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**POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION
NETWORK**

SECOND MEETING

COLOMBIA: SOLIDARITY SOCIAL NETWORK

Summary of the presentation by Guillermo Casasbuenas,
Deputy Director of the Solidarity Social Network,
and Informational Document about the Solidarity Social Network

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“Developing a Population and Territorial Concept of Social Policy. The SSN Social Management Scheme”

*Brief Summary of the Conference by Guillermo Casasbuenas
Washington, D.C, December 11th, 2001*

Over the last decades, social policy has been conceived from a sectorial perspective. This means that social policy responds more to government's organizational activities than to people necessities; as if social problems could be approached from a unilateral perspective; in the same way that national, provincial or municipal budgets are allocated by “sectors”.

Citizens who were not receiving support from government institutions were the main detractors of this approach and, in many cases, government institutions that channeled public demands and worries were non-existent.

On the other hand, institutions have been recognizing (though not at the desired pace) that social problems are essentially related to “population aspects” not to “sectorial aspects”.

At SSN, we implemented a population and territorial perspective that would enable us to concentrate our institutional capacities on the neediest groups and to work in places where problems were the most critical. The focalization concept was established as an organizational guideline and, therefore, we became coordinators (Act 387th) of different organizations (ICBF, INURBE, INCORA) and Ministries' activities related to displaced population, but also to our program aimed at the country's poorest population and support to victims of the armed conflict.

In order to maximize these coordination activities, we created a comprehensive database that includes more than 4 thousand official indicators from every municipality of the country and implemented social information systems to identify which territorial and population problems we were expected to attack, who were our beneficiaries and

what kind of short and mid term impacts our policies would have on population and regions where we intervened. In methodological terms, this *Population/territorial* perspective demanded specific data collection mechanisms that some times were very hard to manage, especially the information on displaced people. This compelled us to develop systems that were able corroborate the accuracy of information that was provided through different sources (like the Information System of Contrasted Sources). In some cases, this sources were potential or actual beneficiaries, authorities or even the communities.

This double-way territorial and population perspective was aimed at enhancing people's capacity to solve their own problems with government support, not in the opposite way. Our goal was to build personal, family and group capacities that would make social policy beneficiaries the central actors in the solution of their problems.

We initially implemented this concept in the field work (it was developed at the academic level some years before), when we participated in the Coffee region disaster (an earthquake that affected the Armenia and Pereira regions in September 1999).

Having this critical scenario as a framework, we were able to implement a work scheme where people played a central role in aid and support actions for the most affected population and, therefore, they abandoned their traditional role of *humanitarian action* receivers. Few days after the tragedy occurred, we encouraged those who lost all their possessions to develop a provisional solution for their most urgent needs. Victims participated very actively in the installation of food booths, and one week later, people started the construction of provisional shelters.

We understood that people who has lost all their possessions because of telluric or violent calamities, are able to overcome this tragedies and also to play a central role in the implementation of viable solutions. There was no place for quiet suffering; the pain caused by this emergency was transformed into shared energy for the implementation of joint solutions.

Everything we learned from the tragedy in the Armenia region was implemented and expanded into programs for displaced population, municipality reconstruction and development of psycho-social support programs.

I will elaborate more specifically on the challenges, progress, achievements and failures of this population and territorial approach and on the subject of social policy formulation and implementation.

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY NETWORK OF COLOMBIA

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Social Solidarity Network is a presidential initiative that promotes national solidarity as a means to respond to critical necessities of the poorest and most vulnerable population groups in the country and to facilitate their participation in social programs. The Network's combined actions are aimed at enhancing these population groups' life quality and guaranteeing their civil rights.

The Network's concept represents a new approach in social management that involves governmental and society actors: national organizations, territorial authorities, private sector, nongovernmental and community organizations. On the other hand, the Network's programs and projects recognize the necessities and specific demands of benefited population groups.

Therefore, the Social Solidarity Network promotes participation, communication and social coordination mechanisms that involve the participation of communities in the management, operation and control of their own development projects and programs. Also, the Network tries to guarantee the adequate coordination of social policy provisions among territorial entities, through the implementation of new inter-institutional coordination mechanisms.

The Social Solidarity Network was created in 1994 by the Act 368th of 1997, and was established as a national public institution of the Administrative Department at the Presidency of the Republic Office. In terms of social policy implementation, the Secretariat of Popular Integration (1982-1986) and the National Plan of Rehabilitation (1986-1994) were the Network's predecessors.

During its first years of operation, the Network invested significant financial resources for the implementation of many projects and was part of a management strategy based on inter-institutional coordination and community participation. Today, the Network maintains these goals, but it has adapted the country's changing conditions

of the last few years. This situation implies new challenges such as the improvement of social and economic conditions for poor and vulnerable population—especially those affected by the internal armed conflict; create a climate of social coexistence; promote solidarity principles; and contribute to the peace process through the participation of local and community institutions in decision-making processes.

As a result of many years of experience and its role as interlocutor with society, community organizations, local governments and social sector institutions throughout the country, the Social Solidarity Network is now a leading national organization in social policy issues. This presidential initiative has emerged as an effective strategy that attacks Colombia's social problems based on its technical capacity and the new emphasis in a territorial and population approach; its methodologies and innovative mechanisms for monitoring and overseeing public policy provisions, and its effective response to social emergency situations, among others.

1. SOCIAL SOLIDARITY NETWORK'S MISSION

The Network's current mission is based on the country's necessities and on President Andrés Pastrana Arango's government guidelines. The Network's main objective is to promote a participative and social development management strategy based on the following five topics:

Promoting social equality. Providing support to the most vulnerable population groups, especially those affected by the internal armed conflict, through the implementation of projects that include social and gender equality principles and using strategies aimed at eliminating the causes of exclusion and social discrimination.

Developing of a new social policy management concept. Creating networks that link government and civil society in order to implement projects and actions directed to the most vulnerable groups.

Increasing community involvement commitment for their own *development processes* through the detection and creation of collective interests and assessing necessities and interests of different population groups; promoting individual and collective empowerment processes; and creating opportunities and capacities using the concept of equality.

Promoting decentralization process expansion with the participation of municipalities and departments in social policy formulation and management processes; strengthening institutional capacity at the local level; promoting the adoption of social policy principles at the local level; developing co-responsibility practices among communities, public institutions and private sector.

Implementing new institutional models to coordinate and control social policies in territorial entities, designing inter-institutional coordination strategies and implementing flexible structures and mechanisms adapted to the local context; implementing permanent

self-evaluation and monitoring processes; and developing actions that have an integral impact on society.

2. SOCIAL SOLIDARITY NETWORK'S OBJECTIVES

General objectives

(Act 368th of 1997)

- 1** Implementation of focalized social investment programs defined by the President of the Republic and those included in the National Development Plan Act, and directed to Colombia's poorest and most vulnerable sectors.
- 2** Coordination of programs aimed at promoting constitutional rights and combating social demands such as violence, economic conditions, physical and mental disabilities as well as problems related to age, gender, children and young population, elderly, women and family.
- 3** In coordination with national public entities, the Network coordinates different planning, development and evaluation phases of focalized social investment programs and harmonizes them with National Government's social policies.
- 4** In coordination with the respective public institutions, the Network obtains national and international cooperation funds for studies, programs and projects to support its activities.
- 5** Organizes co-management activities with non-profit organizations that conduct similar or complementary activities related to the Network's objectives.
- 6** Implementation of social and institutional development programs in communities with severe poverty, marginality and disability problems; strengthen community participation processes.

- 7 In compliance with National Government's policies, the Network develops dissemination and training programs that promote communities' participation in all decisions that may affect them; also, it demands the effectiveness of constitutional principles, rights and obligations; institutional development, administrative decentralization and modernization, and an active participation in project design and implementation.
- 8 In compliance with National Government's policies, the Network coordinates inter-institutional activities and promotes the participation of social, political and community organizations in the designing and operation of their own development process.
- 9 Receives and distributes resources for special presidential programs aimed at Colombia's poorest and most vulnerable groups.
- 10 Implementation of special programs or projects that prevent social emergency situations or require special attention from the government.
- 11 Sign contracts with entities that implement actions related to the Network's objectives and functions that include community's participation.
- 12 Implementation of support programs and projects for the population displaced by violence, armed groups, or political urban militias that returned to civil life.

Actions for the Support of displaced population

(Act 387th of 1997; Decree 2569 of 2000)

- Coordination of the National System of Integral Support for Displaced Population

- In compliance with the declaration procedures established by Article 32 paragraph 1 of the Act 387th of 1997, supervises and trains members of the National System; collects information and maintains the Registry of Displaced Population
- Promotes forced displacement prevention programs and provides support to victims with the collaboration of state-level members of the National System
- The Network represents the National Government in the implementation of management strategies for internal displacement caused by the armed movement.
- In coordination with the National Department of Planning, defines social and economic indicators that lead to the adequate monitoring and evaluation of both the National System activities the program for population displaced by violence.
- Promote and coordinate the adoption of humanitarian measures, adequate emergency humanitarian aid, and socioeconomic support for displaced population measures by local and national authorities implementation.
- Promote the creation of Municipal, District and Department Committees of Integral Support for Population Displaced by Violence; attend their meetings and provide them with technical support.
- Promote national, department, district and municipal authorities coordination efforts that lead to the implementation of national government's social, economic, legal, political and security measures for displacement prevention and rehabilitation.
- Coordinate actions and measures that facilitate displaced population's voluntary return to their places of origin or their relocation.

- Promote coordination and co-management activities between public institutions at any level and national/international nongovernmental organizations that provide funds, develop or conduct projects aimed at the population displaced by violence.
- In coordination with public and private institutions, promotes the creation of a national network of humanitarian emergency aid that includes emergency lodging mobile camps, temporary shelter centers, and orientation and aid units in medium and large cities.

3. POPULATION AND TERRITORIAL APPROACH

In order to achieve its mission and goals, the Social Solidarity Network formulates its policy and develops its actions through a population and territorial approach. The population mechanism analyzes development alternatives and problematic taking into account that the different groups involved have particular interests and interpretations and require different kinds of aid. The territorial mechanism is aware of Colombian regions' differences and particularities.

Based on population and territorial diversity, this approach seeks for a balanced distribution of development benefits using different strategies for support and response, focused on particular demands and avoiding the use of a single response in all cases.

This approach understands development as an assessment of people's life in all its dimensions and individual capacities.

Colombia is privileged by its natural, cultural and population diversity. Different forms of life, knowledge and social regulation coexist in the country. Colombia's social and territorial heterogeneity provides the possibility of having options and innovative responses for difficult situations and changing circumstances.

However, many factors are restraining this potential. Inequality and social exclusion and discrimination are limiting capacities and potential of large population

sectors in Colombia. Unawareness of this social and territorial heterogeneity sometimes translates into the same intervention strategies that are not taking advantage of the different possibilities, characteristics, or social, economic, political, cultural and environmental conditions in the country. Frequently, universal social public policy impacts on specific regions and population groups are ignored. The existing structure for development management is very sectorial and only partially decentralized; therefore, it is difficult to analyze the demands of disadvantaged groups from an integral perspective.

Recognizing and appraising differences

Each population group has different interests in productive activities and social reproduction; use and distribution of time; production, use and dissemination of knowledge; different labor-related activities; territorial management; community actions and organization; use of power, etcetera.

The population approach recognizes different development and social change interests among several population groups. These interests vary according to the territorial context. This serves as an institutional scheme basis for the Network.

The population approach opens possibilities for the assessment of ethnic-territorial cultures that, under their own social organization and existence forms, have been able to preserve important ecosystems in a sustainable way, among other things. Also, this approach encourages the recognition of women's domestic work (even if it is not a paid work); and to respect the potential and capacities of people with disabilities who actively participate in different sectors of society.

The population and territorial approach role in the designing and conduction of development actions reflects recognition and respect for the capacities and potentials of different population groups.

Development actions have different positive and negative impacts among groups that need to be balanced in order to facilitate equality. If cultures and interests are

heterogeneous, actions aimed at solving social problems must include a thorough analysis of their potential impacts on different population groups and territories. Such analyses will provide essential information to define management priorities in different territorial contexts. Therefore, it is assumed that universal solutions that benefit everyone do not exist.

Inequality and social exclusion

Population groups have different opportunities and interests. Therefore, they must be able to identify, express, negotiate, arrange, and manage their interests, in order to satisfy them. However, inequality and vulnerability conditions affecting some of them prevent the development of this capacity.

Inequality has its origins in exclusion patterns, social discrimination based on population features, and privilege systems. Although the Colombian Constitution guarantees equal conditions and rights for all citizens, access to resources and respect for their rights is highly unbalanced among different population groups.

More than being a dramatic income distribution inequality that impoverishes large sectors of population, social exclusion is also reflected in severe disparities in government levels and social visibility, political participation, individual freedom, education, health, life expectancy, personal security, collective organization and basic services access, among others. Basically, distribution patterns for social resources are defined by territorial principles. In other words, the relative position of social advantage or disadvantage depends on population-related features such as gender, age, ethnic origin and culture and their relationship to territorial placement.

Discrimination and social exclusion constitute a serious limitation for the country's development. They reduce discriminated people's capacities to participate in social planning and management processes; inhibit human capital growth and difficult ideas and social resources creation and exchange. Consequently, actions that promote enhancement of people's capacities and reduce power, resources and opportunity gaps are a fundamental goal of development.

Vulnerability

An important element that makes population groups different is their vulnerability levels, especially amid changing social conditions. Modifications of productive, political and environmental contexts have different impacts on population groups because of these vulnerability levels.

Individual, family or massive displacement caused by the country's internal armed conflict is leading to vulnerability for an increasing number of people. People, families or communities displaced from their territory are forced to survive in unknown social and geographic settings. They are deprived of their family and community networks, cultural origins, and goods. In most of the cases, these families have children and elder people among them; in certain cases affected people are part of ethnic groups—afro-Colombian and indigenous— or they are people with disabilities.

Forced displacement deteriorates the life conditions of people who already live precariously. Displaced people are highly exposed to diseases and they require food, basic services and adequate housing. Lack of solidarity and sometimes rejection from people and authorities where displaced people settle aggravates the situation.

Also, at least in the short time natural disasters affect people's life conditions making them more vulnerable; in some cases this phenomena affects personal safety, public and private goods, employment and productivity conditions, and community relations.

Depending on their characteristics, some sectors are more vulnerable and those in the most precarious conditions depend on the central government for their rehabilitation processes. In these cases, institutional strategies must provide support to population groups affected by higher vulnerability levels—it must be considered that response capacity is more limited for some groups.

On the other hand, during economic crises women become vulnerable since their participation in temporary jobs, where lay offs are more frequent, is larger than men's. Also, in times of economic recession, women have heavier workloads because they provide some goods and services that otherwise are provided by the market.

For indigenous peoples, vulnerability means extinction not only in human and biological terms but also in social and cultural terms. Some factors account for this: erosion of cultural identity caused by the expansion of a dominant culture; weaken or lost traditional authority and social control systems; dispossession of their territory due to colonization or mining activities expansion; an armed conflict that has caused massive displacements and increased mortality rates; expansion of illicit crops in indigenous territories; absence of institutional development strategies at the local and regional levels.

Sometimes, government actions that cause damage to people are unavoidable. However, implementation of strategies that are able to strengthen population groups' capacity to design an effective response is feasible. In other words, it is possible to enhance the empowerment of vulnerable groups and their capacity to promote their own collective agenda.

Integration capacity

When a population group suffers any kind of social discrimination and their access to power is restricted because of one or more of these social characteristics, it is likely that they will pursue a strategic interest in order to change the *status quo*. This means not only seeking for basic survival conditions, but also gaining autonomy and social power.

This strategic interest of a social group should not be fragmented depending on different institutional frameworks. Survival necessities and respect for their social rights are closely interrelated interests of any social group.

Local and decentralized management encourages population groups' integral work and enables them to focus on their development interests within a territorial context. Also, promotes the implementation of effective actions and focalized social actions aimed at specific population groups in order to establish objectives for economic progress, social equality, conservation, sustainable use of natural resources, and institutional strengthening.

Before formulating its policies and programs, the Social Solidarity Network:

- Verifies that the benefited population group is in disadvantage because of social discrimination or exclusion.
- Identifies social demands of different population groups, in order to define action lines.
- Analyze differences among population groups and their development interests thus giving priority to actions in favor of more discriminated groups.
- Encourages human capacity development.
- Promotes strengthening of social capital through creation and consolidation of participation mechanisms for decision-making processes.
- Promotes social equality among populations.

4. SOCIAL SOLIDARITY NETWORK'S ACTION ITEMS

Principles that guide the Network's allocation distribution and organizational processes:

Integrated actions. The objective is to join efforts with other institutions to implement focalized actions that have an integral impact on specific population group. Consequently, economic progress, social equality, conservation, sustainable use of natural resources, and institutional strengthening objectives are linked in a coherent manner.

Process sustainability. Emphasis on sustainable actions for income creation and social services provision. This implies that communities achieve their goals without intervention of external institutions.

Even if government responds to an emergency or an extraordinary event, the Network focuses on productive projects that strengthen organizational capacities that provide better living conditions to communities.

Strengthening social capital. The objective is to create social networks that involve public and private institutions, non-profit organizations and community organizations, in order to define common strategies and actions for the solution of social development problems. Also, encourages groups to take responsibility for their own development.

The Network projects should facilitate the promotion of development interests and the capacity to negotiate them with private and public institutions. Proactive work is important for the strengthening of community organizations. Network's development actions should be negotiated with different groups through transparent and public decision taking processes.

Inter-institutional coordination based on information and agreement creation. Effective joint actions of national and regional public organizations depend mainly on communities' successful development efforts. In order to achieve integrated social policy objectives, the Network focuses in the creation of information, agreement and coordination mechanisms among diverse organizations at all territorial levels; designs effective mechanisms to achieve an integral formulation of social policy, especially at municipal levels; and prevents duplicity and parallelism of national and municipal government actions.

Strengthening local and regional governments. In order to strengthen local authorities legitimacy and deepen political decentralization in the country, the Network's management model is aware of different functions and jurisdiction of local governments

and, therefore, focuses its work on effective decision making processes at the local level. Also, seeks for the participation of local governments in decision taking and in distribution of social development investment. This means that national organizations involved with the Network's activities must consult local authorities and they have to adopt local development plans as their own policy formulation guidelines.

Transparency and accountability. Every action implemented by the Network is under public scrutiny. All projects and programs include public information and oversight mechanisms. Therefore, it is essential to institutionalize public control practices for every action implemented by the Network.

5. SOCIAL SOLIDARITY NETWORK'S OPERATION SCHEME

The Networks conducts its national operations in a General Coordination office based in Bogota and Territorial Units in every Department's capital cities. Also, there are two Sub-regional territorial units in Magdalena Medio and Uraba. In coordination with territorial units, the Network gives advice to territorial entities and social groups that need to formulate, manage and implement development projects aimed at disadvantaged population groups.

The Network coordinates inter-institutional actions aimed at vulnerable population. Therefore, the it is not only implementing or funding projects, but also creating and supporting different actions to improve life quality and decision power of vulnerable population groups of institutional and community actors.

In order to implement their actions, territorial units receive program and operation support from advisors working in different programs and also from a group of territorial and supervising coordinators.

Each Territorial Unit has a basic structure that manages social, technical and administrative activities. The structure provides logistic, secretarial and transportation

support and as an integral team uses a territorial approach in the analysis of the poorest and most vulnerable population conditions.

6. SOCIAL SOLIDARITY NETWORK'S PROGRAMS AND TOPICS

The Network's programs and topics have been designed using a population and territorial approach for social management. Network's programs seeks improvement of life conditions for Colombia's poorest and most vulnerable sectors and the enhance of their productive and organizational capacities.

Also, as the Social Solidarity Network, created in 1999 by the National Government, coordinates the National System of Integral Care for Populations Displaced by Violence, some of its programs and activities are aimed at supporting people affected by forced displacement

Program for Population Displaced by Violence

In coordination with entities of the National System of Integral Care for Populations Displaced by Violence, this program provides care and offers long-term solutions to people displaced by the armed conflict—its main objective is to overcome emergency response and aid emphasis.

Main components of the program:

- Offers emergency humanitarian aid through Orientation and Care Units that operate in medium and large cities where displaced population is located; delegates humanitarian aid management to non-governmental organizations; coordinates actions in case of massive displacement.

- Creation of adequate conditions for displaced populations that allow them to recover their productive and income-creation capacities through productive, training, business and housing projects (for both returning and relocated population).
- Design of efficient legal procedures that facilitate the access of displaced population to special support programs.
- Strengthen local response capacity in order to improve institutional actions at territorial levels and to define municipal and department action plans—Municipal, District and Department Committees for the support of Population Displaced by Violence coordinate these actions.
- Prevention of displacement caused by the armed conflict: early detection of the problem; local impact actions; social and economic improvement of vulnerable communities.
- Implementation of strategic alliances with the private sector and national and international nongovernmental organizations, in order to obtain funds and technical assistance for actions of integral support to displacement.

In addition to responsibilities related to this program, the Social Solidarity Network coordinates the National System of Integral Care for Population Displaced by Violence, and governmental institutions efforts for displaced population; also, the Network has permanent communication with national and international nongovernmental organizations related to displacement issues.

Joint Technical Unit

The Technical Unit is formed by a group of specialists that provide technical advice both to the Network and different entities of the National System of Integral Care for Population Displaced by Violence (SNAIPD).

The Joint Technical Unit (UTC) was created in September 1999 by the Social Solidarity Network and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and is operated with national and international funds.

The activities of UTC include audit and oversight processes for humanitarian aid in the country; design of integral care policies and operational strategies for displaced population; and coordination between local, regional and national governmental organizations, national and international nongovernmental organizations and affected communities.

These actions are aimed at improving SNAIPD's response capacity and implementation of long-term solutions for people and families affected by forced displacement. The UTC gives advice for the implementation of pilot projects in specific territories and formulation of new legal provisions in favor of displaced population. Also UTC designs institutional strengthening programs for Departmental District and Municipal Committees for the support of Population Displaced by Violence.

Finally, the National Information Network for Displaced Population that provides national and regional information on displacement has two systems: Registry System (SUR) and the Assessment System of Contrasted Sources (SEFC).

Program of Integral Support for Municipalities affected by political violence in Colombia

This Network's program provides support to people affected by violence related to political or ideological aspects—terrorist attacks, warfare.

The program has two components:

Humanitarian aid; subsidies; solidarity credits; educative support. And municipal reconstruction efforts

Humanitarian aid includes economic support for housing, lodging, food and, if necessary, funeral expenses and solidarity credits refer to interest cancellation measures; also, the Network has signed an agreement with the Industrial Promotion Institute to provide financial guarantees. If victims do not have sufficient collateral guarantees, the Network releases a certificate to the National Collateral Guarantees Fund to provide guarantee for the victim's credit; in accordance to Article 38, Law 418th of 1997. Also, the Network authorize educative certificates that exempt tuition and school fees payments for school-age victims.

The second component refers to social and community infrastructure projects in municipalities affected by armed actions; implementation of psycho-social care projects and provides up to 2 million Colombian pesos for housing reconstruction expenses.

Program of Integral Support for Senior People

This program's objective is to improve life conditions of Colombian men and women who are 65 years or older; indigenous and people with disabilities who are living in extreme poverty and are 50 years old are eligible for this program too.

The program promotes an integral support policy for senior people that contribute to satisfy their basic and complementary necessities; promotes the decentralization process through community and municipal organization activities and co-financed projects aimed at senior people's rights and participation in local decision-taking processes.

The Network provides funds for municipal and other public or private organization projects based on sustainability, integral action, and improvement of management capacities.

The two services co-funded by the Network are *basic services*—health, sustenance, and housing support to seniors, and *complementary services*—education, culture, tourism,

recreational and sport activities. The provision of these services is based on senior people's social and cultural necessities, capacities and skills.

Program for Indigenous People

Social Solidarity Network-World Food Program

This program is aimed at the improvement of indigenous people life and cultural conditions; supports the consolidation of indigenous people's territorial autonomy; balance between indigenous people and institutions involved in development project development for their communities.

The World Food Program provides economic and technical support to this program and operates in nine micro-regions located in Cauca's Andean zone; southern Nariño; Sibundoy Valley in Putumayo; Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta; Magdalena; El Cesar; San Andrés Sotavento; Cordoba; Sucre; and Southern Tolima. Fifteen indigenous peoples are benefited with this program: pastos, kamzá, ingas, paeces, guambianos, coconucos, yanaconas, totoróes, pijaos, arhuacos, malayos, kogui, wiwua, zenúes and chimila.

The program has two components:

Credit

The program supports productive, profitable and sustainable initiatives and provides resources for production, transformation and commercialization projects that create employment and income and improve the communities' negotiation capacity when local and regional institutions are involved.

The most common projects are for cattle raising; fishery; coffee and *panela* production and commercialization, fruits and spices; milk production and processing; potato production; natural water bottling and commercialization; mining; and machinery purchasing.

Food for work

This program works with resources obtained by monetization of wheat, rice and other type of food donation to indigenous people from the micro-regions mentioned above. These resources attract indigenous development resources to different institutions. This program supports social infrastructure, environmental, housing and productive and participative development projects.

Program for People with Disabilities

The objective of this program is the promotion, design and implementation of strategies that enhance management capacities, organization and participation mechanisms of people with disabilities. This program is aimed at providing a new perspective for municipal, department and national approaches that enhances disability public policies.

This program emphasizes the implementation of inter-institutional and inter-sector schemes that oversee National Plan for People with Disabilities 1999-2002 provisions. The goal is to strengthen and increase existing services and to improve access and participation in social, economic, cultural and productive processes for people with disabilities. This program provides technical and monitoring assistance and promotes governmental productive projects for people with disabilities.

This program includes training actions that strengthen local and regional work projects for people with disabilities where private and public institutions participate. Also, conducts decentralization efforts (Territorial Networks for Disability Care) in order to include actions and goals of the National Plan for People with Disabilities 1999-2002 in municipal and department development plans.

Finally, this program is part of coordination efforts carried out by the Office of the First Lady, the Ministry of Health, and INSOR aimed at the implementation of the programs “*Colombia Walks*” and “*Colombia Listens*”.

The population benefited by this program are working-age men and women with disabilities; living in extreme poverty; 50 year old indigent people with mental or physical limitations; economically disadvantaged boys, girls and adults with mobility or hearing disabilities (stratum 1 and 2); and NGOs engaged in disability issues that need management and organizational support for their work with people with disabilities.

Support Program for *Recyclers*

This program provides technical and financial support to projects developed by the *recyclers* union (people who recover reusable material); its main goal is to enhance the life quality of this population group. The National Government favors this union’s insertion into the formal labor-market and also seeks for new social inclusion mechanisms that benefit people who work in recycling activities through the introduction of new technology, training programs, technical assistance, project formulation and evaluation, among other activities.

Also, in coordination with this program, the Network participates in regional development programs such as the Master Plan of Solid Residues that operates in Bogota; the Network has played an important role in promoting intervention strategies at the district level for recycling activities, equipment and tools for the modernization of recycling activities supply.

Program for Income Creation and Improvement

The National Government has implemented different measures to promote employment and creation of opportunities to improve income to cope with the expansion of informal economy and increasing unemployment rates.

The Network's labor has outlined the scope of its actions in order to give priority to temporal and permanent employment solutions more than to employment creation. Yet these measures have a positive impact on people benefited by the Income Creation Program.

In addition, this program has modified its previous supply approach. Today, the program recognizes the country's population and territorial heterogeneity before implementing strategies and responses for its benefited population groups' necessities and potential.

The program is aimed at supporting projects of permanent and/or temporal employment creation, which have a positive impact on benefited people's income. Such income may be created, stabilized, or increased. Projects must include concepts like capacity creation, productive pilot projects, social and economic sustainability, strategic alliances, inter-institutional coordination; and local and regional governments strengthening.

Special Housing Program

This program offers solutions to households affected by natural or human-origin disasters or forced displacement. The program initiates houses construction or reconstruction and provides immediate accessibility, water supply and drainage services.

The Special Housing Program operates when conditions exceed territorial entities capacity to cope with disasters or when the Presidency of the Republic considers to intervene.

Also, this program operates as a complementary social policy strategy that provides support to families displaced by the armed conflict and is aimed at attacking housing shortages caused by involuntary displacement as a result of the internal armed conflict, violence in different regions, human rights violations, and impunity.

In order to achieve greater social equality and implement more than housing-related measures, the program includes mechanisms such as active participation of affected communities, efficient use of resources, empowerment of local groups, and implementation of new institutional models.

Program of Employment and Training for Displaced Young Population

Social Solidarity Network-National Learning Service Agreement

According to different governmental statistical analyses, the country's highest unemployment rate affects young unskilled population that, among other reasons, have deserted secondary education. This situation has created increasing non-formal economic and employment conditions.

Forced displacement as a result of the armed conflict aggravates this situation and in many cases, youngsters see themselves with no other option than to abandon their places of origin or work immigrating to larger cities and, therefore, increasing unemployment lists.

In accordance to National Government's social policy, the Network and SENA have designed the Employment Training Program for Displaced Youngsters, which is directed to young population between 17 and 30 years old, who were expelled from their places of origin. Among these youngsters, the most affected by unemployment or non-formal employment are women with children and they represent a high percentage of displaced population.

The program is aimed at achieving young population's social and labor insertion in economic cycles and also has a training scheme that adapts to private sector demands. The private sector benefits with qualified young people who are accepted for internships in these companies and the private sector receives qualified labor force that eventually can hire on a permanent basis.

This program is able to strengthen the economy's formal sector and also provides better income-creation opportunities for displaced youngsters; also, they are able to stay in socioeconomic stabilization processes. This is a first step to achieve their integral recovery.

The program provides viable short and mid-term solutions through this six-months long internships and courses and manages to regain displaced people's trust in Government institutions.

Communication Management Area

The main task of this area is to disseminate the Network's actions that benefit the poorest and most vulnerable population and create autonomous communications processes.

The purpose of the Communication Management Area's actions is to create awareness in national and international public opinion and affected population, regarding socioeconomic problems of sectors affected by violence or marginalization and what is the government's capacity to support them.

There are four lines of action: ideas and policy criteria about the institutional role's actions in favor of benefited population; dissemination and orientation actions for the public opinion; expansion of inter and intra-institutional communication capacities; strengthening identity and culture of the Network's participating communities.

The first line of action promotes the preparation of research papers, data collection and awareness raising works. Some of the publications are *Resettlement in Colombia* and *National Network of Displaced Population: components, progress, methodology and figures*; and *Forced displacement, protection and refuge in Colombia's bordering zones*.

The public opinion approach refers to information analysis, audio-visual, radio and printed material production and they were created as the area's main tools to communicate with private media representatives. The Network has produced documentaries and promotional videos; it has radio programs in different stations, a website, promotional stickers, and a newsletter called *Notired*. In addition, there are daily press releases and periodical press conferences.

The guidebooks *Formato Único de Declaración*, *Formato de Valoración de Declaraciones*, *Formato de Caracterización Básica del Hogar* y *Formato de Seguimiento de Ayudas Entregadas*, are a useful tool for displaced population and reflect different efforts to strengthening inter-institutional dissemination strategies.

Also, this area conducts internal communication actions such as information reports via fax or internet and teleconferences in order to meet the Network's Territorial Units demands and provide communication practices in the regions.

Creation of a visual memory through videos and photographs that shows the Network's actions and work with the country's poorest and most vulnerable population groups is enhancing their culture and identity.

This area has produced the documentaries *The Miracle City*; *Leadership during crisis times*; *Senior population*, *A New beginning*; *Building a Network*; and the series *Weaving the Network*.

Also, community training workshops for media, radio and television production, and newspaper edition have been organized in the following municipalities: San Vicente del Caguán, La Macarena, Calamar, Teorama, Armenia, Jardín, Turbo y Leticia.

Donation Management Area

This area receives merchandise seized or that that is not sold or auctioned by DIAN and it is donated to Colombia's poorest people. This is a complementary activity for the Network's actions and this area works in favor of community process enhancement and development of Colombia's most vulnerable population.

For this area, it is very important to identify organizations and communities that will be benefited with donations and, therefore, it has implemented priority principles depending on population groups necessities and characteristics of donated goods. Affected or displaced population—because of tragedies or violence—is the Area's biggest priority and receives special treatment. Finally, according to the most vulnerable population principle, this office also conducts different support actions for communities affected by natural disasters.

International Cooperation Management Area

This area gives advice to the Director General's office on international issues coordination and management, which constitute a very important activity for the entire Network. The main tasks of this area are to obtain international cooperation resources and establish alliances with other countries; supervise and oversee projects that receive international cooperation resources; and inform the international community about the Network's actions.

On the one hand, this Area coordinates its work with the Ministry of Foreign Relations, the Colombian Agency of International Cooperation and Colombian embassies; on the other hand, it is responsible, in coordination with other Network's central and national offices, for international cooperation process management.

Also, the office must document updated information about international operations conducted by the Network and actions funded with international cooperation

resources. Finally, the area plays an important role in the National Government's positions and reports, and its participation in social development agreements and international mechanisms.