities.

Beginning in 1958, with the return of democracy in Venezuela, this project began to take shape in autonomous public universities and with the creation, in 1959, of the Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Research (IVIC), as well as the Oceanographic Institute of Venezuela (1958) of the Universidad de Oriente. Likewise, AsoVAC promoted the incorporation of new generations through the Youth Science Festival (1968), strengthening the link between science and students in primary and secondary education.

AsoVAC became one of the main driving forces behind the institutionalization of science in the country, promoting the creation of chapters throughout the national territory. In the field of science policy, it promoted the creation of the National Council for Science and Technology (CONICIT) in 1968—now FONACIT—where it maintained representation until 2000. Likewise, it contributed decisively to the organization of the Researcher Promotion Program (PPI,

1990), promoted the creation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Commission of Congress (now the National Assembly), and actively participated in the discussion of the Organic Law of Science, Technology and Innovation (LOCTI, 2000), aimed at fostering the financing of scientific activity by both public and private sectors.

In 2026, the Association's main challenge is to contribute to the reconstruction of the Venezuelan scientific system in terms of the 21st century. In this regard, it is essential to rebuild the profession of the scientist and the professor-researcher, recognizing their merits, ensuring dignified working conditions and professional development, as well as adequate remuneration. It is also necessary to produce knowledge relevant both to science and to the country, and to train the next generation of scientists who will lead scientific and technological development in the coming decades, within dynamic academic institutions.

Likewise, it is necessary to restore the autonomous university, both in its governance and financial sustainability, strengthening its capacity for renewal and promoting a fruitful dialogue with the State, productive sectors, and society, sharing responsibility for education and science as a public good. This is complemented by the importance of incorporating the talent of the scientific diaspora, both in person and remotely, making use of the experience gained abroad for the benefit of the country.

Finally, it is essential to review, update, and recover the original spirit of the Organic Law of Science, Technology and Innovation (LOCTI), adapting it to new economic and social realities, understanding that knowledge is a collective construction involving scientists, decision-makers, entrepreneurs, educators, and society as a whole. Some of these goals will be achieved in the long term; however, what is fundamental is to begin this process.

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