

Letter from the Director

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A few weeks ago, a legal act was released to transform Colciencias into an Administrative Department. It is important to highlight two aspects: the first one is the substance of this law, which not only gives more category and recognition to several aspects of science in the country, but also fortifies the National Science and Technology System, as stated by its objective, in order to achieve a productive model supported by science, technology and innovation that strengthens the economy, the productive development, and a new national industry.

In this way, by means of this law, the national Science, Technology and Innovation Plan comes to integrate into the country's economical and social policy. This general goal intends to support a culture of empowerment, competitiveness and cooperation between industry, science and productive processes. Even better, and this is something closer to us, it provides for the encouragement of master and doctorate degrees in strategic sectors for the transformation and the social, environmental and economical development of the country.

We would say that, even though this law is commendable, it is nevertheless late, since the country already has examples and experiences of collaboration between science and technology.

Empowerment is an old topic, very well known in the Cauca Valley: the pioneers of this subject were graduated from the universities of this province. The close relationship between university knowledge and some industrial companies in Medellin is well known too. In the same way, more or less developed Business Incubator projects with a scientific or technological base—I'm thinking Medellin, for example—have been going on for some time now.

Slowly, several universities advance in the creation of software and in other fields. The biggest challenges are the lack of doctors devoted to these topics, more technological developments and financing – even though the aforementioned law creates a fund, the origin of the resources is uncertain.

Despite these problems, we cannot do anything but celebrate the arrival of this law, which intends to universalize the phenomenon of scientific and technological development and its incorporation into national development.

The second aspect I would like to briefly address is the liturgy of the law: as any other respected law in Colombia, it is loaded with vague words: to encourage, to foment, to promote, to consolidate, to survey, to propose, to manifest, to design, to articulate, to propend, to intend...

May this new Administrative Department engage itself into getting the pertinent normative decrees so that this law may start being productive.