

# *Colombia for Farmers' Rights and Environmental Protection*

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## **Creation of new Campesino Reserve Zones**

by María Josefina Arce

In the framework of the UN Biodiversity Summit, COP 16, recently concluded in the city of Cali, Colombia, the host country made an important announcement: the creation of four new Campesino Reserve Zones, a mechanism that contributes to the conservation of ecosystems and guarantees the rights of rural dwellers.

This measure, which will benefit some 4,000 families, aims to consolidate sustainable agri-food systems for the benefit of farmers and nature conservation.

The four new reserves cover more than 103,000 hectares of land in the departments of Valle del Cauca, Tolima and Antioquia.

With these declarations, there are now a total of 18 such areas throughout the country, 11 of which were approved by the current government under President Gustavo Petro.

The aim is not only to facilitate the social organization of territories affected by decades of armed conflict, but also to create better living conditions for the peasantry.

It is a further demonstration of the authorities' commitment to fulfilling the Comprehensive Rural Reform included in the Peace Accords signed in Havana in 2016 between the government of then-President Juan Manuel Santos and the former guerrilla Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo).

Colombia's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Martha Carvajalino, said, "Today we can say that the current government has restored the rights of farmers in a timely and efficient manner.

But it is also a reaffirmation of the priority that Bogotá has given to the care of the environment, which is essential to guarantee life on the planet.

In fact, the families that will benefit from the creation of the peasant reserve zones are committed to fighting deforestation and protecting biodiversity in order to counteract the climate change that threatens us all today.

The government of President Gustavo Petro has taken important steps in favor of peace; and the approval of four new areas of this type is a message to the world and to Colombian society of its commitment to work for the rights of the peasantry and for the care of the environment, for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the planet.

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