

Letter from the Director

Ignacio Restrepo Abondano

Founded by President Carlos Lleras Restrepo on November 20, 1968 as the Institute of Science and Technology Francisco Jose de Caldas, changes its nature and its name in 2009 by the 1286 Act to be called the Administrative Department of Science, Technology and Innovation.

The Department is assigned the direction and implementation of the State's policy on scientific research and technology innovation.

The Academy ever since the founding of the Administrative Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, has expected more than what it currently can and has in fact delivered to the proper performance of the function it has been assigned.

That is due, in large part, to the difficulty of creating its own model and original science and technology in the country and its low budget allocation.

Even today, Colombia does not invest in science and technology beyond 0.19% of GDP, while in Brazil does up to 1.2 , Chile and Mexico at 0.7 to 0.5.

Right was had Dr. Jaime Restrepo Cuartas, Colciencias last director, stating that the institution "would have to face a restructuration to adapt to the demands and proposals of the research sector."

His presence at the head of Colciencias since August 2010 raised great expectations in the Colombian Academia, given his important career as a scientist and university administrator. Rector of the University of Antioquia for eight years, which headed towards the paths of research, an active member of at least 20 boards related to academia, science, research and administration, seemed the best person at the time to update the structure of Colciencias and find new ways of development. And now, when the institution was assigned 10% of the royalties, equivalent to at least 800 million pesos.

The researcher that is Dr. Restrepo has manifested in his scientific production published in books, manuals and numerous articles and the many distinctions he received due to his knowledge. Thus who would have thought this, new revenue would be allocated, in large part, to the formation of human capital, research funding and strengthening of basic sciences.

With his retirement, Colciencias is now in a limbo and we do not see good future, especially when there are rumors of political interference.

It is time for Colciencias to define its path and play the key role that requires research if we do not want to remain indefinitely in the wake of the developed countries and even some that still remain behind Colombia in many respects, but are ahead in science, research, innovation and technology.