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Abstract

This document presents an overview of the economy and living conditions in the islands of San Andrés,

Providencia and Santa Catalina in the 21st century and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The main results reveal significant economic progress during the last decades, as well as big challenges in tourism competitiveness and the life quality of the population. In particular, the findings highlight the importance of increasing the provision of public services, improving the quality of jobs in the tourism sector and reducing the territory's high crime levels. These needs have increased with the arrival of the pandemic, which has led to a profound decline of tourism activities with direct effects on the labor market and the business networks. These recent trends highlight the importance of a coordinated public response between the national and regional governments, and the private sector to minimize the economic and social consequences of this unexpected shock.