

A process that is moving forward, but not fast enough

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Havana, September 30 (RHC)-- The stage that the country is experiencing associated with the process of implementing the actions approved with the purpose of supporting the Government Projections to correct distortions and boost the economy in 2024 is decisive, said the First Deputy Minister of Economy and Planning, Mildrey Granadillo de la Torre, as part of the debate at the meeting of the Council of Ministers for the month of September, headed by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and President of the Republic, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, and directed by the member of the Political Bureau and Prime Minister, Manuel Marrero Cruz.

This is an issue that has been constantly monitored since the beginning of this year at each ordinary meeting of the highest governing body, which on this occasion evaluated everything that has been done between the second half of July and September 19.

Granadillo de la Torre explained that the monitoring of the maximum prices for the commercialization of the six products (cut chicken, vegetable oil, sausage, powdered milk, pasta and powdered detergent) has been maintained by non-state management methods, as part of which both violations and good experiences have been identified.

Although "the objective is not to impose violations, but to guarantee the regulation of prices," he said, 222,300 inspections have been carried out, in which 127,532 violations were detected, which have led to the application of 137,391 fines, worth more than 348 million pesos.

Regarding the banking process, he pointed out that there is an upward trend in online payments. During the period, 3,600,000 operations have been carried out, for more than 9,000 million pesos, for a 4% increase compared to July.

However, it has also been proven that there are more than 300,000 fiscal bank accounts with zero balance, and some 152,000 forms of non-state management that do not have accounts opened for the operation of their businesses.

From the normative point of view, he stressed, changes have materialized for the ordering of non-state economic actors, in their complementary role in the development of the country.

The Minister of Economy and Planning, Joaquín Alonso Vázquez, valued that "the Government plan to correct distortions and re-boost the economy is a process that advances, but not at the speed we want." Although the actions developed are incipient, he considered, we are already seeing how some indicators of the economy are moving.

Speaking on this point, the Prime Minister emphasized how "life has shown us the amount of reserves that exist." Today the most conclusive result we have is the reduction of the budget deficit, and although "a number of very important actions have been implemented, the population still does not perceive it, because it does not yet have a direct impact on it."

He stressed the need to "prioritize those issues that have a greater impact on the population," and highlighted the fight against high prices and the increase in production, the results of which would impact the quality of life of the people.

Associated with the increase in the fight against the distortions of the economy, which has taken place between the months of July and August, the President of the Republic considered that it is necessary to increase the pace of work, since these actions contribute greatly to ordering the budget deficit, the relations between the state and non-state sectors, and "it gives us discreet ways to begin to better control inflation and also the exchange rate of the Cuban peso."

These discreet advances in macroeconomic indicators, he pointed out, "have not yet reached the family economy, but they are beginning to put some elements in order." Now we have to work more decisively, he said, "it is a problem of organization and control."

PLAN AND BUDGET UNDER DISCUSSION

The report on the performance of the economy at the end of August was also presented to the highest Government body, as part of which the Minister of Economy and Planning specified the status of compliance of the main exportable items, imports of goods, the performance of agricultural production in the country, the preparation of the sugar harvest, the situation of tourism activity, as well as the

functioning of the new economic actors and the relations between state and non-state.

Regarding the latter, he said that "it is a pending subject, since an adequate productive linkage between the different forms of state and non-state management has not been achieved."

When we talk about linkages, he commented, many times we think of a sales contract, and it is not really one; we must see effective linkage as the complementarity of actions between different entities or sectors, adding value in each link of the chain.

In this sense, he commented on the "still low linkage that the national economy has with the entities located in the Mariel Special Development Zone, affecting the expected result."

Reflecting on the complex situation facing the economy, the Prime Minister emphasized that, "in the midst of the lack of fuel, of foreign currency, of electric energy, in the midst of all this, there are countless subjective issues that we have not yet resolved."

The first thing we have to do, he insisted, is to concentrate on solving everything that is within our reach, because there is a lot of botching and there are many issues that do depend on us, and that we are not facing due to lack of demand.

Faced with so many difficulties, he stressed, we have to "go up to the subjective problems and each one in their area, in the tasks that correspond and direct them, but also at the community level, which is where the problems are first resolved."

The report on the execution of the State Budget at the end of July was also presented, as well as the results of the control actions on the execution of the State Budget in 2024.

Regarding the first of these points, the Minister of Finance and Prices, Vladimir Regueiro Ale, said that, in general, the budget result shows a deficit of 32,125 million pesos, lower than planned by 23,249 million pesos.

The main cause of this is the over-fulfillment of income and the non-fulfillment of expenses, he said.

Associated with the latter aspect, a process of adjustment of the budgets of the State Central Administration agencies in the provinces is being carried out, so that it is in correspondence with the economic reality of the different territories.

The Minister of Finance and Prices also commented on the programs for the control of expenses and to enhance the income approved by each Municipal Assembly of People's Power.

Regarding local budgets, he specified that the budget deficit is 2,315 million pesos, less than the programmed amount by 4,990 million. Havana and Matanzas, he said, have a surplus, as do 54 municipalities in the country.

Even though a recovery in results is observed, he said, there are still reserves that must be put into function of a greater systematic control of the budgets.

The Minister of Economy and Planning, Joaquín Alonso Vázquez, said that, although the "report shows a generally positive result, since the deficit is reduced, income is increased, expenses are controlled, and the adjustment to the Budget for this year, the Investment Plan, has already been made substantially."

He insisted on the need to "maintain the work of control, evaluation and adjustment in the remaining months of 2024, since there are still reserves to mobilize."

As part of the work session, the Council of Ministers also exercised the legislative initiative to present, for the approval of the Council of State, three decree laws: for the updating of the legislation on infractions on the possession and operation of ships, vessels and naval artifacts in the national territory; on the Payment System, and on Official Statistics.

ADDRESSING THE POPULATION'S PROPOSALS AS A PRIORITY

An important political process began on September 20 throughout the country: the accountability of the delegate to his constituents, which also supports the rights of petition and citizen participation in the country.

In support of this will of the Cuban Government, the head of the Office of Attention to Local Administrations of the Council of Ministers, Nancy Acosta Hernández, presented a report on the attention, processing and solution offered to the proposals made by the constituents to their delegates, which covered the period between 2018 and 2023.

The proposals, she recalled, occur both in the context of the accountability and through other means, and the main problems correspond to high prices of basic products; water supply and waste treatment; construction and maintenance of housing and multi-family buildings; poor condition of roads; public transportation; fixed telephony, as well as electrification or electrical improvements.

By the end of July, he explained, 1,712,781 requests had been made, of which 1,551,499 had been resolved. The agencies with the lowest percentages are the Ministries of Construction, Economy and Planning, Communications, Energy and Mines, and the Central Bank of Cuba.

The Prime Minister insisted that bureaucratic issues cannot be allowed to pile up without a solution. "These are requests that are there, and what is lacking is a response, which sometimes, unfortunately, is not possible; but we also have to explain this with sensitivity." The worst thing, he stressed, is not giving a response to the population, and we cannot allow that. (Source: Granma)

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