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REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COLOMBIAN REGULATIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS, 2025

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ABSTRACT

The present exercise sought to identify the main regulatory contributions to environmental issues in Colombia, and through these it was possible to carry out a review regarding their effectiveness, in order to understand how these norms are applied and, indeed, how they help to generate a better awareness of care for the environment. This task aims to generate recommendations that can help establish in Colombia the foundations of a "new ethical environmental agreement" through principles that can be understood as basic conditions that should influence the way of life of individuals and their social coexistence. This qualitative exercise sought to contribute to the development of an ethical environmental proposal based on the idea of Aristotelian virtue that allows for the apprehension of a culture of care for the environment; an exercise that aimed to highlight the need to shift from an anthropocentric paradigm to a biocentric one, understood as a way to shape in the being of each citizen a consciousness that reinforces the superior, ethical, and natural value of existence, so that future generations can enjoy the environment in a peaceful and efficient manner, without this representing a detriment to life as we know it. Finally, it was concluded that although Colombia has an ecological constitution and a number of normative, jurisprudential contributions and even a block of constitutionality in environmental matters, the effectiveness regarding compliance with the current regulations is insufficient to identify an exercise of environmental awareness and care by citizens regarding the available goods and natural resources, thus reaffirming the need for an environmental ethical proposal that allows impacting from home, society, and education the mentality of people regarding the use and abuse of natural resources.

KEYWORDS: Care, Awareness, Effectiveness, Ethics, Environment, Regulations, And Virtue.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of environment has been defined according to the UNDP* (2010) as follows:

The word environment is most commonly used in reference to the "natural" environment, or the sum of all the living and abiotic components that surround an organism, or group of organisms. The natural environment comprises physical components, such as air, temperature, relief, soils and bodies of water as well as living components, plants, animals and microorganisms. In contrast to the "natural environment," there is also the "built environment," which comprises all man-made elements and processes. (p. 2)

The environment must be considered to be the natural and physical environment that sustains life as we know it, and therefore, through human action, not only its protection and care can be considered, but also its neglect and destruction.

In this sense, it is not only necessary to direct efforts to understand the way in which we must act in relation to the preservation, protection and care of it, but it is also an urgency that allows us to foresee some of the main consequences that are currently being suffered, such as the contamination of water sources, the lack of access to drinking water, health problems that affect health due to the emergence of epidemics, the degradation of coral reefs, shortages of basic food, heat waves, air pollution, among others, all of them with great human influence due to a lack of greater awareness and ethical action.

Under the concept of environmental awareness, the United Nations Organization, through the Environment Program (hereinafter UNEP), has developed a guide for Latin America and the Caribbean aimed at the care and preservation of the environment. In this regard, it has been mentioned that this environmental education is conceived as:

It is an ongoing process in which individuals and communities become aware of their environment and learn the knowledge, values, skills, experience, and determination that enables them to act, individually and collectively, in solving present and future environmental problems (UNEP, 2023, p. 3)

Next, it can be deduced from the above that one of the strong tasks in environmental matters not only in Colombia but worldwide consists of the adequate training of future generations. Training oriented through ethical attitudes that allow the promotion and apprehension of principles, values, knowledge

and experiences, through which awareness can be strengthened for the care of the natural environment, resources and biodiversity (*biological and ecological*) found in the different ecosystems.

From this perspective, it is essential to mention that the formation of awareness for the care of the environment must be linked to the understanding and application not only of philosophical principles such as *human dignity, well-being, planning, precaution, prevention, conservation, reparation and responsibility* that on a day-to-day basis serve as an example to improve the relationship with the natural environment, so they highlight an alternative in the ethical training of the person and at the same time serve as a basis for an environmental ethical proposal, but also of the knowledge, respect and application of current regulations, which in environmental matters for the Colombian case is very broad.

Well, some of the most relevant philosophical contributions found in the constitution, in the block of constitutionality and at the regulatory level in Colombia in relation to the environment, are: *awareness and conservation, care and well-being, equality and participation, general interest and service (diakonia), social justice (diké), equity, responsibility, solidarity, coexistence (koinonia), sustainability and sustainability.*

Below, a journey is presented that helps to identify how in Colombia there is a great constitutional and normative support that, related to international treaties, serve as a basis to identify the importance of caring for the environment, but that in the face of effectiveness generates questions, so this exercise will allow to review the way in which said regulations are complied with and above all, citizen awareness around the protection of the environment as a common home.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this exercise is ascribed to the qualitative approach. To develop the research proposal, it will seek to identify the main regulatory contributions in environmental matters in Colombia, and then review their effectiveness with respect to the way in which these regulations are applied and, in effect, serve to generate a better awareness of care for the environment, so that the bases of a "new environmental ethical agreement" can be established through principles that can be understood as basic conditions that must have an impact in people's way of life and in their social coexistence.

* The acronym UNDP refers to the United Nations Development Program, which was created through the merger of the United Nations Expanded Technical Assistance Program, which was

created in 1949 and through the United Nations Special Fund, which was established in 1959.

2.1. Methodological Design Used In The Research

The methodological design that is intended to be implemented in the research process begins through the search and eventual review of the literature from primary and secondary sources, with which the exploration of the main concepts that are related to the main topic of study can be configured, such as *care, conscience, ethics, environment and virtue*. etc.

In this sense, a qualitative research approach is suggested that, through the hermeneutical method supported by Gadamer,¹ allows us to understand what are the normative foundations that exist in Colombia in environmental matters in order to review their current effectiveness.

However, the exercise involved in reviewing the literature is structured in the following steps:

A. Identification of the need for revision: the literature related to the subject of environmental care has been growing, due to the increasing interest in understanding its usefulness, importance and the relationship it has with the different areas of knowledge.

Likewise, there is an interest that not only projects the deepening of the subject at the national and international level, but also from the binding force of the norms, jurisprudence and international treaties and conventions presented by organizations that seek to make contributions aimed at the preservation and care of the environment for the preservation of life as we know it.

Next, bearing in mind that there are currently multiple doctrinal elements that help to deepen the importance of proposing this research proposal, the recommendation presented by Petticrew and Roberts (2006) is accepted, through which "it is necessary to have the topic and the research questions clearly defined, to avoid the risk that the review becomes unmanageable". therefore, the structure of the search for information is presented based on the following questions:

- What constitutional foundations in environmental matters serve as a basis for the exercise?
- What regulations does Colombia have in force in environmental matters?
- Is the current regulations in Colombia

considered effective with respect to the formation of an environmental culture that allows the care and respect of natural resources?

B. Definition of bibliographic search strategies: the sources of information that supported this research were defined by incorporating primary sources of information such as the official website of the Senate of the Republic of Colombia where the official gazettes and current regulations are available, as well as the website of the Constitutional Court of Colombia. International sources of information indexed in Scopus were also defined, among which are: Analytic Philosophy, Ancient Philosophy, Behavior and Philosophy, Biology and Philosophy, Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science, British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy (CRISPP), Cultura. International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology, Epistemology and Philosophy of Science, Aristotle Semitic-Latinus, Studia Neoaristotelica, Studies in Environmental Science, Sustainable Environment Research, The National Environmental Journal, Journal of Earth Sciences and Environment, among others.

C. Evaluation and analysis of the selected sources of information: taking into account the selected primary and secondary sources of information, the normative and doctrinal contributions that are directly related to the questions defined in the initial phase were explored. In this way, the categories that were defined to divide the information were: *care, awareness, effectiveness, ethics, environment, Colombian regulations and virtue*. Finally, it should be mentioned that through the steps described above, it has been intended to comply with the structure of the thematic review and, therefore, through the questions and categories presented, they serve as guidance for the presentation and argumentation of the expected results.

2.2. Frame Of Reference

Undoubtedly, one of the main references in the field of environmental preservation is found in the international contributions that are constantly issued by international organizations such as the UN, UNESCO, WWF, GREENPEACE, IUCN, WRI,

called this situation the hermeneutical circle: we understand only what we already know; we perceive only what we put in. This seems inadmissible if measured with the criterion of knowledge of the natural sciences; but only in this way is historical understanding possible. It is not a question, according to Heidegger, of avoiding this circle, but of using it correctly." (Gadamer, 1998, p. 40)

¹ This hermeneutical method conforms to the so-called *hermeneutical circle*, necessary in this process of research as an element that allows us to understand history combined with real life, since, as Gadamer states: "Like real life, history interests us only when it refers to our previous judgment about things, men and times. Any understanding of something significant presupposes that we bring a set of such prejudices. Heidegger

WNO, etc. It is not only a matter of understanding what these organizations do but, in particular, what are the contributions they make in environmental matters in order to seek to understand the way in which they can be useful for the promotion of an environmental ethic, which serves not only to promote an awareness of care worldwide, but also serves in Colombia as an essential foundation for the civic and ethical training of present and future generations, who currently face environmental problems derived from abuse and the unwillingness to take actions to guarantee its responsibility and

sustainability.

However, one of the first organizations that has generated contributions in environmental matters has been the United Nations (UN), which has at least seven (7) current initiatives that tend to contribute to generating a greater awareness of care and well-being. This organization highlights initiatives such as: *climate change, environmental protection, protection of the ozone layer, supply of drinking water, fight against fish depletion and the prohibition of toxic chemicals, etc.*

The following table further illustrates these contributions, namely:

Table 1: Key UN Environmental Contributions.

Finding a global solution to the problem of climate change Helping countries tackle climate change	"Climate change is a global problem that requires a global solution. The United Nations has played a leading role in assessing the scientific evidence and forging a political solution. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which includes 2,000 leading scientists in the field of climate change, issues a general scientific assessment every five to six years." (UN, 2024). "The United Nations helps developing countries respond to the challenge posed by global climate change. Thirty-eight United Nations agencies have forged an alliance to address the problem in a comprehensive manner" (UN, 2024).
Protection of the environment	"The United Nations works to solve the problems of the global environment. As an international forum for consensus-building and negotiation of agreements, the United Nations addresses global problems such as climate change, ozone depletion, toxic waste, loss of forests and species, and pollution of the atmosphere and water" (UN, 2024).
Protection of the ozone layer	"The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) have played a decisive role in publicizing the damage caused to the Earth's ozone layer" (UN, 2024).
Drinking water supply	"During the first United Nations decade dedicated to water (1981-1990), more than one billion people managed to have access to drinking water for the first time in their lives" (UN, 2024).
Combating the depletion of fish stocks	"80% of the world's major commercial fish stocks have been exploited to the point of reaching, and even exceeding, their sustainable upper limit" (UN, 2024).
Prohibition of toxic chemicals	"The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants aims to rid the world of some of the most dangerous chemicals ever created. Ratified by 178 countries, this Convention outlaws the use of 25 hazardous pesticides and industrial chemicals that can kill, cause damage to the nervous and immune systems, cause cancer and disorders in the reproductive system of people and interfere with the development of the child" (UN, 2024).

Source: Authors' Elaboration Based On The Official UN Website (2024).

These environmental efforts led by the UN are supported by a set of organizations that this same organization leads and that, in turn, are subdivided into themes, specialties and agendas.

Of these organizations, the following stand out:

- The Commission on Sustainable Development (*a subsidiary of ECOSOC with primary responsibility for environmental issues. meets annually and reports to the Economic and Social Council*).
- The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (*convenes annual meetings at the ministerial level during the meetings of the Economic and Social Council, and every four years at the level of Heads of State during the General Assembly*)
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (*a specialized expert body that reviews scientific research and reports to policymakers. It is established jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World*

Meteorological Organization (WMO).

- The United Nations Forum on Forests (*a subsidiary of ECOSOC*) assumed responsibility for the work of the two predecessor agencies listed below. It meets annually and reports to the Economic and Social Council). (UN, 2024).

In this order of ideas, organizations such as UNESCO (United Nations Cultural, Scientific and Educational Organization) and UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) are part of the UN and also generate great contributions in environmental matters. In the case of UNESCO, it should be remembered that this organization:

(...), supports the study and observation of biodiversity in oceans, drylands, mountains, wetlands and agricultural systems, as well as remote sensing in support of UNESCO World Heritage sites, biosphere reserves and Global Geoparks and works in the field of biotechnology and related capacity-building. (UNESCO, 2024)

This is made possible thanks to a process of training, education and awareness with different communities worldwide.

However, in relation to UNEP, it must be recognized that this organization's mission is as follows:

UNEP's work focuses on helping countries transition to low-carbon and resource-efficient economies, strengthening governance and environmental laws, safeguarding ecosystems, and providing evidence-based data to inform policy decisions. Through cutting-edge science, coordination and advocacy, UNEP supports its 193 Member States to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and live in harmony with nature. (UNEP, 2024)

In addition to the above, it cannot be overlooked that

in 2015 the UN signed a new sustainable development agenda and that under the guidance of strict, planned and articulated compliance with the purposes presented by each sustainable development goal, it is intended that in fifteen (15) years the fruits of this work can begin to be harvested.

Of these seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed by the UN, eight of them stand out that are linked to the care and protection of the environment, namely: 2 (zero hunger), 6 (clean water and sanitation), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible production and consumption), 13 (climate action), 14 (underwater life) and 15 (life of terrestrial ecosystems). In fact, the following image is presented:



Image 1: Eight Sdgs Linked To Environmental Care.

Source: ECLAC Library (2024).

In Colombia, the seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (*hereinafter* SDGs) defined by the UN in 2015 have been adopted, therefore, through the National Planning Department (DNP) and through the website (<https://ods.dnp.gov.co/>) the Government of Colombia presents the main advances for the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda in relation to the way in which these objectives are made visible.

Indeed, there is evidence of a clear commitment on the part of the National Government and its Territorial Entities to incorporate these objectives in

the context of a participatory democracy and, therefore, with respect to the achievement of a general interest and well-being that increasingly tends to the quality of life of its inhabitants.

The foregoing allows us to deduce that it is not only through the set of constitutional and regulatory provisions on environmental matters that this universal right can be effectively protected, but especially through the apprehension and/or experience of these in daily life, through an exercise of awareness and care.

In this sense, the eight (8) SDGs that stand out in

relation to the care of the environment, are identified by the following criteria:

- **Zero hunger (2).** This objective is measured through five (5) indicators, of which the sixth is concerned, which deals with the "participation of agricultural production that meets green growth criteria". (DNP, 2025)

Specifically, for the year 2018, one of the conclusions produced by the National Council for Economic and Social Policy (CONPES 3934, 2018), expressed the urgency and need to build a public policy in this direction, due to the low achievements obtained in this indicator. There it was said in this regard that:

(...), in light of the great challenges involved in consolidating a transition towards green growth and given that the implementation period of the NDP is four years, it is necessary to adopt a policy that leverages this model of long-term economic growth. (CONPES 3934 of 2018, p. 21).

This situation is in line not only with the political will of the country, but also with other factors such as the qualification of the sector and, with it, of the peasants, access to efficient technology, credits, opportunity to open new businesses, security, pedagogy in the use and care of resources, among others.

Well, considering that this same document refers to green growth as (...), "those growth trajectories that guarantee the economic and social well-being of the population in the long term, ensuring the conservation of natural capital and climate security" (CONPES 3934 of 2018, p. 12), it should be considered that although the Colombian State is heading towards seeking to contribute to this objective, it is still far from achieving it, especially because it must strengthen the change of culture in entrepreneurs/peasants who are dedicated to agriculture or who carry out activities that indirectly touch on it, since by 2018 "only 305 companies have been consolidated in the country for the development of bioinnovative products, which represents only 0.5% of companies in sectors with potential for the bioeconomy" (CONPES 3934 of 2018, p. 30).

This culture, which must be consolidated, must articulate ethical elements that allow the environment to be seen not as a context of well-being and exploitation, but rather as a reflection on sustainability, the circular economy and, above all, the concept of care for the common home, focused on the application of principles such as responsibility, well-being, protection, conservation, among others.

- **Clean water and sanitation (6).** In Colombia, this objective is identified through nine (9)

indicators that are aimed at "guaranteeing the availability of water and its sustainable management and sanitation for all". (DNP, 2025).

Regarding this objective, it should be noted that Colombia currently has a very big challenge in terms of access to drinking water, since by 2024 the Commission for the Regulation of Drinking Water and Sanitation stated that:

(...), about 29% of the population in Colombia does not have access to safe drinking water. This means, in round figures, that 13.8 million users do not have access to this vital service, with the implications it has for health, overcoming poverty and quality of life. (CRA, 2024)

This situation affects people's quality of life and, therefore, generates a threat to their very existence, in the understanding that water is considered an essential element to guarantee subsistence, which is why immediate and effective attention is required from the Colombian State in order to seek to consolidate strategies that can contribute to treating wastewater.

Extend the aqueduct service, construction of sewers, distribution of drinking water, and above all, seek the training of the peasantry that develops agricultural work in the sense of generating sustainable and environmentally friendly strategies, since according to the UN (2023), in relation to this objective, it should be considered that:

Agriculture and untreated wastewater are the main threats to water quality, and nitrogen and phosphorus measurements often fall short of targets. Greater efforts are needed to improve agricultural practices and wastewater treatment, especially in regions with high population growth. (p. 24)

It should be noted that efficient management with compliance with the green growth indicator derived from Goal two (2) "zero hunger" in relation to the articulated work for the improvement of agriculture, would produce results that contribute to Goal six (6) "clean water and sanitation", from which it is deduced the importance of seeking strategies that favor a comprehensive intervention, not only by the State, but also as a commitment of nationals.

- **Affordable and non-polluting energy (7).** To meet this objective, there are four (4) indicators. Indeed, the aim is to "guarantee access to affordable, safe, sustainable and modern energy". (DNP, 2025).

In relation to electricity coverage, it is observed that from 2015 (96.9) to 2018 (97.2) there was an increase in coverage of 0.3% (DNP, 2024) and in this same sense, not only is this coverage oriented with

respect to the increase in installed capacity, but it is also necessary to think about clean energies that do not affect the environment and, that result in a sustainable alternative, and in addition to this, the awareness exercise that must be carried out with communities that still use burning wood in daily uses, burning garbage, among others.

In this regard, the UN (2023) indicated that: "traditional uses of biomass, such as burning wood in open stoves or fireplaces, still accounted for more than a third of total renewable energy use in 2020." (p. 27)

In this regard, Colombia has been promoting investment strategies in the area of energy transition, a situation that involves the investment of large capital oriented to the gas sector, clean hydrogen, commitment to decarbonization, solar energy, wind energy, thermal energy, among others.

The great commitment for Colombia is not only accentuated in the awareness that people may have regarding the use of new energies or access to new equipment or technologies, but especially, in the investment capacity that the state itself can sustain for the implementation of these.

- **Sustainable cities and communities (11).** This objective has thirteen (13) indicators. It aims to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (DNP, 2025).

It is about seeking to minimize gaps in terms of access to housing and in turn improve the physical infrastructure that guarantees access to transportation, inclusive urbanization, sustainable and resilient construction, among other factors.

In this way, this objective directly touches on access to housing and basic public services, with accessibility to transport, with citizen participation, with the management and protection of the environment, with citizen safety and, above all, with urban planning. In fact, it is a greater challenge, since the same pollution of the environment is mainly generated in large cities, a situation that requires, in addition to economic investments, the promotion of ethical and civic attitudes that allow generating a change in the culture of consumption by citizens, seeking to generate strategies that allow a better integration of values and principles that are linked to the knowledge of the rules, allow not only their experience but also the consolidation of a way of life more aware of the care of resources, including, for example: *air, water*, among others.

With the modernization of transport systems and the consolidation of policies for the construction of social interest housing and priority interest housing, Colombia contributes to the achievement of this

objective, however, citizen oversight is of vital importance when it comes to shaping a follow-up to this type of initiative, a situation that makes citizen participation visible and tends to the consolidation of the so-called general constitutional interest.

- **Responsible production and consumption (12).** This objective is measured through six (6) indicators and is aimed at "guaranteeing sustainable consumption and production patterns" (DNP, 2025).

Through this objective, sustainable development is highlighted through the implementation of green businesses, but also the monitoring of the generation of waste or waste treated and/or reincorporated back into production.

As for the results that Colombia presents on this objective, significant progress is inferred, however, it is essential to join forces on the part of companies, the State and citizens, with respect to seeking strategies that allow not only to improve production techniques through the incorporation of increasingly environmentally friendly materials, but also to improve production techniques. but also to consolidate an awareness of recycling at the citizen level, since many times the ignorance of this type of regulatory initiatives such as Law 1672 of 2013 (*which establishes the guidelines for the adoption of a public policy for the comprehensive management of waste electrical and electronic equipment*), Law 2232 of 2022 (*which establishes measures aimed at the gradual reduction of production and consumption of certain single-use plastic products*), and Resolution 2184 of 2019 (*which establishes the white, black and green color code for the separation of waste at the source*), among others, constitute one of the most relevant inputs that, in terms of consumption and final disposal of waste, serves to improve the culture of the use of elements that can re-enter the production cycle through circular economy methods.

- **Climate action (13).** Its measurement is configured through seven (7) indicators and its purpose is to "adopt urgent measures to combat climate change and its effects" (DNP, 2025).

Through the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the government of Colombia has presented a bill that seeks to "create minimum measures in the short, medium and long term that allow the country to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050; that is, that Colombia can offset its greenhouse gas emissions" (MINAMBIENTE, 2025).

In this way, it is observed that currently the indicators on the reduction of deforestation, the reduction of black carbon, among others, are not

significant in relation to the goals that have been set since the adoption of the SDGs.

In this sense, to advance in the achievement of achievements aimed at combating climate change, they must integrate a series of sectors such as "transport, environment and sustainable development, mines and energy, housing, city and territory, agriculture, fisheries and rural development, and commerce, industry and tourism" (MINAMBIENTE, 2025), for this reason, it should not be agreed that it is not only through the public policies managed by the government that results can be achieved favorable in terms of climate resilience, but it is hand in hand with the aforementioned sectors that effective strategies must be generated to achieve these goals.

- **Underwater life (14).** This objective is measured through two (2) indicators and its purpose is to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development". (DNP, 2025).

With this objective, the government of Colombia has managed to improve the protection of marine hectares significantly, seeking to reduce pollution, protect ecosystems, regulate fishing exploitation more efficiently, increase investment in scientific knowledge, technology and research for the better preservation of the oceans, support artisanal fishing boats, among others.

Although the importance of caring for the marine ecosystem can be deduced from this objective, it is inferred that it is relevant for the State to seek strategies that allow improving the apprehension of the regulations that are related to this aspect, especially through access to knowledge, technology and research for these communities, not only because they are so far from the central State, but also because many times the resources that are required do not reach this destination due to the attention of other needs that the communities have.

Here it is of vital importance to promote a culture of care and protection with respect to marine resources and ecosystem, since their experience could have a positive impact not only on communities but also on the sustainability of these and future generations.

- **Life on land (15).** This objective is measured through eight (8) indicators, which are aimed at "sustainably managing forests, combating desertification, halting and reversing land degradation and halting the loss of biological diversity" (DNP, 2025).

In this objective, Colombia has been developing a management that tends to protect terrestrial

ecosystems, gradually improving their preservation through the so-called "protected areas", however, today it finds great remains such as the consolidation of efforts to deal with hunting and trafficking of protected species. protecting biodiversity and natural habitats, sustainably managing forests, among others.

In relation to this goal, the UN (2023) has mentioned that:

Halting and reversing biodiversity loss requires a comprehensive approach that combines regulatory and voluntary measures, as well as mobilizing and aligning biodiversity finance. Economic instruments play a crucial role in incentivising the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and can be used to mobilise funds and integrate biodiversity across sectors. (p. 42)

The elements that make up this objective involve strategic efforts by the State, citizens and, especially, companies, since in an articulated exercise between these institutions is that environmentally friendly actions can be generated with respect to the efficient conservation of the terrestrial ecosystem, which manages to integrate responsible production and consumption and, in turn, the promotion of a culture of protection and care for the environment and its resources.

However, once these eight (8) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been reviewed, it must be noted that Colombia has a great challenge in relation to the fulfillment of the goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda, especially in terms of care, preservation and protection of the environment. As could be reviewed in these objectives mentioned above, significant progress is identified and at the same time concerns are identified regarding the effective non-fulfillment of goals just five years after their final fulfillment.

This serves as a context to manifest the importance of building an environmental ethical proposal that, based on Aristotelian virtue, allows to contribute to improving the civic awareness of people in different contexts such as social, business and governmental, with projection not only in the political, economic, cultural, environmental sector, but also in the educational sector.

Since through ethical training it is possible to improve with regard to the apprehension of values, principles and norms that are of interest to achieve the general interest and the materialization of the common good that after being a simple action must constitute a way of life. It is recalled that:

(...), the function of man is a certain life, and this is an activity of the soul and of reasonable actions, and

that of the good man these same things well and exquisitely, and each one is well performed according to the right virtue, and if the virtues are several, according to the best and most perfect, and also in a whole life*. (Aristotle, EN., LI 1098a 10-15).

It should be noted that this way of life that conforms to good and virtue, under the guidance of an exercise of care and environmental awareness, by tending to understand and contribute to the goals set by these eight (8) objectives, favors dignified living conditions, so it is imperative to allude to the protection of the environment as an essential element to achieve these objectives efficiently and effectively. **In this way, it should be mentioned that there are other institutions linked to the UN so that each State with its agents can achieve these purposes. These entities are, for example:**

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)
- The OECD (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)
- The World Bank and the World Meteorological Organization (UN, 2024).

Finally, organizations such as WWF, GREENPEACE, IUCN, WRI, WNO and GEF generate great contributions in environmental matters, which represents a significant contribution in terms of policies, guidelines and concrete actions for change that seek to ensure sustainability and a better environment for all.

The following table summarizes some of these contributions:

Table 2: Contributions From Other International Organizations In Environmental Matters.

WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature (1961 – Switzerland) – Present in Colombia
"It is the main nature conservation organization globally. Our actions are focused on six major objectives: species, forests, oceans, freshwater, food, and climate and energy. Our science-based work has a global reach. Our option involves being inspired by the relationship with nature based on traditional knowledge, forging alliances and multi-stakeholder platforms for collective action in defense of the territory, understanding the different identities and particularities of each corner of our biodiverse Colombia, grounding action based on rights, the voices of communities and nature." (WWF, 2024)
GREENPEACE (Vancouver, Canada, in 1971) – Present in Colombia
"It promotes the defense of human rights, defense and protection of animals, development education, research and teaching, education and the environment. We are an international environmental and pacifist organization, economically and politically independent , which does not accept donations or pressure from governments, political parties or companies. Our objective is to protect and defend the environment and peace , intervening in different parts of the planet where attacks against nature are committed. Greenpeace campaigns to stop climate change, protect biodiversity, end the use of nuclear energy and weapons, and promote peace." (GREENPEACE, 2024)
IUCN-International Union for Conservation of Nature (1948-Switzerland) – Colombia is present
"It is a unique Union of members made up of governmental and civil society organizations. With the expertise, resources and reach of its more than 1,400 member organizations and the contribution of more than 15,000 experts, IUCN is the global authority on the state of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it." (IUCN, 2024)
WRI - World Resources Institute (1982- Washington D.C) – It is present in Colombia
"It is a trusted partner for change, using research-based approaches, we work globally and in specific countries to meet people's essential needs; protect and restore nature; and stabilize the climate and build more resilient communities. Our goal is to fundamentally transform the way the world produces food, uses energy, and designs its cities to create a better future for all." (WRI, 2024).
WNO - World Conservation Organization (2012 – Benin) – It is not present in Colombia
It is dedicated to the protection of the environment at an international level. Its main focus is on energy efficiency, climate protection, sustainable development and sustainable energy supply. As a permanent platform, WNO seeks to build bridges between business interests as well as development and environmental protection while at the same time making the economic value of nature evident" (WNO, 2024)

Source: Authors' Elaboration Based On The Websites Of The Organizations Described

Thanks to these organizations, a verification of environmental conditions is carried out worldwide with respect to compliance with environmental guidelines and obligations. Likewise, these

organizations, which are recognized for being non-profit, also generate alternatives for environmental intervention in the different countries through interdisciplinary teams that contribute to improving

* And we lay down a man's work a certain life, and this the energy of the soul and deeds with words : but these things are of great importance to a man, and to each one is according to his own home. Virtue is constituted: if so, the human good of the soul becomes an action according to

virtue, and if the virtues are more numerous, according to the best and most perfect. (Aristóteles, EN., LII 1098a 10-15).

expectations regarding the care and protection of the natural environment as an essential element for human survival.

3. RESULTS

3.1. *Constitutional And Normative Contributions On The Protection Of The Environment In Colombia.*

Talking about the constitutional and normative assumptions that are found in Colombia in terms of environmental protection is a necessity for this exercise, because this approach will allow us to understand how the Colombian State considers the environment, that is, what is the legal treatment given to this assumption that outlines the sustainability of existence and life in conditions of dignity. Or, to identify whether at the social level the set of existing constitutional norms and precepts in environmental matters have managed to form an awareness of care in citizens.

First of all, it should be noted that at the constitutional level, in Colombia there are multiple contributions in environmental and natural resources matters, with the understanding that the Political Constitution of 1991 is conceived with the qualification of ecological.

In the words of the Constitutional Court, it is recalled that:

The Political Constitution of 1991 granted the environment the character of superior interest,

through a wide catalog of provisions that make up the so-called Ecological Constitution. The objective of this set of mandates is to ensure that human beings, as the foundation of the constitutional order, can live within a suitable and adequate environment that allows them to develop their existence in dignified conditions and with a higher quality of life. As for its legal categorization, it has been understood that the environment is a constitutional good that is expressed as a principle, collective right and right-duty, which provides the basic assumptions through which the relations of man and society with nature are reconciled, based on the specific mandate that appeals for its conservation and protection. (Judgment C-259, 2016)

The foregoing refers to the way in which a series of basic conditions essential for the development of life in conditions of dignity and well-being must be generated by the State, however, when considering the environment as a constitutional good, it is deduced that its use implies responsibilities, since it not only constitutes a right but also gives rise to duties that are oriented to conservation, care, prevention and protection*.

When reviewing the Political Constitution of 1991, a series of articles are found that account for the importance of the environment for the Colombian legal system. Because of this, these contributions are presented both in terms of the environment and natural resources, namely:

Table 3: Contributions Of The Political Constitution Of 1991 In Environmental Matters.

Article 8. It is the obligation of the State and of the people to protect the cultural and natural wealth of the Nation.
Article 64. It is the duty of the State to promote progressive access to land ownership for the peasantry and agricultural workers (...). The State recognizes the economic, social, cultural, political and environmental dimension of the peasantry, (...), and shall ensure the protection, respect and guarantee of their individual and collective rights, with the aim of achieving material equality (...), access to goods and rights such as (...), land, territory, a healthy environment, access to and exchange of seeds, natural resources and biological diversity, water, (...), the improvement of rural infrastructure, agricultural and business extension (...).
Article 79. Everyone has the right to enjoy a healthy environment. The law shall guarantee the participation of the community in decisions that may affect it. It is the duty of the State to protect the diversity and integrity of the environment, to conserve areas of special ecological importance and to promote education for the achievement of these ends.
Article 80. The State shall plan the management and use of natural resources to ensure their sustainable development, conservation, restoration, or replacement. In addition, it must prevent and control environmental deterioration factors, impose legal sanctions and demand reparation for the damage caused. It will also cooperate with other nations in the protection of ecosystems located in border areas.
Article 95. (...) The duties of the person and the citizen are: 8. To protect the country's cultural and natural resources and to ensure the conservation of a healthy environment (...).
Article 268. The Comptroller General (...), shall have the following attributes: (...). 7. To present to Congress an annual report on the state of natural resources and the environment.
Article 317. Only municipalities will be able to tax real estate. (...). The law shall allocate a percentage of these taxes, which may not exceed the average of the existing surcharges, to the entities in charge of the management and conservation of the environment and renewable natural resources, in accordance with the development plans of the municipalities (...).
Article 330. In accordance with the Constitution and the laws, the indigenous territories (...) shall exercise the following functions: (...). 5. To ensure the preservation of natural resources.

* Here are some of the principles that will be referred to in the second section of this exercise: *human dignity, well-being, conservation, prevention, etc.*

Article 331. The Autonomous Regional Corporation of the Rio Grande de la Magdalena is hereby created to be responsible for the recovery of navigation, port activity, the adaptation and conservation of land, the generation and distribution of energy, and the use and preservation of the environment, fish resources and other renewable natural resources.
Article 332. The State is the owner of the subsoil and of non-renewable natural resources, without prejudice to the rights acquired and perfected in accordance with pre-existing laws.
Article 334. The General Directorate of Economy will be in charge of the State. It will intervene, (...), in the exploitation of natural resources, the use of the land, in the production, distribution, use and consumption of goods (...), to rationalize the economy in order to achieve at the national and territorial level, within a framework of fiscal sustainability, the improvement of the quality of life of the inhabitants, (...), and the preservation of a healthy environment.
Article 360. The exploitation of a non-renewable natural resource shall give rise to an economic consideration in favour of the State in the form of a royalty, without prejudice to any other right or compensation that may be agreed. The law shall determine the conditions for the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources.

Source: Authors' Elaboration Based On The Political Constitution Of 1991.

In accordance with the above, it can be deduced that all these constitutional contributions that are configured in our political charter serve as a scenario for the protection of the environment, however, it is essential to question their effectiveness, because although there is a great foundation that serves to protect the general interest, it is worth asking: why are so many ecological and environmental effects identified in Colombia?

For the year 2018, the virtual edition of ELNUEVOSIGLO.COM indicated on the subject that:

The country is not spared from the critical state of ecosystems in all parts of the globe. (...), 10 worrying facts about what is happening in Colombia: Deforestation. 2. Soil desertification. 3. Glaciers. 4. Air pollution. 5. Loss of moorlands. 6. Animals in danger of extinction. 7. Erosion on the coasts. 8. Floodable territory. 9. Water scarcity. 10. Temperature anomalies. (Paragraph 4)

These problems continue to be a challenge for the country, in addition to them, attention must be paid to issues such as pollution from illegal mining, illicit crops, regulation of the use of plastics, energy transition, among others.

However, the way in which each of these superior mandates is being complied with must be reviewed because, as established by the Constitutional Court of Colombia, it is imperative for each citizen to recognize that:

(...), the protection of the environment is not subject in the Charter to an exclusively anthropocentric vision, since it is understood that as a superior interest that goes beyond the particular goods of each individual, its defense proceeds directly and autonomously, beyond the fact that in general its guarantee becomes a support for human life. In this sense, (...), it was noted that the Constitution addresses the environmental issue from an approach that involves ethical, economic and legal criteria: From the *ethical level*, a biocentric principle is built that considers man as part of nature, granting both values. From the *economic level*, the productive

system can no longer extract resources or produce waste unlimitedly, and must be subject to the social interest, the environment and the cultural heritage of the Nation; it also finds as limits the common good and the general direction in charge of the State (Articles 333 and 334). On the *legal level*, the law and the State must not only protect the dignity and freedom of man against other men, but also against the threat posed by the exploitation and depletion of natural resources; for which they must develop new values, norms, legal techniques and principles where the protection of collective values prevails over individual values. (Judgment C-259 of 2016)

In this way, and taking into account the constitutional contributions mentioned in this section, it must be recognized that in Colombia the environment is not only understood as a social or collective right, but is also identified as a principle that is related to human dignity, life and health, and in addition, from the consideration of the duties of the citizen established in Article 95 of the Constitution it is also assumed as a duty which, in the words of the Constitutional Court, serves in these three dimensions to provide "the basic assumptions through which the relations of man and society with nature are reconciled, based on the specific mandate that appeals for its conservation and protection" (Constitutional Court. Judgment C-259 of 2016).

In this regard, the doctrinal Ramírez (2015) mentions that:

Despite being considered the second country with the greatest biodiversity among the fourteen countries with the highest index and one of the richest in terms of water availability, it faces intense processes of environmental deterioration that affect the physicochemical quality of the environment. Some of these environmental problems are the degradation of forests and soil, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, overexploitation of renewable resources, water and air pollution, among others. The above scenarios are involved in the detriment of the quality of life of the surrounding human populations. (p. 2)

Bearing in mind this situation, it is recalled that Article 79 of the Constitution mandates a social right that serves as the foundation of well-being, namely:

Everyone has the right to enjoy a healthy environment. The law shall guarantee the participation of the community in decisions that may affect it. It is the duty of the State to protect the diversity and integrity of the environment, to conserve areas of special ecological importance and to promote education for the achievement of these ends. (National Constituent Assembly, 1991)

It should be noted that these problems currently persist, so it is suggested that the State has not been able to overcome this situation and this is because neither the promotion of environmental education by it nor the apprehension of ethical attitudes by citizens have favored a better result, which could undoubtedly benefit us as a country and, that without further ado it constitutes a breach of the duty expressed in Article 95, paragraph 8 of the Political Constitution of 1991: (...) "The duties of the person and the citizen are: 8. To protect the cultural and natural resources of the country and to ensure the conservation of a healthy environment." (National Constituent Assembly, 1991).

It can be said that in Colombia the anthropocentric paradigm predominates, so giving the environment the place it needs in our environment becomes an ideal somewhat distant from materializing, since under this gaze man is constituted as the center of reality and the rest revolves around him in order to satisfy his needs.

Hence, the prevailing view of the environment as a scenario that provides resources in an unlimited way and that never exhausts them, and in this sense, Colombia is not alien to this theory since even in terms of non-renewable resources, the Political Constitution of 1991, in correspondence with the provisions of Article 332 above, which states that the State is the owner of the subsoil and of the non-renewable resources. renewables, it is provided in Article 360 of the Constitution that:

The exploitation of a non-renewable natural resource shall give rise to an economic consideration in favour of the State in the form of a royalty, without prejudice to any other right or compensation that may be agreed. The law shall determine the conditions for the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources. (National Constituent Assembly, 1991)

This situation should help us understand the urgency of moving from the anthropocentric paradigm to the biocentric model understood as "A turning to history and historical consciousness to

know how, in human experience, the previous antinomies have been resolved so that people can actually live." (Schmidt, 2016, p. 49).

In fact, with respect to understanding whether at the social level the set of existing constitutional precepts on environmental matters has managed to form an awareness of care in citizens, it should be stated that these contributions serve as a guide to social and state behavior, but it is not conceived as sufficient, since in daily practice there is not only persistence of environmental effects but environmental education is very low. and this is supported by the report issued by the Comptroller General of the Republic of Colombia through the *Report on the State of Natural Resources and the Environment, 2023-2024 - hereinafter IERNA, 2024* - in the exercise of his functions and the provisions of Article 238 above, namely: "The Comptroller General (...), shall have the following attributes: (...). 7. Submit to Congress an annual report on the state of natural resources and the environment." (National Constituent Assembly, 1991).

This report then indicated that:

The fight against the degradation of páramo ecosystems in Colombia requires effective coordination between the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Regional and Sustainable Development Autonomous Corporations - CARDS, as well as the active participation of communities and other local actors to achieve sustainable results. It is essential that these entities continue to work together, with a view to reducing the loss of these ecosystems in the territories and continuing to promote environmental sustainability. (IERNA, 2024, p. 118)

Although there are a series of constitutional mandates that are conceived as imperative (*of mandatory compliance*), some phenomena such as the lack of presence of the State in the territories, its inefficiency in terms of the creation of public policies and efficient strategies for environmental care and protection, generate a lack of attention and, therefore, affect the effective guarantee of the duties that citizens must fulfill in relation to the environment.

Likewise, in the area of environmental education, the State has the duty to guarantee this social right, so difficulties are perceived in terms of compliance, since this same report reiterates that the importance of:

(...), strengthen governance, advance in the processes of awareness-raising, environmental education and guarantee the protection of the collective rights of communities and the right to a healthy environment, giving recognition of

community participation to the traditional inhabitants of the páramo, in search of the protection of their rights. (IERNA, 2024, p. 118)

But it is not a question of directing responsibility towards the State, individuals must also understand the need and urgency to take care of the environment, not only as a constitutional and normative mandate (*Cf. Article 95, numeral 8, Superior*), but as an ethical attitude of care that implies the duty of responsibility and protection, since the environment is a universal good that it is the responsibility of all to safeguard, therefore, when

this report talks about the need to promote environmental education, this condition is addressed both to State servants and employees, and to citizens in general terms.

In addition to the above, such has been the identification of this problem through which a lack of education in environmental matters is observed, which has been recalled in the year 2024 the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia, created the National Environmental Education Plan, namely:

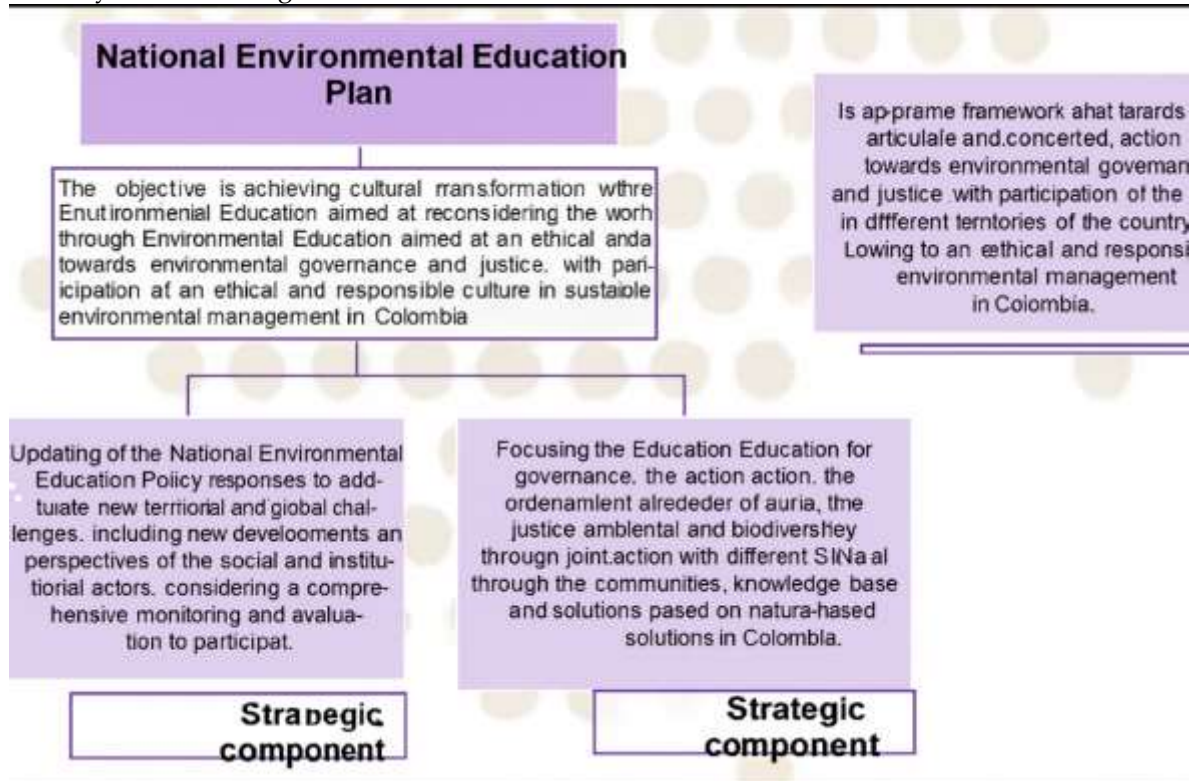


Image 2: Structure Of The National Environmental Education Plan (PNEA).

Source: IERNA, 2024, P. 328

Currently there are the so-called protected areas and ecosystems of natural parks with which strategies of "environmental classrooms" have been implemented through which it is sought to generate pedagogical actions that allow citizens to be sensitized about environmental care, it is essential to promote this strategy from school education in its different stages (preschool, basic and secondary education), and even in the processes of technical and professional training, since the environment is one of those issues that touches on a large number of social, economic and cultural situations, and therefore, by having an education that can strengthen the awareness of care, it is sought not only that people can know the norms and normative assumptions that they must comply with, but also that the

apprehension and application of these is part of a way of life that promotes values and principles aimed at strengthening responsibility, sustainable development and environmental care.

Thus, just as there is a broad compendium of constitutional provisions that refer to the environmental issue, it can be deduced that our Political Constitution of 1991 is ecological, since as the Constitutional Court recalls, through Judgment T-411 of 1992:

(...), the subject, reason and purpose of the Constitution of 1991 is the human person. It is therefore not the individual in the abstract, considered in isolation, but precisely the human being in his social dimension, seen in the individual-community tension, the ultimate reason for the new

Political Charter. It is from the human being, his dignity, his juridical personality and his development (articles 1, 14 and 16 of the Constitution), that the rights, guarantees and duties, the organization and functioning of the branches and public powers acquire meaning" as well as the defense of the environment, insofar as this is the vital environment of man. (Constitutional Court, 1992)

But the question in question is: *what is the duty that assists the citizen in relation to his social behavior with respect to the environment? Is not the denomination "ecological" that is predicated on the Constitution sufficient guarantee to motivate citizens to have a better attitude of environmental responsibility?* It is observed

that this repeated manifestation seems insufficient, while environmental problems (*contamination of water sources, deforestation, illegal mining, etc.*) persist and worsen over time.

Under this orientation, it is appropriate to talk about the normative contributions that Colombia has in matters related to the environment, for which it is necessary to affirm that in this regard there is a wide range of norms.

These rules are presented below in four groups, namely: rules from before the 1991 Constitution, rules from 1992 to 2000, rules from 2001 to 2014 and rules from 2015 to 2024, let's see:

Table 4: Environmental Regulations Prior To 1991.

Norms prior to the Political Constitution of 1991	
Law 2 of 1959	Forest reserve and soil and water protection
Law 23 of 1973	Extraordinary powers to the President to issue the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Code
Law 26 of 1977	Creating the Forest Financial Fund
Law 9 of 1979	By which Sanitary Measures are dictated
Law 74 of 1979*	Approves the Amazon Cooperation Treaty
Law 17 of 1981*	Adopts the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
Law 45 of 1983*	Adopts Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
Law 9 of 1989	It dictates rules on municipal development plans, purchase and sale and expropriation of property
Law 84 of 1989	It adopts the National Statute for the Protection of Animals and creates contraventions and regulates what refers to its procedure and competence
Law 30 of 1990*	Approves the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer
Law 21 of 1991*	Approves Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries

Source: Authors' Elaboration Based On Contributions Issued By The Colombian Congress.

This group of norms is identified with the validity of the Political Constitution of 1886, which was repealed on July 4, 1991, however, it should be mentioned that these norms are currently in force, so it should be noted that only Law 9 of 1989 has been partially modified by Law 2 of 1991 and partially repealed by Law 388 of 1997 and also Law 84 of 1989

was amended by Law 1774 of 2016.

It should also be noted that Table No. 1 shows five norms (*) that make up five (5) laws approving international treaties and conventions on environmental matters. The second group of rules follows:

Table 5: Environmental Regulations From 1992 To 2000.

Regulations subsequent to the Political Constitution from 1991 to the year 2000	
Law 29 of 1992*	Approves Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer
Law 99 of 1993	Creates the Ministry of the Environment
Law 139 of 1994	Creating the Forest Incentive Certificate
Law 141 of 1994	Creates the National Royalties Fund
Law 160 of 1994	Creates the National System of Agrarian Reform and Rural Peasant Development
Law 161 of 1994	Organized by the Regional Autonomous Corporation of the Rio Grande de la Magdalena
Law 164 of 1994*	Approves the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
Law 165 of 1994*	Approves the Convention on Biological Diversity
Law 208 of 1995*	Approves the Statute of the International Centre for Biotechnology
Law 253 of 1996*	Adopts the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal
Law 357 of 1997*	Approves the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat
Law 373 of 1997	Establishes the program for the efficient use and saving of water
Law 388 of 1997	Amends Law 9 of 1989 and Law 2 of 1991
Law 430 of 1998	Prohibitive regulations on hazardous waste are issued in environmental matters
Law 472 of 1998	It develops Article 88 of the Political Constitution of Colombia in relation to the exercise of popular and group actions
Law 491 of 1999	Establishes ecological insurance and modifies the Penal Code
Law 511 of 1999	Establishes National Recycler and Recycling Day

Law 599 of 2000	Colombian Penal Code. Title XI. Crimes against natural resources and the environment
Law 611 of 2000	Dictates rules for sustainable management of species of Wild and Aquatic Fauna
Law 629 of 2000*	Approves Kyoto Protocol (Framework Convention on Climate Change - UN)

Source: Authors' Elaboration Based On Contributions Issued By The Colombian Congress

This second set of norms integrates seven (7) laws that in Colombia subscribe to Protocols, Statutes, Conventions and International Conventions on environmental matters (*).

Likewise, there are a number of regulations that are related to the preservation, care and protection of the environment on different fronts, among which stand out, for example: *ozone layer, forestry*

incentives, agrarian reform, climate change, biological diversity, hazardous wastes, wetlands, water, recycling, wildlife, etc. among others. This situation is relevant, since these are norms that are subsequent to the Political Constitution of 1991 and, therefore, reinforce the aforementioned context of the ecological constitution in Colombia. In this sense, the third group of rules is presented:

Table 6: Environmental Regulations From 2001 To 2014.

Regulations subsequent to the Political Constitution: from 2001 to 2014	
Law 685 of 2001	By which the Mining Code is issued.
Law 740 of 2002	Approves the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
Law 807 of 2003	Approve the Amendments to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.
Law 822 of 2003	It dictates rules related to generic agrochemicals.
Law 850 of 2003	They regulate citizen oversight bodies.
Law 945 of 2005	Adopts the Basel Protocol: liability and compensation for damage resulting from transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal.
Law 981 of 2005	Establishes an Environmental Surcharge on tolls on roads near or located in Municipal Conservation and Protection Areas, Ramsar sites or Wetlands of International Importance defined in Law 357/97 and Biosphere Reserves and Buffer Zones.
Law 1021 of 2006	Issues the General Forestry Law.
Law 1152 of 2007	Dictates the Statute of Rural Development, reforms the Colombian Institute of Rural Development.
Law 1159 of 2007	Approves the Rotterdam Convention on the Application of the Prior Informed Consent Procedure to Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.
Law 1242 of 2008	It establishes the National Code of Navigation and River Port Activities.
Law 1252 of 2008	It dictates prohibitive rules on environmental matters (waste and hazardous waste).
Law 1259 of 2008	It establishes in the national territory the application of the environmental comparendo to violators of the rules of cleanliness, cleaning and collection of debris.
Law 1333 of 2009	It establishes the environmental sanctioning procedure.
Law 1348 of 2009	Approves the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling.
D-Law 3573 of 2011	Creates the National Environmental Licensing Agency.
Law 1450 of 2011	Issues the National Development Plan, 2010-2014.
Law 1454 of 2011	It dictates organic norms on territorial planning.
Law 1466 of 2011	Article 1, paragraph 2, and Article 8, paragraph 2 (Law 1259/08) are added.
Law 1515 of 2012	Approves Budapest Treaty on International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the Purposes of Patent Procedure.
Law 1518 of 2012	Approves the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants.
Law 1658 of 2013	They establish provisions for the marketing and use of mercury in the country's various industrial activities.
Law 1672 of 2013	It establishes the guidelines for the adoption of a public policy for the comprehensive management of waste electrical and electronic equipment.

Source: Authors' Elaboration Based On Contributions Issued By The Colombian Congress.

This group of norms that was presented above incorporates seven (7) laws that subscribe to Protocols, Amendments, treaties, Conventions and international conventions on environmental matters. Well, from this set of norms, aspects such as *mining,*

biological diversity, endangered species of flora and fauna, agrochemicals, environmental comparendo, environmental licenses, plant varieties, mercury, etc., stand out.

The last group of rules is presented below:

Table 7: Environmental Standards From 2016 To 2025.

Regulations after the Political Constitution: from 2016 to 2025	
Law 1774 of 2016	It amends the Civil Code, Law 84 of 1989, the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and other provisions are issued
Law 1844 of 2017*	Approves the Paris Agreement
Law 1872 of 2017	Creates the "Fund for the Integral Development of the Special District of Buenaventura" and adopts measures to promote the Integral Development of the Special, Industrial, Port, Biodiverse and Ecotourism District of Buenaventura

Law 1880 of 2018*	Approves the Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty on Environmental Protection, its appendix and its annexes I, II, III and IV
Law 1892 of 2018*	Approves the Minamata Convention on Mercury
Law 1897 of 2018*	Approves the Agreement for the Pacific Alliance Cooperation Fund
Law 1926 of 2019*	Approves Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Protocol on Liability and Redress Supplementary to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
Law 1930 of 2018	Provisions for the Integrated Management of the Páramos in Colombia Dictated
Law 1931 of 2018	Guidelines established for the management of Climate Change
Law 1938 of 2018	Partially modifies Articles 33 and 38 of Law 99 of 1993
Law 1950 of 2019*	Approves "Agreement on the terms of the accession of the Republic of Colombia to the Convention of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
Law 1954 of 2019*	Approves Agreement for the Establishment of the Global Institute for Green Growth
Law 1964 of 2019	Promotes the use of electric vehicles in Colombia
Law 1968 of 2019	It prohibits the use of asbestos in the national territory and guarantees of protection of the health of Colombians are established
Law 1970 of 2019*	Approves the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol
Law 1972 of 2019	It establishes the protection of the rights to health and a healthy environment by establishing measures aimed at reducing polluting emissions from mobile sources and other provisions are issued
Law 1973 of 2019	Regulates and prohibits the entry, commercialization and use of bags and other plastic materials in the Archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina department and the Minor Islands that compose it
Law 1977 of 2019	Partially modifies Law 1176/07 (Drinking Water and Basic Sanitation sector)
Law 2111 of 2021	It replaces Title XI "Crimes against natural resources and the environment" of Law 599 of 2000, amending Law 906 of 2004.
Law 2232 of 2022	They establish measures aimed at the gradual reduction of production and consumption of certain single-use plastic products
Law 2290 of 2023*	Agreement concerning the Adoption of Harmonized UN Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles and Equipment and Parts Capable of Mounting on Wheeled Vehicles...
Law 2294 of 2023	National Development Plan 2022-2026.
Law 2387 of 2024	It modifies the environmental sanctioning procedure, Law 1333 of 2009, with the purpose of providing effective tools to prevent and punish offenders and other provisions are issued
Law 2476 of 2025	Through which adaptation to climate change and risk management in Colombia is strengthened through green, biodiverse and resilient cities and urban centers (Green Cities Law).
Law 2478 of 2025	By means of which the conservation of wetlands in the national territory is promoted and other provisions are issued.

Source: Authors' Elaboration Based On Contributions Issued By The Colombian Congress.

In this order of ideas, nine (9) laws* that approve Agreements, Amendments, Protocols and International Conventions on environmental matters are identified from the previous group, highlighting at a general level contributions in matters such as: *welfare and protection of animals as sentient beings, mercury, climate change, moors, prohibition of asbestos, polluting emissions from mobile sources*, among others. Two current laws (2025) that constitute the field of action on climate change and wetland conservation

are also highlighted.

Likewise, it should be mentioned that with this group of regulations presented in the four tables, important contributions in environmental matters are also highlighted that are found in Resolutions issued by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and also by Decrees issued in this regard by the President of the Republic.

Some of these contributions are:

Table 8: Resolutions And Decrees On Environmental Matters From 1974 To 2025.

Environmental Resolutions	
Resolution 0376, 2016	Cases that do not require modification of environmental license
Resolution 97, 2017	Creates the Single Registry of Ecosystems and Environmental Areas
Resolution 1259, 2018	It indicates the cases in which it will not be necessary to advance the process of modification of the environmental license or its equivalent (projects in the mining sector)
Resolution 2184, 2019	Set the white, black, and green color code for waste separation at the source.
Resolution 0855, 2022	It indicates the cases in which it will not be necessary to advance the process of modification of the environmental license or its equivalent (projects in the hydrocarbons sector)
Resolution 0859, 2022	It establishes the list of minor changes or normal adjustments in dam, dam, transfer or reservoir projects and in electric power sector projects, which have an environmental license or its equivalent
Resolution 0057, 2025	It regulates domestic sustainable management, particularly in the forestry field, and is complemented by Article 55 of Law 2294 of 2023.
Resolution 431, 2025	The District Secretariat of the Environment adopted procedures for the collection of environmental assessment and monitoring services, and the tariff scale for environmental licenses.

Resolution 908, 2025	It updates the Environmental Management Plans (EMP) and establishes the validity and the process of publication and prior consultation in environmental processes.
Decrees on environmental matters	
Decree 2811, 1974	Dictates the National Code of Renewable Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
Decree 1867, 1994	Regulates the National Environmental Council of the Ministry of the Environment
Decree 1124, 1999	The Ministry of the Environment is reformed and other provisions are issued
Decree 2820, 2010	Environmental licenses are regulated
Decree 1640, 2012	It defines the instruments for the planning, management and management of the country's watersheds and aquifers, in accordance with the structure defined in the National Policy for the Integrated Management of Water Resources
Decree 1076, 2015	Single Regulatory Decree on the Environment and Sustainable Development Sector
Decree 044, 2016	Establishes criteria for declaring and delimiting temporary reserves of natural resources within the framework of mining-environmental planning
Decree 670, 2025	It regulates Article 227 of Law 2294 of 2023 regarding the Zero Waste Program.
Decree 810 of 2025	It establishes the National System of Animal Protection and Welfare (SINAPYBA).

Source: Authors' Elaboration With Contributions From The Ministry Of Environment And The Presidency Of The Republic.

Well, all these normative contributions that there are a total of seventy-three (73) laws that regulate the environmental issue in Colombia and of these twenty-eight (28) laws that approve Treaties, Conventions, Amendments and International Protocols on this same regulation are identified.

Now, from an ethical approach to the enactment of these norms, it must be agreed that their necessity constitutes the importance of seeking tools that allow the protection of the environment from its different areas or conditions, and above all, it is presumed that these laws, having been issued by the Congress of the Republic from the orientation instituted by the Political Constitution of 1991 through articles 150, 151 et seq., and also from the presuppositions determined by Law 5 of 1992.

Specifically in its articles 204, 205, 206, 207 and 208, they give a glimpse of the essential elements of due process that a bill must provide in order to become a Law of the Republic, in order to be binding on all citizens, in accordance with the following Superior postulates, namely, Article 4 at first which indicates:

Article 4. The Constitution is a norm of norms. In any case of incompatibility between the Constitution and the law or other legal norm, the constitutional provisions shall apply. It is the duty of nationals and foreigners in Colombia to abide by the Constitution and the laws, and to respect and obey the authorities. (National Constituent Assembly, 1991)

This duty of nationals, which is framed in complying with the constitution and the laws, implies not only knowledge of them but also their internalization and application in terms of respect, obedience and achievement of the general interest or common welfare. Likewise, the second Higher Assumption that is framed in a personal ethical and civic attitude implies understanding that: "Article 6. Individuals are only responsible to the authorities

for violating the Constitution and the laws. Public servants are so for the same reason and for omission or overreach in the exercise of their functions" (National Constituent Assembly, 1991).

In this way, the responsibility referred to in Article 6 of the Constitution implicitly entails knowledge as an essential element of ethical and civic apprehension of the postulates that make up the Constitution and the laws, since its omission or ignorance is determined as a consequence that implies responsibilities. Thus, Law 57 of 1887 states in this regard that: "Article 9. Ignorance of the laws does not serve as an excuse" (Congress of the Republic, 1887).

This principle of "*ignorantia juris non excusat*" allows us to infer according to the scholars García and Gutiérrez (2015) that:

It would not be a question, therefore, of whether ignorance excuses or not, but of the fact that the rules have to be applied to their addressees without stopping at certain subjective details, at all those subjective details that the system itself does not include in the factual assumption of the respective rule (p. 67)

In fact, it is a matter of each citizen being able to understand the importance of complying with the rules through a civic and ethical conscience that allows them to know some minimums. In other words, it may not be possible for citizens to know all the laws that exist in the Colombian legal system, but it is possible for them to question how to act in relation to a certain intervention or decision, since the most important problems are the most important problems.

Relevant environmental issues are initially configured as small actions that can deliberately affect a community or group of people.

In this regard, it should be borne in mind that a

person does not know the resolution* that establishes the use and final disposal of waste in colored bags (*white, black and green*), however, when he is circulating through a park in the national territory, he finds three cans with the aforementioned colors and wants to deposit a plastic bottle that contained water and that on its label indicates "usable". however, this person does not take the time to verify where this waste is disposed of and ends up in a black bin (non-usable waste).

Likewise, it can happen with a plastic bag that was forgotten on a beach in the national territory and that will end up contaminating the water resource, or it could be a person who is dedicated to providing mechanical services in a workshop and does not know how to dispose of the oil that has been extracted from the cars he is preparing.

Consequently, *"it could be an excuse not to know the law"* and therefore, under this pretext to make decisions that directly and indirectly affect the environment and, with it, the well-being of people, which is why this section highlights a reflection on raising awareness that the number of laws that are in place in environmental matters is not so relevant. but rather the number of ethical and civic actions aimed at conserving the environment as a sustenance of life in conditions of dignity and quality, since it represents our survival on earth and not taking care of it now means that future generations – *including ourselves* – will not be able to have hope of a prosperous tomorrow for the conservation of our species.

To the above, not only the knowledge of the law but also its oversight, its application and above all the demand that barriers such as the lack of environmental, civic and ethical education around the identification of problems tending to improve or propose effective alternatives to solve our environmental problems contribute to the above.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As could be observed, Colombia has a large number of regulations that regulate the environmental issue, ranging from provisions that approve international treaties to the sanctioning conditions in environmental matters under the ownership of the State, however, and although Colombia currently does not have statistical material regarding the number of sanctions imposed on citizens and companies for attacking or generating actions against the environment, it can be deduced

that the sanctioning part does not solve the problem of the use and abuse of natural resources, since beyond having sufficient legal budgets – *which serve as a frame of reference for the issue and denote a great concern on the part of the Colombian legislator* – the problem of environmental deterioration continues to grow without its consequences diminishing. with which not only the conservation of species continues to be affected, but also life itself in conditions of well-being and dignity.

In this way, it is concluded that the Colombian State has seventy-nine (79) laws from 1959 to 2025 that are in force; in addition to this, it has nine (9) Resolutions from 2016 to 2025, nine (9) Decrees from 1974 to 2025 and a Constitution that is proclaimed as "ecological", so the task of regulating and bringing to the norm everything that in environmental matters stands out. It is conceived as indispensable for the survival and contributor to the conservation of the human species, since if these internal agendas are reviewed, this regulation highlights, for example, issues related to: *the forest reserve and protection of soil and water, environmental protection, forest financial fund, sanitary measures, Amazonian cooperation, international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora, Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Protection of Animals, Protection of the Ozone Depleting Layer, Ministry of the Environment, Forest Incentive Certificate, Agrarian Reform and Peasant Rural Development, Climate Change, Biological Diversity, Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Bird Habitat Aquatic diseases, efficient use and saving of water, hazardous waste, ecological insurance, recycling and recycling, sustainable management of species of wild and aquatic fauna, mining code, biotechnology safety, generic agrochemicals, citizen oversight, environmental surcharge, general forestry law, rural development, navigation and river port activities, environmental comparison to violators of sanitation standards, cleaning and collection of debris, environmental sanctioning procedure, whaling, environmental licenses, development plan, protection of plant varieties, commercialization and use of mercury, comprehensive management of waste electrical and electronic equipment, comprehensive management of the páramos in Colombia, global institute for green growth, use of electric vehicles in Colombia, use of asbestos in the national territory, the rights to health and a healthy environment, regulation and prohibition of the entry, marketing and use of bags and other plastic materials in the department of the archipelago of San Andrés, drinking*

* **Resolution 2184 of 2019.** It came into force in Colombia in 2021. *The colors for the presentation of solid waste in bags or other*

containers will be green (usable organic waste), white (usable waste) and black (non-usable waste). MINAMBIENTE (2019)

water and basic sanitation, crimes against natural resources and the environment, gradual reduction of production and consumption of certain single-use plastic products, adaptation to climate change and risk management in Colombia, green cities law and the conservation of wetlands in the national territory.

In accordance with the above, a large agenda is identified in our Colombian regulations, which account for the needs in environmental matters in Colombia, however, when reviewing the effectiveness of the norm, this condition refers – specifically – to the way in which each of these norms is materialized, that is, the way in which the legal effects for which each norm was created are fulfilled through aspects such as knowledge, obedience, respect, its application and whether it manages to motivate or concretize the desired changes or behaviors both in citizens and in entities (public and private); In other words, effectiveness refers to a relationship between a mandatory provision and the human behavior that derives from it, so if when reviewing the current problems we have in environmental matters, it can be concluded that although many of these regulations manage to sanction alleged offenders, they do not manage to be fully efficient because the legal effects provided for in them are not configured in a concrete way, that is, although rights are generated, duties, prohibitions and regulations are specified, an apprehension of citizens and institutions is needed that manages to account for the internalization of it and its strict consideration.

In addition to the above, it is concluded that from an ethical and civic perspective it is necessary to reinforce from the training at home, at the social level and in terms of education (preschool, primary, secondary, secondary, technical, technological, professional, etc.), a culture of awareness and protection for the environment, since the environmental problems we have today continue to be the constant concern for the way we are using and abusing resources. It is necessary to emphasize that our way of evading the environmental problems that currently surround us (*destination of polluting waste, air pollution, deforestation, contamination of water sources, illegal mining, deforestation, among others*) is the reflection of the way we live, the priorities we have and the way we think, so it is deduced that caring for

the environment is not – for many people and companies – a priority.

It must also be recognized that laws alone do not serve to change the way in which we must assume responsibility for caring for the environment, since it is necessary to build an environmental ethical proposal that through the idea of Aristotelian virtue serves to build a citizen who in the manner of the *Spoudaios* (σοφός) of which this author speaks to us, is the reference of a wise, serious, responsible, diligent, active and virtuous person, who through his example manages to transcend the law not only by obeying it but also by seeking that his actions allow him to take care of himself (ethics – *ἠθική*), to take care of others (politics – *πολιτική*) and to take care of others (science – *ἐπιστήμη*).

Finally, it must be concluded that Colombia has sufficient regulatory provisions on environmental matters to promote an awareness of care and responsibility with respect to natural resources, but as long as the paradigm persists according to which it is assumed that only the application of the law is enough to solve the current problems in this area, we will continue to witness a regulatory ineffectiveness that does not achieve the objective for which it was designed. And adding this situation to the current cultural problem that persists in seeing in the anthropocentric paradigm the *raison d'être* of well-being and the guarantee of human survival, we will continue to deplete resources irresponsibly without measuring the consequences of what we ourselves could suffer in the future and, therefore, future generations as well. Indeed, it is urgent to focus on adopting a biocentric paradigm, according to which the past can be recognized so as not to repeat it, and in this sense, build the awareness we need to know and improve our experience with the environment in order to seek that our actions are friendly to the environment, to living beings, to resources and to others. since, as Aristotle recalled, it is a matter of understanding that the main task of man is a way of living and this is defined as an activity of the soul accompanied by reasonable actions tending to good, virtue and happiness, since it is useless to lead a life without examination, act without conscience and make decisions without understanding the importance of exercising care.

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