

Colombia is securing the rights of peasants



By María Josefina Arce

A government of life, based on peace, social and environmental justice is the commitment of Colombia's president, Gustavo Petro, who has paid special attention to the peasantry, one of the sectors hardest hit by state neglect and armed conflict.

For decades, rural inhabitants have been victims of forced displacement, poverty, injustice, violence and dispossession of their lands.

Among the actions of the executive is to guarantee the recognition of the peasantry as a special subject of constitutional protection, as well as their right to a dignified life, because, as many believe, it is time to pay the historical debt with this population segment.

Hence, the Congress is debating a constitutional initiative, presented by the government in this sense, which seeks that agrarian workers and their families have access to land, health, housing and social security. This draft legislative act has already been approved in a first analysis, but there are still four debates to be initiated in March.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Peace affirmed that the protection and respect for the rights of peasants is one of the bases for sustainable development and the democratization of the territory.

The executive headed by Petro has also promoted the creation of Peasant Reserve Zones, a long-standing demand of the sector to avoid the concentration of land and to develop actions that, in addition to caring for the environment, allow for the wellbeing of the inhabitants of the area.

Thus, in the last few days, the government delivered to the inhabitants of Sumapaz, in Bogotá, the act of constitution of the Peasant Reserve Zone, which includes more than 23 thousand hectares of land.

Sumapaz is one of four such areas approved last December by the National Land Agency. The others are located in the departments of Cauca and Meta, and are intended to create conditions of social justice, as one of the axes of the total peace promoted by the President.

The authorities have also delivered land to peasants, Indigenous and Afro-descendants, as part of their commitment to the Agrarian Reform, stipulated in the Peace Agreement, signed in 2016 between the government of then President Juan Manuel Santos and the once guerrilla Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army, and whose implementation was never a priority of the executive headed by Iván Duque.

Colombia is one of the most unequal countries in Latin America in terms of land distribution. One percent of the population owns 81% of the territory.

Gustavo Petro presides over a government of change, which in six months has been articulating public policies to make social justice a reality and has maintained a constant dialogue with the various sectors of society, to work together for the necessary peace.



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