

## Seventh Meeting of Governors for Children, Adolescents and Youth Ends

**Bogotá, December 12, 2008.** With evidence of significant progress by territorial policies on child-related themes and a call for coherence among diagnoses, planning and budgets in departmental and municipal development plans, the Seventh Meeting of Governors for Children, Adolescents and Youth came to a conclusion in the city of Barranquilla (Atlántico).

During this two-day meeting the departmental authorities concentrated their work on influencing the protection of public social spending and private investment in favor of children, adolescents and youths, in the framework of the “Municipalities and Departments for Children, Adolescents and Youth: Facts and Rights” strategy.

At the end of the event the Head of the Public Ministry presented the conclusions of this Seventh Meeting, emphasizing that “This is a long-range task that shows short-term results, considering that the strategy began at the end of 2004, however we have to continue with persistence and harmony among the national and international entities”.

He recognized that “There are problems at several levels: more local commitment is needed, but there also is a need for adjusting the planning scheme that is set in a legal and administrative framework that is relatively inflexible. This calls for political work to produce legislation that is simpler, clearer and more applicable to the country’s reality.

“We also find that in some of the country’s regions there is a lack of basic planning concepts. In virtue of this problem, it is necessary to offer training alternatives for teams of mayors and governors, and for the entire community so that it can accompany and oversee the making and execution of plans, with criteria and knowledge of the rights framework.

Regarding the plans themselves, there is a need to increase coherence, from diagnoses through to budgeting. It is not so complicated to make diagnoses of the social situation in a region. We do not expect to establish sophisticated methodologies, and while information systems are put into place it is necessary to use ingenuity and wisdom when consulting the community to learn its true needs.

In general terms, the department of Amazonas – considering its two municipalities and the governor’s plan – is a region that clearly recognizes the importance of guaranteeing the rights of its children and adolescents. In this case, as in all cases, we have to take care that these plans are applied as they are written.

We advanced in the category of the rights to existence. We have to strengthen all categories. There is need to intensify technical assistance to the regions, but above all we have to get mayors to share the spirit that we are seeing in the governors – and furthermore, learn from their experience in including the rights of the population of children, adolescents and youth in their plans.

We must advance in clarifying the components of social spending so that we can effectively determine what amounts are budgeted for children and adolescents. But we have to go further: social spending must aim at satisfying needs – especially the need to overcome poverty. In other words, this is not a matter of establishing budgets exclusively based on what there is, but rather that the social budget should increase its percentage within the national budget until it reaches levels that in a reasonable period of time foster human development and close the gaps.”

At the end of his intervention, the Inspector General emphasized that “the national government has earmarked 7.1 trillion pesos for 2009, in order to attend the needs of children and adolescents, according to an announcement by the National Planning Department. Through the national system of participation, 21 trillion was budgeted for the territorial entities, to address matters of safe drinking water and basic sanitation, education and health, which will be tracked and controlled by the Offices of the Inspector General and the Comptroller”.

#### **RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

This meeting served as a scenario for showing the country the results of the departmental, district and municipal development plans for 2008-2011. One thousand eighty development plans for the period beginning in January 2008 were read and evaluated.

Among the findings was a “serious deficiency in the area of planning in large areas of the country, especially in the municipalities, which frustrates our goal of achieving the full guarantee of rights. 50% of the national plans were given a score of 25% out of 100%; and only 18 of the country’s plans were scored at 60% or higher”.

One of the factors influencing the low score was the difficulty of evaluating the variables for early childhood education, for lack of specificity in the plans.

As in the evaluation made in 2004, diagnoses were the weakest area of the development plans, and while progress was found in the inclusion of the guarantee of the rights of early childhood, both the diagnoses and the programmes lack quality in their inclusion.

Antioquia is the department receiving the best score for its Development Plan, with 61%, followed by Tolima with 60.6%, Atlántico with a score of 55.6%, Cundinamarca with 54.5%, Norte de Santander with 53.8%, Risaralda with 51.3%, Cauca with 50.8%, Boyacá with 50.14%, Sucre with 49.2% and Vaupés with 49.1% Among the municipalities, the first 10 – with a score varying between 66% and 63% are Buga (Valle del Cauca); Sogamoso (Boyacá); Florida (Valle del Cauca);

La Jagua de Ibérico (Cesar); Tunja (Boyacá); Canta Gallo (Bolívar); Fusagasugá Cundinamarca); Fresno (Tolima); Tubará (Atlántico); and Santa Rosa Sur (Bolívar).

In analyzing the variables included in the development plans it was found that in the area of protection important improvements had been made between the two evaluations. However, there are problems that require greater attention, like sexual violence, where 20 departments addressed the matter with diagnoses; 17 with programmes and budgets; 16 departments addressed sexual exploitation in their diagnoses; 17 programmed the issue and only 15 included corresponding budgets in their investment plans.

Insofar as the variables related to adolescents are concerned, the theme of adolescent pregnancy was diagnosed in 25 departments and addressed at the programmatic and budgetary level by 20; in the area of prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, 9 departments diagnosed it and 7 addressed it in their planning with programmes and budgets – all reflecting greater concern with issues related to sexuality.

“The best scores were achieved in the area of guaranteeing the rights of early childhood, indicating that the country is moving towards the construction of firmer bases for development in this population’s basic issues”, said the Inspector General. In this area Cundinamarca got the highest score with 90%; Norte de Santander was highest in the area of children, with 61%; Tolima with adolescents at 64.7%, and Boyacá with youth, at 67%.

Regarding budgetary allotments, a warning was issued regarding the need to improve them, define the level of investment and achieve greater coherence between the budgets and the programmes included in the Development Plans.

In this perspective, “The Facts and Rights Strategy should enter a new phase, with counseling and evaluation for achieving what is planned, and providing training opportunities for better planning for children, youths, elected governing authorities, candidates, governmental teams, the academy, political parties, organized civil society and the entire community – so as to achieve the guarantee of the rights of our children, adolescents and youth, advance human development, and reduce the poverty gaps that exist in our country”, concluded the maximum head of the Public Ministry.

**Press contacts:**

ICBF – Diana Samacá Tel. 4377630 ext. 1093 – 95 - 97  
Office of the Inspector General of the Nation – Luz Angela Arteaga; Tel. 5878750 ext. 12121  
IOM – Karen Mora – Tel. 312.4204062  
UNICEF, Marisol Quintero – Tel. 3120090 ext. 439 – Mobile: 315.8642912  
Office of the Governor of Atlántico, Sandra Devia – Tel. 315.7164345

**Entities promoting the Facts and Rights Strategy throughout the country:**

- Office of the Attorney General of the Nation, Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF), National Federation of Departments, Office of the Governor of Atlántico..
- Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation, Office of the Vice President of the Republic, National Planning Department (DNP), Ministry of Social Protection, Ministry of Education, Ministry of the Environment, Housing and Territorial Development, Presidential Young Colombia Programme (Colombia Joven), Escuela Superior de Administración Pública (ESAP), Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic, International Organisation for Migrations (IOM), Fundación Plan, Save the Children, UNFPA, National Business Council, National Planning Council, National Federation of Departmental Assemblies, National Federation of Councilmen, Alliance for Colombian Children.

Visit: <http://www.unicef.org.co/hechosyderechos.htm>