

The challenge of preserving the environment from damage due to the mining and energy industry

Decisions taken recently by popular consultation in different towns of Colombia, has put in the eye of the hurricane the impact of the petroleum and mining industry on natural resources. This decision becomes of great importance because the royalties from mining and energy exploitation are now centralized and resources no longer come as before to the producing territories, resources that, by the way, were, in a high percentage, squandered by the local governments.

However, it seems that there is a new and growing collective consciousness in the population that has brought to the table the citizens participation to decide on water resources and the use of mining-energy resources in their regions. Towns like Piedras in the province of Tolima, Tauramena in the province of Casanare and Guamal in the province of Meta, are clear examples of how the citizens (primary constituents) prefer to conserve their natural resources rather than venturing into living on petroleum and mining, mainly because, traditionally, they have merely seen wealth passing by bringing problems to the producing territories. It is just enough to see the misery that these communities are still in, despite the time that they have been “enjoying this wealth”, in towns where coal has been mined and in those that have ferronickel. But these industries are not only the cause of serious environmental impacts, but also the companies that are developing important projects in the infrastructure of this country.

Therefore, a stronger policy is required by the national government in defense of the environment and also, to sanction those who violate the law. The domestic and foreign companies will need to of redefine their social and environmental functions. If not, the communities’ discontent will increase, and it will become more and more difficult to exploit these resources. Without doubt, this problem is no stranger to the responsibility that the scientific magazine, *ORINOQUIA*, has with the region and the country, because its main good is the publication of the research generated especially in the region with the same name.

Because the editor of Orinoquia will leave to enjoy a sabbatical year, the direction of the magazine will be in charge of the subeditor who will be responsible of continuing our editorial policies and preserve the quality of our publication. To all our authors, reviewers, and collaborators, we wish a Happy New Year and that 2014 will be full of satisfactions. On our part, let us continue to work in order to keep the magazine in a high level among the Colombian scientific publications.

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Editorship