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Misión Permanente de Colombia  
ante la ONU en Nueva York

STATEMENT BY COLOMBIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, CLAUDIA BLUM,  
BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL  
New York, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Mister President,

Members of the Security Council,

I thank you for convening this meeting, and for all the remarks and support by the Members of the Security Council.

I thank Secretary General, António Guterres, and his Special Representative in Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu, for the report presented and the commitment of the Verification Mission.

I also take note of the statement by Ms. Clemencia Carabali delivered in this session.

Mister President,

As all other countries, Colombia is facing the enormous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. My government has implemented comprehensive measures to safeguard public health, provide support for the most vulnerable, preserve jobs, and to protect the welfare of our citizens.

Even in the context of this pandemic, we continue with a firm commitment to comply with the terms of the 2016 Agreement. We have not held back any of the areas of work comprising the Peace with Legality policy. Its implementation is a priority of President Iván Duque's Government.

The framework put in place by the Agreement operates consistently. The National Reincorporation Council has met periodically, as well as the various tripartite working groups. The Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementacion held six meetings during the reporting period.

Measures for COVID-19 prevention and mitigation, have been adopted by all agencies implementing the Peace with Legality policy. Beneficiaries of these measures include former combatants, victims, and farmers committed to the National Program for Illicit Crop Substitution.



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In the former twenty-four Territorial Areas for Training and Reintegration (TATRs) protocols are in place to prevent contagion and to ensure referrals to health centers when necessary, in close coordination with local authorities.

We also continue to work hard on the approval and implementation of projects in the 170 municipalities most affected by poverty and violence, where Development Plans with a Territorial Approach are carried out. Stabilization efforts are funded mainly by the National Budget, complemented with other public and private funding, and international cooperation. International support remains committed, confident on the results being achieved.

In regions where those Development Plans are being implemented, during President Duque's administration, 186 projects worth U\$423 million dollars have been funded by royalties from oil and mining exploitation. Government agencies also continue to engage with one 100,000 families who have expressed their willingness to abandon coca cultivation and transit to legality.

In addition to the challenges posed by the implementation of the Agreement and the response to the pandemic, Colombia continues to devote important resources to the attention of 1.8 million Venezuelan citizens who have been forced to abandon their country.

Mister President,

The success and sustainability of the reincorporation of former combatants, is decisive to prevent new cycles of violence. We continue to work with determination to support their productive projects. Beneficiaries of the projects put in place in the first half of this year, have increased by 71% in comparison to the same period of 2019.

Former TATRs are operating normally at the administrative level and the Government has guaranteed the provision of the necessary goods, services and supplies. Food supply has been extended, despite that the legal status of these areas has long expired. Monthly allowances continue to be rewarded to ex combatants residing inside and outside the TATRs. Digital connectivity has been strengthened to keep access to education and technical assistance for productive projects.



The Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization has adopted virtual mechanisms for the attention of ex combatants. Also, the Agency for Territorial Renovation has held virtual meetings to reinforce the relationship between central and regional authorities and to align the institutional offer with local planning instruments.

Distinguished Delegates,

Safety and protection of former combatants, human rights defenders, social leaders and communities, remain as our greatest challenge. The Government has articulated actions by 15 different agencies to strengthen prevention, individual and collective protection, and support for investigation and prosecution. All these, with a comprehensive concept of security in the context of reincorporation, and a zero-tolerance policy against any irregular conduct by State agents.

During the reporting period, we analyzed in detail the security threats present in the municipalities of Ituango and Caldono. Our recommendations to establish safer locations for residents in these areas, took time to be followed. Through close coordination between national and local authorities, with the Verification Mission's accompaniment, former combatants were relocated from Ituango to the municipality of Mutatá. Protection measures requested by female ex combatants have also been approved.

As of July 8, the Attorney-General's Office has advanced in the investigation of 146 of the 294 crimes registered since the signing of the agreement, against ex combatants and their families. This is a progress in 49.7% of the cases. There have been 198 arrest warrants issued for homicide, attempted murder and forced disappearance, including 51 for the identified instigators. As well as 27 convictions against those responsible for these crimes so far.

From the result of the investigations, it is quite clear that these attacks are related to the complexity of the environment and the threat posed by organized armed groups involved in drug trafficking and illegal mining. These criminal actors include non-reincorporated FARC members, the ELN terrorist group, and other groups engaged in transnational organized crime.

We must not forget that the exponential growth of illicit crops, occurred between 2013 and 2017. We are now taking the toll for the silence kept during that period, in the face



of a situation that created new threats to the most vulnerable communities, social leaders and human rights defenders.

President Duque's Government is strongly committed to reduce illicit crops and promoting crop substitution options for the communities. According to the last report by the UNODC Monitoring System, in 2019 Colombia achieved a 9% reduction in the area planted with coca. It was the second year with an area decline. Colombia will not achieve the desired peace if the illegal economies remain profitable. International cooperation and co-responsibility is essential to address this problem.

Distinguished Delegates,

The Agreement's implementation is a two-way process and requires the effective commitment of both the State and the FARC political party. My Government reiterates the need for the Verification Mission to demand FARC compliance with the provision of information regarding: drug trafficking routes; the location of missing persons; the delivery of assets that contribute to victims' reparation; the recruitment of children by dissident groups; and the location of land mines, among others.

Mister President,

Our Government continues to provide support to the Transitional Justice System, including funding for all of its mechanisms. I must underline that there has not been nor will be any reduction in their budget.

The success of the transitional justice depends on the satisfaction of the rights of the victims, particularly justice, truth and reparation.

Within the framework of the Agreement, a series of different sanctions and restorative actions have been defined, according to the collaboration and acknowledgement degree by those subject to the jurisdiction. The Agreement also foresaw that sanctions compliance should be verified in order to safeguard victims' rights. Our Government has initiated an interinstitutional coordination process in close work with the Verification Mission, in order to design a system that will properly address this need, once the Special Jurisdiction begins delivering its sanctions.



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Mister President,

I would lastly like to refer to the "*active unilateral ceasefire*" announced by the ELN terrorist group on March 29, and its recent request for a bilateral ceasefire. The Government strongly reiterates that this alleged willingness for peace must result in concrete actions by ELN such as the release of all persons kidnapped and the cessation of any criminal act. Let us be clear: the ELN failed to deliver on its March announcement and there is no signal that it will deliver on this new announcement. Colombian authorities will not cease their constitutional mission to protect our citizens from the terrorist and criminal threat that this group poses.

Distinguished Delegates,

The Government of President Iván Duque is firmly committed to building Peace with Legality. The support of the UN is fundamental to continue advancing in the stabilization and development of territories most affected by violence and poverty. In the middle of the current global crisis, we will not weaken our efforts and will continue to devote all possible resources to convey the results our citizens deserve.

Thank you very much.