

# *Dialogue in Panama resumes negotiations with little progress*

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**The parties agreed on eight priority issues for these discussions, among them the high prices of the basic family food basket, fuels, medicines and electric energy. Jul. 23, 2022. | Photo: Confidential Digital**

Panama City, July 24 (RHC)-- In Panama, on its second day of talks, the dialogue table between the government and the sectors leading the protests in Panama continued, discussing the cost of the basic food basket.

The groups propose a 30% reduction, while the Executive proposes 15%, as well as the inclusion of 17 more products in the price freeze scheme. This would increase the total list to 35 products. There was also talk of the creation of a price freeze office to follow up on the issue.

Government representatives assured that, in any case, the Consumer Protection and Competition Defense Authority (Acodeco) would be responsible for monitoring these issues.

The Government's new proposal to include 17 regulated products to the basic family basket did not meet the expectations of some groups participating in the single dialogue table being held in Penonomé, province of Coclé.

Among the products that would be regulated are soybean oil, vegetable oil, canned fish preparations, wheat flour, bread and bakery products, creams, corn flakes, coffee and IMA brand sugar. In addition, the following imported products would be included: toothpaste, toilet paper, bath soap, sanitary napkins, personal deodorant and bleach.

For the economist, Maribel Gordón, who participates in the dialogue, the proposal presented by the Government is far from the needs and vicissitudes of the Panamanian people.

Gordón explained that one million Panamanians go to bed without eating daily and added that presenting a basic food basket, which is not healthy, implies a projection of a sick people.

In the central province of Coclé, with the Catholic Church as facilitator, high authorities of the Executive, whose liaison with the Head of State is the Vice President of the country, José Gabriel Carrizo, are participating in the talks.

The parties agreed on eight priority issues for these discussions, among them the high prices of the basic family food basket, fuels, medicines and electric energy.

The talks took place in the midst of road closures and repressive actions by the National Police against demonstrators in the provinces of Veraguas and East Panama, which jeopardized the continuity of the negotiations.

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