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FEATURED Q&A

What Has Petro Accomplished in His First 100 Days?



Colombian President Gustavo Petro this week marks 100 days in office. // File Photo: Facebook Page of Gustavo Petro.

Q Colombian President Gustavo Petro this week marks his 100th day in office. A leftist and former guerrilla, Petro assumed the country's presidency championing social justice with pledges to implement a "total" peace and end oil exploration in a bid to promote Colombia's green energy transition. However, the government has already lowered revenue estimates for its flagship tax reform and is considering reversing its proposed ban on new oil contracts to secure fiscal stability. How well has Petro led the country over the past 100 days, and what have been his main accomplishments so far? What factors have constrained the implementation of his political agenda? What are the main challenges ahead?

A Martha Maya Calle, senior associate and director of Latin American projects at the Institute for Integrated Transitions: "Gustavo Petro's presidency began filled with unprecedented symbolic gestures and high expectations for change among communities and groups traditionally excluded from political participation. That, together with statements from government officials on issues such as health, tax, pension and agrarian reforms, clean energy, land restitution and peace policy, have turned his first 100 days into something of a roller coaster. With limited clarity on how and when all of this can be done, it begs the question of whether there is a road map or a plan to execute. As with all preceding governments, Petro's administration faces the challenge of guaranteeing state presence and satisfying basic needs for those communities most affected by conflict and historically neglected by the state. While these communities now have higher expectations as they

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TODAY'S NEWS

POLITICAL

Haitian Prime Minister Fires Top Cabinet Members

Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry fired his justice minister, interior minister and government commissioner. Henry will reportedly take over as interior minister while remaining prime minister.

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ECONOMIC

Cuba Halves Growth Estimate for Next Year to 2%

Cuba on Monday cut its growth estimate for next year in half to 2 percent as it continues struggling with a battered economy and low rates of tourism.

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POLITICAL

Mexican President Dismisses Protests Against Proposed Election Reforms

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador on Monday said protesters who took to the streets against his proposed election reforms did so in favor of corruption and racism.

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López Obrador // File Photo: mexican Government.

POLITICAL NEWS

Protesters ‘In Favor of Corruption’: López Obrador

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador on Monday dismissed protests that happened on Sunday against his proposed electoral reforms, saying that demonstrators marched in cities across the country in favor of corruption and discrimination, the Associated Press reported. “They did it in favor of the privileges they had before the government I represent,” López Obrador told reporters. “They did it in favor of corruption. They did it in favor of racism, in favor of classism and discrimination,” he added. Organizers have said the demonstrations in more than two dozen cities across Mexico drew some 200,000 protesters, though López Obrador estimated that they drew 50,000 to 60,000. He said the demonstrators used his electoral reform proposal as an “excuse” to take to the streets, adding that they “are against the transformation that is taking place in this country.” Under the proposed reforms, the National Electoral Institute, or INE, would be replaced with a new agency whose members would be selected by voters from a list that the president, Congress and Supreme Court chooses. They would also reduce the number of legislators in Congress. Critics of the changes say López Obrador’s party could use them to assert more control over electoral authorities, though the president says they would strengthen the country’s democracy. The reforms would require a constitutional amendment that would need the support of two-thirds of Congress, Agence France-Presse reported.

Haitian Prime Minister Fires Top Cabinet Members

Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry fired the country’s justice minister, interior minister and its government commissioner, the Associated

Press reported Monday. The justice minister, Berto Dorcé, fired Government Commissioner Jacques Lafontant on orders from Henry before he himself was fired days later, along with Interior Minister Liszt Quitel, the AP reported, citing documents that it had obtained. Henry did not say why the officials were ousted, and the wire service was unable to reach his spokesman for comment. Henry will take over as interior minister while remaining prime minister, and Emmelie Prophète Milcé will take over as justice minister, the AP reported. Milcé will now be Haiti’s fifth justice minister in just two years. The firings followed U.S. announcements in recent weeks that it was revoking the visas of current and former Haitian officials who are involved with gangs in the country. This month, the U.S. Treasury sanctioned Haitian Senate President Joseph Lambert and former Senator Youri Latortue, who were accused of abusing their positions in order to smuggle drugs alongside gang members, the AP reported. “The Potemkin Village-like character of the current Ariel Henry interim regime has only emboldened gangs into quasi-politicized networks—more extortion and even less governance,” Georges Fauriol, fellow at the Caribbean Policy Consortium and senior associate at the Center for Strategic & International Studies, told the Advisor in a [Q&A](#) published May 17.

ECONOMIC NEWS

Cuba Halves Growth Estimate for Next Year to 2 Percent

Cuba cut its growth forecast for 2023 in half as it continues to struggle with a battered economy and low rates of tourism, Antonio Carriarte, president of the chamber of commerce said on Monday, Reuters reported. The Caribbean nation is now expected to grow by 2 percent, down from a previous 4 percent estimate. The country fully reopened its tourism sector in November of last year, a crucial industry to its economy. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic,

NEWS BRIEFS

Cuba, U.S. to Hold Migration Talks Today

Cuba and the United States will engage in a second round of migration talks today in Havana, officials said on Monday, Reuters reported. A record-number of Cuban immigrants are seeking to enter the United States, fleeing the island’s ailing economy. The talks first resumed in April, after a four-year hiatus under former U.S. President Donald Trump. Today’s discussion will aim to address underlying issues, according to Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernández de Cossio.

Boric Sees Approval Ratings Rise Following Proposed Pension Reform

Chilean President Gabriel Boric’s approval rating rose for the first time in two months, after his proposed pension reforms were sent to Congress, a poll by Cadem released on Sunday revealed, Reuters reported. The president’s approval ratings increased by 8 percentage points to 33 percent, and his disapproval rate fell by 11 percentage points to 58 percent. Boric is seeking to replace Chile’s controversial Pension Fund Administrators (AFP), with a new private-public social security system.

Nu Holdings Posts 171% Growth in Revenue for Third Quarter

Brazil’s Nu Holdings, the holding company of digital bank Nubank, on Monday posted record revenues of \$1.3 billion, a 171 percent increase as compared to the same quarter last year. Nu Holdings said it posted net profit of \$7.8 million for the quarter and added that its customer base grew 46 percent year-on-year to more than 70 million. “We continue to launch and cross sell best-in-class products, while keeping a low-cost tech platform with low cost of funding and a widening profit margin,” founder and CEO David Vélez said in a statement.

Cuba saw some four million visitors a year, and the sector represented around 10 percent of its gross domestic product, Bloomberg News reported. Last month, however, the government said it expected about 1.7 million tourists this year, a significant drop from pre-pandemic levels, and short of the 2.5 million goal, Reuters reported. The country is grappling with recurring power blackouts and public transportation issues, as well as a scarcity of necessities such as food and medicine, while the effects of U.S. sanctions are further slowing the island's economic recovery. Cuba's crisis has precipitated record-rates of emigration. The United States' "strategy to deter foreign investors from Cuba, identify and eliminate Cuban revenues and block the island's access to international markets and trade," Helen Yaffe, a senior lecturer in economic and social history at the University of Glasgow told the Advisor in a [Q&A](#) published on Oct. 17, adding that, "inevitably, this daily hardship has resulted in soaring emigration."

BUSINESS NEWS

Uruguay's DLocal Posts Third-Quarter Profit of \$32.3 Million

Uruguay-based payments firm DLocal on Monday posted net profit of \$32.5 million for the third quarter, a 64 percent increase as compared to the same quarter last year, the company said in a statement. DLocal said its revenue in the quarter rose 63 percent year-on-year to \$111.9 million. Revenue beat an estimate of \$110.1 million from Refinitiv, Reuters reported. The company reported net income of 10 cents per share, which missed the average estimate of 11 cents per share of three analysts surveyed by Zacks Investment research, the Associated Press reported. DLocal said it had solid revenue growth from both existing and new customers in the third quarter, Reuters reported. The company's adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, or EBITDA, rose 58 percent year-on-year to

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are part of this government's constituency, there is still a deep rupture between communities and government institutions that needs to be resolved. Meanwhile, those in government are now undergoing a transition from being civil society leaders and activists to becoming government officials who must act on behalf of the state. In terms of peace, Petro's 'Total Peace' policy has been at the center of social and political debates in the first 100 days. The policy is grounded on what he describes as a 'perpetual peace' where negotiations are conducted with all types of armed groups, empowering communities through their experience in humanitarian agreements. While the National Liberation Army (ELN) peace process might resume soon, Congress is set to discuss the conditions on how to negotiate with ordinary criminal groups imminently. As such, defining the role of the armed forces, the sequence of the 'Total Peace' elements, and the different approaches to illicit drugs, will be critical in addressing the current situation of violence that threatens the lives of numerous communities across the country."

A **Yohir Akerman, journalist at El Espectador:** "Big announcements and few results have marked the first 100 days of Gustavo Petro's government. It is one of the presidencies that has generated the most illusion among Colombians in recent history, by campaign announcements and by being the country's first leftist government. However, it is also one of the governments that has generated the most rapid disillusionment among its followers by the lack of concrete achievements on its social agenda and the demonstration of ignorance in the exercise of governance. President Petro and his cabi-

\$41.62 million, beating an estimate from Refinitiv of \$37.41 million, the wire service reported. "Growth has been supported by ... our business strength of continuous diversification across verticals, regions, and products," DLocal's chief

net in many ways continue to behave like the opposition party, rather than the ones who are holding the reins of the administration. And the lack of coordination between their ministries, as well as a number of contradictory and opposing messages from their heads on issues such as energy exploration

“Let's hope that the following months will pave the way for the maturation of this government...”

— Yohir Akerman

and environmental issues have generated social anxiety, a lack of stability and lack of guarantees for certain sectors, such as entrepreneurship in the country. Finally, two important elements have marked his discourse and legislative priorities. Tax reform and the 'total peace' project have been evidence, on the one hand, of his improvisation in the announcements and, on the other, of acting like all previous governments that ended up negotiating with the darkest sectors of the policy to achieve their goal. This government presented itself as the option of change and of the need for a progressive left to do politics differently. But the change has been very small in structural matters where society expects more than announcements and, on the contrary, there have been many variations on issues where the country needs greater economic stability and legal certainty. Let's hope that the following months will pave the way for the maturation of this government to one of greater structure, with more results and fewer announcements."

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executive officer, Sebastián Kanovich, said in a statement. DLocal, which was founded in 2016, is listed on the Nasdaq stock exchange and in 2020 became Uruguay's first "unicorn," a start-up valued at more than \$1 billion.

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A **Miguel Ángel Herrera Zgaib, associate professor in the Department of Political Science at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia:** “Gustavo Petro and Francia Márquez summarize well the historic triumph of the opposition in Colombia after almost uninterrupted bipartisan government built from the defeat of the government of the Democratic Societies and General José María Melo in 1854. The proposal of the Historical Pact together with five leftist and democratic currents with the intention of advancing the provisions of article 13 of the Constitution, to promote that equality is real and effective in social terms. This is a premise without which no sub-alternative democracy is viable, that is, a democracy that differs from the democratic representation that is hegemonic in most of the capitalist world. In the first 100 days, through the Broad Front, which has its roots in Uruguay, the opposition-made government wanted to disarticulate the dominant bloc, separating forces of the right from the hard core of the reaction. It did so in part, by passing the tax reform and the law of public order, which

enables presidents to advance the ambitious goal of ‘total peace.’ In this regard, there are impediments from insurgencies, such as the ELN, the dissidents or the New Marquetalia, and the armed groups of common criminals, headed by the Gulf clan. However, the government attained 20 billion pesos (\$4.18 mil-

“Progress will require a large social mobilization.”
– Miguel Ángel Herrera Zgaib

lion) for the first year. To that are added 26 billion pesos of Ecopetrol profits. With this revenue, the aim is to reach 17 million poor people. At the same time, we committed to advancing the preservation of the Amazon, and to supporting the elderly. Progress will require a large social mobilization.”

The Advisor welcomes comments on its Q&A section. Readers can write editor Gene Kuleta at gkuleta@thedialogue.org.

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Advisor Video

Militarization in Mexico – A discussion of the Future of Security, Human Rights, and Civil-Military Relations

An Inter-American Dialogue Discussion with
Lisa Sánchez, Mexico United Against Crime (MUCA)
Santiago Aguirre, Center Prodh
Sara Velázquez, Center for Research and Teaching in Economics
Stephanie Brewer, Washington Office on Latin America

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