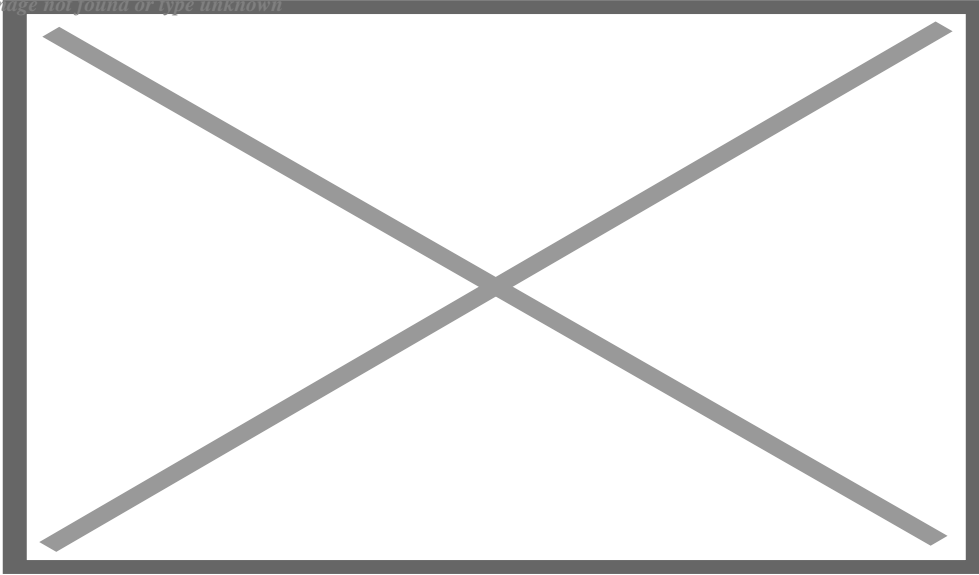


Climbing the Turquino

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The well-deserved recognition for the progress of the Turquino Plan should transcend in Cuba as an incentive to increase production and the standard of living of the inhabitants.

By Roberto Morejón

The well-deserved recognition for the progress of the Turquino Plan should transcend in Cuba as an incentive to increase production and the standard of living of the inhabitants.

Thirty-six years ago, the Program for the Integral Development of Mountainous Regions, known as the Turquino Plan, was born and is now recognized by Cubans as an inspiring program.

Renewing those territories with mountain ranges and the western Zapata Swamp continues as a laudable purpose, along with the conservation of the environment and adaptation for the defense of the country.

To sustain the foundations and the development of areas with these geographical characteristics with forest and agricultural resources, today far from being enhanced, represents an unwavering commitment.

The mountains are a vital scenario for the production of coffee, cocoa, coconut, fruits, forest wealth and beekeeping, but it is still expected to achieve better contributions to local consumption, provinces and the country.

Experts urge to achieve the sustainability of the program with greater deliveries of food and other items for exports, a source of funding to reverse difficulties in the economic base and raise living standards.

Undoubtedly, the past 36 years have been successful in establishing schools and family doctor's offices, as well as the visits of these professionals in white coats, even on horseback, to sick patients, no matter how remote their homes may be on the horizon.

Nevertheless, the roads need maintenance and the progressive advance of communications must continue, among other improvements, which are indispensable to stop the exodus of the inhabitants of the mountains to the municipal capitals or other provinces.

From the often remote areas, a response is expected, as in the whole nation, to a complex reality, since official figures reveal the annual decrease in agricultural deliveries.

The largest of the Antilles requires the creation of jobs in agricultural enterprises and the rebound in the management of cooperatives and individual farmers, especially when the municipalities are urged to promote self-sufficiency in food.

When in this Caribbean nation emphasis is placed on bringing science closer to the tasks of the economy, agriculture is not exempt from heeding the call, specifically in the mountains.

The Turquino is allegorically ascended when working for efficiency of the Plan.

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