

Editorial

The national development plan 2022-2026: Colombia, world power of life

The President of the Republic, Gustavo Petro Urrego, signed Law 2294 on May 19, 2023, which establishes the National Development Plan “Colombia, World Power of Life.” This plan, which will be implemented in the four years 2022-2026, will become the roadmap for economic, social and environmental public policies and government investments.

The plan consists of 372 articles and provides for public investments worth 1,154 billion. Half of these resources will come from the General Budget of the Nation. Likewise, 23% will come from the General System of Participations, 13% from the own resources of the territorial entities, 9% from the industrial and commercial companies of the State (national and territorial), 4% from the General System of Royalties and 1% as a contribution of international cooperation. At the same time, the Pluriannual Investment Plan of the Development Plan indicates that “in addition, it is estimated that the public investments identified in the Pluriannual Investment Plan will leverage private investments during 2022-2026 to a value of \$249.7 trillion by 2022, and it is expected that part of these resources will promote the fulfillment of social objectives together with the national government.”

The objective of the National Development Plan of the current government is “to lay the foundations for the country to become a leader in the defense of life, based on the construction of a new social contract that promotes the overcoming of injustices and historical exclusions, the non-repetition of conflict, the transformation of our relationship with the environment, and a productive transformation based on knowledge and in harmony with nature.” The plan emphasizes that “this process must lead to total peace, understood as the search for an opportunity for all of us to live a dignified life based on justice, that is, in a culture of peace that knows the sublime value of life in all its forms and that guarantees the care of the common home.”

On the other hand, the plan is based on five axes of transformation:

1. Planning the territory around the water. To achieve this transformation, “a change in land use planning and development” is needed, with water as the nodal point, and in which the protection of both environmental determinants and areas of special interest is important “to guarantee the right to food”, where the people who inhabit the territories are heard and their concerns are included in the participatory processes of territorial planning.

2. Human security and social justice. To achieve this transformation, it is necessary to integrate the protection of life and to guarantee legal, institutional, economic and social security through a series of drivers such as: a) “a universal and adaptable social protection system b) a physical and digital structure for life and good living c) justice as a good and service d) security and integral defense of territories, communities and populations.” These drivers make it possible to overcome deprivations and expand capacities “in the midst of diversity and plurality.”

3. The human right to food. Consists of people having access to adequate food, based on ensuring the availability, accessibility and adequacy of food.

4. Productive transformation, internationalization, and climate action. This will be achieved through a re-composition of productive activities, prioritizing natural capital, clean energy and sustainability, and progressively phasing out dependence on extractive activities.

5. Regional convergence. This transformation will be achieved through adequate access to opportunities, goods and services that enable regional convergence. This will be accomplished by seeking to strengthen intra- and inter-regional ties, to increase productivity, competitiveness and innovation in the territories, and to transform institutions and public management, placing “the citizen at the center of their actions and creating trust among communities and between them and the institutions.”

In addition to the five transformation axes, the development plan proposes four transversal axes:

1. Complete peace. This great goal is conceived as a “participatory, broad, inclusive and comprehensive commitment to achieve a stable and lasting peace” that guarantees non-recurrence and security for all Colombians, as well as the right of victims to truth, justice and reparation.

2. Different actors for change. It is proposed to achieve transformations in the Colombian population that will lead to an “inclusive society, free of stereotypes and stigmas, which overcomes discrimination of an economic, social, religious and political nature”, as well as those of gender, ethnic-racial, generational, abilities, physical identity and sexual orientation, in which “diversity will be a source of sustainable development and not of exclusion”.

3. Macroeconomic stability. This strategy will be aimed at the adoption of an economic policy that guarantees public resources that contribute to the financing of the transformations that are “framed in the current global, regional and national economic situation.”

4. Foreign policy with a gender approach. Coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is expected that the national government will design and implement a foreign policy with a gender approach as state policy, with the aim of “promoting and ensuring gender equality in bilateral and multilateral policies”.

In the National Development Plan, three themes stand out like no other: environmental sustainability, territorial planning and social policy.

Within the framework of environmental sustainability and given climate change, the Plan promotes initiatives to control deforestation, as well as policies to protect biodiversity and strategic regions such as the Amazon and the Pacific coast, with the understanding that productive transformation is oriented toward diversifying biodiversity, utilizing natural capital, and intensifying the use of clean energies that prioritize knowledge and innovation so that they contribute to mitigating environmental degradation.

Such is the importance of territorial planning that Jorge Iván González, current director of the National Planning Department, affirms: “We are in a difficult situation, but we have a way out. The development plan will propose to the country a structural solution that is land use planning, water, agricultural production, energy reform, and social and regional convergence.” According to González, several issues are included in territorial planning, among others, the articulation of territorial planning plans, because, according to him, some of the great problems that the country has are concentrated in spatiality.

The importance of social policies cannot be ignored, which are very broad and aimed at improving the living conditions of those most in need, as is the case with the creation of the Citizen Income program, proposed in Article 66 of the Plan, which consists of centralizing social programs in a single system to better target spending and make it more efficient. This is acknowledged in the document: “Citizen income will be part of the transfer system and will consist of the provision of conditional and unconditional cash transfers, gradually and progressively, to households in situations of poverty, extreme poverty and socio-economic vulnerability, prioritizing the population with disabilities, in order to contribute to overcoming poverty and promoting social mobility and strengthening the popular and community economy”.

The National Development Plan “Colombia, World Power of Life” is the first plan of a leftist government. Although the opposition expressed some objections in the discussion of this –which were heard and taken into account–, the government was able to specify most of the proposals included in its government program.

In general, it can be concluded that the programs and projects of the Plan are aimed at supporting the most disadvantaged regions and improving the living conditions of their inhabitants; therefore, it is expected that the proposed objectives and goals will be met.

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