

Bolivia: Bill to Compel Public Bodies to Buy National Products



La Paz, December 23 (RHC-teleSUR) -- The Ministry of Productive Development is preparing legislation that will make it compulsory for public bodies to purchase up to 30 percent of goods and services from the country's companies, governmental representative Victor Ramirez announced on Tuesday.

Institutions of the federal state, but also states and municipalities, will be affected by the law, and "the measure is also available to large-sized firms," said Ramirez, who wants to stimulate national production, and promote dignified local employment.

His ministry plans to create a record of goods produced nationally, in order to direct public entities towards such goods.

Social organizations as well as the Confederation of Micro and Small Companies (Conamype) will monitor the measure in order to guarantee its implementation.

Micro-entrepreneurs who wish to be part of the initiative will need to register themselves at ProBolivia, a body affiliated to the ministry, while bigger companies will be affiliated to Fundempresa, informed Ramirez. Nevertheless, the yet-to-be-approved bill plans to give priority to small companies over big ones.

Earlier this month, President Evo Morales presented the project “Made in Bolivia,” created in order to foment consumption of national products and improve sales – measures that companies of all different sizes were in favor of.

“The sectors that will benefit from the measure will mainly be (areas such as) furniture and food,” he said.

The bill will be introduced into parliament next year, and will not be approved unless all the involved sectors agree with it, warned Ramirez. So far, the Confederation of Manufacturing Workers of Bolivia, via its secretary of international relations, Vitaliano Mamani, opposed the legislation, saying that 30 percent was not enough, as public entities will keep buying mainly foreign products.

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